



*“Cause their players to change their positions and exploit the open space they have left”*

## **OFFENSIVE ZONE – POWER PLAY - BREAKING DOWN THEIR BOX/DIAMOND 5 ON 4**

One of the most difficult coaching tasks is to describe to players and lead them through effective tactics when we have a 5 on 4 player advantage in the other team’s zone and they are playing a relatively passive or active/aggressive box/diamond formation.

Why is this?

Mostly because there are no “silver bullet” plays. There is no one power play formation or play that is automatically better than any other power play formation or play in their end. Different formations or plays will produce great scoring chances depending on what we do and how they react. We have the extra player, and therefore should be able to win and control the puck and facilitate their mistakes in coverage and passing lanes.

So, players on the power play perhaps a lot more than in other areas of the game must be highly skilled in almost every aspect of the game, and play as a team to score goals with any regularity. Therefore practicing together over and over with and without resistance is very important.

There is however one important opposition tendency to be noted when thinking about how to beat good penalty killing units and breaking their box/diamond formation down. There is a tendency for changing formations and fast complex movements to cause confusion sometimes leading to missed coverages by them and open passing lanes for us. So we constantly need to move and change formations to set up scoring opportunities.

What are the basic keys to setting up these scoring opportunities?

1. Create passing lanes and different formations at the same time by our positioning on the outside of the box/diamond – see various formations in a previous TIP on this site

Misdirection plays or convincing fakes while moving are very good ways of creating passing lanes by the puck carrier, for example, taking a step one way, looking there and passing to somewhere else.

Another play is the figure eight play in a corner where the penalty killer is playing contain stick on puck. Skate one way along and slightly away from the boards towards the blueline and then quickly turn back towards the boards and down lower away from the boards and then again turn up towards the boards and towards the blueline in a figure eight pattern. These movements many times allows the puck carrier to find a passing lane to a teammate and get their penalty killer’s stick away from the puck



However the players without the puck have a key role too to try to position themselves in easy open passing lanes for our puck carrier, particularly those players closest to the puck carrier. It does no good to be open and have no passing lane to you open. If you find yourself standing still somewhere outside or inside the box/diamond, move or switch positions with another player, it's much harder for their coverage to keep track of where you are and to adjust where they are when you are moving. Eventually one of their players will be tempted to move out of position enough or get confused enough to create an open lane for a pass to our player in a good scoring position.

One great play that works if the passing lane can be opened is passing right across their net to our down low player at the side of their net 10 feet or so away from their net for a one timer. Their goalie often can't get across in time to stop a goal.

## 2. Create passing lanes suddenly by moving inside the box/diamond

By player rotation into different formations, exchanging positions, cycling, and passing back and forth we can develop 2 on 1's on one of their defencemen down low which can lead to great scoring chances in the slot from their corner or from behind their net - particularly good if their forwards play too high at the top of the box/diamond .

Also, one of our down low players can purposely get too close to one of their defencemen quickly teasing him to make a play for the puck and when he lunges we pass off to where he was to another one of our players anticipating that lunge.

If one of our down low players takes the puck behind their net, we will have created some options using their net to our advantage. If their defenceman comes behind their net to check us our player can go out the other side and pass to the opening left by their defenceman filled by our player moving into a clear passing lane. If their defenceman doesn't come behind their net, our player can go back and forth behind their net waiting for another player to jump into the high slot inside their box/diamond from the side or from their blue line with an open passing lane. A great scoring chance.

## 3. Crash their net underneath the box/diamond

One of our down low players takes the puck behind the net and tries to wrap it around with all others down low crashing the net to over power them and their goalie on the loose puck.

## 4. Place a big player just in front of their goalie underneath the box/diamond

This player should be just on the white ice in front of the crease area screening their goalie. This positioning will hopefully force one of their defencemen low in their box to cover him and thus force them to come out of their normal box/diamond formation leaving only 3 of their players to cover the rest of their zone and 4 of our players.



5. Shoot on goal and don't wait for the perfect chance to do so

A shot on goal forces one or both of their D to the net and if we have 3 guys there we can over power them, win the puck and perhaps pass and score before they get back into the box. This is particularly the case on small offensive zone surfaces where there is little room for pretty passing plays ... screen/shoot/rebound.

6. Beat one of their players one-on-one

One of our players through his movements and their relatively stationary positioning may be able to beat one of their players one on one. This should only be tried down low in their end in case they get the puck