

Scoring on deflections and rebounds

By Tony Diritto

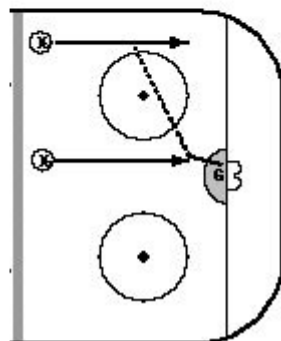
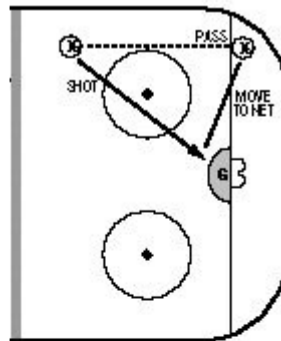


Figure 1: Deflection drill Performed with a player (X1) in the corner and a player (X2) on the blue line. X1 passes to X2, X1 then drives to net in position to deflect the shot by X2. Figure 2: Tip-in drill Performed with two players. The fir

If you were asked how most goals are scored, what would be your response? It seems like a simple question, but the reality is that most goals are scored either on rebounds or deflections. With that being the case, I find it hard to believe that players usually neglect practicing these two specific skills. And practicing these skills isn't only for forwards, because learning these skills provides a benefit to all players. First, you will learn how to better your own and your teammates' scoring chances, but also you will learn how to defend against deflections and rebounds.

Have you ever noticed in most pro games that when players are in the offensive zone there always seems to be congestion in front of the net. There is a constant struggle going on between the defense and the offense to either clear the front of the net, or constantly screen the goalie. Skating and passing put the puck into scoring position. However it is the shot on goal that determines whether it is a goal or just another shot and save for the goalie. Scoring opportunities are scarce and extremely hard to come by, so it is vital to you and your team that you make the most out of any scoring opportunities that come along. Goals that are scored by either a deflection or rebound are usually referred to as "garbage goals" because the player seems to have scored their goal without much effort.

This article will show you how to enhance your overall scoring chances by explaining a few simple guidelines for when you are in the offensive zone. Remember that these tips are for all players and can be used in either zone, offensive or defensive. Having an understanding of how offensive players are thinking is an invaluable tool that can be utilized in the defensive zone by all players and even goaltenders.

Awareness

Awareness can have many different meanings and is used very loosely in hockey. However in the offensive zone, it is very important that you have an understanding as to where you are, where your teammates are, and where the puck is so that you are in proper position on the ice. Most players know where their linemates are, but what sometimes lacks is their awareness of the net. By this I mean that you do not want to be forced away from the net by your opponents, you must constantly be moving and create a screen in front of the goalie.

The puck, as we all know, travels very quickly and can be an elusive object to handle. Through reading and reacting to the situation on the ice (ie: puck movement, opposing players' position), you will be able to stay a step ahead of your opponent—and therefore raise your scoring chances.

Movement

When a defenseman or linemate has the puck in the offensive zone and is trying to position themselves for a shot on goal, you should be constantly and aggressively moving, in the low slot, directly in front of the opposing goalie. This accomplishes two important things: First, it distracts and confuses the goalie. Second, it forces your opponent to either react to the person with the puck or to clear out in front of the goalie. This results in a scoring chance either through a direct shot on net, tip-in or rebound.

Positioning

The position of your stick blade is as important as your body position. Your stick blade must be turned to an angle that is facing the net and will also force the puck to carom off of the blade toward the net. You don't want to redirect the puck away from the net. You should maintain a tight grip on your stick to ensure the angling of the blade. This skill takes a lot of practice because it entails trial and error in finding the right angle for each different position the shot is coming from.

Deflections

Keep in mind that you do not want to stop the on-coming shot. Your main objective is to redirect it, change the speed of the shot, or even the height of it. Shots can be changed either by lifting your blade angle upward to allow the puck to deflect off the blade and gain height. Also a shot that is waist high or lower can be redirected by "batting down" the puck and forcing it to go lower than intended. Keep in mind that if you are the player shooting the puck that you want to aim for your teammate's stick blade so that it can be easily deflected. Experimentation will determine which angle placement is suitable for certain shots. Figures 1 and 2 are some drills for you to practice with a friend or teammate.

Rebounds

Many shots are saved and knocked out by the goaltender and only a handful of these rebounds result in a goal. This is because rebounds are not practiced enough and are left to chance. When a shot is being taken by one of your teammates you should almost simultaneously be driving, following the shot to the net for the rebound. Remember that you must have your stick down on the ice and your head up so that once you locate the puck your stick is in the ready position and you can put the puck in the net. In the drill outlined in Figure 3, player number two follows the shot (taken by player number one) in an attempt to put in the rebound.

If you put these tips into practice and give the drills a try, I think you will improve your scoring chances. In order to better these and any other skills you must practice. Practicing is a vital part of development, but also your time should be well spent and include areas such as deflections and rebounds to allow yourself to evolve into a complete hockey player.

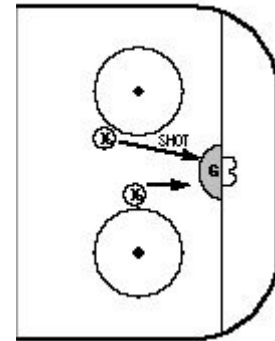


Figure 3: Rebound drill

Performed with at least two players and goalie. First player (X1) shoots on goalie, at pads. Second player (X2) breaks for net to get rebound.

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