



Puck Control

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

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. Consider...

- Length
- Flexibility
- Lie
- Curve of Blade
- Grip

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 depends 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. The dribble is one means accessible to a player who wishes to become free of an opponent and maintain possession of the puck.

Key Points

- The hands should be spaced approximately eight to twelve inches apart in a comfortable position. The arms and shoulders should be relaxed.
- Both hands should move in the same direction on the stick shaft. 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.

Types of Dribbles

1. Front Dribble (perpendicular to the direction of the player)
2. Side Dribble (parallel to the direction of the player)
3. Diagonal Dribble (diagonal to the direction of the player)



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 shot in order to mislead an opponent.

Key Points

- A fake must be based on deception but have all the appearance of reality.
- Dekes should be initiated at a sufficient distance from an opponent to avoid being stick handled.
- Changes of speed and direction are important factors to the success of any deke.
- Acceleration after completing the deke is often important.

Types of Dekes

Body Fakes

1. Change of Direction
2. Between the Legs

Skating Fakes

1. Stop and Start
2. Change of Speed
3. Directional Skating
4. Using the Boards

Stick Fakes

1. Fake a Shot
2. Fake a Pass

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.

Key Points

- Accuracy is most important.
- Get the stick blade traveling as fast as possible.
- Speed of execution (i.e. 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.

Types of Forehand Shots

1. Sweep Shot
2. Wrist Shot
3. Snap Shot
4. Slap Shot
5. Flip Shot

Types of Backhand Shots

1. Sweep Shot
2. Wrist Shot
3. Flip Shot



PASSING

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

Key Points

- The hands should be in 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.
- The stick blade is perpendicular to the target upon releasing the puck.
- The stick blade follows through towards the target.

Types of Forehand Passes

1. Sweep Pass
2. Snap Pass
3. Flip Pass

Types of Backhand Passes

1. Sweep Pass
2. Snap Pass
3. Flip Pass



PASS RECEIVING

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

Key Points

- Keep the blade on the ice at a 90 degree angle.
- 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.

Types of Errant Passes

1. Pass ahead of intended target
2. Pass behind intended target
3. Pass in air