



*“A picture is worth a thousand words”*

## **OFF ICE – GAME VIDEO PLAYER DEVELOPMENT**

Every coach is very familiar with the above expression and yet how many actually use game video to teach hockey performance improvement. More often videos are used for player entertainment and to record memories.

Game videos are probably the most important coaching tool I have ever used off ice. The players love watching themselves, they have fun, they can laugh and learn from their mistakes and good plays and they will remember what they learned longer after having seen images of themselves. Ask them.

It's important that the video is taken so that as much as the ice as possible is shown so the players can see the options they had in various situations. Parents can do this or a hockey video service can be obtained relatively cheaply.

Positional play improvement is the thing to focus on in these sessions. A few examples would include:

- The 2 on 1 rush was caused by our defenceman pinching at their blue line when he really had no good chance to keep the puck in at their blue line
- Their good scoring chance could have been eliminated if our defenceman did not lunge at their player crossing our blue line but instead had angled him into our corner
- We're too bunched up in the neutral zone and crossing their blue line on this 3 on 2 coming in all in a row making it easy for 2 of their defencemen to cover 3 of our players
- They wouldn't have scored if we had just got the puck out when we had the chance
- He wouldn't have scored if I just have lifted his stick off the ice when he was standing in front of our net
- I didn't realize my right winger was so wide open when I shot from far out

Let the players do their own analyzing in groups or one-on-ones. If they do a good job you will know they have been learning what you have been teaching them and they will learn leadership



and communication skills as an added bonus. Some will be very quiet at first but they will come around as these sessions become commonplace.

Pick the best team and second best team in your league to video so you can also figure out their style, tactics and tendencies. This is a lot better than showing the players games they have easily won all the time.

Set up a Google Drop Box for each game video which can be broken down to clips for every aspect of the game: e.g. shots and goals for and against, forechecking, breakouts, power play, penalty kill, neutral zone regroup, zone entries and so on.