



www.hockeyplayer.com

Using the boards to your offensive advantage

[Printer friendly page](#)

By Bill Ferguson

Whether you know it or not, every time you hit the ice you have an extra player on your team who is always willing to pass you the puck and help out. He surrounds virtually every rink in North America. He's the boards, but you can call him "Woody." The boards can be an effective tool in hockey, but like all your other teammates, Woody can't help you out unless you pass him the puck. Here are five ways to use the boards to your advantage.

Miss the Net

Deliberately shoot the puck wide of the net so that it forcefully caroms off the back boards to an open teammate at the side of the net. When the shot whizzes past the goalie, he will likely follow it to the post, leaving the wide side of the net open. Since the caromed puck will move quicker than the goalie, your forward, positioned to the side of the goal, can receive this pass and have a quality scoring opportunity.

Sling Blade Breakout

On a defensive zone face-off, tell your off-winger to skate immediately to the boards if your centerman wins the draw (sending the puck back to your D). When your defenseman gets the puck, he sends a slap shot around the boards to the winger, who should be arriving shortly with a few feet of open ice (or possibly a break-away).

Nail in the Coffin

When the other team pulls its goalie, which is usual extremely futile in the disorganized realm of house league hockey, you have an opportunity to get an easy goal with the help of the boards. This move takes a lot of practice and a knowledge of each rink's dynamics is a must. If you get the puck in your corner, instead of whipping it up center ice, risking an interception, try angling a strong shot off the neutral zone boards towards the net. If you practice this move and the different angles it takes to get the puck to the goal from different positions on the ice, you will become your goalie's best friend, taking the pressure off him by putting the game away.

Little Man in the Corner

Instead of just dumping the puck around the net when coming in on a wing with your teammate streaking down the opposite wing, throw a slap shot into the angle of the corner so that the carom will land on your rushing winger's stick. I was at the NY Islanders training camp and saw the big league guys working on this one. When performed correctly, it's like having your own little leprechaun feeding you passes from the corner.

Breakout Redirect

Next time the puck is in your defensive zone try this tricky breakout. Have your two defensemen skate behind the net. One picks up the puck and starts to rush around the net like he is going to skate up ice with it, the other stays behind the net. As he is cornering around the net, the player with the puck banks the puck off of the boards behind him to his partner. Because of the interference of the net, opposing players may

believe that the first defenseman still has puck. With the confusion on who has the puck, your team has the upper hand and may have the chance to perform an effective breakout. This play needs a lot of communication and practice. If you can pull this off with the traditional 2-man, straight-ahead breakout, you will keep the forecheckers guessing and possibly keep your score rising.