

What Happens in a Hockey Game?

Before we make a season plan or design a practice or decide what kind of offensive and defensive structure we want our team to play it is important to have a basic understanding of what **ACTUALLY HAPPENS** in a hockey game.

Some statistics about a Hockey Game:

- the average game has about 5.5 goals scored. So if you can average 3 or more goals for and keep it to 2 or less goals against then you will have a good winning percentage. The old adage about winning 2-1 with great defense is bunk.

- each team will get the puck for about 180 attacks which means the puck turns over about 6 times per minute. Your player must have good habits like facing the puck, getting open, and follow the transition principle "you must defend so that you are ready to attack and attack so that you are ready to defend."

- in a game your team is on;

offense 35% of the time.

defense 35% of the time.

the puck is loose 30% of the time and the battle for loose pucks puts you on offense or defense.

So the question is what kind of forecheck will you use. Does a zone trap make sense when the counter attack from there is successful 7% of the time.

Success of shots.

So the question is 'how do you get your team to shoot from the slot and put in rebounds and prevent the other team from doing this?

Attacks

- 60% of goals come from 30 counter attacks. (should you work on Quick Transition)

- 40% of goals come from 120 organized attacks (should your first choice be North-South or East-West.)

10% of these goals come from won face-offs.

Goals from Scoring area

5% of goals come from breakaways

35% of goals come from one timers or bang ins

30% are scored shooting in stride.

30% of rebounds or deflections.

Teams score on about 11% of the shots from the scoring area and the goalie stops 89% of the shots.

The players constantly switch from

Game playing role one - puck carrier.

Game playing role two - supporting the puck.

Game playing role three - checking the puck carrier.

Game playing role four - covering away from the puck.

Six transitions per minute from offense to defense to loose puck is a LOT of transitions between game situations and game playing roles.

It is easy to work on one way drills where you pass and attack vs zero opposition and these drills are important to get the basic skills of passing, skating, taking a pass, shooting, rebounds, etc. but if a coach only does this he isn't really preparing the team to 'play the game'. The same with playing defensive one on ones. They are important skills but the game continues after the 1-1 battle and those players will be in a different game situation and a different game playing role.

So it is a huge challenge to prepare players to be successful in an actual game. They need:

- the individual offensive and defensive skills.
- the ability to read the play and recognize who to cover away from the puck on defense and how to effectively support the attack on offense by getting open, going to the net, giving width or depth to the attack.

Players also have to be able to play within the team structure in even and odd man situations. This requires skills, game awareness and the ability to create opportunities to regain the puck or get a scoring chance.

So our challenge as coaches is to practice every situation in all three zones on offense, defense and loose puck battles.

T – Game Transitions Examples from World Championships

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jh0SYNZiGwU&t=6s>