



TECHNICAL

Puck Control II



REVISED 2/19

OBJECTIVES

- To understand intermediate-level puck control techniques
- To understand the various game situations for stickhandling techniques

INTRODUCTION

Puck control is one of the most important fundamental skills of ice hockey. Until players learn to control the puck, their ability to shoot and pass will be greatly diminished. This chapter will cover various puck control techniques that will be very useful in game situations.

FOREHAND SHIFT

The forehand shift is one of the most important ways you can teach your players to stickhandle around an opponent. The characteristics of this move are described below and illustrated in Figure 9-1.

Key Elements

- The puck is shifted to the forehand side
- The arms are fully extended, the puck is brought out, slightly back and away from the defender.
- Use the body as much as possible to protect the puck.
- Keep the head up.
- Speed is important in this move.

Common Errors

- slowing down when approaching the defender
- not using the body to shield the puck from the defender



Figure 9-1. *Forehand shift.*

Suggestions for Coaching

- Teach your players to set up the move with a slight move to the backhand (and/or a head and shoulders fake to the backhand side). This move should be strong enough to get the defender to react. As the defender reacts, initiate the shift in the other direction.
- As the players advance in skill, allow them to use the lower hand only to hold the stick. This frees the upper hand so that it can be used to ward off the defender.

BACKHAND SHIFT

The backhand shift must be developed to compliment the skill developed in the forehand shift. As your players master both of these skills and can reliably use them at full speed, they can create enormous difficulties for the defensemen. This move is illustrated in Figure 9-2.

Key Elements

- The puck is shifted to the backhand side.
- The arms are extended.
- The body screens the puck from the defender.
- The head is up.

Common Errors

- keeping the puck too close to the body
- watching the puck rather than the defender

Suggestions for Coaching

As with the forehand shift, the backhand shift can be set up with a fake to the forehand side. As with many of the other skills of hockey, teach the moves of the backhand shift at slow to moderate speeds before working on them at full speed.



Figure 9-2. Backhand shift.

CHANGE OF PACE

In this move, players skate under control at moderate speed. Just as they reach the defender, they accelerate to full speed. Figure 9-3 shows the sequence of events involved in the change-of-pace move. Puck carriers should approach the defender at moderate speed, then accelerate and cut around the defender carrying the puck on his or her forehand side. Note that the puck is kept far away from defenders, and that the puck carriers should use the arm closest to the defender to aid in brushing past them. The combination of timing and fast skating will allow the puck carrier to beat the defender. This maneuver may also be done to the backhand side.

Key Elements

- Use distinct acceleration.
- Shift the puck to the backhand and/or forehand side.
- Shield the puck with the arm closest to the defender.

Common Errors

- accelerating prior to reaching the defender
- failing to execute the forehand and/or backhand shift
- leaving the puck too close to the defender

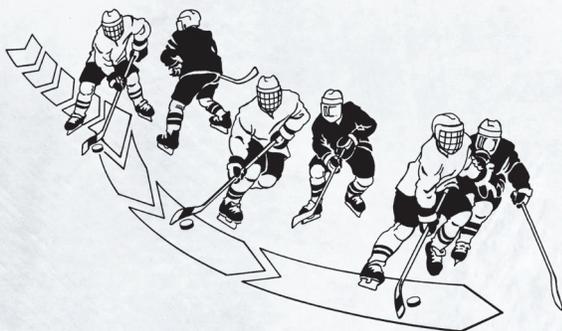


Figure 9-3. Sequence involved in the change-of-pace move.

This move is especially useful when a defenseman is skating backward slowly and there is room to move on either side.

SLIP THROUGH

In this move, the puck is pushed through the defender's stick and skates or between the skates. This move is illustrated in Figure 9-4.

Key Elements

- Push the puck forward with the appropriate velocity.
- Pull the stick back and away from the defender.

Common Errors

- inappropriate timing for pushing the puck through

Suggestions for Coaching

The defender should have slowed down, the head should be down, and a large space should exist between the defender's legs or between his or her stick and skates.



Figure 9-4. Executing the slip through.

SLIP ACROSS

The slip across is another important move to teach your players to help them beat a defender one-on-one. To execute this skill, shift the puck to one side and then slip the puck between the skates and the heel of the stick of the defender. The slip across is illustrated in Figure 9-5.

Key Elements

- Set this move up by a shift to one side to get the defender to shift his or her weight to that side.
- The puck is slipped between the defender's skates and the heel of the stick.
- The player shifts direction and picks up the puck on the other side of the defender.



Common Errors

- failing to get the defender to react to the first shift (fake)
- slipping the puck too hard and thus losing control of the puck

Suggestions for Coaching

- The slip across differs from the slip through in that the puck travels across the body instead of straight ahead.



Figure 9-5. Execution of the slip across.

SLIP AROUND

The slip around should be executed in the following manner. First, fake right, and slip the puck around the defender's right side. Pull the stick back and skate around the left side of the defender. Pick up the puck and be ready to jump over the defender's stick. This series of moves is illustrated in Figure 9-6.



Figure 9-6. Slip around.

Key Elements

- Make a good fake to commit the defensive player.

Common Errors

- getting the defensive player to commit before executing the move

Suggestions for Coaching

Players must be encouraged to accelerate quickly as they change direction. The timing on this move is important and, therefore, many practice repetitions are often necessary to master this ability. Again, work on developing the move going in both directions.

FAKE SHOT

The fake shot is used to slow down or freeze the defender, allowing the offensive player to advance around him or her easily. It is initiated by shifting the puck to the forehand side and initiating a wrist or slap shot motion. A shoulder drop or lower hand slide is beneficial to create the deception. The puck is then shifted to the forehand or backhand side. This is illustrated in Figure 9-7.

Key Elements

- an effective fake shot

Common Errors

- telegraphing that the shot is a fake



Figure 9-7. Executing the fake shot.

Suggestions for Coaching

This move is especially useful when the defender has slowed down or stopped in his or her defensive zone.

THE MAGIC WAND

The magic wand is a very deceptive move, and probably has its origins in European hockey. It is

called the “magic wand” because the attacking player “waves” his or her stick above the puck, as if to dribble from side to side, but never touching it. This tends to freeze the opponent.

This fake movement of the puck, combined with a head or shoulder fake, often catches the defender leaning or committing to one direction or the other. At this moment, the attacker may play the puck to his or her forehand or backhand and accelerate around the opposition (Figure 9-8).

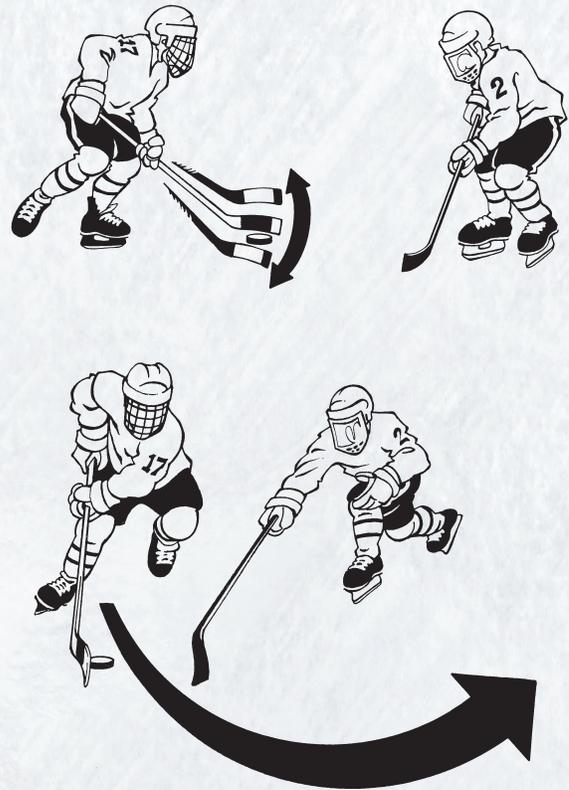


Figure 9-8. The magic wand.

Key Elements

- waving the stick above the puck as if to dribble it
- utilizing a head or shoulder fake to get the defender to commit to one direction
- accelerating around the defender

Common Errors

- playing the puck accidentally instead of waving the stick over it

- not using an adequate fake to force the defender to commit

Suggestions for Coaching

This maneuver may be practiced utilizing some of the same drills previously outlined in this section. Once again, you may want to start against a stationary defender, move to passive resistance and then practice at full speed.

PUCK OFF THE BOARDS

This maneuver involves passing the puck off the boards and going around the defensive player on the opposite side to pick up the puck. It is successful because the defender is often deceived into trying to play the puck. This is illustrated in Figures 9-9a and b.



Figure 9-9a. Puck off the boards.

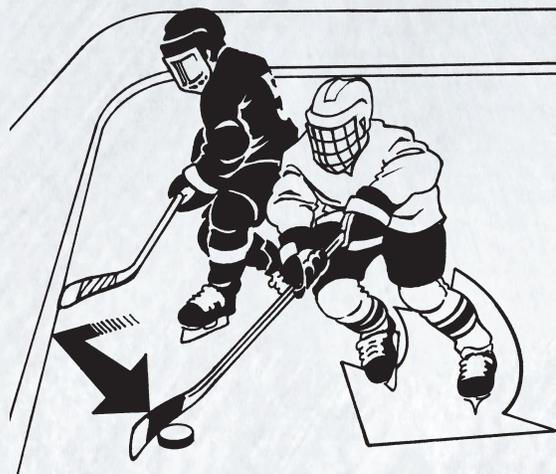


Figure 9-9b. Puck off the boards.

Key Elements

- The puck should be shot off the boards at approximately a 45 degree angle at only moderate speed. The puck will come off the boards at the same angle at which it hits the boards. Angle of incidence = angle of reflection.

Common Errors

- failing to shoot the puck off the boards at the proper angle and speed, thus allowing the defender to intercept the puck

Suggestions for Coaching

This move is used when moving out of your own end and a defender is standing still.

STOP AND GO

As your players approach the defender they should stop and then quickly accelerate again. There must be a distinct hesitation.

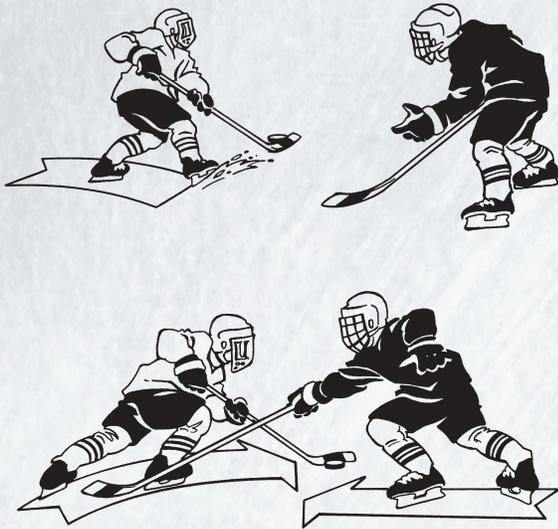


Figure 9-10. Executing the stop and go.

Key Elements

- the ability to accelerate quickly from a virtual standstill

Common Errors

- stopping too close to the defender
- not accelerating quickly after hesitating

Suggestions for Coaching

This maneuver will be most effective when utilized against aggressive defenders.

DOUBLE SHIFT

This is an advanced maneuver. Shift the puck to the forehand side, then shift to the backhand side. Pull the puck, and then go to the forehand side.



Figure 9-11. Double shift.

Key Elements

- properly controlling the puck by cupping the blade of the stick during the shift from forehand to backhand to forehand

Common Errors

- trying to complete this maneuver too close to the defender

Suggestions for Coaching

Teach this advanced move by breaking down its components. Start from a stationary position and progress to moving.

GRANDSTAND

This is an advanced maneuver. It is executed as follows: Crossover to the right, with the puck and stick extended to the left. Crossover to the left, with the puck and stick extended to left. Pull the puck back to the skates, deflecting it from the blade of the skate to the blade of the stick. Shift left, and go.



Figure 9-12. Executing the grandstand.

Key Elements

- shifting the puck from left to right using full extension
- pulling the puck up to the skates and deflecting it to the stick

Common Errors

- slowing down in order to complete the maneuver

Suggestions for Coaching

This move, like all of the others included, should be practiced first against a stationary pylon, then against a stationary defender, then moving at moderate speed. Once these steps are mastered, the maneuvers should be done at full speed.

SKATE CONTROL

Skate control is also an important aspect of stickhandling. It should be developed and practiced with all of the above skills. Some drills that are useful for working on this ability are:

1. Skate forward while stickhandling, drop the puck into the skate and kick it out onto the stick.



2. Foot drag drill - Control the puck by kicking it out from behind the other blade.



3. Control the puck along the boards with the skates.



To become proficient at most of these moves, a player must be efficient at executing fakes. Many hours of practicing are necessary to perfect this ability. Opponents quickly learn which players have only one move. Availability of a wide variety of moves that can be employed during a game results in each move being more effective in winning the one-on-one contest.

SPIN AROUND

This maneuver is utilized when driving hard and fast into the offensive zone against an aggressive defenseman who likes to challenge the puck carrier. The puck carrier drives hard toward the defenseman. Just as the defender slows to make contact, the attacker spins away from the check and accelerates.

The spin around may be done to both the backhand and forehand sides, as illustrated in Figure 9-15.

Key Elements

- The player stops quickly, close to the defender.
- The puck is kept away from the defender on the forehand or backhand side.
- Spin 180 degrees with the puck on the forehand or backhand side of the stick, and accelerate quickly forward.

Common Errors

- failing to control the puck while spinning away from the defender
- not accelerating quickly forward after completing the spin

Suggestions for Coaching

The players must master the art of shielding the puck from the defender with their bodies.

Figure 9-13. Skate control.

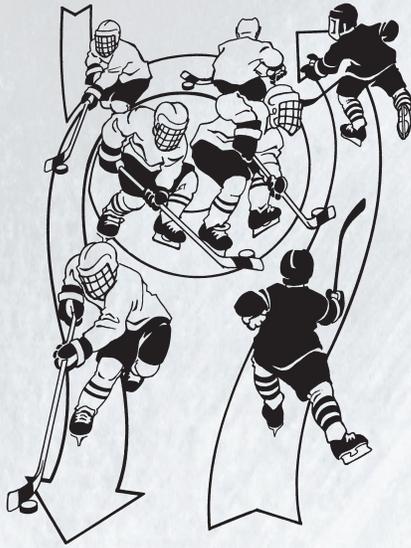


Figure 9-14. Executing the backhand spin around.

SLIP THROUGH AND SPIN

The attacker pulls the puck back between his skates, spins, picks up the puck and goes, utilizing a controlled turn with a crossunder to accelerate away from the defender.



Figure 9-15. Executing the slip through and spin.

Key Elements

- The attacker must pull the puck back between his or her skates with the right velocity.
- The attacker must spin away from the defender.

Common Errors

- failing to accelerate out of the spin and away from the defender

ESCAPE TO AVOID A CHECK

The attacker executes a 360-degree controlled turn and accelerates away from the defender. He or she places his or her body between the defender and the puck.

This maneuver may be done to continue skating, to pass, or to shoot, and should be practiced utilizing all three options.

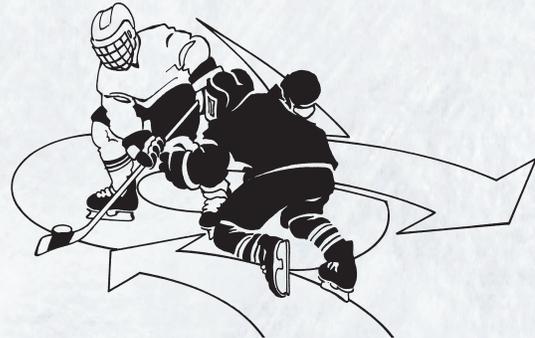


Figure 9-16. Executing the escape to avoid a check.

Key Elements

- 360-degree controlled turn
- placing your body between the puck and the defender as a shield

Common Errors

- turning into the defender instead of away

Suggestions for Coaching

All of these escape maneuvers should be practiced in a stationary position to begin with. As the players begin to gain confidence in each maneuver, they should increase speed and then go against passive resistance.