

COMMON SENSE RULES

to make you a better hockey player

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This is not a definitive list by any stretch of the imagination. These rules represent nothing more than a short compilation of things you might hear me say at any particular time on the bench or in practice. These were the ones that came immediately to mind. There are more!

OFFENSIVE RULES

COVER FOR ANY DEFENSEMAN CARRYING THE PUCK INTO OFFENSIVE ZONE

ALWAYS CARRY THE PUCK TO OPEN ICE WHEN ENTERING OFFENSIVE ZONE

- usually this means skating to the outside of 2 opposing defensemen and not between them - sometimes it means stopping as you cross the blue line, doing a Gretzky turn towards the boards, or skating along the blue line, allowing teammates to skate to open ice for a pass or to crash the net before a shot.

NEVER CARRY THE PUCK INTO THE MIDDLE OF 2 DEFENSEMEN WHEN SKATING INTO THE OFFENSIVE ZONE

- skate the puck to the outside and set-up plays - at worst, you will lose the puck deep in the opposition's zone - at best you can score from many well set-up plays against the strong-side defenseman

NEVER PASS THE PUCK THROUGH THAT AREA BETWEEN THE TOP OF THE CIRCLES AND THE BLUE LINE IN EITHER THE OFFENSIVE ZONE OR THE DEFENSIVE ZONE.

- this area, known as the DANGER ZONE, is a prime area for costly turnovers – the team passing is going in the wrong direction – consequently, it becomes exceptionally difficult to get into a good defensive posture with a turnover.

ALWAYS KEY ALL OFFENSIVE PLAYS AGAINST 1 MAN

- most all offensive situations in hockey are variations of a 2 on 1

EXECUTE GIVE AND GO'S IN ALL ZONES

ALWAYS MOVE TO THE PUCK - NEVER WAIT FOR THE PUCK TO GET TO YOU

- cut diagonally in front of defending player when receiving pass, forcing him/her to turn – teammates should always be ready to replace you if you were positioned on the boards – a good rule of thumb then, is to skate the puck to the inside, pass to the outside.

SKATE HARD WHEN MAKING A PASS OR RECEIVING A PASS - DO NOT GLIDE

HEADMAN THE PUCK IMMEDIATELY

- no one should be forced to wait at the blue-line because you didn't feel like passing

SPREAD THE DEFENSE

- stay wide - the closer you are together, the fewer opposing players it will take to defend you

THERE ARE NOT MANY REASONS FOR TAKING SLAP SHOTS, EXCEPT FROM THE POINT

- the time taken to 'cock' the stick allows all defenders to prepare.
- there should be a man in front screening and deflecting before any long shot is taken - shots from the point should be on the ice

CRASH THE NET, HARD

- create confusion in front of opponents net - most goals come from in close in confusing defensive situations

NEVER CROSS THE GOAL LINE WHEN CRASHING THE NET UNTIL THE PUCK ENTERS THE NET OR THE PUCK GOES BELOW THE GOAL LINE

WHEN THE PUCK IS OUTSIDE – i.e. defenseman has possession ready to shoot – MOVE IN TO SCREEN GOALTENDER OR REDIRECT OR DEFLECT SHOTS – WHEN THE PUCK IS INSIDE – i.e. offensive players below goal line or on the boards, looking to pass – MOVE OUT TO DRAW OUT DEFENSEMEN OR TO RECEIVE PASS IN SHOOTING POSITION

EXECUTE 2 ON 0 PROPERLY

- you should score 100% of the time on a properly executed 2 on 0

NEVER GO OFFSIDE, ESPECIALLY ON A POWER PLAY, 2 ON 0, 2 ON 1, OR 3 ON 2 SITUATIONS

AVOID RINK WIDE PASSES UNLESS SURE OF COMPLETION

– short give and go passes are usually much more effective in beating opponents and in creating man-advantage situations

ADVANCE THE PUCK

- make your teammates want to skate with you

NEVER STICKHANDLE IF YOU ARE THE LAST MAN IN THE DEFENSIVE ZONE

- remember the hockey idiom – ‘no pass, off the glass’

NEVER PASS THE PUCK INTO THE OFFENSIVE SLOT WITHOUT LOOKING FIRST

ALWAYS LOOK TO PASS BEFORE GOING AROUND BEHIND THE NET IN OFFENSIVE ZONE

- if you wait until you get out on the other side of the net before you pass, the defense has had 2 - 3 seconds to prepare

LEAN ON STICK HARD, IN THE OFFENSIVE ZONE SLOT

NO BLIND PASSES

FILL ALL LANES

- it doesn't matter what position you play

PASS, PASS, PASS

- you can pass the puck much faster than you can skate - you won't get as tired - you will score more often - it's more fun

DO NOT DUMP THE PUCK - WE WORK TOO HARD TO GET IT - DON'T GIVE IT AWAY - RATHER, PASS BACK TO DEFENSE, REGROUP, AND GO AGAIN

- dumping is for teams with 240 lb. gorilla forwards who are effective forecheckers - EXCEPTIONS: changing, man-down situations, and when the defense outnumbered the offense at the blue line - when dumping, it is usually much more effective to dump the puck diagonally into the opposite corner, keeping the puck away from the goalie, who can easily start a breakout against you

MOVE, MOVE, MOVE

- move to an open area - many games are won, not by what you do when you have the puck but what you do when you do not have the puck

DEFENSIVE RULES

BACKCHECK - BACKCHECK - BACKCHECK

- everyone, no matter how good of a hockey player he is, can back check effectively

POINTS MUST BE COVERED BY THE WINGS IN THE DEFENSIVE ZONE

FORM A BOX IN THE DEFENSIVE ZONE FOR MAN-DOWN SITUATIONS

- keep your eye on your man, the puck, and the net at all times – protect the center of the ice – force passes to the outside by your stick placement – don't turn your back to the play – weak side corner can sag in to help cover the middle, forming more of a triangle, than a box – take care to turn the box, if teams are using an umbrella, or a 1-3-1 power play

ROTATE COVERAGE OPPOSITE THE DIRECTION OF PUCK MOVEMENT

FORM A TIGHT TRIANGLE IN THE DEFENSIVE ZONE FOR 2 MAN-DOWN SITUATIONS - OPTION: INVERTED TRIANGLE

- defensive players should be ready to rotate opposite the movement of the puck

SKATE WITH YOUR CHECK - DON'T STOP SKATING and

NEVER HANG ON FOR THE BIG RIDE

NEVER GLIDE WHILE BACK CHECKING

- good back checking is very frustrating to opponents

WHEN BACK CHECKING, PICK UP CLOSEST MAN, EVEN IF HE DOES NOT HAVE THE PUCK, MAKING SURE HE CAN'T RECEIVE A PASS

DON'T GET SUCKED OR DRAWN TO THE PUCK CARRIER

- our defensemen will take care of any puck carrier 100% of the time

NEVER ALLOW YOUR TEAM TO BE OUTNUMBERED IN THE DEFENSIVE ZONE

BOTH DEFENSEMEN SHOULD NEVER GET CAUGHT BELOW THE GOAL LINE AT THE SAME TIME WHEN ON DEFENSE OR WHEN POSSESSION IS IN DOUBT

MAINTAIN SOME KIND OF CONTACT WITH YOUR CHECK - STICK, BODY, ETC.

ALWAYS REMEMBER TO PICK-UP TRAILER IN DEFENSIVE ZONE

FORCE SHOOTERS TO OUTSIDE LANE AND LET GOALTENDER HANDLE ANY BAD ANGLE SHOTS - YOU DON'T HAVE TO MAKE BODY CONTACT TO BE AN EFFECTIVE DEFENSEMAN OR CHECKER

TEAM PLAY RULES

TRANSITION IS KEY. ALWAYS PLAY OFFENSE, READY TO PLAY DEFENSE. ALWAYS PLAY DEFENSE READY TO PLAY OFFENSE

DEFENSEMEN SHOULD WORK HARD TO HOLD OFFENSIVE BLUE LINE. FORWARDS SHOULD WORK HARD TO BE IN A POSITION TO BACK CHECK SO THE DEFENSEMEN ARE COMFORTABLE HOLDING THE BLUE LINE.

I AM A BIG FAN OF THE VERTICAL TAKEOVER AND THE HORIZONTAL TAKEOVER. THEY ARE NOTHING MORE THAN MISDIRECTIONS. BY USING TAKEOVERS, IT MAKES IT EXCEPTIONALLY HARD FOR DEFENDERS. THESE CAN BE USED IN ANY ZONE AND SHOULD BE USED IN ANY ZONE. IT'S NOTHING MORE THAN OFFERING D-SIDE SUPPORT TO THE PUCK CARRIER. AND, IT GIVES THE DEFENDERS FITS.

NEVER GO TO A FACE-OFF WITHOUT A PLAN

- pay particular attention to position and intentions or tendencies of your opponent - i.e., right or left-hand draw, offensive or defensive zone face-off, strategies, creating a shot-on-goal for your shooter or, more importantly, coverage of the opposing shooter in the defensive zone

CENTER - ALIGN PLAYERS TO YOUR SATISFACTION IN ALL FACE-OFFS - THIS IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY

NEVER BE AFRAID TO GET A STOPPAGE OF PLAY OR TO KEEP PLAY FROM RESUMING

- if you do not like a particular situation, stop play - if you are tired, take your time getting ready for a face-off - change slowly - the goalie should fix his pads, get a drink, or fix the net - however, one must always be aware of the official and his intentions - know your officials - this is part of the game

BE AWARE AND IN THE GAME FROM THE BENCH

KNOW WHO IS SUBSTITUTING FOR WHOM AT ALL TIMES - AND DISCUSS IT

YOU! - BE THE FIRST TO ANY LOOSE PUCK

EVERYONE PLAYS OFFENSE - EVERYBODY PLAYS DEFENSE

- when we have the puck, 5 men play OFFENSE
- when they have the puck, 5 men play DEFENSE

NEVER THROW, PASS, OR GIVE THE PUCK AWAY - WHENEVER THERE IS DOUBT, GET A STOPPAGE OF PLAY AND A FACE-OFF

PENALTIES SHOULD NOT BE TOLERATED IN THE OFFENSIVE ZONE OR ON A POWER PLAY

RETALIATION PENALTIES SHOULD NOT BE TOLERATED AT ALL

FINISH ALL CHECKS

CONSTANT MOVEMENT IS NECESSARY - MOVE YOUR LEGS AT ALL TIMES

NO RINK TURNS

- this is sloppy, lazy hockey

NEVER CHANGE LINES WHILE PUCK IS IN THE DEFENSIVE ZONE

BE AGGRESSIVE - MAKE A DECISION

NEVER ERR WITH INDECISION

- if you make a mistake, at least make it trying and not waiting

NEVER TURN YOUR BACK TO THE PUCK – ALWAYS FACE THE PUCK

LEARN TO PLAY ANGLES

TALK, TALK, TALK

ANTICIPATE THE PLAY - PLAY WITH YOUR HEAD - CONSTANTLY MAKE READS

CHANGE LINES FREQUENTLY

- changing lines after any goal for or goal against regardless of time spent on the ice is usually a good idea - players tend to let up after scoring or being scored upon – the first shift after a goal is scored, for or against, is one of the most critical times in a hockey game

STAY IN MOTION

TRY NO TO GIVE UP A ZONE ALREADY ACQUIRED EXCEPT WHEN REQUIRED TO MAINTAIN POSSESSION

THINK TEAM ALWAYS

LOOK CONFIDENT - MAKE THE OPPOSITION WORRY ABOUT YOU

- a neat team uniform and a snappy, crisp warm-up will cause other teams to watch you and to worry about you - think how easy it is for you to get psyched-out of a particular game by your opponent for any number of reasons - make these mind-games work for you and not against you

NEVER GIVE YOUR OPPONENT AMMUNITION THAT CAN BE USED AGAINST YOU IN LATER GAMES

- i.e., derogatory, unsportsmanlike comments directed at opposing players, coaches, and parents make your opponents want to beat you even more than they normally do - this is one of the main reasons why teams lose the 2nd time around in a season

SET A GOOD EXAMPLE

- do your part to maintain that tradition of your school or skating club - though you may not realize it, younger students and players look up to you and aspire to play on your team.

WORK HARD TO WIN, BUT ABOVE ALL, BE A GOOD SPORT

- it is easy to win graciously but much more difficult to be humble in defeat - bad calls, bad ice, bad breaks, bad weather, etc., do not cause defeat - a better team on a particular day will cause you to lose - make sure you remember this

ARGUMENTATIVE, DISRESPECTFUL, ABUSIVE, OR PROFANE LANGUAGE DIRECTED TO ANYONE, BUT PARTICULARLY THE OFFICIALS, SHOULD NEVER BE TOLERATED

TAKE YOUR GLOVE OFF WHEN SHAKING HANDS AFTER THE GAME