



“Every position on the team is important, but not many teams win championships that are not strong down the middle”

ALL ZONES – RESPONSIBILITIES OF A CENTRE

I was helping to teach a player who was used to playing another position to play centre and found it was useful for him and me for reinforcement and feedback to have the basic 5 on 5 responsibilities of the centre position set out in one place.

Give your centres an outline like this, let them read it, ask questions about it, modify it, and then go over it on a hockey board with them one-on-one in an interactive way. Then give them feedback in practices and games and keep reinforcing the Tips over and over with them one-on-one.

GENERALLY

- Constant high speed, confident, no hesitation skating – sees and covers the whole ice, goes everywhere and challenges their puck carrier – makes something happen
- Usually if you are not moving constantly you are not in the play – so move unless you are covering one of their players in front of our net who our D can't cover
- Backchecking - has to be able to get back into our zone fast down low and to join the rush when we get possession
- Body checks when ever he can to disrupt their flow
- Playmaker – good passer – finds the open player to pass to - explodes into an open area and expects the pass back

IN OUR ZONE

- Our third defenceman – covers their extra forward down low our 2 D can't cover and gets the puck whenever he can
- Don't worry about their points they are our wingers' responsibility unless you are our last player back in our zone and a winger on one side is already down low
- If 2 of their forwards are in our corner and one is in front, you go to our corner – their one player in front is our D's coverage
- If 2 of their forwards are in front of our net and one is in the corner with the puck, you cover one player in front, the highest in the slot – our D should challenge their player in the corner, and our other D should cover their player closest to the net in front
- Stay down low until one of us cleanly wins the puck
- Anywhere you feel you can win the puck win it
- If there is a loose puck in front in heavy traffic bang the puck to the corner, don't try to stickhandle and carry it out unless wide open



- Bodycheck their player with the puck and get under his stick whenever you can knocking the puck away
- If you win the puck in our corner under pressure usually reverse the puck hard to the wide side winger on the half boards and take off up ice for the return pass
- If our same side winger at the half boards gets the puck from our D, you should support our winger at the half boards if he's under pressure from them, or expect a chip lateral pass from him if he is free to do this
- If our same side winger at the half boards gets the puck from you or our D and has time and space take off expecting a pass usually indirect off the boards in the neutral zone – you'll get lots of 2 on 1's and breakaways this way
- If our D gets possession and has time and space around the top of our face off circle, as he gets there circle to a wing fast and expect the pass while the winger on that side circles to the middle fast – this creates lane openings with speed
- Just like on D, no stickhandling in our zone unless lots of time and space and you can get out for sure
- In trouble, shoot it out hard just like on D off the glass or freeze it if no time even to shoot
- Face offs – neutralize the draw so they don't win it by tying up his stick, then win the puck and always draw the puck back if you can

IN THE NEUTRAL ZONE

- When your wingers have possession go to the open spaces hard cutting across or straight through expecting the pass
- When you have possession, like D rushes, if room, explosive acceleration and beat their D to the outside mostly at their blue line wide
- Find an open winger – give and go
- If no room, back to D for a regroup, circle back and up the boards fast with the winger on that side circling up centre, or if no room shoot the puck in and go get it
- When they have the puck strip them of it or bodycheck them - no hesitation – don't wait for someone else to do it
- If they go D to D and you are the closest, challenge one D quickly

IN THE OFFENSIVE ZONE

- Create passing lanes to yourself and find the soft spots to receive passes
- Shoot from everywhere and go to the net for your own rebound
- When you see your winger is going to shoot go to the net hard to screen and for the rebound
- If you have the puck coming over their blue line at high speed beat their D wide and go to the net yourself, shoot or pass back to the deep slot to a winger or D coming late before or after going around their net – see 3 on 2's, 2 on 1's and other OFFENSIVE ZONE plays on this web site
- If no room or pass available shoot the puck in and go get it



- If the outside is blocked off cut into the middle and try to set up a drop pass or just shoot
- With puck possession down low, set up the offensive triangle with your wingers using behind the net as well, give and goes and cycling until one player is in a good scoring position in the slot or for a wrap around and crash the net
- On the forecheck 2 – 1 – 2
 - if you are first player in maintain high speed and angle so you know which way their D will go: under stick - body – contact and strip him from the puck – our second player in will pick up the puck if you don't
 - If you are second player in watch for their D to D behind the net play and cover their open D immediately or win the puck after our first player has bodychecked their D
 - If you are second player in and can see our first player in will not get to their player in time to stop a same side pass to their winger at the half boards and no D to D is set up, intercept the pass
 - If you are 3rd player in you are the back up high and can choose what side they are going and go there when they do or anticipate it
 - If you are 3rd player in you are the back up high and if they win the puck and are coming out don't commit to the puck carrier unless you are sure you can disrupt the play, just maintain coverage and backcheck hard
 - If our D pinches and you are our high player then you must get back and play D
 - Pick out their best player and when he comes up ice with the puck you stop him even if you just run into him

MAKE SOMETHING HAPPEN – NO HESITATION