



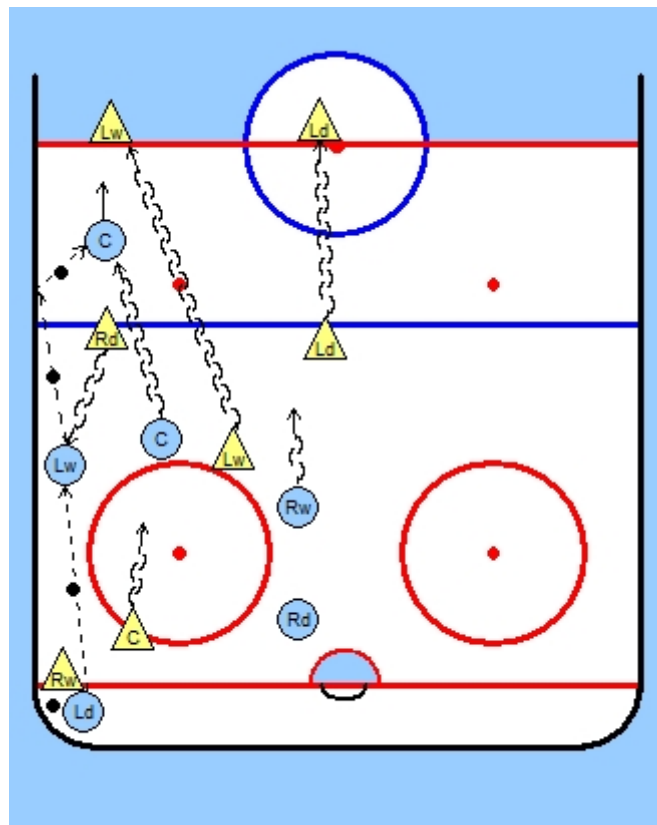
“Defence first, offence second, play the percentages when an odd man rush may result for them”

OFFENSIVE ZONE – LOW RISK PINCHING

Prevent Odd Man Rushes Beginning At Their Blue Line

Our defencemen must be very sure of 2 things before they pinch to try to keep the puck in at the other team’s blue line:

1. we can likely keep the puck in or win the puck ourselves, and
2. one of our forwards having read the pinch is happening is in position to come back to cover our pinching defenceman’s position (see Lw (yellow) coming back in the diagram below when Rd (yellow) is pinching)

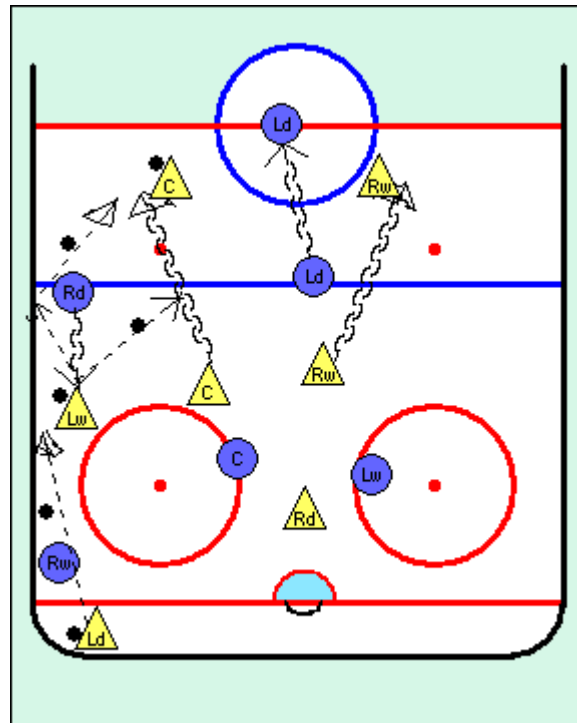




If both of the above are not true, our defenceman must turn, go back and skate backwards from about our red line **SO THE OTHER TEAM HAS TO BEAT 2 OF OUR PLAYERS EVERY TIME TO SCORE A GOAL, NOT JUST BEAT ONE. GO BACK JUST FAST ENOUGH SO THERE IS NO LARGE GAP CREATED BETWEEN OUR D AND THEIR FORWARDS**

NO 2 ON 1's AGAINST US.

It does no good to “pinch” at their blue line, that is, to charge forward, make a great hit or poke check at their blue line and 75% to 90% of the time keep the puck in and lose the puck or not keep it in about 10% to 25% of the time **with no forward who can get back in time to cover for our pinching defenceman**. This gives them give them a 2 on 1 or a 3 on 1, 10 to 25% of the time. That’s a lot. See the diagram below for an easy direct or indirect pass past a pinching defenceman if this defenceman does not get to the puck in time.



A good team will score on a 2 on 1 about 1 or 2 out of 4 or 5 chances. How many times do we score when we keep the puck in at their blue line in high risk situations? Far less than when they get a 2 on 1. The only exceptions to this “no high risk pinching” rule are when we are on the power play or late in a game when we are down a goal and it makes sense taking higher risks.

Unless you are very sure you will be able to get the puck or shoot it back in and there is a forward who can get back in time, we want our defencemen backing off and playing



defence here and forwards coming back to help as well. By being sure a forward will be back in time we mean our D has made eye contact with our forward, has seen that his speed is faster than any of their forwards heading out of their zone, and that our forward for sure will beat their player to the puck if the pinch is unsuccessful. Protect the team!

Some coaches say the rule on the pinch is “get the puck or get the man”. No way. So what if our defenceman gets the man if the pucks squirts loose in the neutral zone to another one of their forwards anticipating a blown pinch. I used to love defencemen who would pinch looking for the big hit and chipping the puck by them to my team mate just before their hit was delivered!

Defencemen must understand how easy it is for a good player to beat him at their blue line when he tries a low % play to keep the puck in, even if the defenceman can body check the forward. Their forward can skate by our defenceman, pass to the centre by our defenceman, or the easiest play is to knock the puck off the near side boards out to centre and have their centre pick it up. Now it's a 2 on 1 against us.

If a defenceman does pinch, the closest forward must read what is happening and get back to cover for the pinching defenceman. The other defenceman must back off fast towards the middle as he may be the only one back

One situation where the risk of pinching unsuccessfully is much less is when the puck is deep in their zone in their corner and their defenceman rims the puck hard around their net to their player at or above the half boards as in the diagram below. Our Rd (yellow) being able to see the rim starting on the opposite side of the ice from where our Rd is, should in almost all cases be able to get to the puck and their player at the half boards at the same time as or before the puck arrives making it an easier play to bang the puck back into their corner or win puck control and bodycheck their player at the same time. Our Rw, when he sees our Rd starting the pinch immediately backs up to and beyond their blue line to cover in case our Rd's pinch is unsuccessful and the other team wins puck possession.

