

- Defensemen Skills and Positional Requirements for Elite Level Defensemen 2011 and older

- **General Rules for Defensemen**

- Learn to Read and Re-act to on ice situations.
- Proper positioning and awareness prevents wasted energy.
- Be aware of puck and coverage.
- Must maintain, “Head on a Swivel”.
- Keep your feet moving.
- Read and identify from the rush.
- Communication with partner and goaltender

- **Defensemen Musts**

- Skating agility and lateral movement.
- Puck Control especially on retrievals
- Direct Tape-to-Tape Passing.
- Move and Shoot.
- Checking, especially 1-1 plays, “Containment”.
- If you see front you contain, if you see numbers on back you close on opponent and attack the puck
- Play within your limits.

- Offensive Zone Play (with or without the puck)

- **Joining the Rush**

- Keep up in the play - Tight Gap
- Think puck control or dump ins with a purpose
- Make wise decisions in offensive zone
- No drop passes or turnovers
- **Blue line Play**
- Hustle to far blue line (to keep pucks in the zone)
- Pinching is not automatic
- Use as much of the ice as necessary (Feet outside blue line, stick and puck in)
- Identify and immediately read the rush on change of possession

- **Shooting**
- Move and release puck 6" high, middle of net, wrist or slap shot.
- Look for tip ins, rebounds, screen shots. Shot low and for the pads.
- Shooting....Off the pass or one-timers.
- Throw "junk" on the net, doesn't need to be hard, direct puck down to in front

- **Adjust to the Puck**
- Always protect the middle of the ice.
- Move to the wall quickly, especially on the PP.
- Stay up and maintain a good gap.
- **Moving in Back Door**, especially on PP, requires proper timing.
- **Pinching....** forward must cover and assume point responsibilities.
- **Partner makes sure to sag back and give support for partner shooting.**

- **Dumps or Soft Chips**
- Dump with the purpose of recovering the puck as primary goal
- High and hard up on the glass
- Keep dump away from the goaltender
- Chip pucks into soft areas
- **Neutral Zone**
- Tight Gap...Joining the Rush...4th man.
- Wide entry - defense move quickly and aggressively, close gap
- Puck carrier in the middle: slow down  
protect seam  
not as aggressively  
and as quickly  
read and react  
\_ ready for high numbers

- **Reading the Rush**
- Read - "Read both sides of the rush" most difficult for young defense to learn, 2 on 2, 3 on 3, 3 on 2.
- Stand up and stay together
- Gap control **"Be up - Not Step Up."**
- Criss - Cross - **"Stay in Lanes"**
- Communication - Switching?
- Awareness - of 3rd or 4th or 5th man

- **1 on 1**
- Gap "in close, stay close."
- Eyes on opponent "eyes up" watch opponent's chest.
- Stick on puck - don't reach or lunge.
- Finish check, hit, ride or pin - **"Contain."**
- Defensive side of the the puck - man

- **2 on 1**
- Positioning - stay in the middle.
- Goaltender takes the shooter.
- Bluff the puck carrier with stick movement.
- Be active with your stick.
- Force puck with stick - use body to shield passing lane - slide?
- Stop second man from getting rebound.

- **3 on 2**
- Positioning
- Communicate to partner and back checker
- Stall for time, and help from your back checkers
- Try to force puck to outside as wide man is least dangerous.
- Pass to slot is most dangerous, middle drive man hardest to defend.

- **Defensive Zone Coverage**

- Strong side D push offensive player away from net. Stay on D-side
- Net front D off of Strong side post, finds Offensive F3
- Rotate off of cycle, communicate with low forward.
- Stick on puck, eliminate, contain, “and Don’t get beat back to the net.”
- Always 1 D in front of the net.

- ***Net Front Play***

- Be aware of opponent through proper positioning.
- Don’t tie yourself up - Stay Loose.
- Gap up on F3
- Pass comes to net - now tie up opponents stick
- Point shot - move opponent away from net
- Don’t let him screen the goalie - no tip ins or rebounds - Box Out.

- ***Take Outs***

- Eliminate time and space
- Hurry the puck carrier....don’t get beat
- Always remain on the defensive side of the puck
- Never get beat back to the front of the net

- ***Puck Moving Defenseman PMD***

- Breakout used according to pressure applied by fore-checking team - little, medium, heavy pressure.
- Partner can be a big help by....  
Getting available, Hold Ups, Communicating
- Goalie can be a big help by communicating
- Work on breakouts – Goalie and partner communication:
- Escape
- Over
- Wheels, Switch
- Read the Pressure
- Choose the correct set play
- First pass a priority, execution, bad pass usually a major problem

- ***Basic Rules of Thumb***

- Never make a pass up the middle in your own end
- Never make a cross-ice pass in the D-zone unless it is sauced and is a stretch-pass that springs a slashing forward on a break away.
- If in doubt, Freeze or Ice the puck
- First option should be a tape to tape pass, Hard rim should be a last option
- Ice the puck High and Hard off the glass
- If your partner has the puck, give support underneath.

- Always play the man, not the puck!
- Be up. Maintain good gap. Do not back in on the goalie, stand up and force the play in the neutral zone.