



*“Until we get clear possession of the puck in our own end, everyone thinks and plays defence, and only defence”*

## **DEFENSIVE ZONE – POSITIONING AND BREAK OUT OPTIONS**

### **Wingers Responsibilities**

If they have the puck inside our blue line in the corner to the left of our net, the normal position for our strong side winger is to stay on their side of the ice a few feet inside the top of the faceoff circle just above the faceoff dot and one step closer to the boards, being able to block *any* passing lane to their defenceman. Our weak side winger should be net front just below the top of the faceoff circle. Our wingers should be close enough to the other team’s defencemen who are standing inside the blue line, and in the passing lane, to prevent anyone passing the puck to these defencemen. If their defencemen move more to the middle along the blue line our wingers move with them to continue to block any passing lane.

If one of their defencemen skate into the deep slot away from our blue line and between our winger and our net looking for a pass, our winger must go with him and lift his stick off the ice at the blade as the pass is received so he cannot shoot.

If their defenceman happens to get the puck for a shot our winger should get right between this defenceman and our net so if he shoots you will block the shot and risk you getting the puck going towards his end. If you go down to block a shot, do so so your head will not get hit, that is with your skates and shin pads directly opposite his stick and the puck, and your head the furthest away from his stick and the puck.

### **Defenceman Responsibilities**

Our left defenceman normally is responsible for the corner to our goalie’s left if the puck is there and the other defencemen is responsible for one of their players in front of our net. The reverse is true if the puck is in the other corner. If their defenceman happens to get the puck for a shot our defenceman lines up in the shooting lane to block the shot.

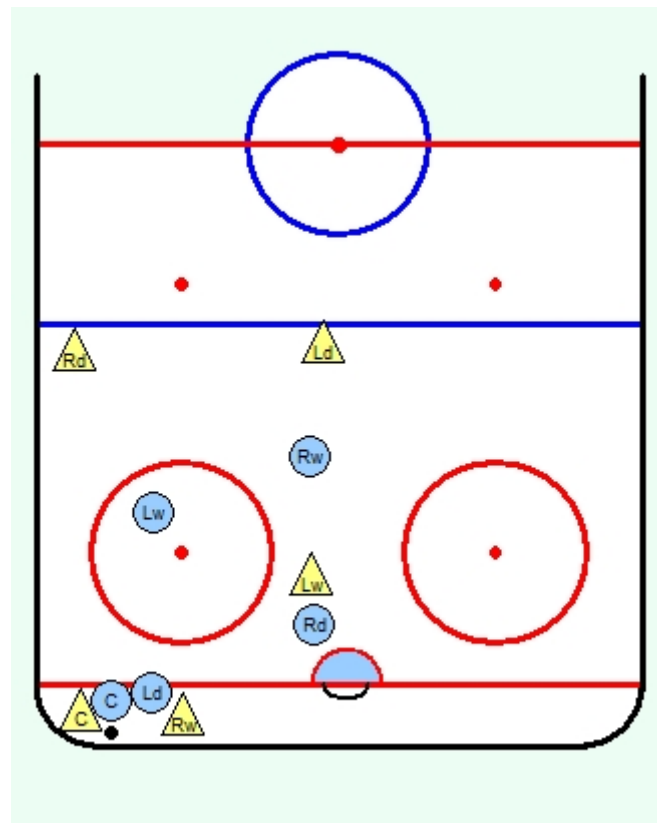
### **Centre’s Responsibilities**

Our centre covers the other player in front of our net, or in the deep slot or helps the defenceman in either corner if 2 of their players are there. This is critical or they will outnumber us down low in our zone. Depending on who gets back first into our defensive zone, these positions may be rotated but we prefer a defenceman net front ideally.



If any one of our players in their assigned positions gets beat one on one by one of their players, the closest of our remaining players must carefully come to the rescue fast.

### COMMUNICATE, COMMUNICATE, COMMUNICATE

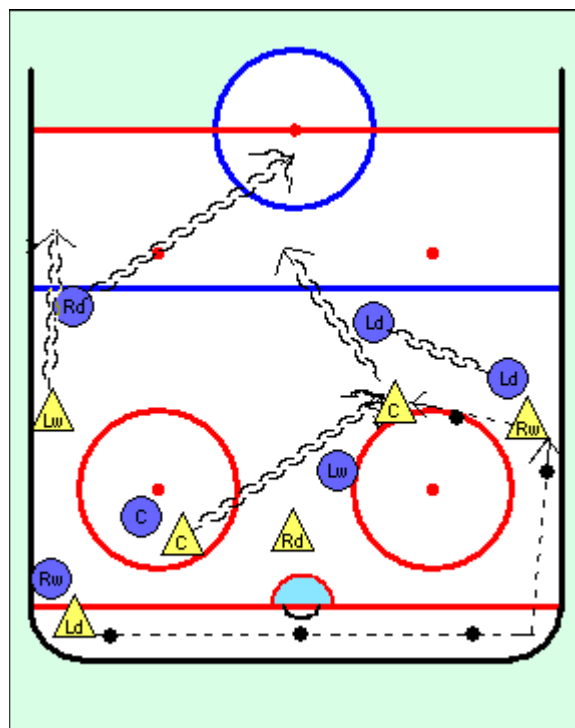


If the puck is in the corner to our goalie's left, it is the left defenceman's job to go to and fight for and win the puck immediately *without hesitation*, or tie it up for a whistle. Angle their player with the puck forcing him away from our net. Lift this player's stick off the ice and body check him at the same time. Pin him against the boards placing your skate and knee between his legs. If the puck squirts out release him from the pin or you will get a penalty. Use your skates or stick to get the puck onto your stick. Even if their player already has control of the puck go to him as quickly as you can, as challenging him, without letting him beat you, may cause him to lose the puck or make a bad pass. **DON'T HESITATE. IT JUSTS GIVES HIM TIME AND SPACE!**



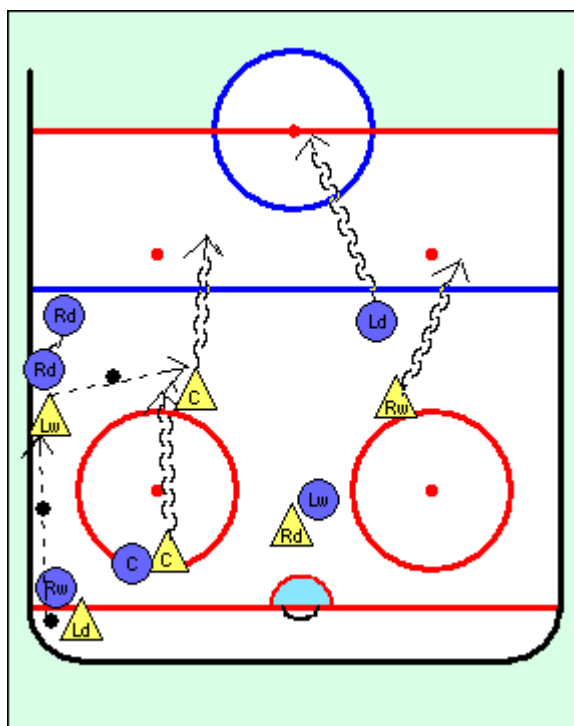
When we get the puck in our corner to our goalie's left, we have a few options:

- (1) **Reverse Rim to Weak Side Winger** - Pass it behind our net along the boards crisply to the right winger who should be very close to the boards at the hash marks on the face off circle. He should be  $\frac{1}{2}$  way between the blue line and our net so their defenceman will have to come way in from the blue line to check him. Our centre, anticipating this pass to our right winger should skate hard up through the face off circle on the right about 10 feet to the left of our right winger to receive a short release pass if our centre is open, hopefully creating a two on one. If there is a puck battle at the half boards, our centre is there to support our winger.



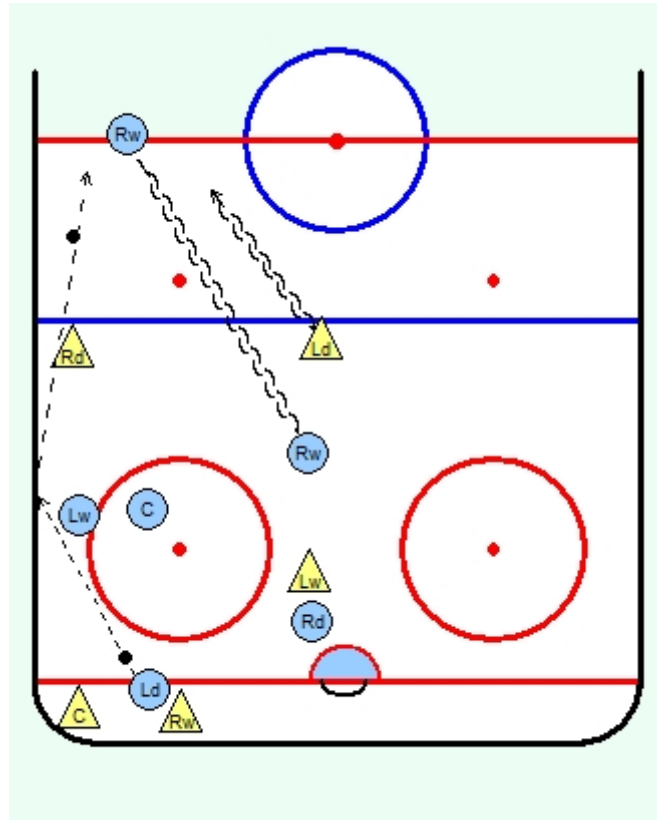


- (2) **To Strong Side Winger** - Pass it up the boards crisply to the left winger who should be very close to the boards at the hash marks on the face off circle. He also should be  $\frac{1}{2}$  way between the blue line and our net so their defenceman will have to come way in from the blue line to check him. Our centre, anticipating this pass to our left winger should skate hard up through the face off circle on the left about 10 feet to the right of our left winger to receive a short release pass if our centre is open, hopefully creating a two on one





- (3) **Strong Wall to Weak Side Winger** - Shoot it out hard off the boards or glass on the strong wall side. Our right winger should anticipate this play, skate hard, and angle in the neutral zone to the strong side boards to pick up the puck. NO SOFT PASSES, STICKHANDING OR POKING THE PUCK FORWARD OR BACK SOFTLY DEEP IN OUR OWN END



- (4) Go towards or behind the net, stop, wait for pressure from the other team and then do (1) or (2) above, or carry the puck out yourself if there is no pressure, or wait for our centre to come and pick the puck up behind the net
- (5) Pass the puck hard to the centre if he is wide open, but don't try a long pass up the middle unless it's 100% safe
- (6) Lift the puck high in the air over everyone's head outside the blue line.



If you don't get the puck in our corner continue to check/chase the other player down. If he passes the puck stay with him and try to position yourself between him and your net so he can't go there without running into you.

## **PRACTICE DRILLS:**

- 1. Run 5 on 5 unit drill with “offensive” forwards and their defencemen starting at the red line in a line across the ice with the centre shooting the puck into the defensive zone. The “defensive” forwards and their defencemen are lined up on the defensive zone blue line so when the puck is shot in they have the advantage in getting to the puck and their positions before the “offensive” 5 player unit.**

**The “offensive” unit forechecks and tries to score, and the defensive unit tries to breakout. Keep score.**

**Give feedback including whistling the play dead in the middle of it having the players freeze in their positions, and then give feedback.**

**When the puck is out of the defensive zone or a goal is scored, repeat the drill.**

**Make sure each unit is wearing different coloured jerseys, and each player in each unit has the same coloured jersey, as we want high speed instant peripheral same team player recognition and it is almost impossible to accomplish this without jersey colour recognition.**

**Vary the starting positions of the offensive and defensive units and players (closer together or further apart) to reduce or increase the time the defensive defencemen will have to get puck control in their defensive corner or to go D to D behind their net. This will replicate “real” hockey conditions.**

**If we are teaching breakout or forechecking systems to players who are not familiar with the options, show them the options off ice on a hockey board, and walk them through the options on ice. Then run this drill with no resistance, then 1 player, then 2 player, then 3 player, and eventually 5 player resistance.**



**Keep running this drill at every practice so the options chosen both defensive and offensive become second nature depending on offensive and defensive positioning and “time and space”.**

- 2. Run 5 on 5 unit drill facing the puck off in the defensive zone with all players in their regular faceoff positions to practice breakouts and forechecking from more of a standstill start – much different from when the puck is shot in.**

**The “offensive” unit tries to score, and the defensive unit tries to breakout. Keep score.**

**Give feedback including whistling the play dead in the middle of it having the players freeze in their positions, and then give feedback.**

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**Keep running this drill at every practice so the options chosen both defensive and offensive become second nature depending on offensive and defensive positioning and “time and space”.**