

Coaches Corner

When practicing Puck Retrievals & Breakouts look to focus on specific components, by separating out the different components it is much easier to identify strengths and weaknesses and opportunities. On most teams you will find subtle skill deficiencies that are limiting the efficiency of the entire breakout process.

In the attached video you will notice the following 5 habits at various times:

- Shoulder Checks & Pre-Scans – Good Defensemen should gather information constantly, checking both shoulders continuously but also continue to read the play from below the goal line. Awareness of the forecheckers and passing outlets is key, this is the single most important skill to introduce
- Reading the Second Layer – Generally when a Defensemen cuts the net they are being perused from behind, having an awareness of the second layer of checkers is very important. This is a perfect opportunity to draw in 2 checkers (F1 & F2) and distribute the puck to an open teammate
- Cut Tight to Net – By cutting tight to the net the Defensemen is less likely to be checked, use the net as an obstacle to create separation
- Take Middle Ice When Available – From the middle lane a Defensemen has more passing and skating options, it is a dangerous area for turnovers so D should get around the net and make a quick decision based on the checking pressure and space available
- Look to make a Penetrating Pass – The ultimate outcome is to create separation from the immediate chaser, step out and make a penetrating pass through the second layer of checker(s) (generally F2, but can include F3)

DRILL – 2 Net Keep Away

- Puck carrier tries to evade checker using both nets until Coach provides an outlet target
- Puck carrier is forced to use vision and awareness in two separate ways that simulates an immediate chaser and the second layer of checkers/outlets
 1. Read the checker
 2. Watch for Coach to put his stick on the ice signaling that an outlet pass is now an option

Key Teaching Points:

- Puck handling - be sure puck carrier is not crossing hands excessively
- Skating – Puck carrier should use “sculling” (pushing with heels) to generate power/speed through a tight turn
- Deception – Both players can use fakes and subtle forms of false information to either create separation or close the gap