



*“When they have the puck in regular play it is very difficult to regain possession. On a face off, we can do that in an instant”*

## **OFFENSIVE ZONE – WINNING FACE OFFS**

Face offs are very important because if we win them, we have the puck.

Draw the puck back to our defenceman normally. This gives us the highest likelihood of keeping the puck. Don't normally go forward on a face off hoping you or we will get possession. The odds are against keeping possession.

- Bend your knees a lot, stay wide on your skates, get your weight on the front of your skate blades and bend your body forward at the waist so you feel very strong when the tip of your stick touches the ice
- Choke up on your stick with your higher hand about 6 inches off the top of your stick and your lower hand down low on your stick – feel very close to the ice
- Grip your stick very tightly when drawing the puck back
- Line up with your shoulders, hips and skates square to the face off circle so you don't give away which way you intend to draw the puck ... back, forward, left or right
- You will have more strength on the backhand pulling the puck back than on your forehand. To increase that strength you may want to reverse grip your lower hand on your stick so the palm of your hand is over the top of the stick shaft, not underneath as is usual. The greater the curve in your stick, the harder this backhand draw will be
- Based on how and where the other player is lined up (body or shoulders or hips or skates turned) and by where he is placing his stick (middle, left or right of the face off circle) decide on one of the following strategies.

### **Alternate Strategies**

- Direct Backhand Draw Back

As the puck is being dropped, and with your weight mostly on your right skate, swing your shoulders, hips and skates around counter clockwise (for left handed shooters). At the same time anticipating where the puck will land in the face off circle move your stick only to the puck cupping it cleanly around the middle to back of the blade of your stick angling your stick blade to the left, and draw the puck back.



- Under His Stick Backhand Draw Back

As the puck is dropped and with your weight mostly on your right skate, stretch towards him and swing your shoulders, hips and skates around counter clockwise (for left handed shooters). At the same time bring the blade of your stick forward underneath the back of his stick and sweep back towards you hard so you go right under and through his stick at the heel taking the puck back.

- Slap His Stick Backhand Draw Back

As the puck is dropped and with your weight mostly on your right skate, slap the shaft of his stick about a foot above the blade pushing his stick away from the face off circle for an instant. Then swing your shoulders, hips and skates around counter clockwise (for left handed shooters) bringing the blade of your stick back towards you and down on the ice hard cupping the puck cleanly around the middle to back of the blade of your stick angling your stick blade to the left, and draw the puck back.

- Takeout Backhand Draw Back

As the puck is dropped and with your weight mostly on your right skate, move towards him and with your stick lift his stick off the ice at the heel of his stick and hold his stick off the ice while you twirl around counter clockwise (for left handed shooters). Now you will be facing your defenceman. The puck should be between your skates. Now kick the puck back to your defenceman.

- Forehand Draw Back

As the puck is dropped and with your weight mostly on your left skate, swing your shoulders, hips and skates around clockwise (for left handed shooters) bringing the blade of your stick back towards you and down on the ice cupping the puck cleanly around the middle to back of the blade of your stick angling your stick blade to the right, and draw the puck back.

- Neutralize the Draw – Lift His Stick

As the puck is dropped, move towards him and lift his stick off the ice at the heel of his stick with your stick. Hold his stick off the ice while you make gentle contact with him leaving the puck between your skates and his skates. Do not check him hard as you will be called for face off interference. The near side winger should get the puck.

- Neutralize the Draw – Slap His Stick Away and Hold it There

As the puck is dropped, move towards him and with your stick slap his stick about a foot off the heel of his stick and away from the face off circle. Hold his stick away while you move towards and make gentle contact with him leaving the puck between



your skates and his skates. Do not check him hard as you will be called for face off interference. The near side winger should get the puck.

- Flip the Puck Over His Stick or Through His Legs Draw

As the puck is dropped, holding your stick softly, gently flip the puck left or right over his stick or through his legs while at the same time moving forward expecting to pick up the puck and carry it forward. This is a dangerous play because if you do not succeed, he is likely to have the puck going the other way unchecked.

However when the puck is faced off in their zone and their defenceman lines up too far in the corner leaving the lane to the net open from the face off circle this can be an effective play. The winger on the side away from the boards should go immediately to the net for a rebound or a pass.

- Go With His Draw Move

When the other player has been drawing the puck back to one side all the time, you may want to go with his move especially if the face off is in their end and his draw move would be to pull the puck back towards the side of his own net. Just put your stick over his when he is moving his stick back with the puck to slow his stick and the puck down so that the puck only goes back a few feet on the way back. Then move towards the puck and pick it up.

- Shoot the Puck Draw

As the puck is being dropped, and with your weight mostly on your right skate (for left handed shooters), bring your stick about a foot to the left of the middle of the face off circle and then anticipating where the puck will land in the face off circle, slap the puck forward following through hard like a shot moving the puck on net.