



“Some players have the uncanny knack of seemingly knowing or feeling what the players on the other team and on their team are about to do before they do it – they see the whole ice, anticipate, and take advantage – can you too? ... Yes!”

ALL ZONES – READING THE PLAY

It is obviously important to anticipate or read the play of our players and theirs. But how can you do that? Is it just lucky guesses? Is it a gift that some players have and others don't? A gut feel?

To some extent it is a gift or a gut feel but if you put your mind to learning the tactics and systems of the game, are observant, stay relaxed, focused and self confident on the ice you will anticipate a lot better.

Even if you are not as physically talented, if you anticipate and get in the right position for their play or your play, you will make up for your lesser physical talent by playing smarter.

THINK AHEAD WHILE DOING WHAT YOU NEED TO DO NOW

Like chess, in hockey, there are a finite number of moves and move sequences that can take place in certain circumstances but you only get one move at a time. You have to think way ahead understanding what moves your opponent may make and then countering them with your moves right now ... sound familiar ... the trouble is there are so many of them on the ice and they happen so fast.

So what's the answer?

PREPARATION

- **UNDERSTAND THE TACTICS AND SYSTEMS OF THE GAME GENERALLY**
- **UNDERSTAND THE TACTICS AND SYSTEMS OF OUR GAME SPECIFICALLY**
- **UNDERSTAND THE TACTICS AND SYSTEMS OF THEIR GAME SPECIFICALLY**

When reading the plays of the other team, you need to understand their team tendencies and systems, and individual tendencies. For example:



- In their own end, do their defencemen consistently pass the puck up the same side boards the puck is on or go opposite the flow – we can adjust our forechecking positioning to their tendency as we know where the puck is likely going
- In their own end, do they play the wingers cover the points and centre down low covering the extra man system or the protect the house system with their centre and wingers down low ? If it's the protect the house system, our defencemen at our blue line are the keys to defeating it if we can get the puck to our defenceman
- Do they forecheck using the 1,2,2 or the 2,1,2 or the 3, 2?
- Which 3 on 2 plays do they use?
- Do their defencemen stand up at their blue line or back in?
- Do they dump and chase?
- How do they play 2 on 1's and 2 on 2's?
- What power play system do they use? Penalty kill system?
- What are their tendencies on face offs?
- What are their goalie tendencies?
- What individual moves do their best players make: fast skate around, puck through your skates, between your stick and your skates, draw the puck back on the tip of the stick blade and then up and around, give and go?
- Do they stick check mostly or body check? Who does which?
- **AND SO ON AND SO ON RE ALL THE TACTICS AND SYSTEMS IN MARK'S TIPS AND ELSEWHERE**

So, if you want to anticipate better, learn these Tips, watch hockey, read about hockey, talk with your team mates and line mates about plays on the ice and have fun trying to figure out what they and we are likely going to do before it happens by WATCHING, ANALYZING TENDENCIES, AND MEASURING WHAT THEY ARE DOING (see Analytics section of this website).