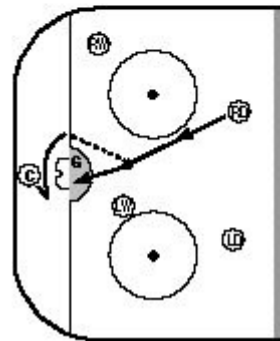


## Working your offense from behind the net

By Greg Siller



Figures 1 & 2

If you have ever watched Wayne Gretzky in action, you have no doubt, seen him initiate scoring opportunities from behind the opponent's net. Gretzky takes advantage of a seldom utilized (but well-protected) area on the rink called the captain's chair (the shaded area behind your opponents net in Figure 1). The captain's chair gets its name from a player's ability to survey the ice (and a team's offensive options) from that location. Utilizing the captain's chair in your team's offensive attack will guarantee you additional scoring opportunities.

### Why is it effective?

Using the captain's chair in your offensive attack is effective for at least three reasons:

- 1) Most defenders are afraid to commit themselves behind their own net. Most amateur coaches instruct their defensemen not to chase an attacker behind their own net because they will commit themselves. In many cases, this instruction is accurate. Because if an attacker skates with the puck behind their opponent's net, and a defender chases him, the puck carrier will emerge from the other side of the net to create a scoring opportunity while the defender is momentarily out of the play behind his own net.
- 2) It focuses the play deep in the offensive zone. By controlling the puck from the captain's chair, you force the defending team to concentrate on the play deep in that location. This creates an opportunity for a defenseman or forward to position themselves in the slot (or other scoring location) unnoticed, for a scoring opportunity.
- 3) It provides the attackers with time to get into an open position. If the defenders do not challenge a player in the captain's chair, the offensive team has time to get their players into open scoring positions.

