



Steve Duchesne backward stopping from the video "Secrets to Hockey Speed."

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The backward stop

By Robby Glantz

As I noted last month when talking about the forward hockey stop, I often feel it should be called a hockey "slide." This is because, on ice, you must learn to slide along the top of the ice first, before you actually come to a stop. And exactly the same principle that applies when it comes to the backward stop: you should learn to slide first, and then come to stop.

The Backward Slide/Stop

The backward slide/ stop can be an intimidating prospect, even for the most advanced players. And, as with the forward stop, you are going to need to do your share of falling down when practicing. Again, this only means that you are attempting to improve by coming out of your skating comfort zone.

Of the two kinds of backward stops, the backward "one-foot" slide/stop (as opposed to the "two-foot" slide/ stop) is the stop that I prefer to teach. However, the one-foot version can be more difficult for the novice player. The following are the steps for improving both varieties of the backward slide/stop:

One-Foot Slide/Stop

- Bend your knees deeply, so that they are at least 2" over the toes.

- Keep your eyes forward, your chin up and your back straight.
- Be sure to turn your hips 90° (a 1/4-turn) from the direction you were traveling, with the back foot coming slightly off the ice, turning 90°, and then returning to the ice.
- That same back skate should slide along the top of the ice, on an inside edge, with the snow coming off the middle-front part of the skate (the ball of your foot).
- The inside skate should trail the back one, and also slides on top of the ice. Again, the snow should be coming off the middle-front part of the edge.
- Your feet should be staggered at this point (not parallel), with the back foot in front of the trailing (or front) foot by almost a full skate length.
- Your bodyweight should be distributed with the far greater percentage distributed to the outside skate (inside edge), so you can explode the other way with a quick forward start.
- Be sure to counterbalance the stop with your upper body. Keep your shoulders parallel to the ice, rather than leaning or dropping the inside shoulder down toward the ice.

Two-Foot Slide/Stop:

- Follow the first two points above: knees bent, eyes forward, chin up, back straight.
- Keep your hips facing the direction you were traveling as you begin your slide.
- Turn your knees outward and bring your heels in under your shoulders (both skates turn at the same time), so you become bowlegged.
- The snow should be coming off the middle-front part of both inside edges as you begin to slide with your skates very “light” on top of the ice.
- When you feel comfortable and get control with the slide, then dig your inside edges into the ice harder to come to a stop.
- Your bodyweight should be centered directly over both skates. And be careful not to lean too far forward or you will lose your balance.

It's tough

The backward slide/ stop (on either one or two skates) is a very difficult maneuver even for many advanced players. However, part of improving is breaking through your fears and finding the ability to work on fundamentals that may not come naturally at first.

The backward stopping maneuver would certainly fall into this category of being very difficult and intimidating at first. But keep working on it, and be sure to do it at your own pace. In other words, practice it slowly at first, then speed up as you get better. You will soon find yourself coming to a halt backwards. I

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