



“If their goalie can’t see the puck he is not likely to stop it, and even if he does there will be a rebound”

OFFENSIVE ZONE – EFFECTIVE SCREENING

If your team is getting lots of shots and not many goals, this Tip may turn your season around. Yes, it’s that effective.

You hear a lot of coaches telling players to screen the goalie, particularly on power plays where one player is assigned the responsibility of screening the goalie as shots are taken. So, we see players at almost every level standing a few feet in front of goalies, sometimes facing sideways and trying to deflect the puck, a very difficult skill to execute with any degree of consistency.

On the other hand, when you see an effective screen being executed and you analyze why it is so effective you see the following:

- The screening player is usually taller than the goalie and quite wide
- The screening player is positioned just off the goalie’s blue ice crease, but barely off on the white ice, blocking the goalie’s view of the shooter and the puck
- The screening player is facing the shooter with his back to the goalie being as wide a barrier as possible, slightly favouring blocking the side of the goalie’s catching glove, and opening up the goalie’s blocker side for the shooter
- The screening player tries to deflect the puck, and immediately turns around to try to put the rebound in, if there is a rebound

If the above screening is executed properly why does it work so well?

1. The goalie is not positioned where he wants to be at the top of the blue ice to cut down the angles of the shooter. Instead, the goalie is positioned on the blue ice in the crease, with space between him and the screener so the goalie gives himself a chance of looking around the screener for the puck. This goalie positioning doesn’t allow the goalie to take away as much angle to the net that he would like and exposes more net on either side for the shooter to shoot at
2. The screening causes the goalie to move to try to see the shot, or
3. The goalie doesn’t see the shot at all
4. If the goalie doesn’t see the shot and it hits him anyway, there will be a rebound

When a goalie sees a shot for ½ second or more, the NHL analytics say there is approximately only a 3% chance of scoring, that is only 3 goals in 100 shots.

Effective screening is one of the most underrated and effective skills in hockey. There are many areas other than the power play where effective screening should be used:

1. When the puck is passed back to the defence in the offensive zone



2. Any play where a player is in, or is going into the higher slot and another player has time to go to the net and screen (e.g. centre or winger drive to the net plays or drop passes)
3. On offensive zone faceoffs back to the forwards or defencemen or on roll plays when there is time for a forward to get to an effective screening position

The shooter should be aware that his shot should be low, not high close to the screener's head.