



*“Are there any hockey players you know who don’t like more time and space when they are carrying the puck”*

## **ALL ZONES – TAKING TIME AND SPACE AWAY**

Sometimes we can’t engage in a puck battle with an opposition player or take the puck away from him because if we try it is highly likely that he will beat us one –on – one and that result will be worse than just containing his space.

Examples would be when he is coming out of his zone with speed and we are a bit flat footed around their blueline and when he is in our corner with better speed and position than we have. So, what to do. If we lunge at him we may get lucky from time to time and knock the puck off his stick but most of the time he may go right by us and get a good scoring chance or set up a good shot on our net.

In these situations I would suggest aggressive containment under control on a good angle, matching his speed with your speed, getting within a stick length from him stick directly close to the puck on his stick so a pass will be difficult, and making him feel at any moment you may attempt a takeaway or a body check. If he mishandles the puck on his stick for an instant, you may then challenge him more aggressively under stick, then with body contact.

It is a judgment call as to when this more passive type of play is the best option. Some players will use it too much and give too much respect for the opposition player’s skill or position, thus giving him what every puck carrier wants ... more time and space to make good plays.

Taking the puck carrier’s time and space away is particularly important in our end in the corner, or as the puck carrier is moving around our net, or up to or across our blueline. Many teams just seem to skate with them not bothering the puck carrier at all, content to keep him to the outside away from our Grade A and AA scoring areas. Some coaches encourage this passive approach but many times by not being aggressive enough in a low risk scoring area, a pass is completed to their teammate in a Grade A scoring area that could have been prevented. Difficult judgment call but no puck carrying forward likes a controlled aggressive checker carefully and gradually closing in on him stick on puck. Be carefully aggressive.