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10 tips for defensemen

By Scott Briggs

- 1) **Quick feet.** It's necessary for defensemen to move as fast backward as your opponent does forward.

- 2) **Don't turn your back on the play as a one-on-one unfolds.** Develop quick feet, good balance and keep skating backward.

- 3) **As you accelerate going backward, move your arms back-and-forth beside your body.** Think of a sprinter moving the arms in a parallel pattern. Don't move your arms side-to-side in front of your chest.

- 4) **Watch the opponent's chest.** The opponent can't go anywhere without it.

- 5) **Don't become mesmerized by the puck.** Don't focus on the puck during a one-on-one.

- 6) **Good Lateral movement.** Your opponent is trying to go around you. You need to be able to skate where he goes.

- 7) **Don't always go for the big check.** Doing so can cause you to lose your balance and be out of position.

- 8) **Develop a strong lower body.** Powerful legs will not only help with skating, but it enables a defenseman to contain strong opponents in the corners.

- 9) **Focus on playing defense first before worrying about points.** Jamie Allison was drafted by the Calgary Flames after a season in which he didn't score a goal in 61 regular season games.

10) Play to please your coach not the fans.

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