

COMMON HOCKEY TERMS

Assist - When a player contributes to help a teammate score a goal. The players who touched the puck before the goal scorer (without an opposing player controlling the puck) get assists. Up to two players can get assists per goal. A goal can be unassisted. Players are not credited with assists on their own goals.

Backcheck – The act of skating back into the defensive zone when a player’s team no longer has possession of the puck. To hinder an opponent heading toward and into the defending zone.

Bad Change – Making a line change at a bad time, such as when the opposing team is attacking. By making a bad change, a player is not covering his defensive responsibility and forces his replacement to scramble back into position. Bad changes are often the cause for breakaways and odd-man rushes. The most opportune times to make a line change are when the team has solid possession of the puck or after the puck has been dumped deep into the offensive zone.

Blue Line – The two thick, blue lines that expand perpendicular to the length of the ice that designate the two offensive zones and the neutral zone. The blue lines are used to determine offsides.

Body Check – The act of using one’s body to separate an opponent from the puck. The two most common types of body checks are shoulder checks and hip checks. Using elbows or knees to apply a body check will result in a penalty. Targeting an opponent’s head will also result in a penalty.

Breakout – A play to carry the puck out of the defensive zone and transition to offense.

Butterfly – A goaltending technique in which the goalie drops to both knees, flares out his feet, and seals off the bottom portion of the goal by laying his pads flush to the ice. A goalie that uses this as their primary technique is referred to as a “butterfly-style goaltender,” as opposed to a stand-up goalie or a hybrid goalie.

BUTT-ENDING: To hit an opponent with the end of the stick farthest from the blade. It is illegal and results in a penalty.

Change – Short for line change.

Check – The act of separating an opponent from the puck. This could refer to both a body check or a poke check. When used without a designation, a “check” is most commonly referring to a body check.

Checking Line – A line of players whose designated role is to shut down the opposition’s top scorers.

Cherry Picking/Picker – While playing defense, when a forward hangs high behind the opposition’s point men in hopes of receiving a breakout pass to create a breakaway. Cherry picking is frowned upon because the forward is neglecting his defensive responsibilities in order to create a scoring chance for himself.

The Circles – The two large circles located within the offensive zone that designate where a face-off takes place. The centermen line up in the cross marks and the puck is dropped on the face-off dot. The wingers line up along the hashmarks along the perimeter of the circle. The “top of the circle” is the area of ice around the edge of the circle furthest away from the net.

Clearing the Zone – The act of either carrying or shooting the puck out of the defensive zone to relieve pressure on the defense. By clearing the zone, the defense forces the attacking team to exit the zone and regroup to avoid being called offsides.

Crash the Net/Crease – The act of skating hard towards the opposing net to look for a deflection or a rebound. It is also done to create havoc for the opposing defensemen and the goalie.

CREASE: The area directly in front of the goaltender. It is four feet wide and eight feet long and marked off by red lines and is painted light blue. Offensive players who do not have possession of the puck may not enter.

Crossbar – The horizontal metal edge of the goalmouth that connects the two vertical posts.

Cycle/Cycling the Puck – The act of moving the puck along the boards in the corner of the offensive zone. It is usually executed with all three forwards: one set up around the hashmarks, one in the corner, and one at the bottom of the circle. The forwards skate in a cycle and pass the puck along the boards. The purpose of this is to try to wear out the defenders and pull them out of position to open up a scoring chance. Because of its effectiveness in maintaining possession of the puck, it can also be used to kill time.

Defensive Zone – The area of the ice between the end boards and the near blue line. The defensive zone contains the two face-off circles, the goal line, the crease, and the team’s own goal. One team’s defensive zone is the same area of the ice as the opposing team’s offensive zone.

DEKE: To fake an opponent out of position

Deflection – The act of using one’s stick to redirect a shot or a pass in hopes that the change of direction will enable the puck to get past the goalie. A goal will be disallowed if the puck is deflected in the air higher than the height of the crossbar. Goals that deflect off of a player are allowed, as long as the referee deems that the player did not intentionally direct the puck into the net with his body.

Drop Pass – A type of pass where a player will simply stop the puck and continue skating, leaving the puck behind. A teammate that is following the original puck carrier will take control of the puck.

Dump and Chase – A tactic used to get the puck deep into the offensive zone and chase after it. This forces the opposing defensemen to turn their back and retrieve the puck, knowing that the forwards are coming at them hard. This wears down the opposing defenders. It also allows the offense to set up in the zone while the forwards battle to retrieve the puck in the corner.

Dumping the Puck – The act of shooting the puck deep into the offensive zone. This is most often done by lobbing the puck high and slowly into the corner. A dump that goes across the ice into the opposite corner can be referred to as a cross-ice dump or a diagonal dump.

Face-Off – The event that starts all play. A linesman drops the puck between the two opposing centermen who attempt to win possession of the puck. A center may be thrown out of the face-off for a variety of reasons, at which point another player must step in to take the face-off.

Five-Hole – The hole that is created between a goalie's legs and the top of his stick blade. There are four "holes" around a goaltender: top right, bottom right, top left, bottom left. The area between the legs is the fifth hole.

FORECHECK: To check an opponent in his end of the rink, preventing an offensive rush.

FREEZING THE PUCK: To hold the puck against the boards with either the stick or skate to get a stoppage of play.

Forecheck – The act of skating to apply pressure in the offensive zone when the team does not have possession of the puck. When the puck is dumped into the offensive zone, it is the forechecker's responsibility to apply pressure on the opposing defenders in order to retrieve the puck or try to force a turnover.

Goal - When a player puts the puck into the opponent's net. Up to two assists are awarded to the teammates that touched the puck before the goal scorer. The team with the most goals wins the game.

GOAL LINE: The red line which runs between the goal posts and extends in both directions to the side boards.

GOAL MOUTH: The area just in front of the goal and crease lines.

Half-Boards – The area of the boards/along the boards between the blue line and the goal line.

Hard-Around – The act of shooting the puck hard along the boards so that it travels along the perimeter of the ice surface. The intention is to get the puck behind the defenders so that it travels back towards the attacking forward who looks to retrieve it along the opposite side of the rink.

Hashmarks – The hashmarks are the two lines protruding from the face-off circles. These lines designate where the wingers line up for a face-off. It is also a term used to designate an area of the ice. A player "sets up at the hashmarks" by stationing himself around that area of the ice while waiting for a pass.

HAT TRICK: The scoring of three or more goals by a player in one game. A natural hat trick occurs when a player scores three consecutive goals.

Hip Check – A type of body check in which a player drives his hip into an opposing player's hip area, throwing the opponent off balance. Hip checks often result in a player flipping the opponent into a somersault.

Icing – A stoppage that occurs when a team shoots the puck from their own half of the red line all the way past the goal line on the opposite end of the rink without touching any players. The ensuing face-off takes place at the face-off circles inside the zone of the team that committed icing.

Line – A forward line consists of 3 skaters: a left wing, a center, and a right wing. A defensive line consists of 2 skaters. There are traditionally 4 lines of forwards and 3 lines of defensemen on a roster.

Line Change – Changing the personnel on the ice to get fresh, rested players on the ice.

Net – Another name for the goal.

Neutral Zone – The area of the ice between the two blue lines. It is called the neutral zone because it is in neither of the two offensive zones.

Odd-Man Rush – An attack in which there are more forwards present than there are defenders. The most common are 2-on-1 and 3-on-2 rushes.

Offensive Zone - The area of the ice between the end boards and the near blue line. The offensive zone contains the two face-off circles, the goal line, the crease, and the opponent's goal. When a team has possession of the puck in the offensive zone, they will set up the offense according to their team's system. When the puck leaves the offensive zone by crossing the blue line (towards center ice), the team must exit the zone in order to avoid being called offsides.

One-Time Shot/One-Timer – A shot that is taken directly upon receiving a pass without stopping the puck. (The player receives the pass and takes a shot all at one time.) The momentum of the pass transfers into the momentum of the shot, resulting in a shot with more velocity. It is also more difficult to defend against because of the quick change in direction of the puck. A slap shot or a snap shot are used to take one-time shots.

One-Touch Pass – Similar to a one-time shot, a one-touch pass is when a player receives a pass and immediately passes the puck again to another player. The quick puck movement is difficult to follow and defend against.

PENALTY BOX: The area opposite the team benches where penalized players serve time.

Penalty Kill – A team is on the penalty kill when one of their players is sitting in the penalty box and the team is consequently playing with one fewer player than the opposing team. When one team is on the penalty kill, the other team is on the power play.

Pinch – When a defenseman makes an aggressive move to attempt to keep the puck from exiting the zone. When the puck is in danger of exiting the zone, a defenseman will normally retreat to defend against the oncoming attack. In certain situations, a defenseman might decide to pinch in order to keep his team in the offensive zone. This is risky, however, as a failed pinch will leave the defenseman out of position and unable to defend against the resulting rush.

Point (Position) – The point is another term for the defensemen set up in the offensive zone between the top of the circles and the blue line. While in this position, the defensemen may be referred to as point men. A point shot is any shot taken from that area of the ice.

Poke Check – The act of using one's stick to separate the puck from an opponent's possession. This can be done by both defenders and goalies.

Posts – The red metal pipes that surround the goalmouth. There are two vertical posts on either side and the crossbar that connects them at the top.

Pull The Goalie - When a team decides to take their goalie off of the ice in order to replace him with another skater. This is a desperation move that most commonly occurs in the last few minutes of a game when a team needs to score another goal to tie or win the game. A team that uses this tactic is very vulnerable without a goalie protecting its own net, but it has the advantage of having an extra attacker on the ice.

POWER PLAY: A power play occurs when a team has a one- or two-man advantage because of the opponent's penalties.

Rebound – When the puck is stopped by the goalie but remains in play. Many goals are scored by gathering a rebound and shooting again. Shooters often take shots with the sole purpose of creating a rebound to open up a better scoring chance.

Red Line – The thick, red line at center ice that serves to line up the center face-off dot.

Restricted Area – The area below the goal line to either side of the trapezoid in which a goaltender cannot play the puck. This prevents the goalie from clearing the puck after a dump-in to the corners. This was implemented to allow for more possession time in the offensive zone.

Rush – An attack executed while skating the puck towards the opponent's goal without waiting to set up the offense in the offensive zone. Rushes are often executed on odd-man rushes. Otherwise, the puck carrier will wait for his teammates to set up in the zone.

Saucer Pass – A type of pass where the player elevates the puck off of the surface of the ice while passing the puck to a teammate. A saucer pass is much harder to intercept because it is flying through the air, but it is also much harder to control for accurate passes.

SAVE: A shot blocked by the goaltender, which would have been a goal if not stopped.

SCREENED SHOT: Occurs when a goaltender's view is blocked by players between him and the shooter.

Shift – The time that a player is on the ice between line changes. The average shift in the NHL lasts between 30 seconds and 1 minute before the player gets back to the bench.

Slap Pass – When a player fakes a slap shot and instead passes the puck to a teammate.

Slap Shot – A type of shot that uses a large backswing in order to create more momentum as the player drives the puck towards the net.

SLOT: A prime scoring area located between the faceoff circles and in front of the goal.

Snap Shot – A type of shot that is somewhat in between a slap shot and a wrist shot. The player uses some elevation of the stick blade to drive down and through the puck, but not as high a slap shot's backswing. The snap shot provides a quick release with more control than a slap shot.

SPLITTING THE DEFENSE: The player with the puck attempts to squeeze between the opponent's defensemen.

STICK HANDLING: To control the puck along the ice.

Tip – Another term for deflection.

Top Shelf – Shooting into the top portion of the goal. It is often referred to as “Top shelf where mama hides the cookies.”

Trapezoid – The area directly behind the goal between the two restricted zones in which a goalie is allowed to play the puck.

Turnover – Giving up possession of the puck to the opposing team. This includes

Wrist Shot – A shot that utilizes no backswing. The player uses his wrists and fling the puck towards the net. Wrist shots are not as powerful, but are more accurate than other shots.

WRAPAROUND: When a player skates from one side to the other of the goal, from behind the goal, and tucks the puck into the other side of the goal before the goaltender recovers to be in position.

HOW TO FIGURE

ASSIST: An assist is awarded to the player or players (maximum of two) who touched the puck prior to the goal, provided no defender plays or possesses the puck in between.

GAME PLAYED: A player receives credit for playing in a game if: i) he steps on the ice during time played or; ii) serves any penalty.

GAME-WINNING GOAL: After the final score has been determined, the goal which leaves the winning Club one goal ahead of its opponent is the game-winning goal (example: if Team A beats Team B 8-3, the player scoring the fourth goal for Team A receives credit for the game-winning goal).

GAME-TYING GOAL: The final goal in a tie game.

GOAL: A goal is awarded to the last player on the scoring Club to touch the puck prior to the puck entering the net.

GOALS-AGAINST AVERAGE: Multiply goals allowed (GA) by 60 and divide by minutes played (MINS).

GOALTENDERS: A goaltender receives a win, tie or loss if he is on the ice when either the game-winning or game-tying goal is scored.

PENALTY-KILLING PERCENTAGE: Subtract total number of power-play goals allowed from total number of shorthanded situations to get total number of power-plays killed. Divide the total number of power-plays killed by the total number of shorthanded situations.

PLUS-MINUS: A player receives a "plus" if he is on the ice when his Club scores an even-strength or shorthand goal. He receives a "minus" if he is on the ice for an even-strength or shorthand goal scored by the opposing Club. The difference in these numbers is considered the player's plus-minus statistic.

POWER PLAY GOAL: A goal scored by a Club while it has a manpower advantage due to an opponent's penalty. Following are some examples of what is and is not considered a power-play goal:

- if a Club has an advantage on a minor penalty starting at 2:02 of the period and it scores at 4:02, the goal is not a power-play goal.
- if a Club scores on a delayed penalty, the goal is not a power-play goal.
- if a Club has an advantage due to a five-minute major or match penalty, that Club is always credited with having one more advantage than the number of power-play goals it scores during that advantage, because the penalty does not expire. A new advantage begins after each power-play goal. For example, if Team A scores three goals during a major penalty, it is credited with four advantages.
- if a Club is on a power-play for any length of time, it is considered to have had an advantage.
- if a minor penalty is incurred by a Club on a power-play due to a major penalty, a new advantage is given to that Club when its minor penalty expires, provided the opponent's major penalty is still in effect.

POWER PLAY PERCENTAGE: Total number of power-play goals divided by total number of power-play opportunities.

SAVE PERCENTAGE: Subtract goals allowed (GA) from shots against (SA) to determine saves. Then divide saves by shots-against.

SHOOTING PERCENTAGE: Divide the number of goals scored by the number of shots taken.

SHORTHANDED GOAL: A goal scored by a Club while it is at a manpower disadvantage. The same cases apply for shorthand as for power-play goals, but in the opposite manner.

SHOT ON GOAL: If a player shoots the puck with the intention of scoring and if that shot would have gone in the net had the goaltender not stopped it, the shot is recorded as a "shot on goal."

SHUTOUT: If two goaltenders combine for a shutout, neither receives credit for the shutout. Instead it is recorded as a Club shutout.