



*“The obvious ... the most skilled players we have... but with differing skills depending on their primary role””*

## **OFFENSIVE ZONE – POWER PLAY – WHO SHOULD BE ON THE POWER PLAY?**

First of all, we need 2 units as a 2 minute penalty is too long for one unit to handle well for 2 minutes.

Almost every player wants to be on the power play so coaches should be careful with who gets on these units because if the PP is not successful there will be more communication issues with the other players about why they are not on. And by successful I generally mean a goal scoring rate of around 20 % + of times shorthanded.

Probably a good idea to give a variety of players a chance to succeed on the power play depending on the level of the league you are in.

What are the skill sets needed?

1. Puck handling skills for giving on the tape passes, one touch pass receipt and setting up goals – there will be lots of puck movement and if there is passing inaccuracy and pucks bouncing off sticks and being bobbled, the plays and great scoring opportunities will break down
2. Quick feet – power plays usually involve quick movement to get open, move in and out of spaces, pounce on rebounds, so the less time it takes the better
3. Misdirection- the ability to fake one way and go another to create passing or shooting lanes is important to gain time and space
4. Cycling – changing positions with puck possession and power play structures is important to confuse the defence and create shot openings for us so effective cycling with puck control and possession is key
5. Winning puck battles – when there are loose pucks we need our players to win puck battles as a team
6. Shooting hard and with accuracy – can't have missed nets as shot – rebound goals are often scored on the PP
7. Effective screening – being taller than their goalie is very important in effective top of the crease screening to prevent their goalie from seeing the shots
8. Hockey IQ – anticipating and seeing the play and creating passing and shooting lanes
9. Scoring – a proven knack of putting pucks into small holes for goals

Of course, not everyone will have all these skills, so we coaches need to get as close as we can to aligning the skills at the blueline, mid ice and low down in the offensive zone to their functions.



For example, the top and side of the PP should have at least 2 players who can really shoot a puck hard and with accuracy, and the screening player needs to not only be taller than their goalie to prevent him from seeing shots but also have the courage to face the shooter at the top of the crease, deflect shots and not allow their goalie to get on the white ice.

If you have all the very skilled players on the PP who don't have great shots and are not great goal scorers but have the other skills don't be surprised if the PP does not do well, Great puck movement does not equate to goal scoring, it's one step that leads to goal scoring. We need shooters and finishers as well.

And if you decide to have 2 fairly equally skilled units, and not stack a unit, don't be surprised if your goal scoring expectations are not met by either. Not a good idea in my experience to dilute your #1 unit.

Also, most of the above applies to high level skilled teams playing more serious hockey. It's important in development hockey at lower skill levels and ages to spread the PP play around the team to give everyone a chance.