



“From the opening faceoff do everything to let them know we really came to play”

ALL ZONES – SETTING THE TONE

Every championship team has a common trait at the start of a game. They set the tone of the game. What do I mean by that?

First, in the warm ups they look fantastic. They skate and shoot hard. Their goalies stop everything. They know the other team is watching. They are putting on a show and making the other team say, gee, those guys are good, how are we going to beat them?

At the drop of the puck at the opening faceoff, they continue showing how good they are. They skate fast, accelerate to the puck everywhere, swarming on the puck, outskating, outhitting and winning every puck battle. They try to have you reeling. When the other team has the puck every player becomes a body checking machine and takes the man hard EVERY TIME. Not soft squeeze out checks but hard punishing, finishing the check bodychecking. If the other team tries to bodycheck them they make sure the player giving the check feels the hit more than they do.

On the forecheck they win every puck first. At the end of three shifts the message to the other team is there's the way we are going to play this game. Do you really think you can beat us!

Many teams on the receiving end of this aggressiveness will start fumbling the puck, get out of sync, make bad passes and play way worse than they are capable of playing because they have lost confidence in handling and passing the puck and playing their flow of the game. The other team has taken it away from them. They have beaten them mentally and physically.

How do you combat this style? Simple. Give them back exactly what they gave us, and keep doing it until the other team is saying to themselves gee, this team is tough, they are not going to quit. This is going to be a real dog fight. The through out the game which ever team is able to consistently keep up this style of play will be the champion and they deserve to be because they did not break. The other team did.