



“How can so many coaches have their heads in the sand about the value of certain analytics”

HOCKEY ANALYTICS – WHICH PERFORMANCE MEASURES ARE MOST IMPORTANT?

Many hockey coaches pride themselves on their ability to identify or diagnose the needs of their team, individual skills development, systems value, assess the opposition's strengths and weaknesses that they do not embrace analytics as another tool to more objectively assess what they see “with their eyes”.

Quite frankly, they do not appreciate the limitations of the human brain and more particularly theirs.

And if they do embrace certain analytics it's almost always in the high level shots category for and against, the very next level before a goal is scored: Grade A and AA shots. Good chances For, Dangerous Shots and so on. This is a good and very important start but not many coaches want to “peel the onion” further and deeper to understand what hockey actions likely generates a quality shot for us or them and most importantly how often that action repeats itself game – in and game- out, and by whom:

Let's list some actions that generate shots sometimes:

- Breakaway – simple to see why it happened, who did it, and count how many and measure with your eyes
- Power Play - simple to see, count and measure with your eyes
- Odd Man Rushes – ask a coach after a game how many odd man rushes we had against us and we had for us and then measure that against your count – they seem to only remember the ones where goals are scored which is a very narrow way of looking at it
- Turnovers in the Dzone – who, what, when, how often
- Turnovers in the Nzone - who, what, when, how often
- Turnovers in the Ozone (just inside their blueline) - who, what, when, how often
- Forecheck puck win (by whom) turned into a cycle and then a shot for or against – how many from dump and chase, after a shot, lost faceoff
- Entries with and without puck possession and how many shots are generated from each and by whom
- Lack of Checks Finished in each of the 3 Zones, by whom
- Lack of backchecking, by whom
- Lack of Takeaways/Puck Battles Won in each of the 3 Zones, by whom
- Effective Screened shots, by whom
- Creating rebound shots - who

Which of the above less obvious actions are more important Grade A and AA shot producers to correct for us or exploit for us against the opposition? How can a coach possibly know without



tracked data in a game and in trends over many games? The ones who don't have data are just guessing.

Now, I realize there would be an enormous amount of data collecting to measure what was outlined above so this is impractical for a non pro team. Who would collect the data? However, coaches could select a category at a time that he suspects needs work and get the data from there one step at a time.

Or a coach can get video person to break the video down into the categories above so he can collectively see the same actions one game all at once, and over time a general trend will emerge. Not as good as more exact data but better than not doing it at all.

In fact, the combination of the data tracking and the video breakdown is outstanding.

Once coaches have the data and trends for the particular level of hockey you are in you can develop standards of performance by looking at the data from the games you have won and you can with a fair degree of certainty identify for the players those critical areas of achievement to earn wins. See another TIP in this site.