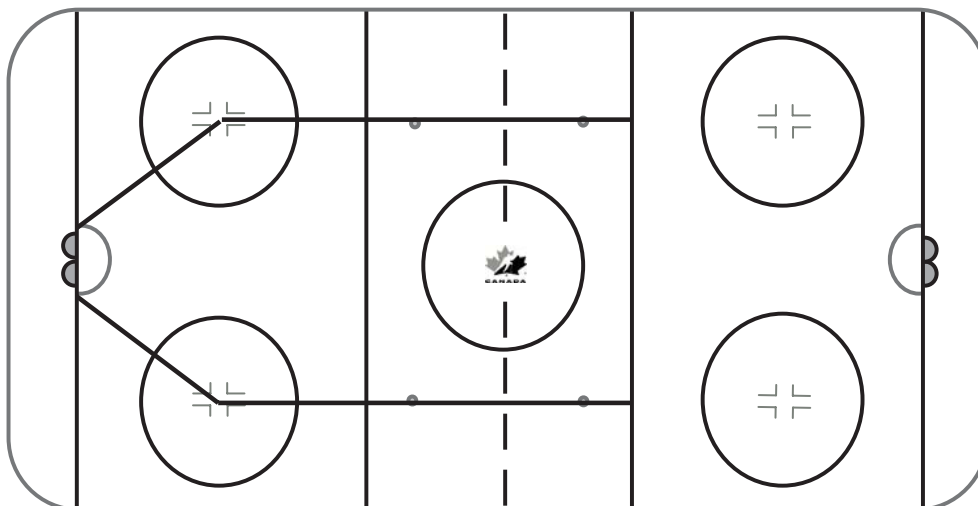


Defensive Team Play – Part I Protecting the Middle of the Ice and Tracking

*Presented by: Wayne Fleming
Assistant Coach, Calgary Flames
From material presented at the 2004 International Coaches Conference*

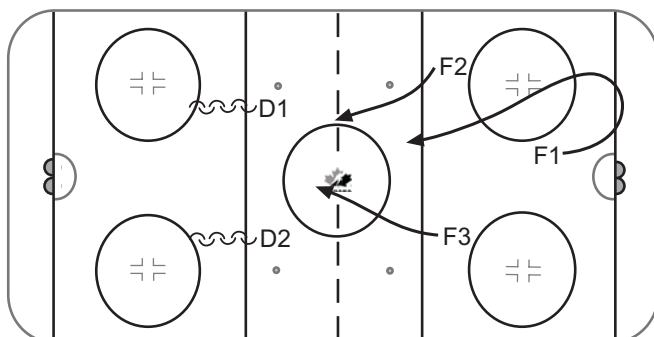
Defensive Side of the Game

Defensively, protect the middle of the ice from our “home base” and out.



Tracking **Closing the Gap from Behind** **“Take Away Time and Space of the Puck Carrier”**

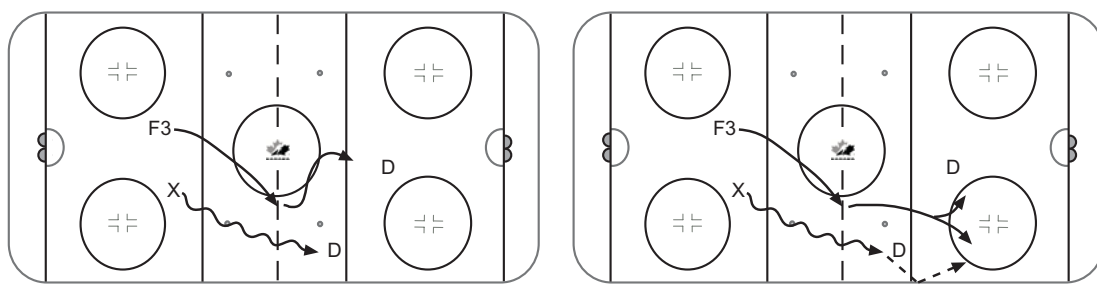
Forwards must track back hard and fast to close the gap from behind. This prevents their players from crossing and provides our defensemen with confidence to stand up.



- F3 tracks back hard through the middle and pressures from behind – pushes the puck carrier hard from the back side to blue line and chases down chips
- F1 and F2 come back hard through the dots to home base – do not get outside the dots
- Outnumber the opposition at our blueline

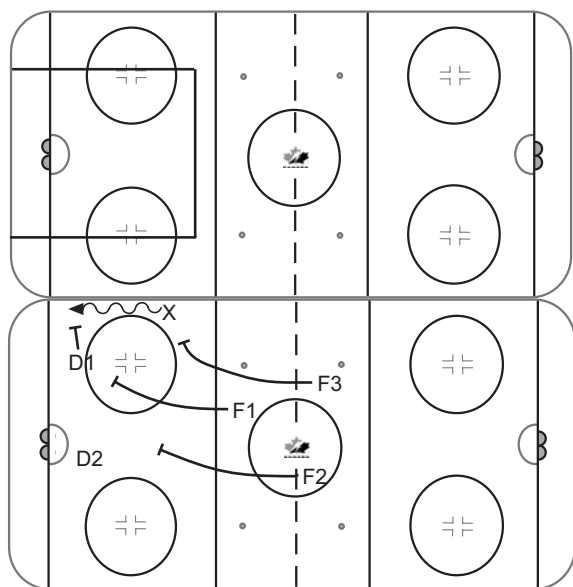
Tracker – backchecking forward

- Tracking is extension of reload on the forecheck in an effort to be middle ice strong
- Track puck carrier hard
- Track puck carrier through middle ice to outside the dots
- Trackers must push hard to the red line then start to fold to the middle while reading the offensive attack. There must be strong communication between the defense and trackers
- As puck side defenseman receives puck carrier outside the dot, before or at our blueline, tracker must protect middle ice and retrieve loose and chipped pucks
- Tracker will usually be first forward back (F1) to work low in the defensive end



Defensive Zone Coverage

Back hard – Protect Home Base



- Outnumber opposition by the defensive blue line and in the area that we want to defend – Home Base
- Forwards must read role as entering offensive zone
- All F's race back between the dots to defensive zone coverage
- When into position – STOP – no fly bys!!
- When things get hectic: **Hold the Slot**

Designating Low Support Forward Options:

- First forward back becomes and stays F1
- Centre is designated low support forward.

Note: many times a winger will be the F1 roles - If playing centre low, a winger, maybe F1 initially, must pick up F2 or F3 responsibilities and switch on first opportunity