

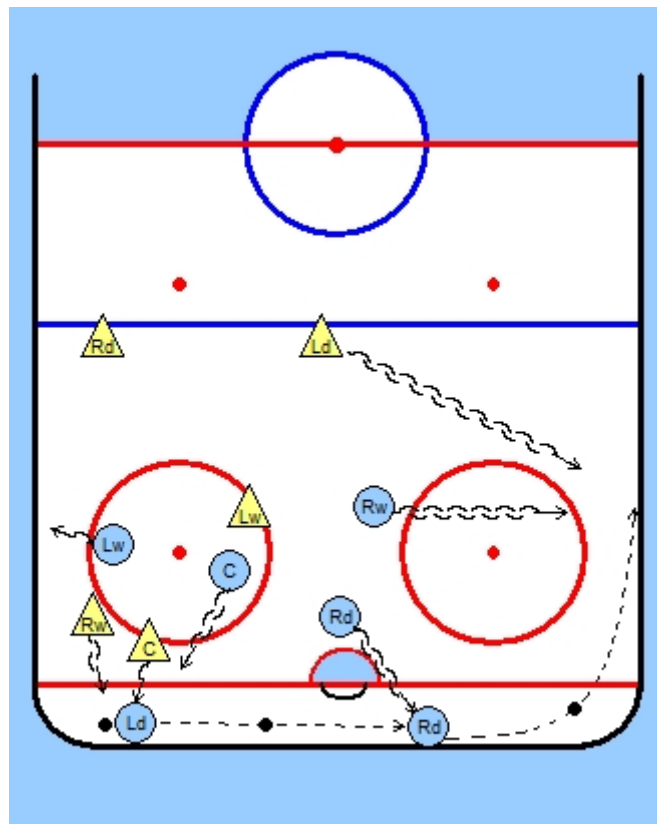


“If they can stop us before we get started in our own end, it’s a real problem. But if we can defeat their forechecking plan, they’ll have the problem”

DEFENSIVE ZONE – BEATING THE AGGRESSIVE 2 – 1 – 2 OVERLOAD FORECHECK

Some teams will commit 2 or 3 forwards into our zone low to try to win the puck when it is in our corner in our end.

Imagine they shoot the puck into our corner and they send 2 players low into our zone, two to check our defenceman with the puck, their first forward there to check our defenceman and the second to take the puck. Their third forward positions around the top of the strong side faceoff circle (see diagram below). Their two defencemen are holding our blue line prepared to come up and challenge our wingers who may be receiving a pass.





What is our defenceman who is going to the puck in our corner supposed to do?

First of all, our defenceman must get there quickly, at top speed. If he hesitates and allows the speed of their forwards to take time and space away from him in the corner he will not be able to pass the puck. **The slower our defenceman goes, the easier a target he is to body check.**

Second, our centre, or our first forward back must go down low quickly so they don't outnumber us in the corner 2 on 1.

Third, our wingers must get to their post positions at the hash marks fast to be able to pick up any release pass from our defenceman, get the puck out, or pass it to the other winger crossing over or on the boards in the neutral zone.

Now what options do our defenceman have if their 2 forecheckers get to the puck around the same time he does:

- Try to beat both of their forecheckers – not likely
- Freeze the puck against the boards and hope the centre gets there quickly
- Without trying to take possession of the puck, one touch the puck to our other defenceman who in turn can skate up ice or pass the puck to our weak side winger at the half boards This is by far the safest play, going opposite to their forechecking flow

If they win the puck from our defenceman, our centre must be there to body check their player before he has a chance to make a play. Heavy body checking may make some teams a little more hesitant coming down low in our end.

Remember defencemen,

GET TO THE CORNER IN OUR END FAST, AND GAIN THE TIME AND

SPACE TO MAKE A PLAY

And centres,

GET BACK FAST TO HELP OUR D

And wingers,

GET INTO YOUR HASH MARK POSITIONS FAST TO RECEIVE THE



**FAST HARD RELEASE PASS AND GET THE PUCK PAST THEIR
DEFENCEMEN IF THEY PINCH**

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.

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.

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