

## **2009 IIHF INTERNATIONAL COACHING SYMPOSIUM**

### **TACTICAL APPLICATIONS IN TODAY'S GAME**



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### **Today's Game**

Today's game at the professional level is played much differently than five years ago. Since the adoption of the 'new rulebook' with zero tolerance against the use of stick and body in restricting the opponent, North America along with Europe has adopted a style of play that is tactically less complicated and far more tempo driven. What has led to this radical change?

- new rules, new game
- how it happened to me (London 'Longshots')
- Tempo Tempo Tempo

#### **Topics today**

- Transition
- Offensive Zone Cycling
- Face-offs (offensive, neutral zone, defensive zone)

**TEAM TACTICS**

**DEFINING THE DIFFERENCE**

**BETWEEN**

**'SYSTEM' & 'TACTICS'**

**SYSTEM :**

The term 'system' is the term that should be applied to a general area or aspect of your team's (or the opposition's) **systematical** approach ('house') to optimal performance within the defined areas of :

- Defensive play
- Offensive play
- Special teams
- Specialty plays
- Team discipline



## TACTICS :

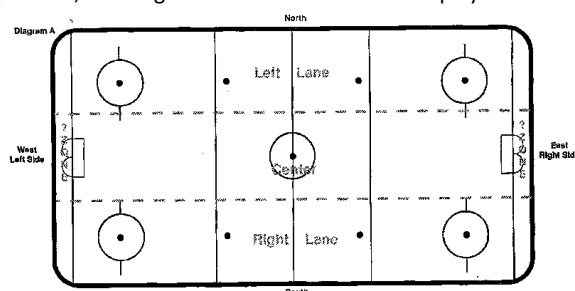
The term '*tactics*' is the term that should be applied within the description to a specific play or manoeuvre toward your team's (or the opposition) *tactical* approach ('bricks') :



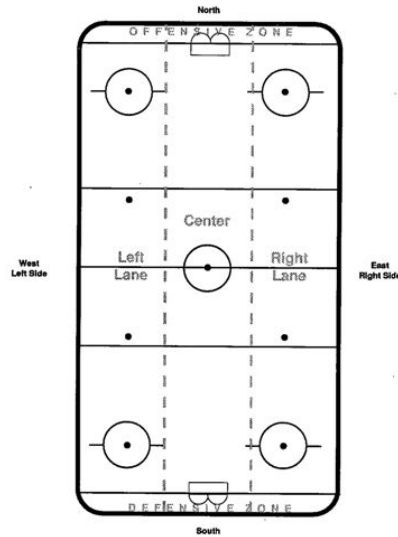
- Defensive – neutral zone checking pattern, defensive zone re-entry and setup...
- Offensive – F3 positioning, D1/D2 positioning, standard or reverse cycling...
- Special teams – power play breakouts/setup, penalty kill forecheck/re-entry/defensive zone...
- Specialty plays – 6 on 5 face-offs, exiting penalty box,
- Team discipline – line changes, last minute each period/game, general team requirements...

## The Players View :

- As a coach or a spectator, we read the game from east/west.
- The rink is a north/south venue to the player.
- Many instructors still present a horizontal (east/west) version instead of a vertical (north/south) "chalkboard".
- The player should become conditioned to the North to attack and the south end to defend.
- In the description of drills, a player proceeds to his designated area and normally faces one end or the other.
- Create practice, creating a sense of direction for the players.



## The Players View during the participation phase of the game :



## TEAM TRANSITION :

### THE PROGRESSION OF POSSESSION

Team transition is arguably the most important team tactic of any successful team in today's game.

Team transition is creating a consistent tactical scheme to advance the possession of the puck from initial possession outside the offensive zone into an attack position in the offensive zone.

For Team Transition to be successful your team must employ a consistent and tactical coordination based on a variety of factors;

- Overall team talent base
- Defensive units basic skill and mobility capabilities
- Implementing a consistent tactical approach to advancing possession through puck movement

Team transition should be implemented on a 'team theme' basis with the entire team capable of performing team puck progression in systematic and at times almost mechanical 'offensive zone march'.

## **TEAM TRANSITION (continued) :**

Listed below are some of the most commonly used phrases used in the description of a team's transition game:

- "We must be better at quick ups"... – is the 'quick up' really that 'quick', or is it the quickest way to exchange possession back to the opposition?
- "We must use our speed though the neutral zone"...- is 'speed' through the neutral zone obtained through carrying the puck or 'moving' the puck?
- "We struggled tonight because we didn't have a good transition game"... - does your team truly possess a 'common knowledge' of your tactical approach to transition?

## **NEUTRAL ZONE CHECKING SCHEMES AN UNDERSTANDING :**

- **THE TRAP**

Is a neutral zone defensive checking scheme that attempts to influence the opposition to an outside lane in the neutral zone, and simultaneously closing down the strongside boards and the middle (or center) lanes and effectively enticing the opponent into making a high risk passing relief option.

- **THE 2-1-2**

Is an aggressive neutral zone puck pursuit tactic designed to limit the opponent's defense of their time and space available. This is a system that attempts to force the opponent's defense into hurried or unwanted pass options and increases the chances for immediate puck re-possession.

- **THE FORWARD LOCK (LT/RT/CTR)**

Is a neutral zone checking tactic that enables the opponent to maintain continual puck pressure with the first, second, or both available forwards while securing that all three lanes are effectively 'locked' in a strong defensive posture.

- **THE 1-4**

Is a neutral zone checking tactic that attempts to draw the opposition with puck possession into a defensive 'wall' with all three lanes blocked either at or before the redline. This is a system designed to place all five players into a defensive posture above the puck carrier and enticing the puck carrier into a neutral zone challenge to beat one if not multiple defensively positioned players. The opponent is allowed to make several pass plays before the red line but ultimately the same result is eventual – a 1 versus 5.

VIDEO

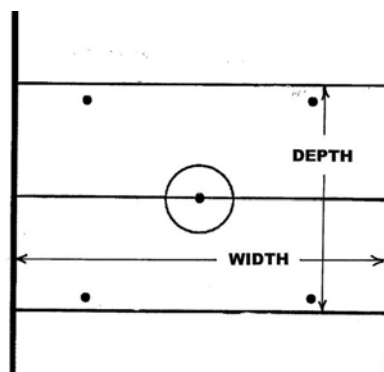
TRANSITION

## IMPLEMENTING AN EFFECTIVE TEAM TRANSITION GAME :

### NEUTRAL ZONE WIDTH AND DEPTH

Your selected team's tactical approach to Team Transition should always take into account the '*risk versus reward*' factor – does the *reward* of your implemented puck advancement scheme outweigh the *risk* of your approach...?

Creating effective consistent team attack through transition is through initial puck possession outside the offensive zone and then puck advancement into the offensive zone can be achieved.

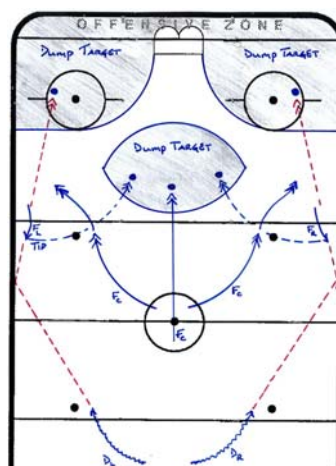


## IMPLEMENTING AN EFFECTIVE TEAM TRANSITION GAME (continued) :

### THE « GENEVA HIGH POST »

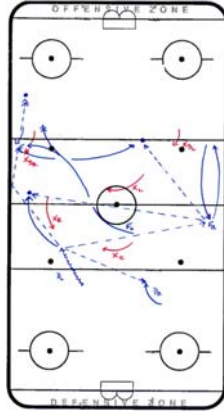
- Creates a sense of direction in both o-zone entries and n-zone positioning
- Utilizes all 3-lane passing lane options
- Creates safe and predictable relief areas for defensemen under pressure
- Creates width through defensemen 'loading' each other and maintaining puck possession
- Creates depth with forwards utilizing the maximum distance to the opponents zone (offensive zone blueline)
- Forwards assist in maintaining puck possession by the discipline of 'regenerating pucks' back to the defense
- Ingrain a 'North / South' mentality

### GENEVA HIGH POST PUCK TARGETS :

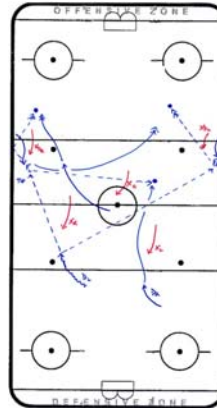


**HIGH POST PUCK ADVANCEMENT VERSUS :**

**THE TRAP**



**THE 2-1-2**

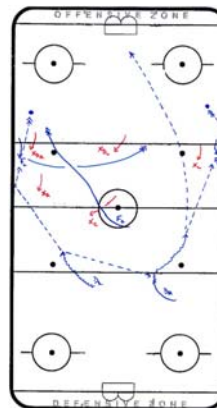


**HIGH POST PUCK ADVANCEMENT VERSUS :**

**THE FORWARD LOCK**



**1 - 4**





## PROGRESSION OF ATTACK :

A successful attack in the game of hockey depends on the team's ability to move the puck at an optimal speed through each zone isolated during the progression of our attack.

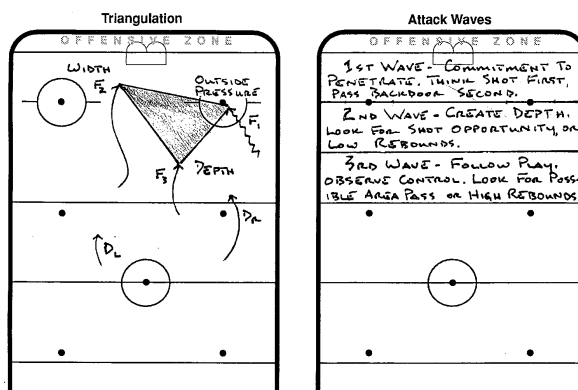
Team attack strategy has been created to begin immediately when possession is gained . To create a solid and consistent attack, an installation of simple principles must exist first.

- Defenseman with puck possession must always attempt to turn towards the boards.
- Defenseman without the puck must work quickly from underneath defense partner (loading).
- Strong side winger posts at offensive blueline to present target.
- Center uses speed through the middle lane in support of the puck.
- Weak side winger either posts high or low in the neutral zone.

## ATTACK WAVES :

Successful attack strategies in the offensive zone have the following common denominators:

- Pressure from the puck carrier attempting to go to the net
- 2<sup>nd</sup> man to penetrate and create width
- 3rd man support the first wave
- 4th man (usually defenseman) option high slot



VIDEO

OFFENSIVE ZONE

**FACE-OFFS :**

- An average game consists of approximately 65-70 face-offs.
- A successful face-off gains up to 15 seconds of puck possession.
- In a perfect environment this leads to an additional + 16 minutes of puck possession.
- Average shift 40 seconds. Successful face-off = successful shift.
- Well prepared teams can generate +30 additional goals per season.

**Every face-off in every zone must finish with a scoring chance**

**VIDEO**

**FACE-OFFS**