

IIHF COACH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

LEVEL I



TECHNICAL



15. GOALKEEPING

15. Goalkeeping

Good goalkeeping is essential to the success of your team. For individuals to be effective goalkeepers, they must develop skills in a number of areas. They must be able to maintain the proper basic stance, master skating skills, learn correct positional play and be able to stop both low and high shots. They also need to be able to effectively handle the stick and the puck.

Upon completion of this chapter, you will be better prepared to:

- *teach each of the elements of the basic stance,*
- *teach necessary skating skills,*
- *teach goalkeepers how to play the angles,*
- *identify puck stopping skills,*
- *identify puck handling techniques and stick skills,*
- *understand at what age it is best to teach which skills to teach to the goalkeeper,*
- *understand the importance of teaching off-ice balance and coordination drills to young goalkeepers.*

15.1 Basic Stance

The basic stance of a goalkeeper must allow for optimal balance, mobility, comfort, and speed of movement. Due to the importance of the basic stance to goalkeeping, emphasis should be placed on each of the elements of this skill.

There are a number of styles of goalkeeping, but all must have these common characteristics of the basic stance.



Figure 1: Basic Stance (Front View)

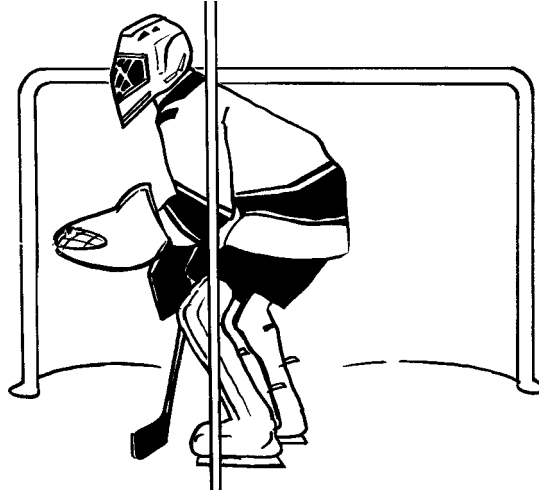


Figure 2: Basic Stance (Side Profile)

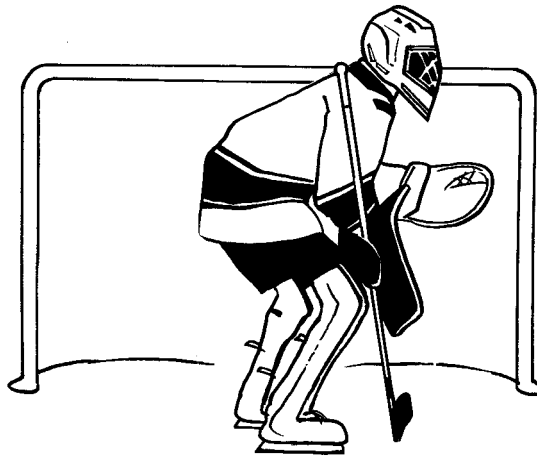


Figure 3: Basic Stance (Side Profile)

- Feet are spaced approximately shoulder width apart.
- Knees and trunk are flexed slightly forward with the weight of the body on the balls of the feet. Power required for lateral movement is readily available in this position. The shoulders, knees and front part of the feet can be joined by a vertical line (Figure 2).
- Head is up and watching the puck and/or play.
- Catching glove is held open at the side and slightly in front of the knee. The blocker and catching glove should both be held slightly in front of the body allowing the goalkeeper to see both by means of peripheral vision (Figure 3).
- The goalkeeper's stick should be held firmly with one hand at the top of the shank. (Thumb behind body of stick to prevent it from turning in your hand when blade is hit.)
- The blade of the stick is flat on the ice, approximately 25 to 30 cm in front of the skates in order to diminish rebounds created by the stick hitting the toes of the skates at the moment of impact.

15.2 Skating Skills

The importance of skating skills to the goalkeeper cannot be stressed enough. By mastering the necessary skating skills, a goalkeeper can execute movements with the speed and precision so important to this position. Due to the uniqueness of the goalkeeper's task, as well as the equipment, skating skills for goalkeepers are specific in nature.

Lateral (Side to Side) Movement

There are two basic methods a goalkeeper can use to move laterally while remaining on one's skates: the shuffle and the T-push.

The shuffle is the preferred technique since the goalkeeper is able to maintain the basic stance, be square with and on the centre line of the puck.

The T-push, despite having some disadvantages, is often used by young goalkeepers because it is a relatively easy method of moving from side to side. Also, advanced goalkeepers may employ a T-push technique while they react to the movement of the puck or play in situations where no shot is imminent.

The Shuffle

This technique is used when following the play as it moves laterally across the ice surface. The goalkeeper moving from left to right using the shuffle is illustrated in Figure 4. It is important to note that the basic stance should be maintained in all lateral movements.

- The right skate points forward and is unweighted slightly.
- The left leg (inside edge) pushes to initiate the left to right movement.
- In situations requiring minor lateral adjustments, goalkeepers should use short lateral shuffles of approximately 25 to 30 cm in length.
- In some situations, for example, the puck moving quickly from one corner to the other behind the net, the goalkeeper may be required to shuffle from post to post in one long move.

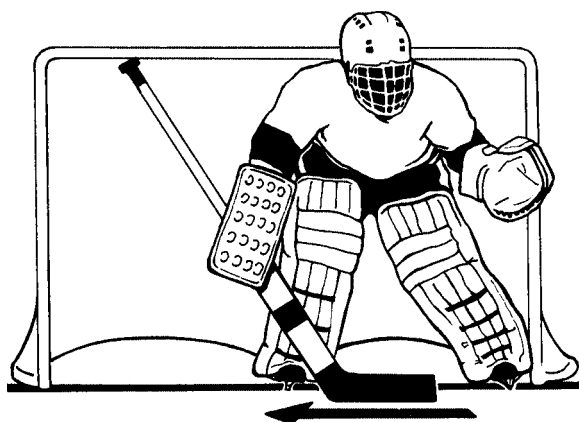


Figure 4: The Shuffle

T-Push

The T-push is a long and fast lateral movement. It is generally used when moving from one post across the crease to the other post when there is no chance of a shot, or when speed of movement is the main priority. A left to right example of a T-push is illustrated in Figure 5.

- The right leg is rotated outwards and parallel to the goal line.
- The left leg extends and pushes (inside edge) off the ball of the foot.
- The right leg (initially the gliding leg) rotates inward to initiate the stopping action (inside edge).

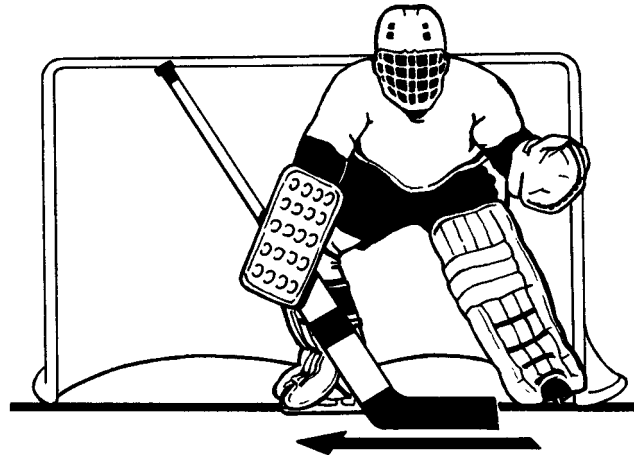


Figure 5: The T-Push

Forward and Backward Movement

Telescoping

The telescoping technique is effective in moving under control both out of and back into the net while maintaining the basic stance. The skates do not leave the ice during such short thrusts, thus providing a quick technique with which to challenge the shooter or assume proper positioning.

Sculling

Most goalkeepers have a preferred pushing foot, however, goalkeepers should develop the ability to scull with either foot depending on the game situation. For example, when the puck carrier is approaching from an angle, the goalkeeper should scull with the skate furthest from the puck and glide on the short side skate. This technique ensures the goalkeeper continues to protect the short side which is the most attractive area of the net for a shooter approaching from an angle. Goalkeepers should be capable of covering the required distance with one or two pushes, therefore, power and efficiency of movement are essential.

Forward

- Both knees are markedly bent.
- Toe is rotated slightly outward.
- A quick, forceful heel push is performed with the inside edge of the rotated skate (skate stays in contact with ice).
- The gliding leg is pointed in the desired direction.
- The basic stance is maintained throughout the push.

Backward

- Toe of one skate is rotated inward.
- The weight of the body is placed on the toe of the rotated foot and a forward thrust (e.g., toe push) occurs forcing a backward motion.
- The weight is then transferred to the gliding leg and the basic stance is re-assumed.

Down and Up Movement

Although it is ideal for goalkeepers to remain on their feet, occasionally situations arise which force them down onto the ice. It is therefore essential for goalkeepers to learn the most effective method of returning to their feet.

First, the goalkeepers must, whenever possible, avoid ending up on their back or in a sitting position. These predicaments force the goalkeeper to make several movements and use precious time in reassuming the basic stance position.

In this chapter, only down and up movement from the knees is covered, as this is the most frequent down position, and it is the intermediate stage of the up movement from other down positions.

In most instances, the goalkeeper falls on one or both knees. Even in this position, the goalkeeper must maintain a basic stance position with the upper body. To return to the standing position a goalkeeper must:

- Move the skates outwards thus fanning the legs and press the heels down against the ice.
- Lean the upper body back until the knees begin to lift off the ice.
- Continue lifting the knees while now vigorously leaning the upper body forward and placing the weight on the toe of the skate blade.
- Bring the feet closer together and assume the basic stance.

Another method of regaining the standing position is:

- Lean slightly forward with the upper body.
- Leave one knee on the ice while drawing the other knee up and subsequently placing the skate blade on the ice.
- Extend this leg to lift the opposite knee off the ice.
- Assume the basic stance position.

Edge Use

As should be evident by now, most goalkeeper skating skills are initiated by the inside edge of the skate blade. In the proper ready position, the goalkeeper's weight is on the inside portion of the feet and, thus, the forward position of the inside edge is used when the goalkeeper must thrust off in any direction. To be mobile, it is essential one edge remains on the ice.

15.3 Positioning

After learning the necessary skating skills, a goalkeeper is then ready to approach a very important aspect of the game: positional play.

Goalkeepers must position themselves in relation to the puck, the net, and the opposition. Proper positioning, often referred to as "playing the angles", is essential at all times. The basis of positional play is to take away as much of the net as possible in relation to the puck.

When learning proper positioning, the goalkeeper must understand the following theories:

- Centre Line
- Horizontal Angle
- Vertical Angle
- Short Side

Centre Line Theory

The centre line theory is an excellent method of teaching positional play. This theory is illustrated in Figure 6.

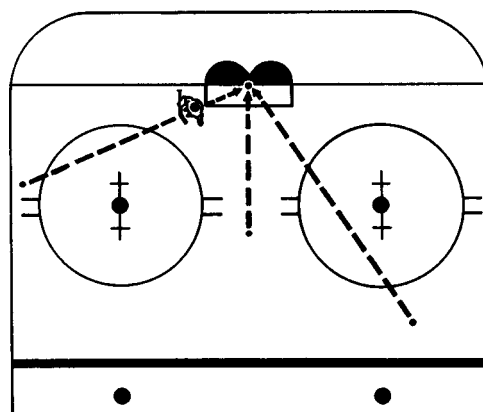


Figure 6: Centre Line Theory

When positioned properly, an imaginary line can be drawn from the puck to the mid-point of the goal line. At all times, the goalkeeper must assume a position on this line in order for this principle to be effective.

Horizontal Angle Theory

When the puck is directly in front of the net, the shooting angle is at its maximum. The available shooting spaces, when the goalkeeper is back in the goal crease, are illustrated in Figure 7a. These spaces decrease as the goalkeeper telescopes towards the puck (Figure 7b).

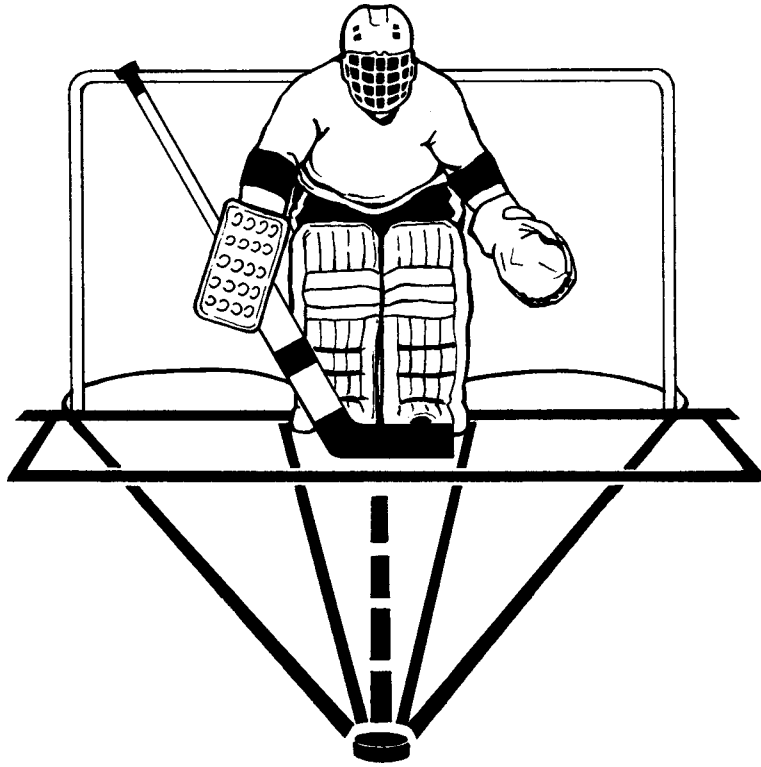


Figure 7a: Shooting Options (Goalkeeper Deep)



Figure 7b: Decrease in Shooting Space as the Goalkeeper Telescopes Towards the Puck

It would appear that the farther out of the net the goalkeeper comes, the better is the goalkeeper's position. However, this is not always the case. A goalkeeper should not come out so far that a quick return to the net cannot occur should the play move closer or should the point of attack be changed.

The distance a goalkeeper comes out of the net to play the angles is determined by the options of the puck carrier, the position of other opponents, and the goalkeeper's skating quickness and mobility.

Vertical Angle Theory

The vertical angle becomes a significant factor as the puck moves closer to the net. As moving toward the puck decreases horizontal angles, so too does it decrease vertical angles, as is illustrated in Figures 8a and 8b.

In Figure 8a, a puck shot above glove level could enter the net. However, in Figure 8b, a puck shot above the glove would travel over the net.

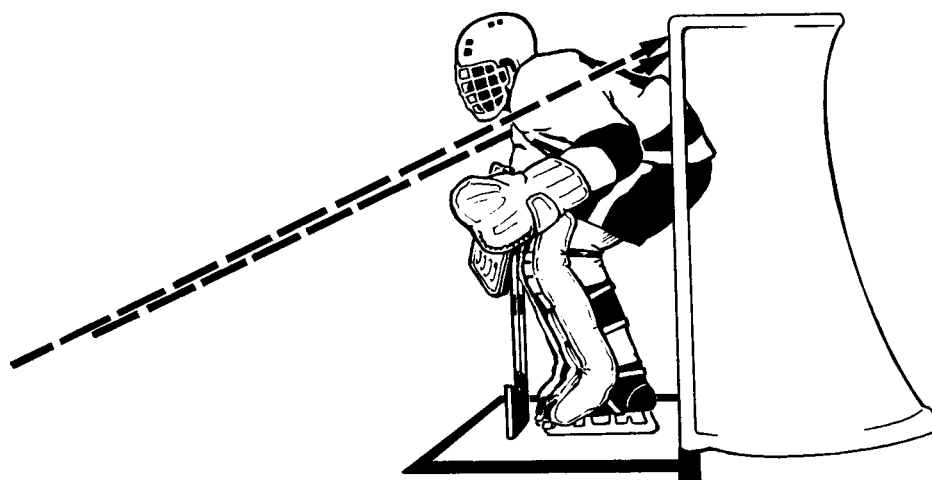


Figure 8a: Vertical Angle Theory (Inside Crease)

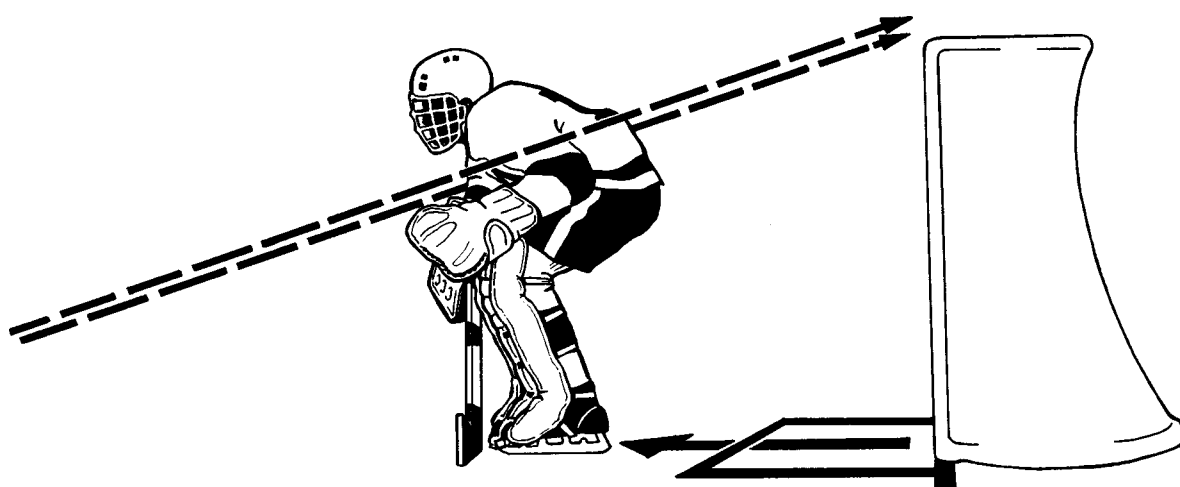


Figure 8b: Vertical Angle Theory (Outside Crease)

Short Side Theory

The short side theory is an exception to the centre line theory and is an advanced technique.

When a shot is coming from a sharp angle, (e.g., outside the face-off spots) the short side technique is very effective.

- The goalkeeper covers the short side (the side closest to the puck carrier).
- This forces the puck carrier to shoot across the goalkeeper's body to the far side of the net.
- By cutting off the short side, all indecision is removed. The shot or deke must go to one side, therefore, the goalkeeper is required to move in only one direction. The decision making process is simplified.
- The goalkeeper's body must always be square to the puck.



Figure 9: Short Side Theory

15.4 Puck Stopping Skills

If goalkeepers are able to remain in the proper position, then most shots taken will be directly at them. However, because of the speed at which the game is played, this ideal situation does not always occur.

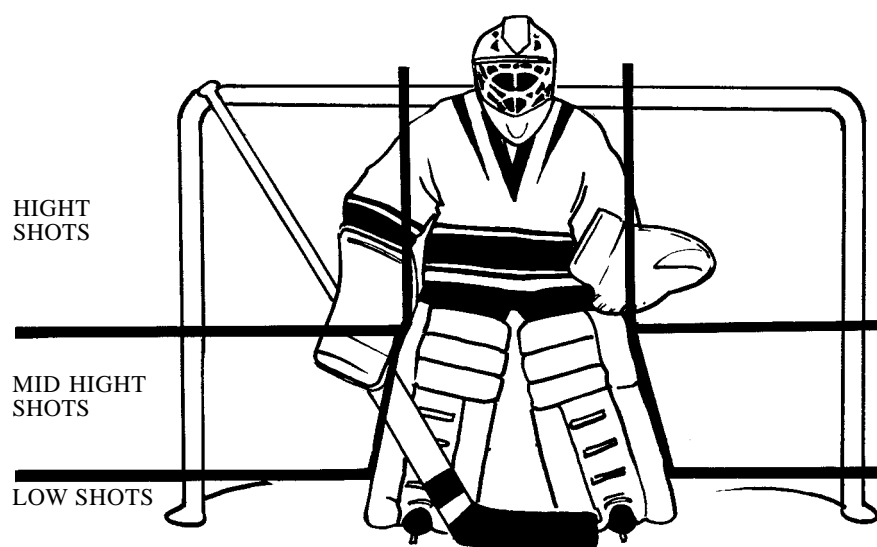


Figure 10: Save Areas

The saves that can be used in each of the three save areas shown in Figure 10 are outlined below:

Low Shots

- stick save
- skate save
- butterfly save
- half butterfly save
- half split save
- double leg jam
- sliding pad save

Mid Height Shots

- standing pad save
- Tretiak block
- stick save
- butterfly save
- half butterfly save
- blocker save
- catching glove save
- sliding pad save
- double leg jam

High Shots

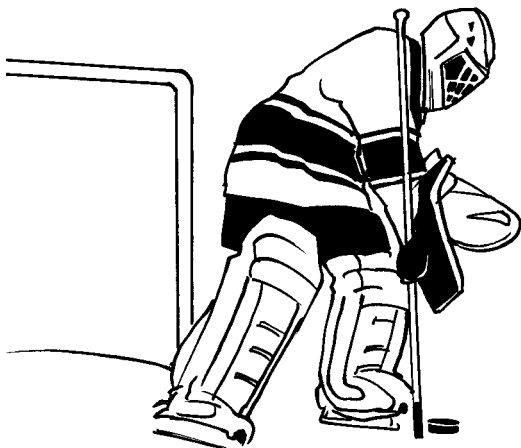
- blocker save
- catching glove save
- body save

15.4.1 Low Shots

- Remember that the stick should be 25 to 30 cm in front of the toes of the skates to absorb the impact of the puck, thereby reducing rebounds.
- When the puck is not shot directly at the goalkeeper, the blade of the stick must be slanted in order that it remain flat on the ice and be placed in the path of the oncoming puck.
- Basic stance is modified very little during a stick save.

Standing Stick Save

- The movement of the stick is initiated by the shoulder.
- The stick is turned at a slight angle so that the puck is deflected into the corner and away from the front of the net.
- Key points:
 - stick flat on the ice during the entire movement,
 - keep your leg in a position behind the stick as security (Figure 11 and 12),
 - body weight changes to the save side leg.



**Figure 11: Standing Stick Save
(Catching Glove Side)**



**Figure 12: Standing Stick Save
(Blocker Side)**

Standing Skate Save

- Rotate the skate in an arc towards the oncoming puck. By rotating in an arc the entire blade (outside edge) remains on the ice.
- When the puck is shot to the catching glove side, the goalkeeper can often use the stick first with the skate arching behind it in a back-up fashion (Figure 13b).
- The supporting leg flexes more than usual to improve balance and extension.
- The puck is directed to the corner (Figure 13a and 13b).



Figure 13a: Standing Skate Save (Blocker Side)



Figure 13b: Standing Skate Save (Catching Glove Side)

Half Butterfly Save

This technique is used to cover one low side of the net. It is similar to the butterfly save except that only one leg is extended while the other acts as a support.

This save is used in situations similar to the half split save, however, pucks cannot be directed as easily to the corner with the half butterfly save, therefore, rebounds can occur (Figure 14a and 14b).



Figure 14a: Half Butterfly Save (Catching Glove Side)



Figure 14b: Half Butterfly Save (Blocker Side)

Butterfly Save

This technique is frequently used to cover both low corners at the same time. It is particularly effective in defending against low screen shots, possible deflections, and dekes, however, it is very difficult to do, physically.

- The feet are spread slightly wider than in the basic stance.
- The knees are on the ice behind the stick and the ankles are flat to the ice with toes extended out towards the sideboards.
- The face of the leg pad is vertical to the ice (in addition to ensuring no portion of the goalkeeper's leg is exposed to the puck, the vertical pad provides more stoppage area).
- The trapper is at waist height over the extended pad. The blocker is at the same height on the other side. The stick blade remains flat on the ice (Figure 15a and 15b).
- Maintain an upright body position with the weight slightly forward.

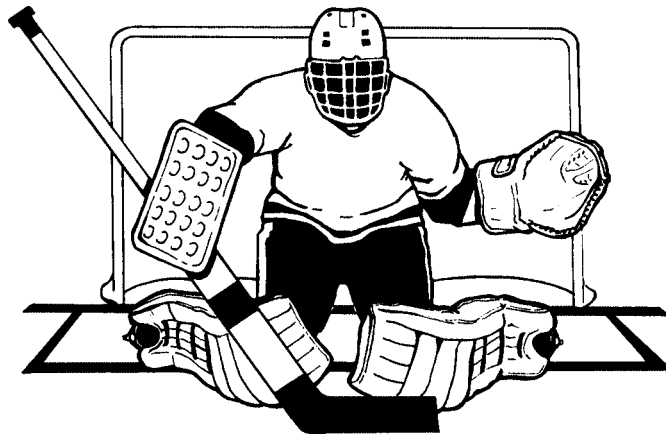


Figure 15a: Butterfly Save (Front View)



Figure 15b: Butterfly Save (Side View)

- Check how effective this style is for each goalkeeper. Excellent flexibility is required. Without sufficient flexibility the legs will extend backwards into the net instead of outwards to cover the low corner. If a goalkeeper cannot physically perform this manoeuvre no advantage will be gained and, therefore, this technique should not be used. Before encouraging use of this style, ensure that flexibility is established through repeated stretching exercises.

Half Split Save

This technique is used when the puck cannot be stopped from the standing position.

- The save leg is extended in an arc so that the skate blade (outside edge) remains on the ice.
- As this leg extends, the goalkeeper drops to the knee of the support leg which allows maximum extension of the save leg. This ensures the leg extends in the direction of the save and not vertically. This low centre of gravity position provides maximum extension.
- The shoulders/upper body are also moved in the direction of the save.
- The catching glove covers above the extended leg while the stick remains on the ice to cover the space between the goalkeeper's legs (Figure 16a).
- The puck is directed to the corner (Figure 16a and 16b).



Figure 16a: Half Split Save (Trapper Side)



Figure 16b: Half Split Save (Blocker Side)

Double Leg Jam

The double leg jam is an effective method of defending against a deke or jamming a shooter who receives a pass close to the net.

This technique is normally initiated while in motion, for example, for a goalkeeper moving from the left to the right.

- With a vigorous push from the left leg (inside edge), the left pad is tucked under the right pad as the slide is initiated.
- The feet are “thrown” toward the right, causing the goalkeeper to actually land on the left hip with both feet toward the right.
- The left leg is extended and the right leg is placed on top of it, both perpendicular to the puck or shooter.
- The blocker is raised slightly above the hip at approximately a 45 degree angle.
- The hip and armpit are as close to the ice as possible.
- The catching glove is extended on the ice to cover the remaining area.



Figure 17a: Double Leg Jam (Stacked Right) – Beginning



Figure 17b: Double Leg Jam (Stacked Right)

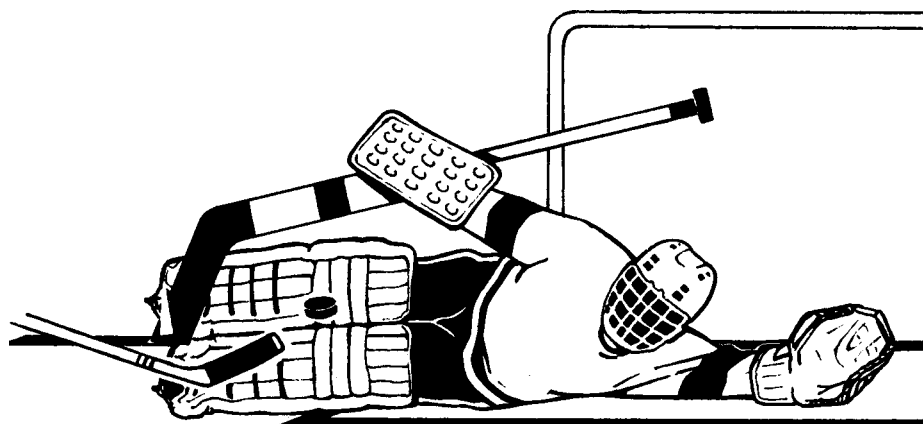


Figure 17c: Double Leg Jam (Stacked Right)

The move from the right to the left is similar with minor adjustments.

- The catching glove and blocking glove positions are reversed.
- The goalie “throws” feet and slides to left (cushion fall with right hand, slide on right side (hip)).
- The stick is extended on the ice, held slightly above the shank, and should be used to poke check the puck carrier whenever possible.

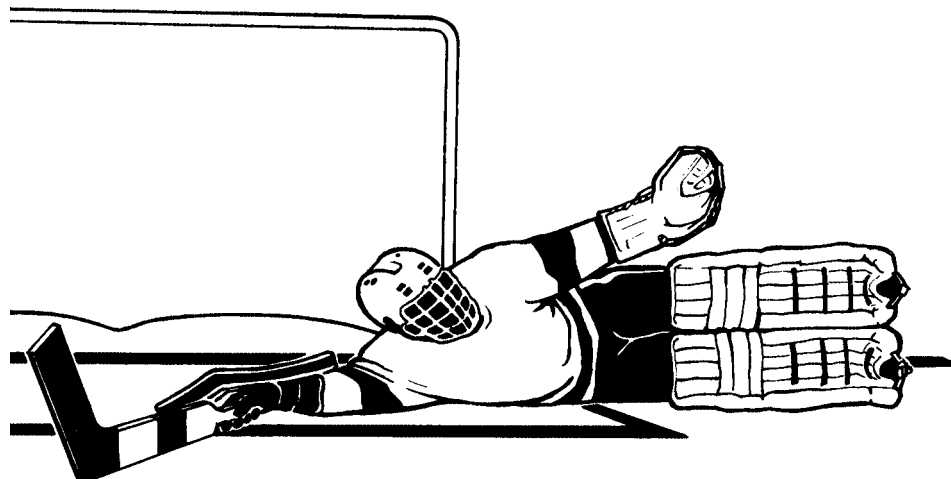


Figure 18: Double Leg Jam (Stacked Left)

When using this technique, it is important to place the pads as close to the puck or stick as possible, thus cutting the angle to the upper part of the net and reducing the puck carrier’s deking options (e.g., “jam” the shooter with pads.)

It is also important to make certain both pads are fully extended and stacked properly one on top of the other.

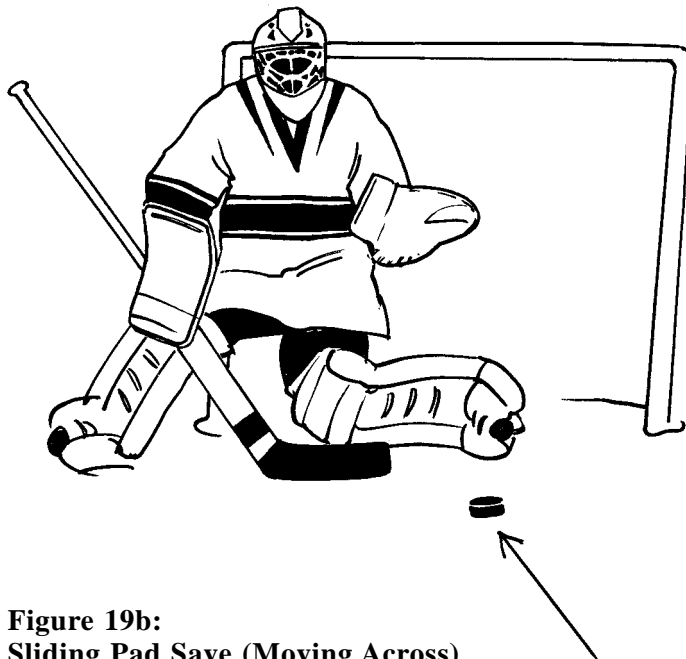
Sliding Pad Save

This save can be used in similar situations to the double leg jam. The difference is that, when using the sliding pad save, the angle and distance from the puck carrier to the shooter is less than in the double leg jam situation. From this sliding pad save, the goalie can get up easily and quickly to defend against any rebounds.



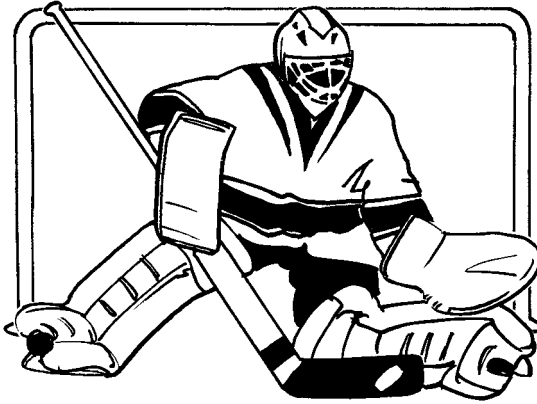
Figure 19a: Sliding Pad Save (Beginning)

- The movement of the goalkeeper begins with the pass.
- Sliding leg must remain square to the puck.
- Strong push from the edge of the skate of the support leg.



**Figure 19b:
Sliding Pad Save (Moving Across)**

- Knee of sliding leg is pushed firmly into the ice.
- The side of the pad must remain on the ice and the front is square to the puck.
- The stick is on the ice between the legs.
- Turn the upper body towards the puck.



**Figure 19c:
Challenging the Shooter**

- The body is square to the puck.
- Move as close as possible to the puck to cut down the shooting angle.
- Stick on the ice between the legs.
- Catching glove is above the pad.
- The arms are compact to the body.



Figure 19d: Returning to Basic Stance

- Quickly bring up the knee of the sliding leg.
- Push with the inside edge of the support leg.
- Move into the basic stance position.
- Move body weight to former sliding leg and be ready to push off of inside edge of this skate.

15.4.2 Mid Height Shots

This area of the net is the most difficult to defend as it requires a combination of saves from all three areas of the net. Following are three save techniques which are particularly effective in defending this mid height area of the net. The choice of save technique depends on each goalie's style and the tactical situation.

Standing Pad Saves

- Remain in the basic stance position.
- Position the pads perpendicular to the oncoming puck.
- Bend the knees forward slightly to direct the puck downward.
- Body weight is evenly distributed on the balls of both feet.
- When closing the open area between the legs, the body weight moves onto one leg and the other leg is pulled in.

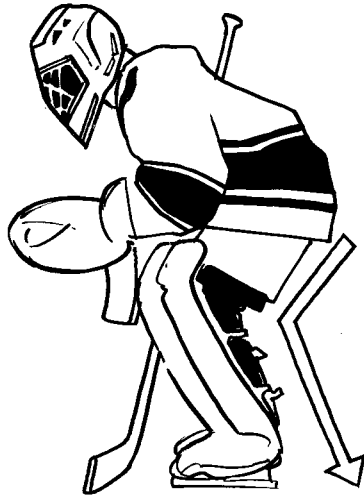


Figure 20: Standing Pad Save

Stick Saves

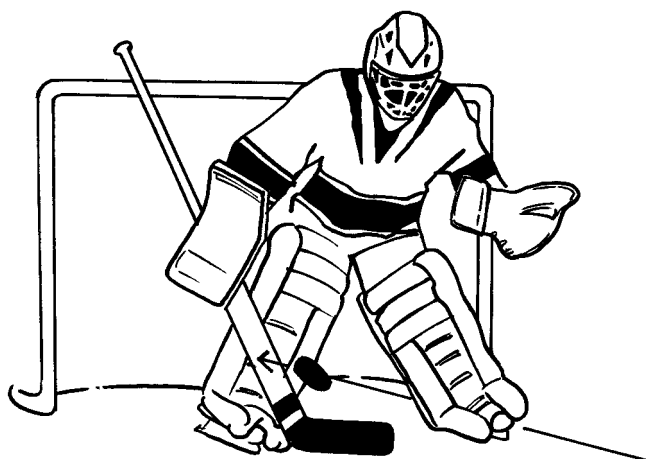


Figure 21a: Stick Save (Beginning)

- The move is initiated from the support leg.
- The stick moves together with the sliding leg.
- Keep the eyes on the puck.
- Keep the paddle of the stick square to the puck.



Figure 21b: Stick Save

- Keep the eyes on the puck.
- Deflect the puck away from the danger area of the net.
- Body weight is on the leg of the save side.

Tretiak Block

This save is the trademark of the famous Russian goalkeeper Vladislav Tretiak. It is similar to the half butterfly save technique with the main difference being that, in the Tretiak Block, the knee of the save leg is on the ice.

- Movement is initiated with the inside edge of the support leg skate.
- The body weight is over the knee which is on the ice.
- The stick is between the knee which is on the ice and the leg which is making the save.
- The upper body moves over top of the leg which is making the save.
- Maintain good body control during the save at all times.
- The catching glove must be on the top of the pad.



Figure 22a: Catching Glove Side Save



Figure 22b: Stick Side Save

- Use the stick, blocker or pad to make the save.
- Deflect the puck away from the danger area in front or the net.

15.4.3 High Shots

Stick Side

The blocker is used to stop high shots. As this glove is a valuable tool to the goalkeeper, it is important that this piece of equipment is not ignored. In fact, the blocker is most often used as a “deflector”.

- Place the blocker in the path of the oncoming puck (Figure 23 a).
- A slight rotation of the right wrist (e.g., slight rotation of hand in clockwise direction) changes the angle of the glove and the puck is deflected into the corner of the ice (Figure 23b).

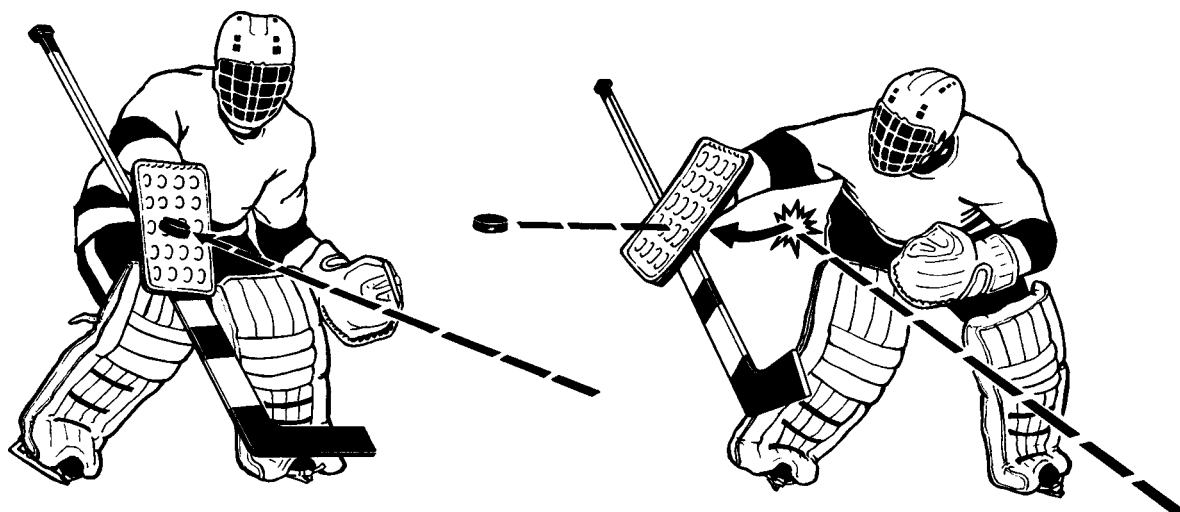


Figure 23a: Stick Side Getting Set for Shot

Figure 23b : Making Blocker Save

To avoid rebounds and inefficiency of movement, do not “punch” out at the oncoming puck. Also, avoid bringing the catching glove across the body, except in situations where a stoppage of play is desired. Such movement causes a lack of balance, inefficient use of the blocker, and decreases effective use of the catching glove.

Catching Glove Side

Catching shots with the catching glove is easier and safer than blocking with the blocker as the glove closes on the puck at the point of impact, thus nullifying rebounds.

- As with the blocker, let the puck come to the glove. Do not grab for the puck.
- Remember, keep the catching glove open at the side, slightly in front of and above the knee.
- Use the catching glove when the puck is on the body midline or catching glove side to avoid rebounds (Figure 24).

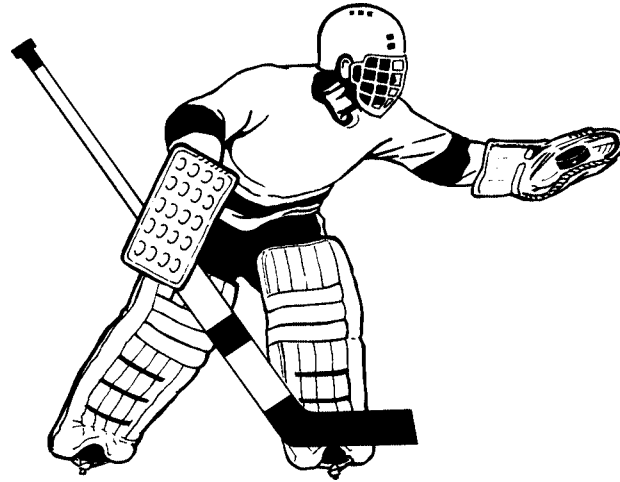


Figure 24: High Shot (Catching Glove Side)

Blocking with the Body

The goalkeeper must have confidence in the protective quality of the equipment and use the body to stop the puck whenever possible.

- Maintain an upright position and, when necessary, move laterally to meet the puck.
- Draw the arms close to the body.
- Bend the body slightly forward on impact and immediately smother the puck with the arms to avoid rebounds (Figure 25a and 25b).

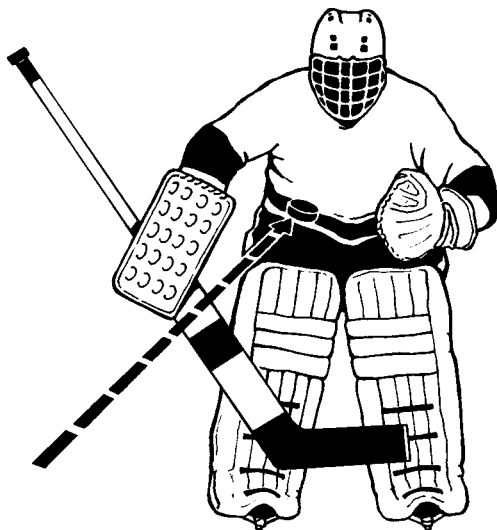


Figure 25a: Body Block



Figure 25b: Body Block (The Smother)

15.5 Stick Selection

Ensuring that your goalkeeper has the proper equipment is an important responsibility. The selection of a proper stick is no exception.



Figure 26: Lie of the Stick

As with all hockey sticks, those for goalkeepers are available in different lies. Perhaps the best method of selection is to observe your goalkeeper using a 14 lie. If the toe of the stick is up, try a lower lie; if the heel is up, try a higher lie (Figure 26).

The height of the shank is also important. If the shank is too high, the goalkeeper will stand upright, and if it is too low, the goalkeeper will bend too far forward.

Remember, select a stick that corresponds with the size and strength of your player. It is better to select a stick that is too small than too big since the smaller stick is much easier for the goalkeeper to control. Never saw off the shaft, it destroys stick balance. Buy the proper size.

The “right handed” goalkeeper holds his stick with the right hand and wears the catching glove on the left hand. The “left handed” goalkeeper holds his stick with the left hand and wears the catching glove on the right hand.

15.6 Stick Skills and Puck Handling

Stick skills and puck handling are areas often ignored in goalkeeping. It is important that a goalkeeper be active and confident in handling the puck around the net. The goalkeeper can be a valuable player by initiating breakouts or clearing the puck from the zone.

Backhand

When possible, hold the stick with one hand when handling the puck (e.g., clearing the puck into a corner or pushing a short pass to a teammate). It is more natural to maintain the one hand grip and it provides the least deviation from the ready position.

- Place the shaft of the stick in the underarm of the stick arm.
- Grip shaft firmly with right arm.
- During the puck handling action, use a shift of body weight from the nearest leg to the stick to the other leg to facilitate the movement.

Forehand

To execute a forehand puck handling skill, the stick is usually held with both hands.

- The blocker glove hand secures the upper end of the shaft.
- The catching glove hand is placed on the lower part of the shaft and, perhaps, partially on the shank.
- Again, a shift of body weight similar to that used during the backhand pass will facilitate puck handling.

Reversing hands on the shaft of the stick to execute these same skills is not recommended because of the delay this action creates.

Occasionally, a one hand forehand action takes place in which the puck is pushed to a teammate or cleared from in front of the net. In this instance, the shaft of the stick can be pressed against the stick forearm for support.

Stopping the Puck Behind the Net

For a shot around the boards on the ice, the following steps should be followed:

- At the moment of the shot, the goalkeeper makes a strong leg push to move around the net to the same side from which the puck is travelling (Figure 27).
- The stick is held with one hand.
- The end of the blade, whether on the forehand or backhand, is placed firmly against the boards at an angle to trap the puck (Figures 28 and 29).
- Once the puck is stopped, the stick can be handled with two hands if necessary (Figure 30).
- Pull the puck out from the dasher to facilitate easy pick up by a teammate.

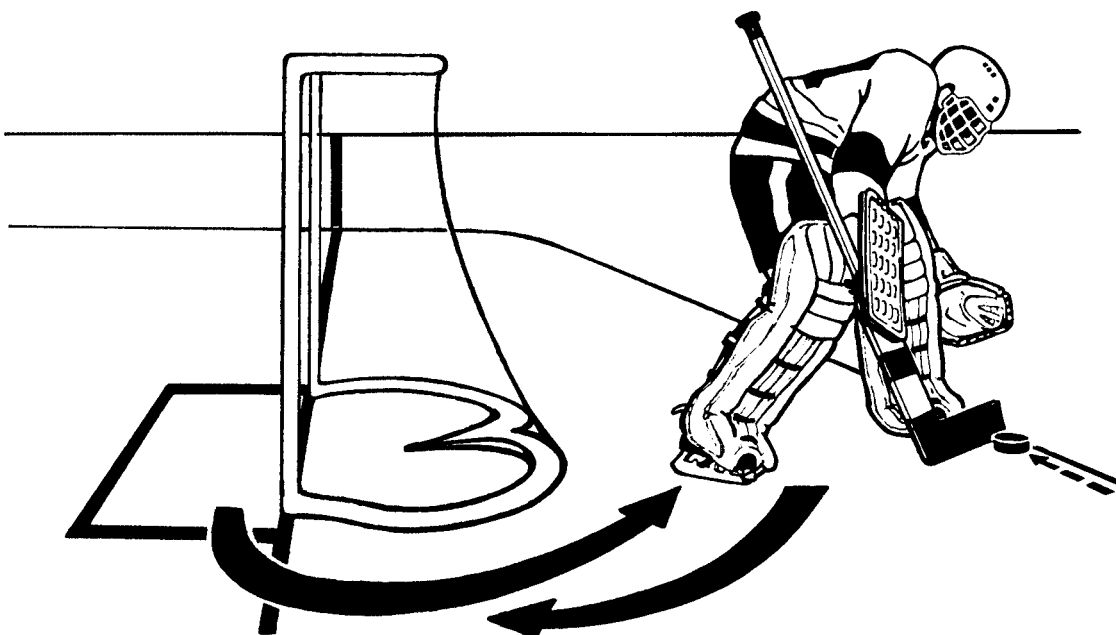


Figure 27: Moving Behind the Net



Figure 28: Stopping Puck Along Boards (Forehand)

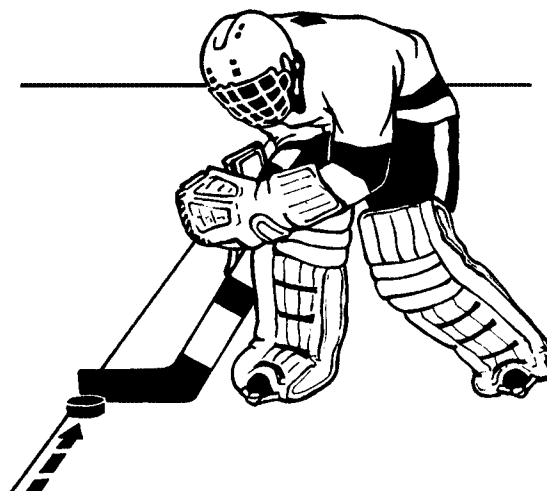


Figure 29: Stopping Puck Along Boards (Backhand)

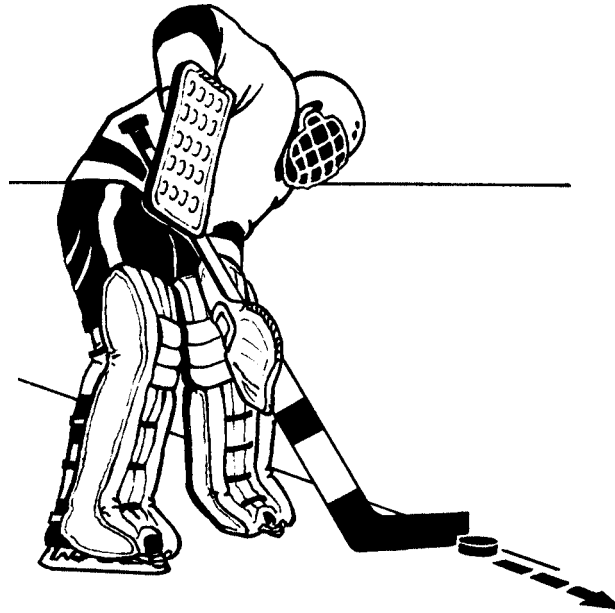


Figure 30: Handling the Puck With Two Hands

For a shot off the ice, the following steps should be followed:

- At the moment of the shot, the goalkeeper makes a strong push to move around the net to the same side from which the puck is travelling.
- The body and stick are placed against the boards, facing the oncoming puck.
- The puck is stopped with the body or stick, then handled with either the one or two hand technique.

Whenever leaving the net to stop the puck behind the net, the goalkeeper should generally try to return as quickly as possible in the direction which faces the play. This will enable the goalkeeper to analyze the ensuing play and facilitates communication with teammates.

An exception to this would be a situation where the goalkeeper is unable to stop the puck until it has passed beyond the mid-point of the net. To return as quickly as possible, it may be necessary to continue around the net.

Also, if it appears it will be difficult to return to the front of the net in the direction from which the goalkeeper came because of oncoming traffic, or to avoid a teammate, the goalkeeper may continue to circle the net.

At all times, try to stop the puck when it is directly behind the net so that any misplayed pucks will not careen dangerously in front of the net.

After stopping the puck, the goalkeeper should place it away from the boards and set it in a convenient position for a teammate.

Poke Checking

This technique is an invaluable goalkeeping tool. It can be used in various situations around the net to prevent goal scoring opportunities. The basics of the poke check are:

- maintain the basic stance,
- when in poke checking range, the blade of the stick is thrust out quickly with the hand sliding towards the butt end of the shaft,
- action is with arm only and should not cause goalkeeper to lose balance,
- do not slide the hand up the shaft as the shooter approaches as this will telegraph the move,
- concentrate on the puck and its expected pathway.

It is important that the goalkeeper does not lean too far forward, thereby, losing balance. Various poke checking moves are illustrated in Figures 31, 32 and 33. Note that the blade is rotated to ensure maximum extension.

- It is important to be aware of the advantage to a player approaching from the off-wing. This is a very difficult poke checking situation as the puck carrier can guard the puck with the body.

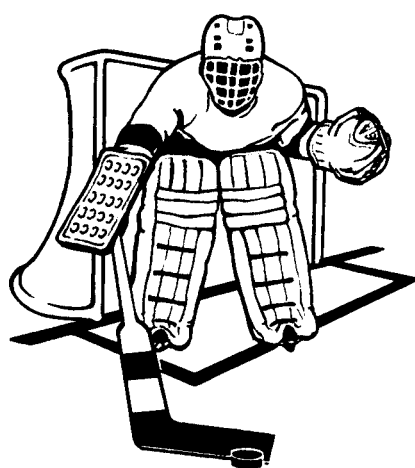


Figure 31: Poke Check (Right Side)

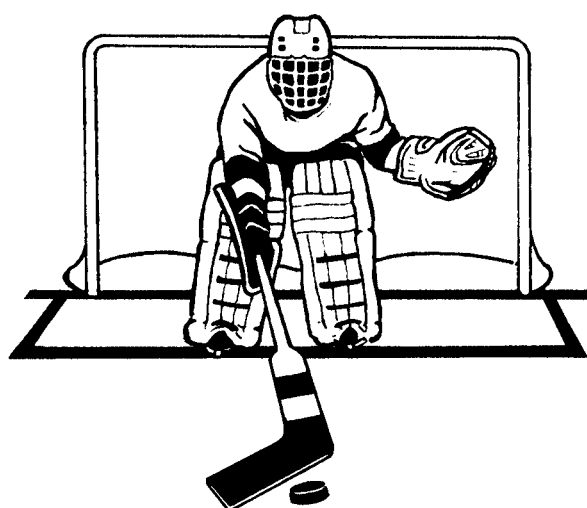


Figure 32: Poke Check (Front)

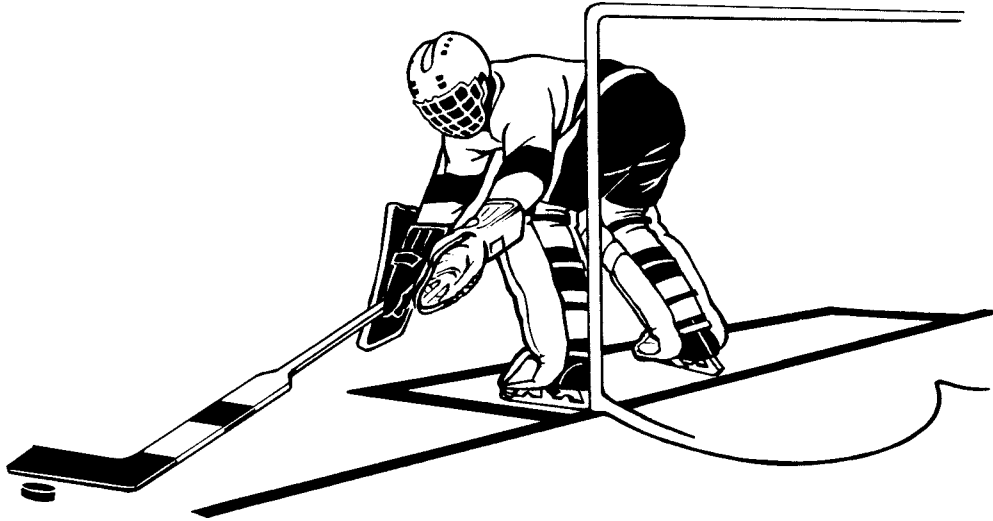


Figure 33: Poke Check (Left Side)

Clearing the Puck from the Goal Area

When the puck finds its way to the goalkeeper in the crease area, it is the goalkeeper's responsibility to handle the puck in response to the situation.

The goalkeeper may:

- clear the puck to the corner by a forehand or backhand shot,
- shoot the puck out of the defensive zone with a two handed clear,
- freeze the puck if the opponents pressure is heavy,
- pass the puck to a teammate, thus initiating a rush,
- set the puck for a teammate.

15.7 Age Categories in Developing Skills of the Goalkeeper

Age Categories

As outlined in Section 1.3, IIHF Classifications of Competition, the IIHF has identified five classifications of competition. Youth hockey is for players up to 16 years of age and junior hockey is for players up to 20 years of age, however, within these age groups each National Association further divides these classifications into categories (teams) to fit the requirements and demands within their country.

The following examples of age category breakdown may be used in developing your goalkeepers.

- Category 1 = up to 11 years
- Category 2 = 12-13 years
- Category 3 = 14-15 years
- Category 4 = 16-17 years
- Category 5 = 17-20 years

Each category is outlined below listing the skills, techniques and tactics that should be practiced during the season in order to develop young goalkeepers.:

Category 1

- basic stance
- basic goalkeeping positioning
- active movement - principles of goalkeeper-specific skating
- learn basic techniques of goalkeeping and player skating
- principles of catching techniques
- proper execution of the two-pad slide and leg splits

Category 2

- perfecting the basic stance
- quick return to the basic stance
- technique of moving around the net while maintaining your basic stance
- technique of skating outside of the net
- perfecting techniques and tactics of catching
- catching the puck while executing the two-pad slide and leg splits
- blocking shots with the body
- blocking shots with the arms
- becoming familiar with the principles of cutting down the shooting angle
- basic use of the stick
- technique of challenging the shooter

Category 3

- perfecting the techniques outlined in categories 1 and 2
- blocked view (screen)
- play behind the goal
- refining the use of the stick
- communication with teammates

- activity in the game and joining the attack
- blocking shots by performing a butterfly and leg splits
- blocking shots in complex game situations (timing and precision of action)
- coordination of movement during personal physiological growth

Category 4

- perfecting the techniques outlined in categories 1, 2 and 3
- controlling rebounds and deflections
- blocked view (screens), cutting down the shooting angle
- passing the puck from the area behind the goal
- perfecting the use of the stick, faking a play, and forehand and backhand passes
- integrating the goalkeeper into the team tactics and system
- perfecting the blocking of shots by all methods and reducing puck deflection
- being pro-active in one-on-one situations
- exploiting the goalkeeper's positive attributes
- quick return to the basic stance without the use of the hands

Category 5

- perfecting all of the activities in categories 1, 2, 3 and 4
- creating an optimal personal stance
- adapting the style of catching and developing individual priorities to fit the goalkeeper's personal style
- have input into the development of practice plans
- become involved in team play (e.g., initiating the breakout)
- development of the ability to "read and react" (anticipation)
- speeding up movement and thought processes
- perfecting goalkeeper-specific skating

15.8 Off-Ice Balance and Coordination Drills for Young Goalkeepers

Perception and Concentration Exercises

- Throw and catch a tennis ball against a wall. Practice with one ball, and then with two.
- As an alternative to the above exercise, throw and catch the ball(s) while kneeling, crouching and turning.
- The trainer throws a ball at the wall in front of the goalkeeper and the goalkeeper reacts and catches the ball.
- A pair standing across from each other throw tennis balls at the bottom corner. They can change the distance from one another, perform crouches, turns, rolls, splits.
- Juggle three balls.
- Juggle two balls in one hand and then both hands. Perform the exercise while standing on a filled ball.
- The goalkeeper's eyes follow the trainer. Upon previously agreed signals, the goalkeeper performs various tasks: spread arms - leg split; raise arms - roll; left arm stretch - crouch; crouch - lie down on back; etc.
- Dribble a ball to the wall, bounce the ball on the ground so that it rebounds off of the wall, then spin and catch it with your back to the wall.

- Throw a ball above your and, while it is in the air, perform a roll, somersault, sit, lie down, leg split, etc., and then catch the ball.
- Throw a ball, turn, and catch it behind your back.
- Pass a ball quickly around the hips, head or between the legs.
- Roll forward and catch a ball thrown by the trainer.
- Hold a stick vertical to the ground at shoulder height and release it; then turn 360 degrees and try to catch the stick before it hits the ground.
- Jump over a stick held in both hands at knee level and then jump back again.
- Balance the knob-end of a stick on your nose, on your palm, and on the top of your head.
- Let go of the stick vertically behind oneself and catch it while turning.
- Let a stick roll down along your outstretched arms and catch it before it hits the ground.
- One player swings a stick under the feet of the other who jumps to avoid touching the stick.
- Basic goalkeeper stance: look directly ahead and then look as far right, left, up and down as possible.
- Basic goalkeeper stance: roll eyes left and then right (stretch your eyes to reach the largest field of vision possible).
- Find points in a field that are at varying distances from each other, both in depth as well as width. Slowly transfer attention from one object to another in various combinations, and in different orders. For each object wait until the vision has become completely focused before focusing on the next object.

Dexterity Exercises

- Forward roll from a walking position and then from a running position.
- Forward dive over a hurdle.
- Backward roll.
- Backward roll to a hand stand position.
- Forward roll from a hand stand position.
- Stand on elbows.
- Sideways roll (three rolls per set).
- Forward roll (three rolls per set).
- Hand stand with knees leaning on elbows and then pushing up to complete hand stand.
- Forward roll over a kneeling teammate.
- Backward roll over a kneeling teammate.
- From a hand stand position, kick your legs backwards and land in a bridge position.
- From lying on your back, spring your body upright into a basic stance with the use of your hands.
- Juggle three balls while kicking your legs (Cossack dance), and then add rolls, splits, etc.
- Lean back on your hands, then push up and clap hands behind back.
- Lean back on your hands, then push up and spin your body to end up leaning forward on your hands.

SUMMARY

- To be effective, goalkeepers must master skills in the following areas:
 - Basic stance,
 - Skating,
 - Playing the angles,
 - Stopping low, mid height and high shots,
 - Stick and puck handling.
- Ensure that your goalkeepers select sticks appropriate for their size and strength.
- Because good goalkeeping is critical to the success of your team, be sure to spend time developing the necessary skills in your goalkeepers.
- Develop the necessary balance and coordination skills in your young players so that they can enjoy playing goal.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Jaromir Sindel of the Czech Ice Hockey Association provided input into this section.



16. SKATING SKILLS

16. Skating Skills

Skating is to hockey what running is to soccer. Skating is the foundation upon which all other skills are built. The level of performance attained by a player in passing, shooting, checking and stick handling are directly related to one's skating ability. The time spent improving a player's skating is a worthwhile investment due to the carry-over value to the many other aspects of the game.

Upon completion of this chapter, you will be better prepared to:

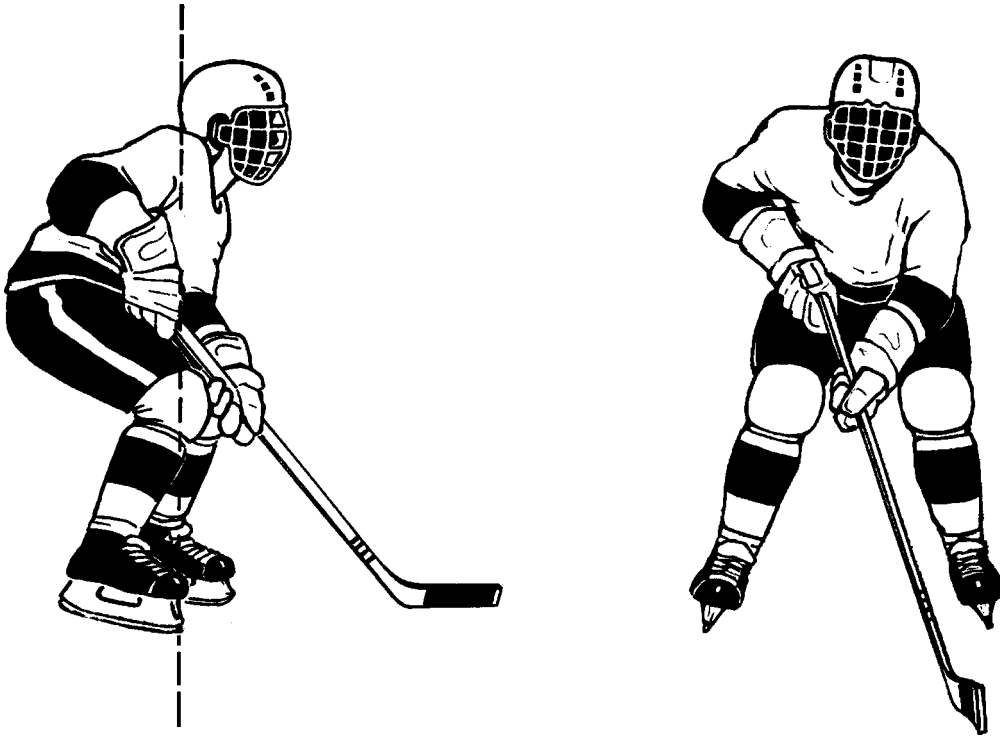
- *Understand and describe the key elements of skating;*
 - *Basic stance,*
 - *Edges,*
 - *Starts and stops,*
 - *Striding,*
 - *Turning,*
 - *Pivots.*

16.1 Basic Stance

The basic stance, or “ready” position, permits a player to move in any direction from a solid base of support. It is particularly effective during face-off alignments or in front of the net when screening the goalkeeper or waiting for a rebound. This position is also used when executing many of the basic skills such as passing, shooting, and checking.

Key Points:

- Feet are shoulder width apart, pointing slightly outward.
 - Knees and ankles are flexed at approximately 45 degrees.
 - The upper body leans slightly forward (approximately 45 degrees) with the weight of the body on the balls of the feet.
- The shoulders, knees, and toes can be joined by a straight line when in the basic stance (Figure 1).
 - Head up, eyes looking forward (Figure 2).
 - The stick is held with both hands, blade flat on the ice and slightly to the side of the body.



Figures 1 and 2: The Basic Stance

16.2 Skate Edges

Understanding the basic edges of a skate blade is important to teaching skating. The skate blade has two edges: inside edge and outside edge (Figure 3).

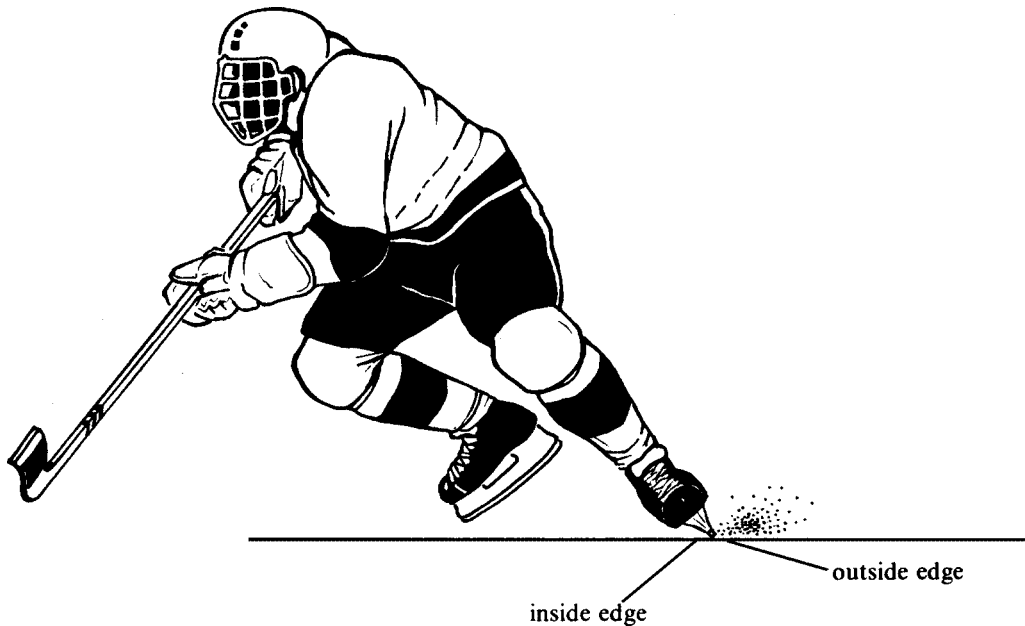


Figure 3: The edges

Although both edges play a role in propulsion, the inside edge is primarily used for “pushing” or “driving” (Figures 4 and 5).



Figure 4: Pushing Off of Inside Edge



Figure 5: Inside Edge of Right Foot

The outside edge, although sometimes used for propulsion purposes, is primarily used for turning and stopping (Figure 6). Figure 7 illustrates the use of both edges during a turn.

Weak skaters have control of only two edges while average skaters have mastered three edges. In both cases, individuals should strive for control of all four edges in order to become proficient skaters.

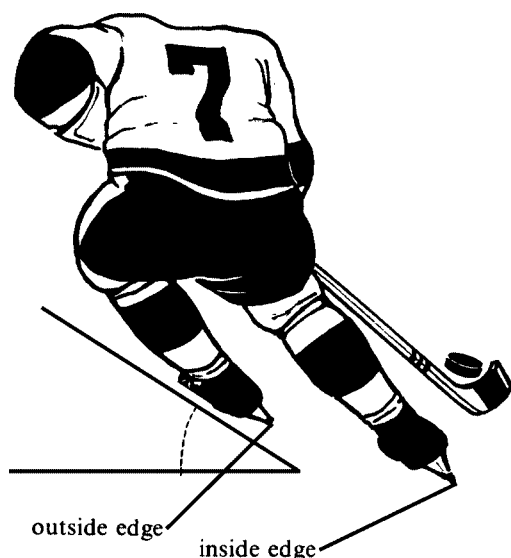


Figure 6: Use of Outside Edge for Turning and Stopping



Figure 7: Use of Both Edges During a Turn

16.3 Forward Skating

The efficiency of the skating stride depends on applying a few fundamental principles and optimum development of the muscles used in skating. Careful attention should be paid to the following key points when teaching forward skating.

Key Points:

- Basic stance is the starting position.
- Power is derived from a full and vigorous sequential extension of the hip, the knee and the ankle in a lateral thrust (to the side and not to the back as in the initial stroke).
- The knee of the gliding leg must be well flexed extending beyond the toe of the skate in the gliding stage (Figure 8).
- The weight of the body is transferred over the striding leg at the beginning of each stride (Figure 9).
- Recovery is executed in a circular motion with skate low to the ice, passing under the centre of gravity.
- Shoulders should be kept perpendicular to the intended direction with the muscles of the upper body relaxed.
- The stick can be held in one or two hands depending on the game situation. The shoulder and arm muscles should be relaxed.



Figure 8: Flexion of Gliding Leg to Striding Leg



Figure 9: Knee Over Toe

16.3.1 Forward Starts

The ability to start quickly should be one of the first skating skills mastered by young hockey players. There are three types of forward starts used, depending on the game situation: front, crossover, and T-starts.

The Front Start

Key Points:

- Basic stance is the starting position.
 - Centre of gravity is shifted forward with the body weight placed on the inside edge of the drive skate.
 - Body weight is placed over the drive leg which is rotated outward at an angle of approximately 90 degrees from the player's chosen course.
- As the number of strides increases, the player takes progressively longer strides, pushing more to the side rather than to the back.
 - Initial strokes (three to four) are short and quick, without gliding.
 - The drive leg is vigorously extended at the hip, knee, and ankle.



Figure 10: The Front Start

The Crossover Start

A crossover start is used when a player wishes to start rapidly after a two-foot parallel stop. It is also used when a player is sideways to the direction one wishes to go. It can be defined as a front start preceded by a crossover action of the leg.

Key Points:

- Skates are slightly closer together than in the basic stance.
 - Skates are parallel and perpendicular to the desired direction of travel.
 - The head and shoulders are turned in the desired direction.
 - The body leans towards the desired direction.
 - After the crossover, the outside skate is placed at a 90 degree angle to the desired direction.
- Perform only one crossover to assume a forward starting position (see Figure 10).

The T-Start

The T-start is used when a player is stationary and knows beforehand the direction one wishes to travel. This is the case in some face-off situations. It is also used to teach beginners how to start as it is easier to master than the front start.

The primary difference between the T-start and the front start is in the positioning of the skates.

Key Points:

- Both legs are flexed slightly.
- The driving leg is positioned at a 90 degree angle to the desired direction of travel thus creating the T-start position.
- The start is initiated by a thrust of the driving leg (inside edge).
- Without any gliding motion, the lead foot is raised and rotated outward, ready to perform another driving motion.

16.3.2 Forward Stops

For safety reasons, this stop should be one of the first skills taught. Use the various lines painted on the ice as stopping points in order to eliminate any accidents which may occur close to the boards.

Stops are essential in avoiding checks, shaking off opponents or changing directions. The three types of stops commonly used are: two-foot parallel, outside leg, and inside leg stops.

Two-Foot Parallel Stop (To Left)
Key Points:

- Turn the skate at a 90 degree angle to the direction of motion with a rotating action of the hips.
 - There should not be any upward extension of the body before rotating as it then becomes difficult to apply sufficient pressure to the blades.
 - The knees are well bent, extending beyond the toes of the skates at the beginning of the stop.
 - The skates are staggered 15-20 cm apart. The inside skate is slightly beyond the outside skate (toe to arch).
-
- To stop sharply, weight should be distributed as evenly as possible over both skates, and pressure should be exerted on the front part of the blades while extending the legs forcefully – inside skate (outside edge) and outside skate (inside edge).



Figure 11: Skates 15-20 cm Apart



Figure 12: Inside Skate Beyond Outside Skate

Outside Leg Stop

The technique of the outside leg stop is essentially the same as the two-foot parallel stop except that:

- all of the weight is on the outside leg (inside edge),
- the inside leg is held above the ice, ready to initiate a new stride.

Inside Leg Stop

The inside leg stop is primarily used as a learning exercise for players having difficulty with their outside edge in the two foot parallel stop, (e.g., a jerking inside skate). This stop is rarely seen in actual game situations because it is very difficult to execute at high speed and leaves the player in an awkward position to initiate another skill.

The following points maybe used as a teaching progression for the inside leg stop:

- Glide on the front skate placing the back skate T-start position behind the front skate.
- Repeat the first exercise while progressively adding more and more weight on the outside edge of the back skate.
- Gradually remove the lead skate from the ice, thus supporting one's entire weight on the back skate.
- The back leg should be well flexed prior to initiating the stop with the body weight leaning backwards.

16.3.3 Forward Turns

To change direction, turns are more energy efficient than stops and starts. It is essential that individuals learn to turn equally well in both directions because of the nature of today's game (e.g., flow and rapid transition). The three types of forward turns are: sharp, crossover, and forward to backward pivot.

Sharp Turn

The sharp turn is one of the most difficult techniques to master but it is also one of the most useful. The player must execute a change of direction of 180 degrees in a very limited space while attempting to maintain the highest possible speed.

Key Points:

- The skate on the side of the desired turn is placed slightly ahead of the other skate.
- The head, shoulders, arms and stick are turned in the desired direction of travel (Figure 13).
- The body leans significantly in the desired turning direction; the upper body leans slightly forward (Figure 14).
- The outside leg then crosses over the inside leg in order to accelerate out of the turn.

- Weight should be placed on the outside edge of the lead foot and the inside edge of the back foot.
- For a sharper turn, more weight will be placed on the back of the blades (Figure 13).
- The amount of knee bend will be determined by the desired quickness of the turn.

A glove, a puck, or a face-off spot on the ice are good markers for teaching sharp turns. Avoid teaching sharp turns around pylons as it prevents players from leaning well into their turns.



Figure 13: Sharp Turn



Figure 14a and 14b: Body Lean in a Sharp Turn

Forward Crossover Turn

Forward crossovers are used to change direction while attempting to gain speed.

Key Points:

- Rotate the head, shoulder, arms, and stick in the desired direction of travel.
- The body leans well into the circle with the trunk bent slightly forward.
- The weight is transferred from the inside to the outside leg which now thrusts by an extension of the hip, knee, and ankle (Figure 15).

- To increase speed, bend the knees as much as possible before extending the driving leg.
- Body thrust is alternately carried out by both legs while the body weight is kept above the drive leg.
- Following a vigorous extension of the hip, knee and ankle of the inside leg (outside edge), the outside leg (inside edge) crosses over the inside leg.



Figure 15: Crossover Turn

16.3.4 Forward to Backward Pivot

The forward to backward pivot allows a player to change from forward to backward skating without modifying one's speed.

Key Points:

- Initiated from the regular skating stride, the weight of the body is placed over the gliding leg opposite to the intended pivot side. (e.g., the weight is on left skate to turn to the right). The stick is held with both hands.
 - At the end of the stride (right leg), the player straightens up and rotates the right skate outward (180 degrees) bringing it on the other side of the gliding skate (left), facing in the opposite direction.
 - Then, following a simultaneous rotation of the head and shoulders to the right, the weight of the body is transferred rapidly to the rotating skate (right), while the left skate rotates 180 degrees to become parallel to the right skate.
- As the pivot ends, the blade of the stick is immediately put down on the ice in front of the player who is now holding the stick with one hand.

To pivot faster, the skates should be brought closer together just before pivoting and the body should be straightened out in order to lengthen the vertical axis of rotation, thus increasing the speed of the player's rotation. Holding the stick with both hands and bringing one's arms close to the body will also increase the speed of rotation.

16.4 Backward Skating

Backward skating should be mastered by all players. It is an integral element of the constant interchange of positions required in hockey.

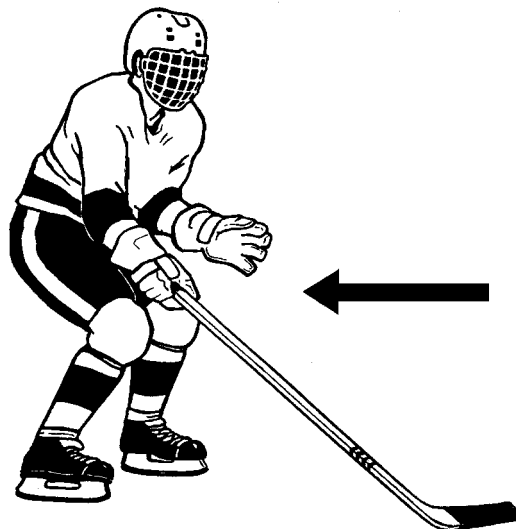


Figure 16: Basic Stance

Key Points:

- The knees are well bent and the back is straight with the upper body leaning slightly forward.
- Skates are shoulder width apart.
- The player should be in a sitting position holding his stick in one hand, elbow flexed, shoulders perpendicular to the desired direction of travel.
- The blade of the stick should be in front of the player and flat on the ice pointing in.

16.4.1 Striding
Key Points:

- Basic stance is the starting position.
 - The heel of the driving leg is rotated outward as the hip, the knee, and the ankle are vigorously extended forward and sideways to trace a “C” shaped arc on the ice.
 - During the thrust of the driving leg (inside edge), the full weight of the body is transferred to the gliding skate and is distributed evenly on the entire blade before initiating a new thrust.
- The player should resist excessive forward lean and avoid transferring one’s weight from one skate to the other by swinging the hips from side to side.
 - The knee of the gliding leg must be well flexed in order to permit a long thrust of the driving leg.

16.4.2 Backward Starts

The backward start is used to initiate backward skating from a dead stop position without turning one’s back to oncoming opponents.

Key Points:

- From a basic stance position (driving leg well flexed), the player rotates the toe of one skate inward approximately 90 degrees to the desired direction of travel.
- With a dynamic extension of the hip, knee, and ankle, pressure is exerted on the inside edge which traces an arc on the ice. This should not be a full extension in order that recovery may be rapid.
- During the vigorous push of the driving leg, body weight is simultaneously transferred from the driving leg to the gliding leg which is ready to initiate another drive.

- When skating backwards, the stick should be held in one hand in front of the body with the arm slightly flexed. The head should be up at all times.
- The gliding leg is flexed to facilitate a longer push by the driving leg.

Backward Crossover Start

The backward crossover start is a very effective method of accelerating rapidly from a stationary backward position.

Key Points:

- From a basic backward stance position, the hips and trunk turn slightly towards the direction of the crossover; the head remains facing the oncoming opponent.
- The inside leg (outside edge) now extends.
- The outside leg (inside edge) crosses over in front of the inside leg as it extends and is brought down on the ice. This stride should be short and close to the ice.
- The body is driven backward by the extension of the outside leg (inside edge).

16.4.3 Backward Stops

The ability to stop quickly is imperative in order to react and adjust to the rapid changes during a game. There are two types of backward stops which are primarily used: the two-leg and one-leg backward stops.

Two-Leg Backward Stop

The two-leg stop is the most commonly used and is the most efficient backward stop. It permits quick stopping and resistance against an opposing force while placing the player in an excellent position to initiate a forward start.

Key Points:

- The body is bent forward.
 - The skates are rotated outward to an approximate 180 degree angle with the distance between the heels varying according to the speed of travel (Figure 17).
 - Legs are initially flexed; extension of the hips, knees and ankles applies pressure on the front part of the skate blades (inside edges).
- The legs should be spread in relation to the speed of travel.



Figure 17: Two-Leg Backward Stop

The One-Leg Backward Stop

Upon completion of the one-leg backward stop, the player is in a forward T-start position.

Key Points:

- The body is bent forward.
- The skate blade rotates outward tracing an arc before positioning itself at a 90 degree angle to the desired stopping direction.
- The weight of the body is on the rear leg, front portion of the skate blade, in order to dig deeply into the ice.
- At the end of the action, the knee of the back leg should be flexed ready to move in any direction (Figure 18).



Figure 18: One-Leg Backward Stop

16.4.4 Backward Turns

Backward turns in both directions are essential for mobility and positioning and are skills that should be mastered by all players.

Backward Lateral Crossovers

Backward lateral crossovers permit a player to move laterally in order to remain in front of an attacker. They can be executed from a stopped position or while skating backward. The mechanics of this movement are similar to those used during the backward crossover start (see pages 16.14).

Key Points:

- Basic stance is the starting position.
- The hips and trunk turn slightly towards the direction of the crossover; the head remains straight.
- Facing the play, the body is moved in the desired direction of travel by the extension of the outside leg (inside edge), followed by an extension of the inside leg (outside edge).
- The outside leg crosses over in front of the inside leg and is brought down on the ice. This action is repeated until the desired position is attained.

- The body weight is shifted to the leg that remains on the ice.

Backward Crossover Turns

The backward crossover turn is used to shift from backward to forward skating without having to come to a complete stop.

Key Points:

- Basic stance is the starting position.
- Head and shoulders open in the direction the player intends to pivot.
- The outside leg extends and exerts force (inside edge) on the ice by a vigorous extension of the hip, knee, and ankle.
- The inside leg (outside edge) extends and the outside leg (inside edge) is brought back to begin the final stage of backwards to forwards transition.
- The inside leg (outside edge) completes its final thrust, the weight is now on the outside leg (inside edge), which then pivots to assume a forward skating position.

16.4.5 Backward to Forward Pivots

Although the backward to forward pivots are skills which are sometimes ignored, they are important positioning skills for all players which must be mastered at full speed.

Heel to Heel Pivot

The pivot from backward to forward skating, which often proves to be a difficult skill, requires much attention.

Key Points:

- The skates must be brought close together and the arms must be brought in close to the body.
- A slight extension of the knees and trunk also increases the speed of rotation.
- The weight of the body is placed over the gliding leg (opposite the pivoting side).
- The head, shoulders and arms are then simultaneously turned in the desired direction of travel while the pivot skate is raised slightly off the ice, rotated in the desired direction, then placed back on the ice.
- A vigorous push from the gliding leg transfers the weight of the body over the pivoting leg favoring a rapid acceleration utilizing short strides.

Crossover Pivot

Some players will use a crossover action to pivot from backward to forward skating. It should never be executed when an opponent carrying a puck is coming at the defenceman as the crossover pivot forces the defender to cross one's legs and thus leaves the player in an awkward position should a quick change of direction be needed. Furthermore, the crossover pivot is not a very good position from which to deliver a solid body check.

Key Points:

- Bring the skates close together and the arms close to the body.
- The head, shoulders and hips rotate and the body leans in the desired direction of travel.
- Body weight moves over the gliding leg while the other leg crosses over planting the blade (inside edge) on the ice at a 90 degree angle to the desired direction.
- The crossover should be short and as close to the ice as possible to permit a rapid change of direction.

16.5 Learning Skating Skills by Playing Games

To be developed

SUMMARY

- To become effective hockey players, it is necessary for your athletes to master skating.
- There are six key elements to skating:
 - basic stance
 - edge control
 - starts and stops
 - striding
 - turning
 - pivots



17. PUCK CONTROL SKILLS

17. Puck Control Skills

Puckhandling is a very important part of the game of hockey and it is one of the more difficult skill areas to learn. However, it is the skill area that players enjoy practising the most. Due to the importance of puckhandling, you should have a thorough knowledge of its components.

Upon completion of this chapter, you will be better prepared to:

- *select the proper stick lie for your players,*
- *describe and instruct the key elements of puckhandling;*
 - *dribbling,*
 - *deking,*
 - *shooting,*
 - *passing,*
 - *pass receiving.*

17.1 The Stick

A coach must be able to determine if a player is using a proper stick. The choice of a stick depends upon the athlete's strength, height, and skating style.

Length

- As a general rule, the stick should be entered from the ice to between the sternum and the chin.
- A proper length stick permits the player to dribble the puck from side to side with less difficulty. If, when performing this movement, the elbow of the top arm has difficulty crossing in front of the body, the stick is too long.
- For younger players, junior size sticks with smaller shafts and blades for easier handling are available.

Flexibility

- Flexibility of the stick should be proportional to the strength and weight of the player.
- Due to a lack of strength, younger players require a more flexible stick shaft, which requires less force while at the same time permit the player to attain a puck speed just as great or greater than that achieved with a rigid stick.

Lie

- The lie of a stick refers to the angle of the blade in relation to the shaft and puckhandling styles of players.
- A blade that remains flat on the ice in the basic stance position or when dribbling the puck has the proper lie.

- The lie is too low and/or the stick is too short if the heel of the stick is off the ice when dribbling. If the end of the blade is off the ice, then the lie is too high or the stick is too long.
- Lies are identified by numbers.

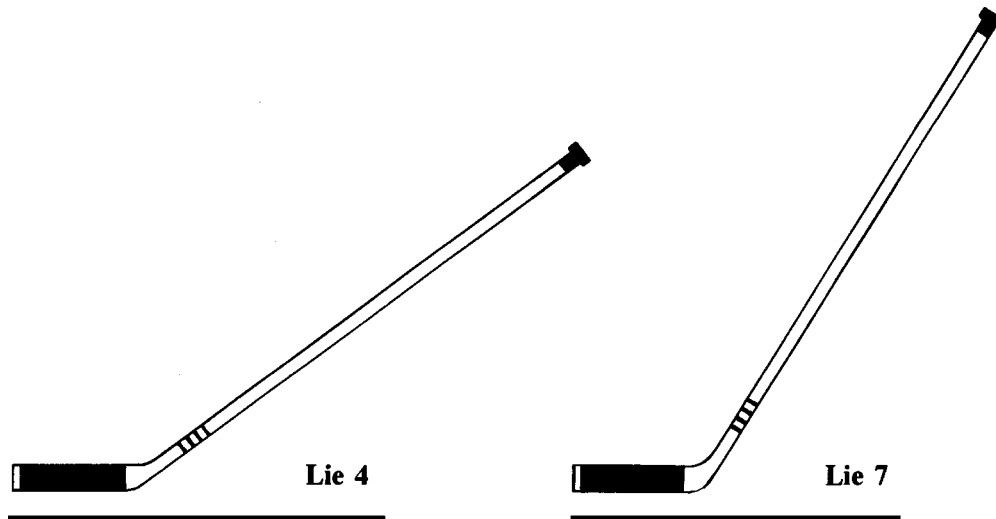


Figure 1: Examples of Stick Lies

- The lie 4 stick accommodates the player who skates in a crouch or bent over position. The lie 7 stick accommodates a player who skates in a more upright manner.
- As you can see in Figure 1, if the upright skater were to use the lie 4 stick, the heel of the blade would be off the ice. Conversely, if the bent over player were to use the lie 7 stick, the toe of the blade would be off the ice.

The Curved Blade

Even though studies are practically non-existent on the curved blade, it seems that a curve improves the precision and the speed of certain shots. Particularly the forehand shots. It also facilitates the execution of the flip pass and certain puck handling movements (e.g., tight forehand turn). When selecting a curved blade, attempt to select a stick with only a slight curve to facilitate acquisition and development of basic puckhandling skills.

The Grip

The grip on the stick varies continuously during a game according to the actions of the player. Generally speaking, the stronger the player, the closer the hands can be on the stick, thus allowing greater range in dribbling movements.

17.2 Dribbling

Dribbling is the puckhandling action with the stick and/or body parts, used to maintain puck control while stationary or in motion. The ability to skate in any direction while handling the puck takes time and practice. Effective faking, passing and shooting depend on the player's ability to dribble effectively. Each time the player moves the puck while dribbling, it is essential to roll the wrists. This rolling action will cause the blade of the stick to turn and cup the puck thus adding control to the puck during movement.

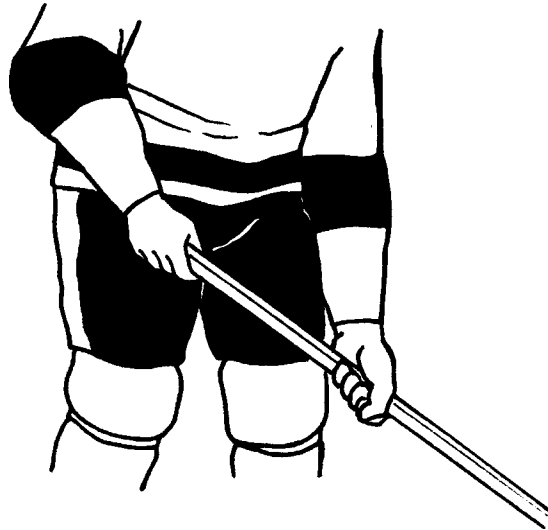


Figure 2: Hand Positioning

Key Points:

- The hands should be spaced approximately 20-30 cm apart in a comfortable position. The arms and shoulders should be relaxed.
- Both hands should move in the same direction on the stick shaft. (e.g., when the stick and puck are on the left side of the body, the right hand is also on the left side of the body). The top hand must move across the chest.
- The head should be up and peripheral vision should be used to maintain sight of the puck. (Note: Coaches should not expect beginning players to rely solely on peripheral vision as this skill requires considerable practise to perfect.)

- Knees should be bent in a comfortable skating position.
- The puck should normally be handled on the back half of the blade.
- Range of movement is improved if the hands are close together on the stick and if the elbows are away from the body in the direction of the puck.
- Dribbling must be smooth yet strong and rhythmical (e.g., avoid hard slapping movements).
- Avoid unnecessary dribbling as it slows you down.

17.2.1 Types of Dribbles

The dribble is one means available to a player who wishes to become free of an opponent and maintain possession of the puck. There are three basic types of dribbles that players should master:

- the front dribble,
- dribble on the stick side,
- the diagonal dribble on both the stick and backhand sides.

Front Dribble (*perpendicular to the direction of the player*)

The front dribble is executed directly in front of the player with the puck moving from side to side.

Side Dribble (*parallel to the direction of the player*)

The side dribble is executed primarily on the forehand stick side of the player with the puck moving forward and backward in a dribbling motion.

Diagonal Dribble (*diagonal to the direction of the player*)

The diagonal dribble is halfway between the front and the side dribble. It can be used in many situations, such as a sweep or slap shot, passing in stride, or backhand passes and shots.

17.3 Dekes

The deke is a second means accessible to a player who wishes to become free of an opponent and maintain possession of the puck. It may also precede a pass or a shot in order to mislead an opponent.

Key Points:

- A fake must be based on deception by have all the appearance of reality.
- Dekes should be initiated at a sufficient distance from an opponent to avoid being stick checked.
- Changes of speed and direction are important factors to the success of any deke.
- Acceleration after completing the deke is often important (be certain that drills allow for practice of this).

- If possible, dekes should be based on a knowledge of the opponent's weaknesses.
- A deke must give the opponent enough time to go for the fake before the player undertakes the intended action.
- While deking an opponent, the player should make an effort to remain fully aware of the whereabouts of teammates and opponents.

It is important to remember that dekes are a creation of the imagination that can be perfected through practise. Some basic dekes which can be modified or combined in many ways to suit the situation, the skills and needs of each player are outlined below.

17.3.1 Types of Dekes

Body Fakes

- **Changes of direction:** The player feints with the head and/or shoulders in one direction, then goes in the other direction.
- **Between the legs:** After a deke with the head, shoulders, or stick, the player slips the puck between the opponent's legs and recovers it behind the opponent.

Skating Fakes

- **Stop and start:** The player skates at full speed as if to outskate the opponent then stops abruptly and starts in another direction.
- **Change of speed:** The player slows down forcing the opponent to do the same, then accelerates rapidly catching the opponent flat footed.
- **Directional skating:** The player does crossovers in one direction and when the opponent moves to cover, cuts back in the other direction.
- **Using the boards:** The player acts as if to skate between the player and the boards but cuts around the opponent, banks the puck off the boards, and then retrieves it.

Stick Fakes

- **Fake a shot:** The player fakes a shot, waits until the opponent reacts, then skates around the opponent.
- **Fake a pass:** The player fakes a pass with the head or the stick, then shoots on goal, or dekes the opponent.

17.4 Shooting

The ability to shoot the puck in the various situations that arise during a game of hockey is an invaluable skill. Hockey players should have a complete arsenal of shots from which to choose. An incomplete player is limited to only one or two types of shots.

Note: For all the examples given, it will be assumed that the player is a left-handed shooter.

Key Points:

- Accuracy is most important. (Hard, quick shots that miss the net are not much of a threat.)
- Get the stick blade travelling as fast as possible.
- Speed of execution (e.g., quick release) is as important as the speed of the puck. The element of surprise is a very important factor in shooting.
- When advantageous, make use of possible screens when shooting at the goal.
- Always keep the stick close to the ice around the net and react to the movement of the puck after each shot (e.g., a rebound).
- Master the various shots in order to have the right shot for any game situation.

For a better understanding of shooting skills, each shot can be broken down into three phases: preparatory, execution, and follow-through. This breakdown also permits a better and more complete analysis of the skill and thus facilitates corrections.

17.4.1 Phases of Shooting

Preparatory Phase

- Preparation to release the shot (e.g., backswing in a slap shot).
- Movement of four joints into position.

Execution Phase

- Forces generated in the direction of the shot.
- Impact of the stick with the puck.
- Body movements (e.g., trunk rotation, weight transfer, and shoulder flexion).

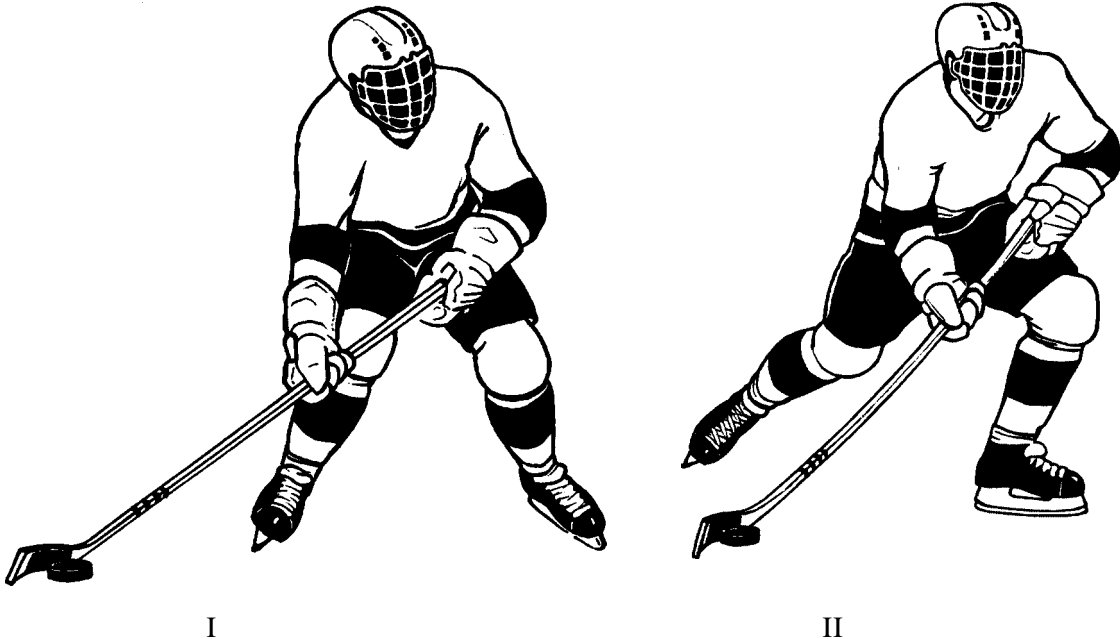
Follow-Through Phase

- Begins once the puck leaves the blade of the stick.
- A good follow-through ensures that body segments do not decelerate too soon.

17.4.2 Types of Forehand Shots

Sweep Shot

The sweep shot, so named because of its motion, is a valuable tool to players of all ages. This is one of the more accurate shots as the puck is in contact with the stick throughout the shooting motion. The sweep shot can also be deceptive, as a pass can be made from the same sweeping motion.



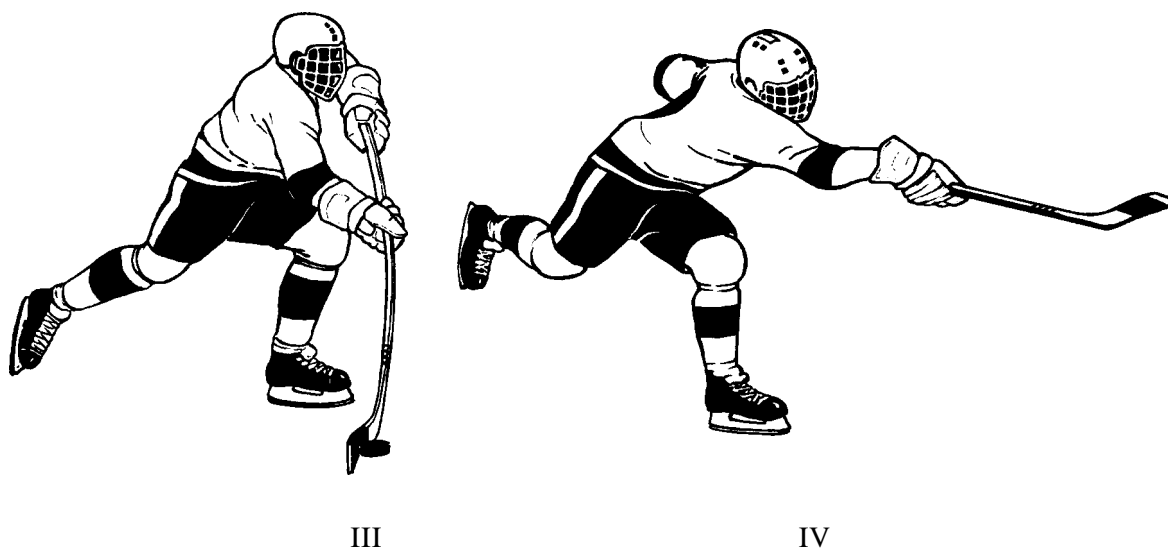


Figure 3: Forehand Sweep Shot

Key Points:

- The spread of the hands on the stick is somewhat wider than that used when stickhandling.
- The puck is brought to the side of the body and should be well behind the left skate.
- Maximum force is transferred to the stick by bending the trunk forward and shifting body weight from the back to the front leg.
- The grip should tighten and the wrists should snap before or as the puck reaches the forward leg.
- The puck is propelled with a snap of the wrists. In one motion, the top hand snaps forward then back towards the body while the wrist is rapidly extended. The bottom wrist flexes and whips the stick through towards the target.

Wrist Shot

The wrist shot is a surprise shot which depends on the quickness of release. It is a useful shot around the opponent's net, where space and time are often limited.

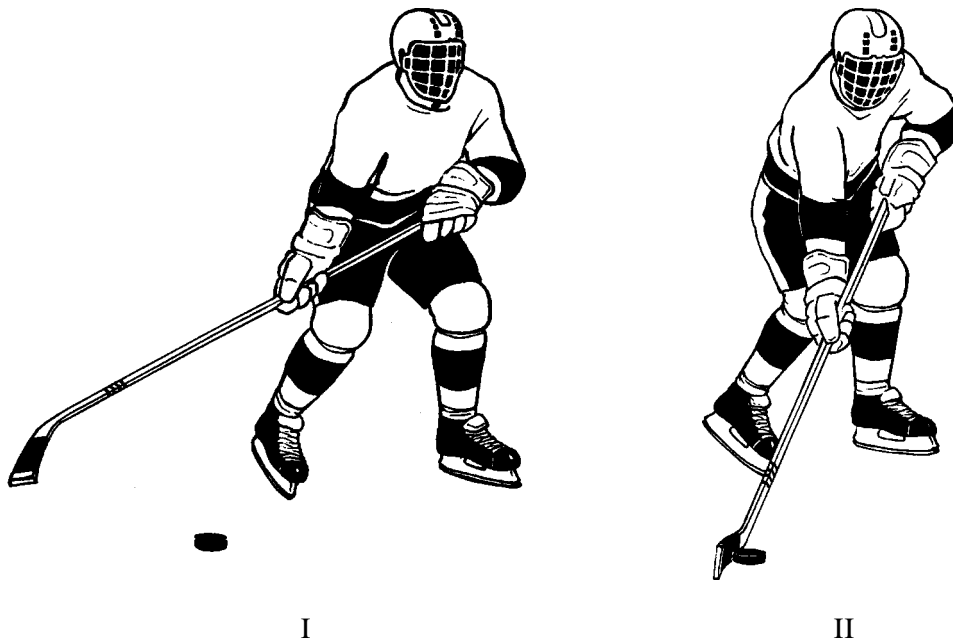
Key Points:

- The hand grip is similar to that used for stick handling. When possible, the lower hand moves slightly down the shaft for greater power.
- The weight of the player is transferred to the stick and the skate nearest the puck by flexing the trunk laterally.
- The grip tightens and the puck is propelled with a snap of the wrists. In one motion, the top hand snaps forward then back towards the body while the wrist is rapidly extended. The bottom wrist flexes and whips the stick through towards the target.

A look at the total picture shows that at the end of the shot, the top portion of the stick has moved very little, while the blade has moved a great deal in a very short period of time. It is the speed and proper coordination of the arm and wrist movements which directly affects the speed of the shot.

Snap Shot

The snap shot is similar to the wrist shot with the exception that the blade of the stick is removed from the puck immediately prior to the shot being taken.



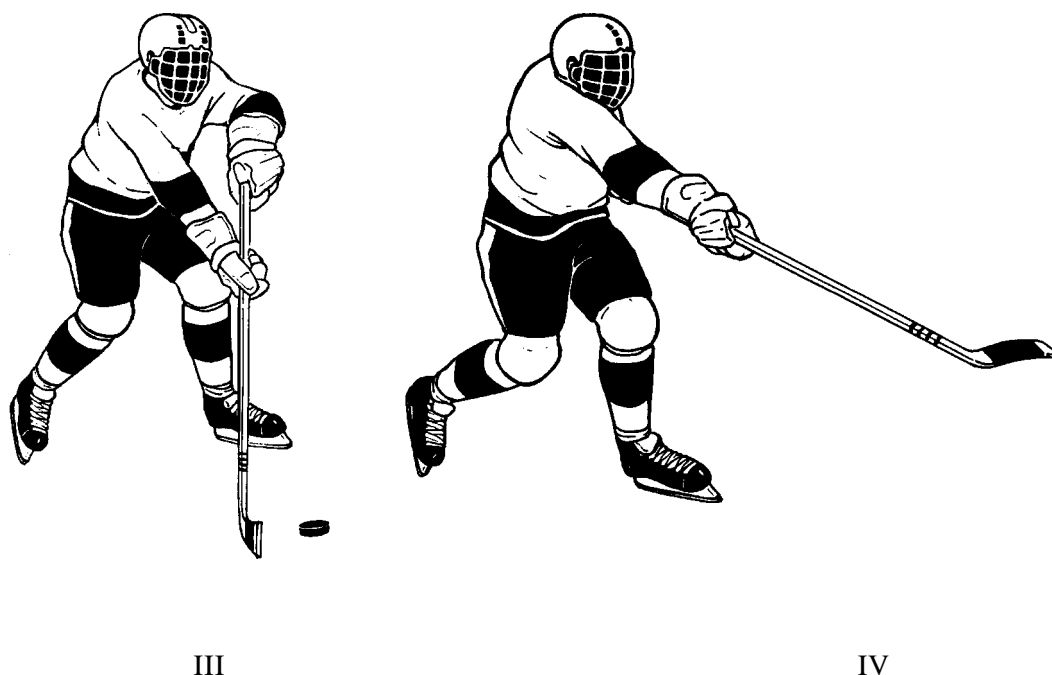


Figure 4: Snap Shot

Key Points:

- The hands are usually held slightly wider than in the stick handling position.
- The stick blade is drawn behind the puck at a distance and height dictated by the time available and the distance of the target. The blade should never go higher than the hip.
- The stick should meet the ice approximately two centimetres behind the puck.
- The grip tightens and the wrists are usually locked at the moment of impact.
- Players should look at the target, then at the puck immediately before impact.

There is a variation of the snap shot that more and more players are developing which catches opponents and goalkeepers by surprise. The player fakes a shot or a pass with the puck well away from the body. Then, with the end of the blade, the puck is drawn close to the skates and snapped with a quick, powerful wrist action.

Slap Shot

The slap shot, wisely used, can be an asset in any player's repertoire of shots. Unfortunately, many players rely too heavily on the slap shot, thus greatly diminishing its effectiveness.



I



II



III



IV



V



VI

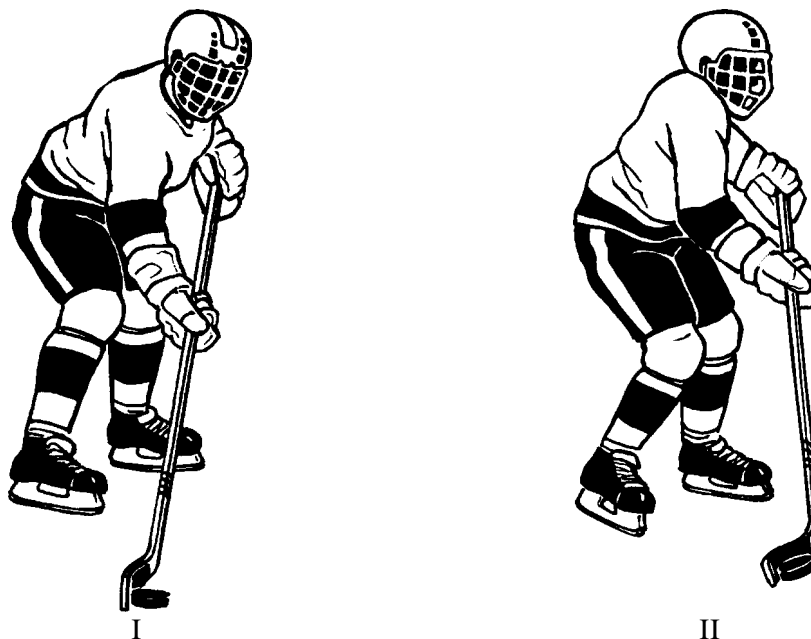
Figure 5: Slap Shot

Key Points:

- The hands are spaced wider on the shaft of the stick than during normal stick handling grip.
 - The puck is close to the body, centered between the legs.
 - After a quick look at the target, the eyes remain fixed on the puck.
 - The player is sideways to the target, bending over the puck and transferring weight from the back leg, to the stick, to the front leg.
 - Wrists are locked and held firmly as the stick comes into contact with the ice slightly behind the puck (1-2 cm).
- The back swing is conditioned by the time available and the desired element of surprise. Players should master a short backswing where the stick is brought back and up in an arc, going no further than shoulder height.
 - Often slap shots go over the net. One reason for this is that the puck is placed too close to the shooter's front foot. To get the puck low, it should be brought back towards the shooter's rear leg and a low follow-through should be used.

Flip Shot

The objective of the flip shot is to get the puck up high in the air as quickly as possible. This is carried out by "scooping" the puck. The flip shot is valuable when a player is in close on the net and the goalkeeper is down on the ice.



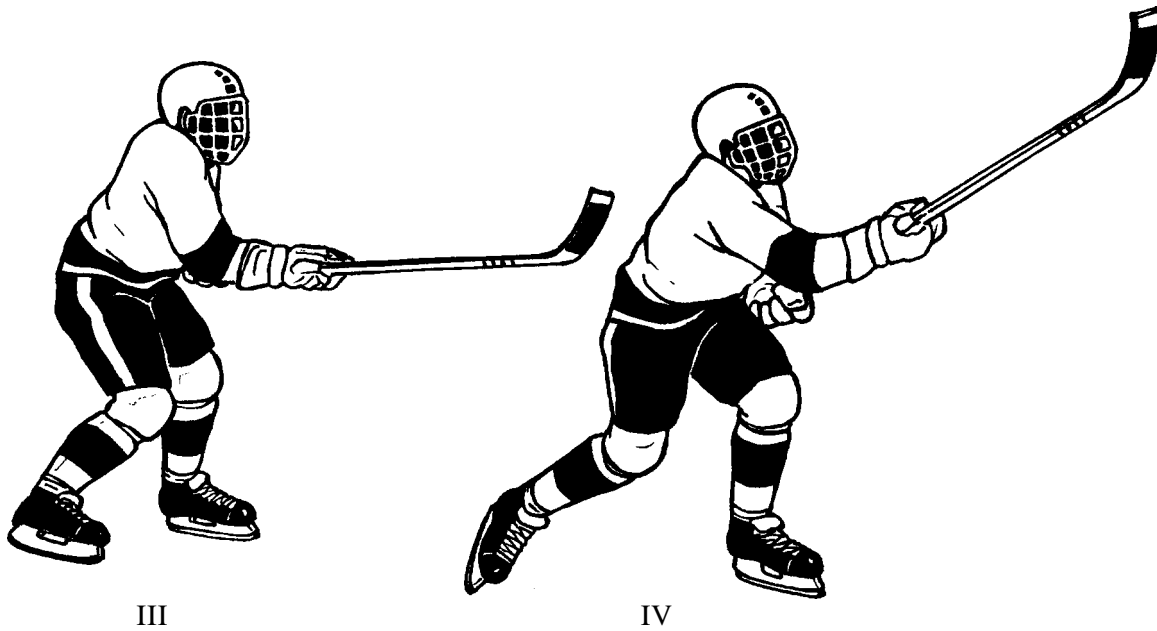


Figure 6: Flip Shot

Key Points:

- Grip is usually wider than in the stick handling position.
- The puck should be slightly ahead of the player and to the side.
- The player bends the knee closest to the puck and “digs” the puck out off the ice.
- The puck is scooped up by the front or toe portion of the blade through a quick flexion of the lower wrist and an extension of the upper wrist.
- The blade is propelled high in the air by raising the lower hand and lowering the upper hand.

17.4.3 Types of Backhand Shots

Sweep Shot

The sweep shot is perhaps the most commonly used backhand shot. It is both fast and accurate.



I



II



III



IV

Figure 7: Backhand Sweep Shot

Key Points:

- Grip is usually wider than in the stick handling position.
- With the skates directed at the target, the shoulders are rotated sideways and the trunk is slightly bent over the puck.
- The front knee is well flexed.
- The sweeping action is directed at the goal by a vigorous rotation of the trunk and shoulders, a forceful extension of the legs, followed by a dynamic action of the arms and wrists.
- During this action, the weight of the body is transferred from the back leg to the front leg as the puck travels from the heel to the toe of the stick blade.

Wrist Shot

The backhand wrist shot is usually used by a player who has faked a move to the forehand side to bring the puck to the backhand for a quick shot on the goalkeeper. Since the player is in a forward skating position, the wrist shot becomes the best tool in this particular situation.

Key Points:

- The hands are spaced slightly farther apart than during the dribble.
- The puck is placed on the heel of the blade to the side and slightly in front of the player.
- The puck is then whipped in the direction of the goal by a vigorous rotation of the shoulders and a dynamic action of the arms and wrists.
- There is limited transfer of weight.

Flip Shot

The flip shot is used when the player wishes to raise the puck quickly in a high fashion. The action is similar to the forehand flip shot but is executed from the backhand.

Key Points:

- The hands are held slightly farther apart than during the dribble.
- The player is sideways to the net, knees flexed, shoulders and trunk rotated sideways and over the puck.
- The puck is cupped on the heel of the stick blade, level with the skate closest to the net.
- The puck is shot upward by a shovelling action of the arms and shoulders as the wrists are snapped vigorously.
- During the rapid rotation of the shoulders and trunk, there is a vigorous extension of the knees and hips as the stick follows through high in the air.

17.5 Passing

Passing is a skill which requires a great deal of practise. Introducing your players to all aspects of this skill is essential.

Key Points:

- The hands should be in a comfortable position similar to that used when dribbling the puck.
- The arms should be held out in front of the body.
- The eyes are fixed on the target. (Note: the head does not necessarily turn to face the target as this would telegraph the pass.)
- The stick blade is perpendicular to the target upon releasing the puck.
- The stick blade follows through towards the target.

Here are some other considerations with respect to passing:

- The passer should use the appropriate type of pass in a given situation.
- A pass should not force the receiver to slow down. A passer should “lead” a receiver in motion thus permitting reception in full stride.
- When it is not possible to pass to the stick of the receiver, pass to the skates, behind the receiver, or to an open space.
- The passer ordinarily does not stop skating after making the pass but moves to a position of support.

17.5.1 Types of Forehand Passes

Sweep Pass

The first pass that a player should be taught is the forehand sweep pass. It is one of the most commonly used passes in hockey. This is understandable since it is not only an accurate pass, but it can be short or long, fast or slow. Another advantage of the sweep pass comes from the fact that it can be executed in full stride without giving any cues to the opponents regarding the moment of release.

Key Points:

- The basic dribbling grip should be used to execute the sweep pass.
- The puck is brought to one side beyond the left skate for a pass to the right of the player.
- The puck is propelled towards the target by a sweeping action of the arms while the weight is transferred from the left to the right skate.
- The length of the sweep depends on the time available to execute the pass and the distance the pass must cover.
- The speed of the sweeping movement and the snap of the wrists will determine the speed of the puck.

Snap Pass

The snap pass is very similar to the sweep pass. However, to implement the snapping action which increases the velocity of the pass, the stick blade is recoiled up to 30 cm back from the puck and then snapped at the puck with a powerful wrist action.

Key Points:

- The puck should be positioned parallel with the skates and close to the body.
- The puck should be struck at the mid-point of the stick blade.
- Just prior to impact, the grip on the bottom hand of the stick should tighten.
- The elbows should be away from the body.
- During the follow-through, the wrists roll over.

Flip Pass

The flip pass is effective when attempting to avoid an obstacle which is in the passing lane.

Key Points:

- The grip on the stick is similar to that used when stick handling.
- The puck is just ahead of the skate to the forehand side of the passer and on the heel of the stick blade.
- The grip tightens on the shaft of the stick as the face of the stick blade opens.
- The puck is rolled along the blade by sliding the stick in front of the body in the direction of the receiver. This imparts a spinning movement to the puck which keeps it flat in the air and subsequently flat on the ice when it lands.

17.5.2 Types of Backhand Passes

It is essential that the backhand pass be perfected. As it is a very difficult skill, it should be given special attention.



Figure 8: Basic Backhand Pass Position

Key Points:

- A player must be able to execute a backhand pass without cutting down on skating speed, changing direction, or excessively rotating the shoulders.

Sweep Pass

Like its forehand counterpart, this is perhaps the most often used backhand pass.

Key Points:

- The grip on the stick is similar to that used when stick handling and tightens during the passing action.
- The weight of the body should be transferred from the leg furthest from the receiver to the closest leg.
- The upper hand must move in front of the body to maintain the blade perpendicular to the target.
- The length of the sweep will depend on the time available and the distance of the receiver.

Snap Pass

The snap pass, although more difficult to execute than the sweep pass, is often used to perform long, crisp passes.

Key Points:

- The grip widens slightly to ensure added strength.
- The puck is placed between the skates and relatively close to the body.
- The stick is drawn back then brought down forcefully, approximately two centimetres behind the puck.
- The follow-through is in the direction of the target as the wrists roll over.

Flip Pass

Although a difficult skill, the flip pass is a valuable tool in completing passes when an obstruction is in the passing lane.

Key Points:

- The grip on the stick remains the same as when stick handling and tightens on the shaft as the face of the stick blade opens.
- The puck is placed on the heel of the blade.
- The puck is rolled along the blade by sliding the stick in front of the body in the direction of the receiver. This imparts a spinning movement to the puck which keeps it flat in the air and subsequently flat on the ice when it lands.

17.6 Pass Receiving

A team's ability to keep possession of the puck is dependent upon how well they pass and receive the puck.



Figure 9: Pass Reception

Key Points:

- Keep the blade on the ice at a 90 degree angle (perpendicular to the direction of the oncoming puck).
- The puck should be received on the straight portion of the blade and, if possible, in the middle.
- To control the reception, cushion the puck by giving slightly with the arms.

Here are some other considerations with respect to pass receiving:

- For a fast pass, tighten the grip and hold the blade firmly on the ice. The stick blade, cupped slightly, and the arms will naturally absorb the momentum of the puck.
- The pass should be received in such a way that another pass can be executed immediately without any additional stick handling movement.
- Players should practice receiving passes from different angles and controlling possible rebounds by opening or closing the stick blade on the puck.

17.6.1 Receiving Errant Passes

In many cases the pass will either be well ahead or behind the player who is responsible for making a special effort to receive it!

When the puck is too far ahead there are two different ways to stop it:

- One is to hold the stick in one hand and extend it in front as far as possible, keeping the blade flat on the ice by cocking the wrist downward (Figure 10).

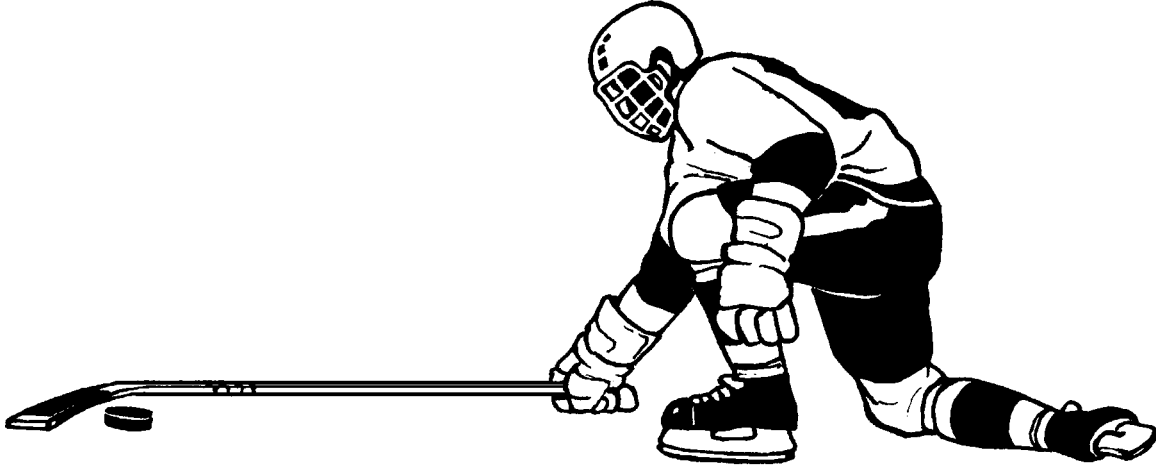


Figure 10: Reception of an Errant Pass Ahead of the Intended Target

- The other has the player dropping to one knee, laying the stick flat on the ice, and scooping the puck back with the blade.

In the event that the pass arrives behind the player, the athlete must know how to use one's skates to control the puck:

- Place the skate closest to the oncoming pass flat on the ice and angle it so that the puck will deflect off the skate blade and come forward to the stick.
- If the puck is still further behind, extend the leg closest to the oncoming puck as far as possible and pull the puck in front using the front part of the blade.

A player may have trouble receiving a pass when the pass comes in the air. (Figure 11) There are basically two ways in which a player can stop a high pass: with the stick or with the hand.

- The stick may be used to knock down a low, airborne puck which is beyond the body or reach of the glove. A downward slapping or bunting action with the stick can prove useful in contacting and controlling the puck.

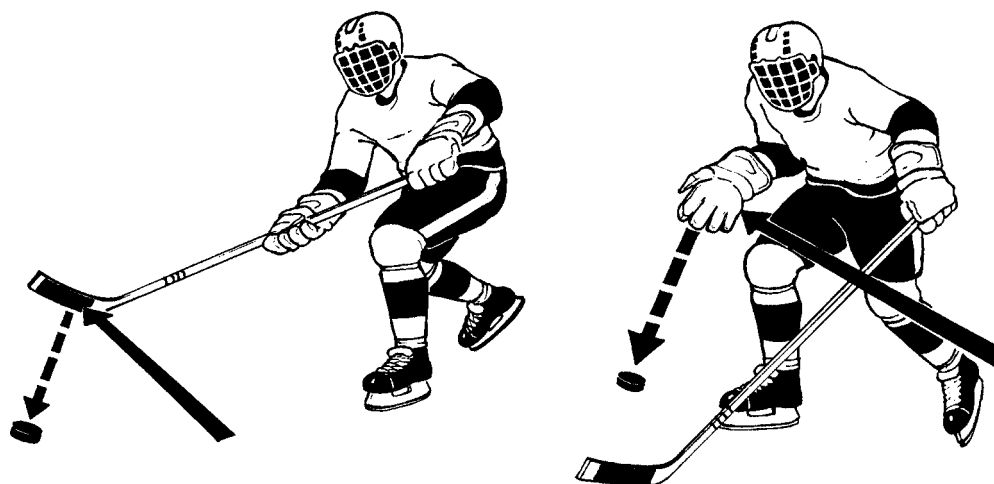


Figure 11: Controlling Passes in the Air

Very few players are skilled enough to consistently knock down passes with their stick. For this reason, it is recommended that players be instructed in using their glove in order to stop a high or bouncing pass.

- Be sure that players do not close their hand around or catch the pass. In some circumstances, the body may be used to trap and control the puck so that it can be redirected to the skates or stick for subsequent action.

SUMMARY

- Puckhandling is an important skill for your athletes to master.
- Using the proper stick is necessary for your players to learn good puck handling skills.
- There are five key elements to puck handling:
 - dribbling,
 - deking,
 - shooting,
 - passing,
 - pass receiving.



18. CHECKING SKILLS

18. Checking Skills

Checking is carried out to gain possession of the puck. However, before teaching checking, it is imperative that skating skills be taught as they are the base upon which checking skills are built. Elements of skating skills, speed, agility, balance and strength are key skills required in the art of checking. The coach must recognize that, before checking skills can be taught or developed, the player must be introduced to and have functionally mastered the basics of skating.

Upon completion of this chapter, you will be better prepared to:

- *relate skating skills to checking skills,*
- *instruct or teach checking skills in a progressive manner,*
- *instruct or teach protection skills,*
- *instruct your players in the rules pertaining to checking;*
 - *checking from behind*
 - *stick infractions*

18.1 Skating Skills and their Relationship with Checking

Section 16, Skating Skills, emphasized seven key skill areas:

- basic stance, edges, starts, stops, striding, turning and pivots.

Each of these skating skills has a direct relationship with checking skills. The majority of mistakes made when checking an opponent stem from incorrect body position on the skates, which is directly related to skating skill.

For example, when a two-foot stop is completed, both legs must be in a position to initiate the drive into the new skating direction. If the legs are not in a proper flexed position, both time and power is lost. The drive should be initiated by the back leg, so that at no time are the legs crossed. If the legs are crossed over at the precise time of a check, the attacking player has only to move to the side to beat the checker.

Fundamental body position errors and leg movement errors such as this example creates compounding problems in all other forms of checking skills, from the poke check to the body check. Therefore, skating should be taught in a progressive fashion (e.g., the basics of the forward and backward skating stride switch to speed of leg movements, correct body position for two and one-foot stops both forward and backward, quick starts, lateral movements, forward and backward crossovers, pivots from forward to backward), and once mastered a coach should start teaching checking.

18.2 Checking Without Making Contact

Angling can be considered as a player's first line of defense. Body and stick positions are important in checking without making contact. This section will examine angling as one technique of checking without making contact.

18.2.1 Angling

Angling is the ability to force an opponent to go in the direction you want. This would normally be towards the boards or to the outside of you.

Key Points:

- Remain between the puck carrier and the pass receiver, gradually reducing the puck carrier's space.
- Skate parallel to the opponent or in an arc or circular movement, but not in a straight line.
- Skate slightly behind the opponent, thus not allowing the opponent to turn up ice to the inside of you.
- Adjust your speed to the opponent's speed.
- Your stick is always on the ice in a position to intercept a pass and as a decoy to force the opposition to the desired direction.

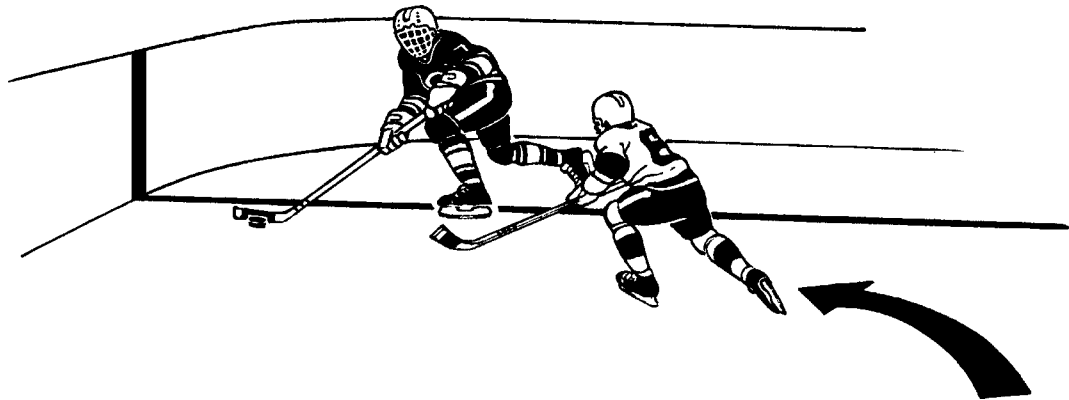


Figure 1: Angling

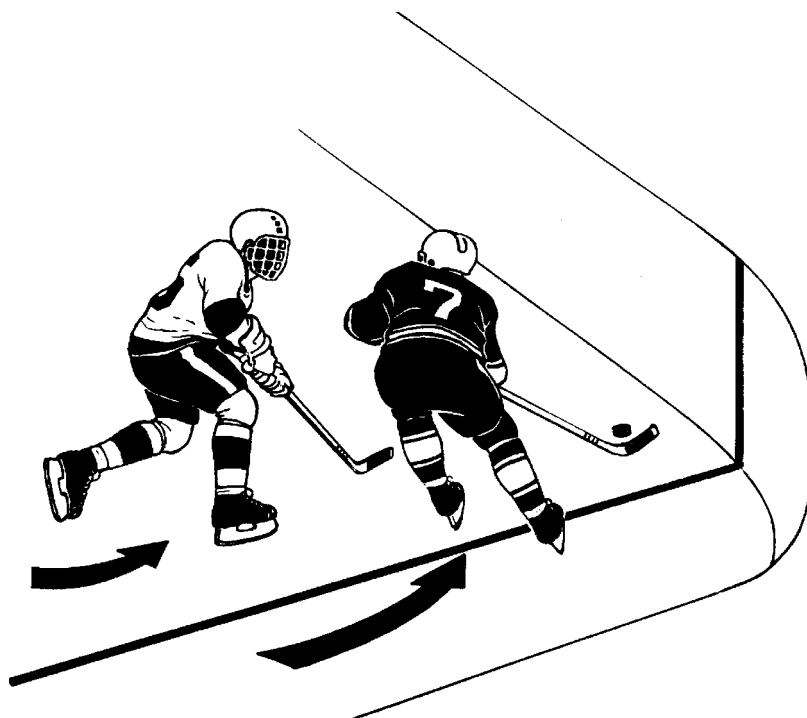


Figure 2: Angling: Closing the Gap

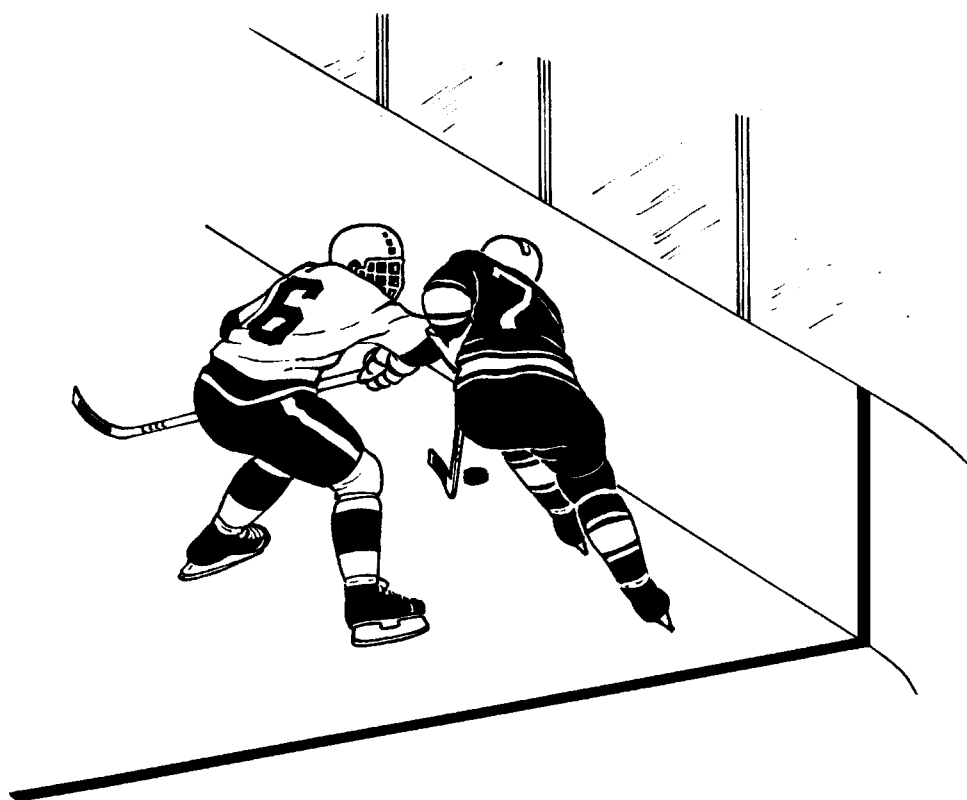


Figure 3: Angling: Establishing Contact

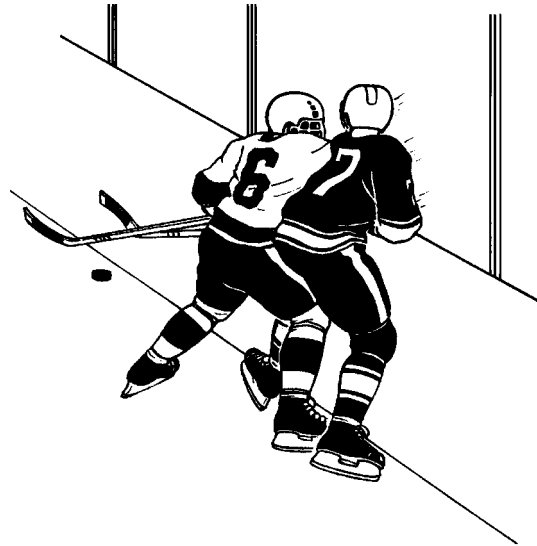


Figure 4: Angling: The Pin

18.3 Stick Checking

Stick checking may be considered the second line of defense as angling forces the opposition to a position where contact can be made with the stick.

When you stick check, you must maintain control of both you and your opponent's sticks. Sticks checks can be effective to:

- delay the advancement of the opposition,
- force a loss of puck control by the opposition,
- control the puck (become the offensive team) yourself (or a teammate).

This section will examine six types of stick checks: poke, sweep, hook, hit, stick lift, and stick press.

18.3.1 Poke Check

Key Points:

- Primary vision is on the player: peripheral vision is on the puck.
- Stick is held with one hand.
- Keep the elbow slightly bent and close to the body.
- Perform a quick extension of the forearm to poke the puck.
- Legs always remain in a flexed (bent) position.
- When required, keep skating.
- Maintain balance throughout the check.

Major Problem:

- Player lunges at the opponent, causing the legs to straighten, therefore leaving the defending player in a poor body position to react if the poke check is missed.

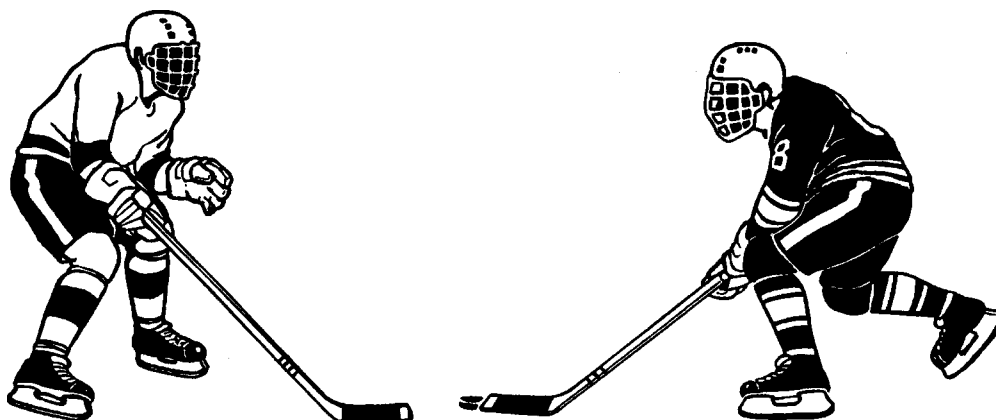


Figure 5: Poke Check



Figure 6: Poke Check

18.3.2 Sweep Check

This check is valuable in many different situations yet is often overlooked in the checking arsenal.

Key Points:

- The hockey stick and blade should be on the ice.
- Sweep the ice surface in a circular motion.
- Maintain movement while performing this check as it will enable you to back check or pin the opponent along the boards should you miss the sweep check.
- You should control this check with either hand, when possible.

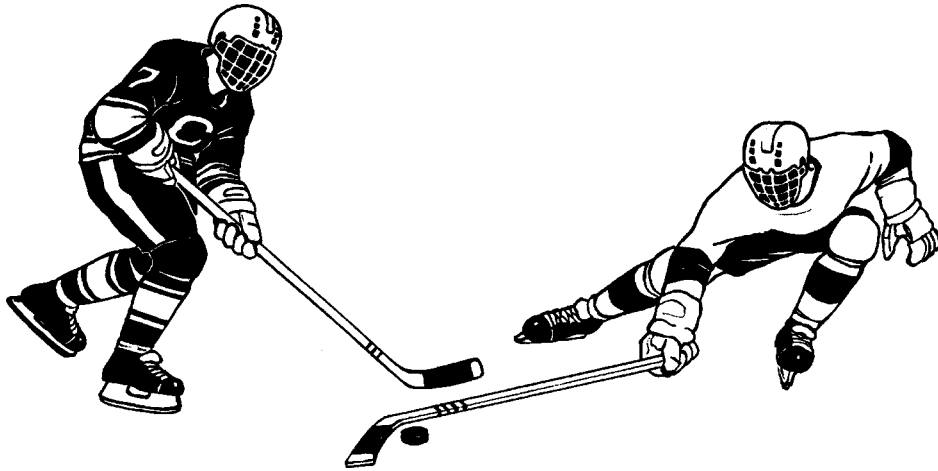


Figure 7: Sweep Check

The disadvantages of the sweep check, are that if you miss the puck and trip the opponent, you may be called for a tripping penalty. Also, you're out of position if you get beat by the puck carrier.

18.3.3 Hook Check

Key Points:

- One hand is on the stick.
- Stick blade is flat on the ice.
- The puck will be controlled by trapping it in the curve where the shaft meets the upper part of the blade.
- Hook the puck towards you.
- Can be executed from both a forward and backward skating position.
- To lengthen your reach you can perform this check while on one knee.



Figure 8: Hook Check

18.3.4 Hit (The Blade of the Stick)

Key Points:

- Skate parallel to the puck carrier.
- When the puck is on the puck carrier's stick blade, on the opposite side of you, hit the stick to provoke the loss of the puck control.
- To be effective, you must forcefully hit the stick near the heel of the stick blade.



Figure 9: Blade Contact

18.3.5 Stick Lift

Key Points:

- Approach the puck carrier from behind.
- When close enough, lift the shaft of the opponent's stick near its heel and compete for possession of the puck.



Figure 10: Stick Lift (From Behind)



Figure 11: Stick Lift (At an Angle)

Note:

If you are close enough to the puck carrier, you should position your body in front of the puck carrier. The stick lift may be done when approaching the opponent from an angle. Surprise and strength are key requirements for this skill.

18.3.6 Stick Press

Key Points:

- The stick is placed over the shaft, below the opponents bottom stick hand.
- Just as the opponent is to receive a pass or move to redirect the puck, press down firmly.

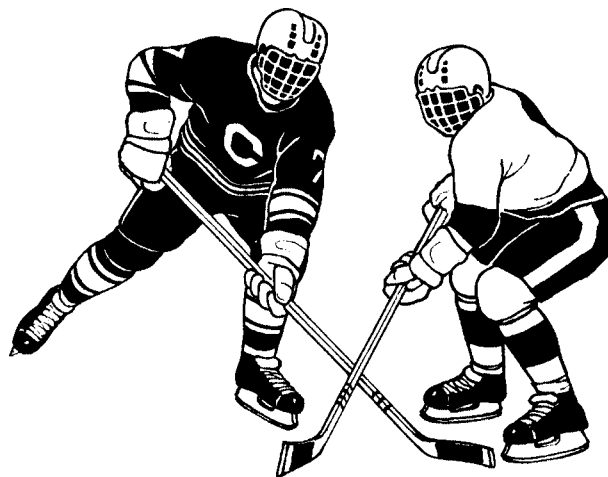


Figure 12: Stick press

18.4 Protection in Body Checking

It is very important to have the ability to avoid or prepare oneself for a check.

To avoid being checked:

- keep the head and eyes up, scanning the play,
- maintain movement or motion,
- don't reach back for a pass unless you are sure there is no opposition player in front of you.

To prepare to receive a check:

- maintain a wide stance by bending the knees and leaning in the direction from which the check is coming,
- initiate movement towards the checker just prior to impact and ensure low contact,
- wear the appropriate protective equipment,
- when falling down or colliding with the boards, absorb the shock with the largest available portion of the body,
- avoid falling on extended body parts,
- during off-ice sessions, enhance your strength and flexibility.

18.5 Body Checks

This section will examine five types of body checks: blocking or defending against the puck carrier, stick lift and shoulder check, block, hip, and roller.

A body check should be used when:

- you wish to separate the player from the puck,
- the opponent, in possession of the puck, tries to pass between you and the boards,
- an opponent is not fully prepared yet not in danger of injury.

18.5.1 General Principles of Body Checking:

- Once you have committed yourself to deliver a body check, complete it. Do not change your decision part way through the check.
- Keep your primary vision on the opponent at all times.
- Never attempt a body check if you are off-balance.
- Attempt to place the opponent off-balance while maintaining your balance.
- For better balance, assume a wide stance, bending the knees in order to ensure leg extension.
- Along the boards, you must neutralize the arms and stick of the opponent to avoid the possibility of a pass.
- During the body check, be sure to momentarily control the opponent by completing your body check
- To avoid penalties and injury, always keep your stick low.

18.5.2 Blocking or Defending Against the Puck Carrier

Key Points:

- Primary vision is on the opponent, peripheral vision on the puck.
- Attempt to hit the opponent's chest with your shoulder (Figure 13).
- Extend the legs when finishing the check.
- Precede the shoulder by placing the hands to the lower chest of the opponent to guard against a stick raise and to control the player.
- Prior to initiating the check, assume a solid base of support.



Figure 13: Body check

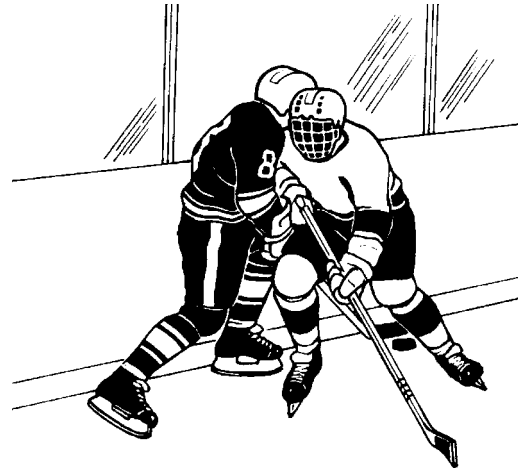


Figure 14: Shoulder check

18.5.3 Stick Lift and Shoulder Check (when the stick blade is directed towards the boards)

Key Points:

- Place the inside knee, bent, in front of the opponent.
- Place your stick under the opponent's stick.
- Lift the stick.
- Hit the opponent with the hip or shoulder (Figure 14).
- Momentarily pin the opponent's stick and arms on the boards.
- Recover the puck with your stick or skate.



Figure 15: Stick Lift and Shoulder Check

18.5.4 Block Check

Key Points:

- Widen the grip on the stick.
- Bend the inside knee and place it in front of the attacker.
- Hip and/or shoulder check.
- Momentarily pin the opponent's arms on the boards.
- Recover the puck with the skate.



Figure 16: Block Check

18.5.5 Hip Check

Key Points:

- It is important to be close to the opponent as momentary eye contact is lost during the check.
- Bend the trunk parallel to the ice.
- Bend the knees and hit the opponent at the hips and thighs.
- On impact, the checker rights oneself by pushing with and extending the outside leg.

Note:

The hip check is the most difficult of the body checks to execute, particularly in the mid-ice area and, therefore, should be handled with care in this zone (Figure 17). An extension of the hip check can occur along the boards by the defending player pivoting at the last moment and making contact with the hips or buttocks rather than executing a shoulder check.

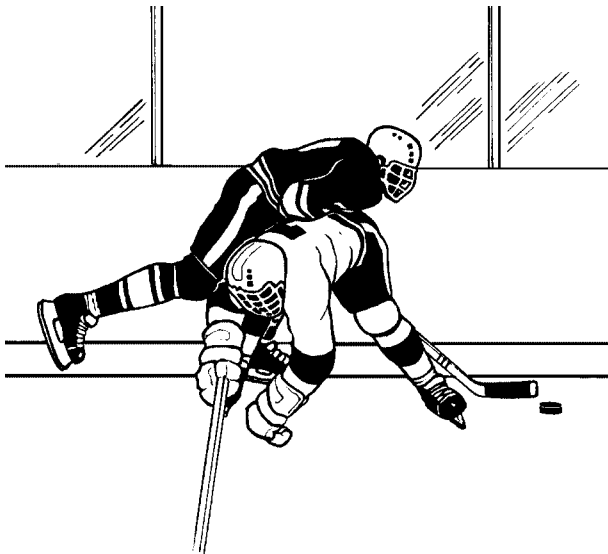


Figure 17: Hip Check at the Boards



Figure 18: Hip Check in Open Ice

18.5.6 Roller Check (along the boards only)

Key Points:

- Forcefully push the opponent with the forearm or shoulder to provoke contact of the hip and shoulders with the boards (Figure 19).
- The rubbing will cause a pivoting or rolling around the point of impact forcing the opponent's chest to the boards.
- Keep skating and take possession of the puck while the opponent is off balance.

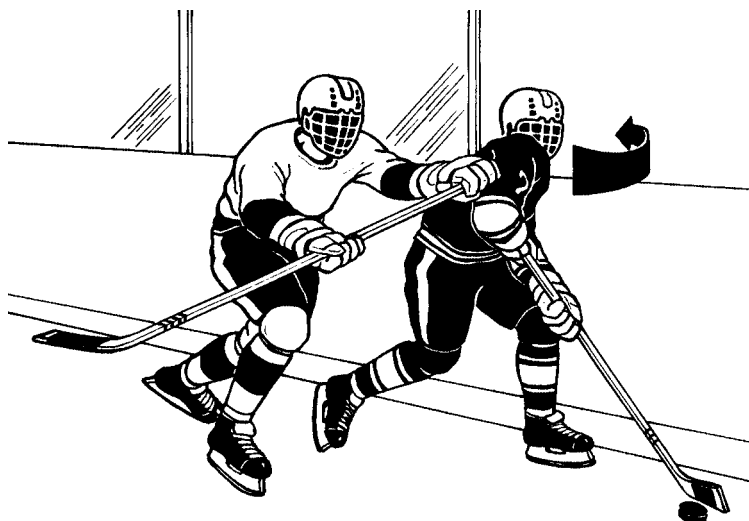


Figure 19: Roller Check

18.5.7 Pinning Technique

Key Points:

- Turn the opponent towards the boards by driving your arm and shoulder under your opponent's outside arm from the backside.
- As the opponent's body is rotating towards the boards, push with the legs and hips.
- Place the inside leg between the opponent's legs.
- Once against the boards, press in and up to lift the opponents skate blades slightly off of the ice thus neutralizing the opponent.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Stricter enforcement of the high sticking, cross-checking, slashing, and hooking rules.
- National Associations strongly support the officials who officiate games according to the recommended application guidelines.
- All National Association officials and coaching clinics specifically address the problem of stick infractions.
- All National Associations make a conscious effort to implement and/or strengthen their present referee supervision programs, with emphasis on stick infractions.

RECOMMENDED APPLICATION GUIDELINES

High Sticking

- Any contact with a high stick, accidental or not, shall be penalized.
- Any player, in the process of checking an opponent, who raises one's stick above the normal height of the shoulders and does not make contact with the stick, shall still be penalized.
- Any defending player raising one's stick above the normal height of the shoulders in a manner intimidating to an oncoming opposing player shall be penalized.
- Opposing players jostling for position anywhere on the ice surface who raise their sticks above the normal height of the shoulders shall be penalized.

Slashing

- Any deliberate slashing action (regardless of frequency or degree) to the body of an opponent shall be penalized.
- Any stick swung at an opponent who is out of reach shall result in a penalty.
- Any swinging action with the stick where it is obvious that the player is not playing the puck shall result in a penalty.
- Any chopping action on the shaft of an opponent's stick above the bottom hand shall result in a penalty.

Cross-Checking

- Any chopping action (sharp pushing action, sudden jarring, or jolting forward action) with the shaft of the stick held between the hands shall result in a penalty.

Note:

A defending player shall be allowed to place one's stick on the puck carrier and ride the puck carrier off.

Hooking

- When the blade of the stick is "hooked" into the body (waist, hips, thighs, arm) of an opponent to hinder the opponent's progress, a penalty shall be assessed.
- Any "tugging" action, with the blade of the stick placed anywhere on the body of an opponent, in an effort to restrict movement or slow the opponent down, shall be penalized.

Through this stricter application of the above four rules, it is hoped that the safety and enjoyment aspects of the game will be promoted and that players may be allowed to develop and better exhibit individual and team play skills.

SUMMARY

- Checking is an important skill to teach properly to your players.
- The main areas of checking are:
 - skating,
 - checking without making contact (angling),
 - stick checking,
 - protection in receiving a body check,
 - body checks.
- It is necessary to strictly apply the rules pertaining to checking to significantly decrease body checking from behind and stick infractions and, thus, to promote the safety and enjoyment of the game.

APPENDIX 18.1

Five rules to follow if you are being checked are outlined below. Everyone should try to play safely – including players who are **giving** checks as well as taking them. The cardinal rule is: **don't** check another player from behind.

1. **Don't get caught in the danger zone – stay close to the boards.**

If you are standing still, approximately 1-1.5 m from the boards, you are extremely vulnerable. You could be checked, either from the side or behind, and go head first into the boards. You wouldn't have time to recover from the check before hitting the boards. If you keep moving, your body will be better able to react to a check than if you're standing still. If you stay in close, the boards will prop you up, and you can use the long bones of your body – legs, arms, hips, shoulders – to absorb the impact of the hit.

2. **Know where your opponents are.**

When you head into the corner after the puck, look over your shoulder to see where the opposition is. You will know whether you are vulnerable to a check from one direction or another, and you will be able to get ready for it. This quick check will also tell you where your teammates are, making it easier to get the puck to them if you come up with it.

3. **Use your hands and arms as a cushion.**

When you are checked, raise your arms and hands so they are between the boards and your head. This allows you to protect your head, and also to push off the boards after the check, springing out and back into action.

4. **Keep your head up.**

This rule applies throughout the game, but especially when you are being checked. If you go into the boards with your head down, you increase the odds of a serious neck injury. Do not lower your head down into your shoulders and stick out your chin. This is the most dangerous position of all. **KEEP YOUR HEAD UP.**

5. **Turn your body so your shoulders hit first.**

If you find yourself hurtling head first into the boards, your first move should be to get your arms up, but also try to turn your body so that your shoulders will hit the boards instead of your head.