**High Performance 1**

**I. Physical Preparation:**

Warm-up: Before every game our team captain’s routinely put or guys through a dynamic warm-up consisting of in-place sumo squats, split squats, lateral squats, glute bridges. Followed by; walking lunges, reverse lunge with twist, 3 way lateral lunges and a series of ¼ squats to leg cradle. Afterwards, players will either continue individual stretching or any game day rituals and others will play with soccer ball (some sort of game or warm-up to increase blood flow).

Recovery: After games we encourage the players to eat a meal with a high intake protein/carbohydrate mix 15-30 minutes after competition. Ie. Drink chocolate milk, peanut butter sandwich, or banana, peanut butter and almonds. And after that initial meal eat a balanced meal within 2 hours of the competition.

Cool down/injury prevention:Before and after any session with our team whether it is a work out, practice or game, we encourage our players to properly stretch before and after each session. For proper injury prevention our athletes must be both mentally and physically fit, we encourage them to take care of their bodies at all time, and we are constantly reminding them that being an athlete is a full time job. Reach out to our training staff, physiotherapists and identify any early signs of injuries to be proactive and try to resolve the matter before it results in missing game or practice time.

Improving critical fitness variables: It has always been my philosophy “to do more and to do it better”. In order to get an edge over your opponents you must be in better physical fitness then they are. To have both the mental and physical edge knowing that you have put in more work than your opponents is crucial. Having better fitness also decreases your athletes’ probability of getting injured. My approach to improving my teams’ critical fitness variables would consist of a variety of different off-ice work outs that include;

1. Circuit training- specific to working core muscles and improving overall co-ordination and condition of our athletes
2. Spin classes- utilizing bikes as great training regiments for both lower body power and conditioning with a focus of building mental toughness
3. Yoga- power yoga can be an effective way of keeping athletes both mentally and physically flexible.
4. Soccer and lacrosse games and other “invasion sports” that mimic the attacking nature of hockey and allow for athletic development and cross sport conditioning

I believe that before and after almost all on-ice sessions these series of exercises should be incorporated into any successful fitness initiatives.

Part B – Players that have suffered concussions, it is our teams policy that he be deemed ineligible to practice or play for one week. At that time he will be re-evaluated by our team therapist to see if he still has any symptoms. If deemed symptom free, he then meets with our team doctor to be cleared to resume light activity; If after a week of light activity no symptoms return, he then is cleared to begin skating (with no contact). At which time if no symptoms appear after a couple of days he will meet again with the team doctor to be cleared for contact and resume his playing career. Dependent on the medical history of the athlete and the amount of previous concussions already sustained, this plan might be altered accordingly.

**II. Ethics in Coaching:**

Konig, S (2013). “Coaching performance and leadership behaviours in team sports”*. Sportwissenschaft4*
The author evaluates coaching performance with reference to team building by exploring different theories, and then confirming them with research gathered from a comprehensive study; Focussing on hierarchical planning and examining a mixed methods study which introduces the idea of sequential and concurrent interlinking concepts, data analysis, and inference. The author also provides some advice on coaching education and the important attributes a successful coach must encompass in order to be successful. This journal provides me with a great working model which outlines attributes that a successful coach must possess.  The book also introduces the idea of team building and team leading initiatives.  It breaks down the Job tasks of coaches from strategic tasks, tactical tasks and operational tasks, to generate a theoretical conception about the team leading within coaching. A qualitative study was conducted using ten high performance coaches from basketball, football, handball and volleyball.  This study examined certain coaching techniques that added insights into what makes a successful coach.  The second study which was conducted in the form of a questionnaire aimed at both coaches and players investigating coach-athlete relationships.  This gave me great insights because it outlined an in-depth analysis into what attributes a successful coach must possess in order to build a championship program. I would highly recommend this to any coach who wants to understand what makes a good coach successful and how to build life-lasting coach-athlete relationships.

1. Vallée, C. N., & Bloom, G. A. (2005). Building a Successful University Program: Key and Common Elements of Expert Coaches. *Journal Of Applied Sport Psychology*, *17*(3), 179-196.

The purpose of this paper was to determine what made leaders or coaches able to build successful programs. Researches focused on two different elements of coaching, one being coaches’ leadership behaviours, necessary for becoming championship coaches. The second major area of focus was identifying  two different models used for understanding what makes a good coach, one such model was the Chelladuria's multidimensional model of leadership and the second was the 'the coaching model'.  According to the Chelladuria's model, athlete performance was influenced by three factors; characteristics of environment, characteristics of the athletes and personal characteristics of the coach.  Chelladuria's model of leadership focused on actual leadership behaviours.  The coaching model focused on more of the psychology of athlete-coach relations, whereby this study provided a framework from which to understand how coaches work and why they function as they do.
This information is invaluable to any reader as it was written by the women who took over the Windsor basketball program and won a championship title within 5 years.  I found a lot of useful information regarding the holistic approaches to coaching and leadership.  A lot of the principles are applicable to what I believe a great coach must encompass.

**IV. Teaching and Leading in Coaching**

1. I decided to mentor a minor hockey team. The team that I chose was the Willowdale Blackhawk’s Minor Bantam Single “A” hockey team. The coaching staff that I worked with was Derek Chalmers and Jeff Howe.

Tuesday August, 19, 2014

- We had our inaugural meeting to discuss what the expectations the coaching staff had for the season. It was communicated that kids of this age and calibre need to have “fun”. The coaching staff voiced concerns that if the season wasn’t “fun” we would lose kids interest so it was imperative to make the practices enjoyable, engaging and rewarding. In the summer, tragedy had struck one of their defensemen’s (in a skiing) accident which resulted in the team being “short” one defensemen. It was agreed upon to make up for this situation; that each forward would take a turn to play defence on a rotating basis and that the team would create an award after the player who was injured. And the forward who “subbed” in as a defenseman in the game would “win” the award. So we tried to turn this unfortunate situation into a team bonding and positive experience. We also discussed the upcoming training camp and what the coach’s expectations were for the players and me (who will be running most of training camp). The meeting lasted 2 hours and were all excited to start training camp.

Monday August 25, 2014

-Day #1 of training camp, we decided we needed to focus on easing the players into camp. We were going to be on the ice 2 hours a day (Monday-Friday) that it was important not to have any injuries or players throwing up. We decided to run them through some flow drills, some one on one’s and have a scrimmage at the end. (2 hours)

Day #2 of training camp we wanted to focus on breakouts and reading the pressure. We did a couple of breakouts teaching d 2 d’s, reverses, “wheels” and “quick ups”. The key mentoring points for the coaches and the players was to identify where the pressure was coming from. In order to do this we needed the off-side defensemen to be constantly shoulder checking to communicate with the puck retrieval defensemen. We also emphasised the forwards getting low for support to be outlets, but also so they can communicate with the defensemen- especially the strong side winger who could be communicating a “quick up”. Today we only used coaches as forecheckers but as the week progresses we will introduce their teammates to simulate more of a “game like” scenario. We also re-introduced body checking. This age group has been the most impacted by hockey Canada’s body checking rule changes. This age group was hitting, and then they weren’t hitting and now their hitting again. We focussed on the proper way of giving and receiving hit and introduced drills to build confidence in the group. We also worked on 1 on 1’s and conditioning. We finished the practice again with a scrimmage. (2 hours)

Day #3 - today we “built up” on our breakouts, we introduced other teammates, using 2 forward’s with their sticks upside down to create contextual interference. We wanted to create mock simulation like the players would see in games. We followed this drill with a controlled scrimmage whereby we instructed the players if they heard a whistle during the play to stop where they were to correct their decision making or their positioning. We encouraged them to utilize the skills and tendencies we had been focussing on all week. We later continued with our body contact drills to ensure all players could successfully give and receive a body check. And we introduced our defensive zone system followed again by a scrimmage to reinforce proper teaching methods. (2 hours)

Day #4- today we decided to build up again our breakouts (because this team struggled a lot in the previous year with this) we activated 3 forwards now but still having their sticks upside down. We again focussed on reading the pressure, communicating to one another and making sure each player fully understood their roles and responsibilities (especially concerning body positioning). Next we continued with defensive zone coverage playing 5 on 5 in both ends of the rink to simulate game situations. Afterwards we played a scrimmage with the idea that if a whistle were to be blown all players would stop immediately, to correct any imperfections. Today we ended practice with a good conditioning skate and played a 5 puck shootout. (2 hours)

Day #5- This was the last day of training camp we were now ready to practice breakouts with 3 forwards forechecking holding their sticks properly. We worked on defensive zone coverage and did a series of one on one battles, 2 on 1’s and puck support drills. We did a series of conditioning skates and finished again as the day before with a 5 puck shootout.

After the 5th day what I was most proud of was the impact my coaching had on their breakouts. The head coach and assistant coach both told me that they hadn’t seen their breakouts done that well ever before. I talked to them about the importance of practicing like we play. The boys needed game like situations to improve decision making and create pressure. The drills reflected more of a game like atmosphere. The coaching staff was happy with the amount of “fun” the boys had and were also very satisfied with the work ethic the boys displayed. It was further agreed upon that I will attend their first tournament and sit in on the dressing room conversations and give reports back on what I see in the games. We also agreed that I would continue to work with the team throughout the duration of the season.

Friday September 12, 2014

I attended their first tournament game. The team played against Nobleton to a 4-4 tie. I took notes during the game and after met with the players and the coaches to provide them with my feedback.

Saturday September 13, 2014

I attended their second tournament game; they played against the Humberview Huskies and won the game 5-2. The team played extremely well, and after the game I met with the players and the coaching staff to review my notes.

**V. Mental Training:**

At the beginning of the season we meet with our sports psychologist. He walks our players through a series of mental imagery exercises. Some include proper breathing techniques, visualization (both the night before, and day of the game), and some “slump” avoiding rituals. One in particular he talks about is if you’re in a slump; place a red sticker somewhere on your stick and when you’re on the bench or before the game only focus on the red sticker. This will allow you to focus on the task at hand and limit outside distractions.

At the midpoint of the season we will bring our psychologist back to meet with the players and at this meeting (coaches are not involved) and this allows the players to voice any concerns that they have with regards to anything team related. This is an excellent opportunity for our players to feel safe to discuss anything that has happened in the first half of the season. And then the coaches meet with the psychologist and gain valuable insight into where he thinks the team mental attitude is. It is at this time the coaches meet and see if anything approaches need to be changed modified or eliminated.

When playoffs are about to begin we set up two meetings- one per week right before the playoffs. At this opportunity we will usually do an exercise that in some way will build confidence for our players. Last year we did an exercise where each player received a blank sheet of paper and they were instructed to write their number on the top of the page and then pass the page to their left. When the player to their left received the piece of paper they were asked to write something positive about the player whose sheet they received. Whether it was “what a great leader they were” or “how hard they worked in practice” or “how hard their shot was”. By the end of the exercise each player received their numbered sheet back with all of their respective player’s positive opinions of themselves. So they were all left with 25 positive things with their number on the top of the page and then they hung it in their locker to see before and after each time they practiced or played.

We also talked about the mental side of the game, last year we struggled with taking undisciplined penalties we would have open discussions with our psychologist in order to “air” the room and try to come to some sort of collective understanding. We found this exercise very valuable because it allowed our players an opportunity to voice their frustrations.

**VI.** **Team Building**

At the beginning of each season we will divide our team into 5 groups of 5 and give them a sheet of paper and a marker. And we will ask the players what are our team values, how to we want to play? We give them 15 minutes to write down their 10-15 most important values and then we will ask them to present them to the rest of the group. After all the sheets of paper are hanging at the front for all the players to see we will go over each groups choices and debate (the players will, we feel it is important that the players have input) which is the single most important one on the list. After we have identified each group’s key value that we as a team want to focus on. We put it in our creed. And our creed is then hung in the locker room for all the guys to see every time we enter the locker room. We also put our creed on our team work out shirts and when we do any dryland training or team functions it is there to remind us what our values are.

We also believe it is important for team building to have a bbq at the beginning of the year. This allows the players to see that they care about them. It also gives the players and coaches to interact in a social setting away from the rink. Typically at this event I will encourage the coaching staff to do all the cooking and preparation so the players can see that the coaches are taking care of the players needs.

Also at this time we will try and schedule the “York university amazing race”. We divide the players up into teams of 5 (usually the captain of the team is a player that is not a captain or top scorer on the team) and they will compete to finish the race first. We place items all around the campus and give clues, the first team to come back with all of the clues the fastest; wins! This team bonding allows the players to compete but in an off the ice scenario, it allows the new players to become more familiar with the campus and in turn feel more comfortable in their new surroundings. It also allows the players to get to know each other in a fun, easy going way.

On all road games we always organize team meals for our players this allows our players an opportunity to socialize together and “feel taken care of”. We always eat as a team and were always together.

At Christmas time we will always have a Christmas party, where we will do a secret Santa and buy dinner for the players. This is another excellent opportunity for our players to get to know each other away from the rink and see the “human” side of the coaching staff.

One weekends after the Christmas break is always dedicated to family weekend. At a home game we will invite all of our players family’s to a game and after the game organize a team meal and silent auction. This allows our players parents to get to know each other and the coaching staff. It’s also a great opportunity the parents of our players to get to know each other and create warm feelings towards one another.

**VII. Effective use of Technology**

It has never been more important for coaches to utilize modern technology. We video tape every game and break it down using Steva Software. We are able to import all of our video clips into the cloud so all coaches on the staff have access to the clips immediately. We also utilize technology when we show game film to our players. We find it really helpful to use a big screen projector (the bigger our players are on screen) the more they seem to pay attention. Another helpful tool for us to use, is downloading NHL clips. Our players enjoy evaluating the pros on what they’re doing well or where they need to improve on. On occasion we videotape practices as well to further help us evaluate where we are as a team. It also gives us valuable insights as to how we are preparing our team and allows us another way to gauge where our work ethic is. We also utilize email and texting of our players. We can send video clips via email or connect with our players via text messaging. Both are a great way for us to communicate with our players. For practices we use “drill draw” which enables us to create detailed outlines of our practice plan and keep them safely stored and accessible. For scouting we encourage players, coaches and scouts to send us video clippings of potential recruits and were constantly talking to different scouts and family advisors to help us build our program.

**Section C: Team Tactics & Team Play Competencies**

**IIV. Offensive Team Play**

It’s my philosophy that your defensemen’s are critical in helping your team create offense. They can do this in a variety of different ways which include creating pressure, quick transitions, having good puck control and support.

1. Creating pressure

Let’s begin by focussing in the offensive zone; one way for a defensemen to create pressure is by “pinching” down on the opposing teams wingers when they have the puck. This allows our team to hem other teams in their own zone. When a defensemen pinches we encourage him to “pinch the puck” so his main responsibility is to push the puck back into the other teams zone. In order for him to do this he must make the correct read which include having a good high guy for support and make the right read on the opposing winger that he won’t be able to make a play under pressure.

In the neutral zone the same concept applies we encourage our defense to “step up” in the neutral zone to take time and space away from the opposing teams’ forwards. Again the defensemen must be aware that he has support and that the opposing teams forward won’t be able to make a play under pressure.

In our own zone we encourage our defensemen to take away time and space from the oppositions forwards in order for us to be able to transition quickly. We like to pressure other teams’ forwards by telling our defensemen to have their “stick on puck” which will allow them to create the necessary pressure in order for us to transition to offense enabling us to create more offensive chances.

1. Quick Transitions

Let’s begin in the neutral zone we want our defense to be quick in transition we want our defensemen to make the right reads. A lot of times in the neutral zone a “quick up” is usually the right play. We teach our defensemen to “see a play, make a play”, don’t see a play protect the puck by putting it into safe areas on the ice so our forwards can skate into the puck with speed, and this typically takes a split second to make a decision. After that you can be very susceptible to creating a turnover. We want our defensemen get the puck up to our forwards in full flight or to a forward who is stretching and we can put the other team back in their own zone as quickly as possible. So in the neutral zone it’s either a quick up to a stretch winger, hit the center men in flight, a quick d to d and let’s get the puck moving north. This enables us to put our opposition on their heels and lets us dictate the speed at which the game will be played.

In our own zone we encourage our defensemen’s to create transitions as quickly as possible, in order for them to do this we must take away the other teams time and space and create turnovers. We encourage our defensemen to utilize the middle of the ice as much as possible by teaching them a “punch pass” which usually hits the low forward (centermen) because we find that the middle of the ice is opened quite frequently. Teams these days are doing such a great job locking the walls that one has to trust their defensemen (and teach) them to feel comfortable using the middle of the ice. We also encourage the weak-side defensemen to activate on the break-outs which enables us another offensive threat down the ice.

1. Puck control

We need our defensemen to be able to control the puck to feel “comfortable” handling the puck all over the ice regardless of which zone the play is in. Let’s begin in the offensive zone our defensemen must be able to control the puck whether a defensemen is activating down the wall on a high cycle to change the flow of attack or a D to D pass to create time and space or a shot on net that we trust the shot won’t be blocked. All of these involve some sort of puck control and we encourage our defensemen to make the proper reads.

In the neutral zone we sometimes like our defense to change the side that we are going to attack to, so we teach our defensemen to go D 2 D and have the strong side D belly out to create time and space and then have the weak side defensemen fall underneath we hit him low so we can attack the other side of the play or he can carry the puck up ice. It is essential that our defensemen feel comfortable with their puck handling ability.

In the defensive zone we encourage our defense to utilize the middle of the ice, make a good first pass, and have our weakside defensemen join the rush or lead the rush to create more offense. All of the above mentioned skills depend on our defensemen to feel competent in their puck controlling abilities.

1. Support

We encourage our defensemen when they don’t have the puck to support the forwards and their defensive partner at all times. Let’s begin in the defensive zone on our breakouts it imperative that the defensemen without the puck “talk” to his partner when he has the puck and either call for a “run”, reverse, or D 2 D and that the defensemen without the puck support his partner by getting to the spot on the ice that allows the proper play to occur.

In the neutral zone we teach our defense to be “staggered” this gives the defensemen with the puck the support he needs in case he needs to go D 2 D or in case he should turnover the puck.

In the offensive zone we encourage our defensemen to support the forwards, whether that be by activating on a high cycle and sliding down the boards. Or it can be as simple as creating a good angle for a pass on the blueline in order to be a release point for the forwards. We teach our strong side defensemen to activate to the hash marks in the offensive zone and have the weak-side defensemen slide to the middle of the ice. So we can hit him at the top of the key and have a good shot to the net.

**IX. Defensive Team Play**

 3 important individual skills/tactics that we like to emphasize to our players are taking the proper angles, blocking shots, and puck on stick and when a player should attack or contain.

1. Taking the proper angles

Were constantly teaching our players to take the right angles; whether it’s a forward angling a defenseman who has the puck, a winger going out to the point to negate a shot, or a defensemen playing a one on one and not giving up the middle of the ice. Taking the right angle(s) and keeping the opposing team away from the dangerous parts of the ice is so crucial in playing good team defense.

1. Blocking shots

Blocking shots has become a crucial part of the game with teams activating and encouraging defensemen to play great roles in the offensive zone it’s become a skill to block shots and to take away a D-mans time and space. All players on the ice need to learn the skill of blocking shots weather it’s a winger up at the point, a centermen or defensemen in front of the net.

1. “Puck on stick”/active sticks.

Far too often our players don’t have their sticks on the ice. Were constantly reminding our players to have their “sticks on puck” when were on defense and to have active sticks. Players can get caught up in making a big hit and not be aware of whether or not their sticks are impeding the other player’s puck control. We want to take passing lanes away with our sticks and it’s imperative to teach players how to properly utilize their sticks.

 3 important team tactics that we like to focus on are; having a good high guy in the offensive zone, playing“zone” coverage in the defensive zone without the puck and having the strong and weakside wingers in their collapsing down low to help out in the d-zone.

1. A good high guy in the offensive zone

Good defence begins in the offensive zone as soon as your team loses possession of the puck. You need good support for your defensemen, which will stifle the ability of your opponents to gain speed through the neutral zone. This high guy must take a good angle to impede your opponent’s ability to gain traction on their breakouts. If this player allows the breakout to occur than good back side pressure is crucial.

1. Zone Coverage in defensive zone

I do not believe in man to man coverage, the discrepancy between players ability is too vast. I believe in a weak man to man with a zone defence emphasis. This allows players of weaker ability to be less likely to be exposed in the defensive zone. As opposed to a man to man defence where a player can come off the ice and say “I had my man” a zone defence emphasis a 5 unit defence; whereby I teach players they have primary and secondary coverage’s and they are all responsible to each other to be in specific spots in our zone.

1. Weak side winger collapsing to the middle and strong side take away the strong side defensemen

Besides the down-low play of your defensemen and center men; the wingers are an integral part to the defensive zone scheme that I like to teach. If done properly the wingers can take away dangerous passing lanes with their sticks, dangerous shooting lanes with their bodies and take away dangerous areas on the ice. The wingers have to be taught that the first three and the last three strides have to be done hard, not to “coast” to their spots. I believe in cutting the ice in half and I teach the wingers this in practice, through game film, and through explanation and demonstration on the white board.

**X. Power Play**

 I’ve always been a big proponent, whether as a player or a coach that the best power plays are when all of your players are in their “right” positions on the “right” side(s) of the ice. Dependent on which way your players shoot they will always find a “more comfortable” side of the ice. We have so many new recruits on the team this year it’s difficult to fully grasp where everyone will play, so for the purpose of this exercise I won’t mention specific players but specific skills each player will need to posses in their given spot(s) on the pp. Let’s begin with the strong side defensemen (or shooter of the top of the key). This player needs to have a feel for the game, feel for pressure and a keen sense to make a play under pressure, whether it’s to pass to the half wall player find a tip down at the goal line or take a seeing eye wrist shot off of his back foot. I already know we don’t have any “big time” shooters for this position but we have identified one player who possesses the necessary skills to be the first mentioned type of player. The half wall player has to be your smartest and most skilled player on the ice. He can quarter-back the pp from that spot on the ice. He can either drive the net and create a scoring chance or either draw in the fwd leaving the strong side D opened or when he drives the lane dish the puck down-low to the goal line support player. I personally like my half-wall player to come almost up to the blue-line to create as much of confusion for the opponents strong side defensemen and to entice the strong side fwd to leave the middle lane and open up a shot for our strong side defensemen. The goal-line player has to be “nifty” good at puck retrieval, understand angles and time and space. He is the release point for either the strong side defensemen when he has the puck or for the half-wall player. He must be a skilled passer and possess a patient demeanour. The net front player has to be big or at the very least play big. We want to create a lot of shots to the net; we want the goalies job to be difficult. A big body player, with good hand eye co-ordination who accepts the role of being the net front player and is good at puck retrieval is essential. The off-side defenseman has to be smart. He has to be patient but not fearful to make his way all the way down to the goal-line if the opportunity presents itself.

Now that the personal attributes of the individual players has been identified, the next step is for them to understand what it is we are trying to accomplish. I love pp’s that create movement and create “slight” picks. Not where one draws a penalty, but where we get our opponents just a little bit out of position. This can make all the difference between a successful power play and “so-so” power play; create movement of not only the puck but the players themselves. Interchange positions between the forwards, and between the forwards and the defensemen. Create doubt or confusion for your opposition. The best power-plays I’ve been part of, have had a structure of where everyone knows where their supposed to be, but have the freedom for the players to execute and be creative.

I’ve found that the best way to practice the power-play is to begin with “walk-throughs” allow the players to understand their positioning, which routes we want to run, and then what opportunities will be there for them. Gradually begin adding resistance in the form of defenders, beginning with their sticks upside. It’s important to build confidence within your power-play units and allow for it to gain momentum. Maybe things don’t work right way but be patient and allow them to “figure” it out. I find that most people will evaluate a power play by percentages (this is the obvious measure) but often times it’s not an accurate reflection of what is truly going on. Last year for example we did not have a great pp percentage, but we also didn’t necessarily have the personal to have a great percentage. I find if a power play is gaining “easy” entries into the opposition’s zone, or getting puck retrieval and creating shots. There’s not much more a coach can give his players then that. At the end of the day hockey players have to make hockey plays.

My favourite system on the pp setup in the offensive zone is the overload or umbrella. It’s important that the players be of the proper shot and setup on the proper side. If they’re setting up facing the oppositions net on the right side then your half-wall, strong side defensemen and your goal-line support players optimally would be left shots. Your net front player would be a right shot (for a one-timer option) and your weak-side defensemen would be a right shot as well for the same reason as your net front player. It should be noted that this would be optimal, obviously there are special circumstances where this isn’t that important(maybe you have a Phil Kessel ) like player who can come off the half-wall and be a righty and he can score at will. I haven’t been that fortunate to coach any Phil Kessel’s. A regular player will have a higher success rate having his stick facing the middle of the ice. What I try an emphasis for my power-plays is to create shots on net. This will force the opposition to collapse down to the front of the net and create commotion which might lead to them taking another penalty or a goal scoring opportunity off of a rebound or bounce at the net or from the shot itself. I find that the more pucks that are directed towards the front of the net, allow for other seams to open up or “lucky” bounces to occur. Another point of emphasis on the power-play is winning face-offs. This is crucial if we can win the draw; I always encourage my teams within two passes to get a shot on net. I learned this from ken Hitchcock and I have found success with this approach.

On the breakouts I like to have a minimum of three variations in order to keep other teams on their toes. Again, I’m a big proponent of everyone playing on their fore-hands. I will provide the three different variations that I like my teams to use.

On the entries I believe entering the zone with possession is crucial, in fact more times than not if the other team forces us to dump pucks in, in my mind we didn’t do a good enough job. If we are forced to dump pucks in, it is imperative we keep it away from the other team’s goaltender and we make good reads. Either a soft chip into the corner where we have support or a cross ice dump if 2 fwds are going hard into the opposite corners. We want are defensemen to get up on the play and seal the boards. What I’m finding now-a-days scoring off the rush is becoming a much more popular idea. It’s important to teach your defensemen to get up ice and be a threat at all times. They can all too often be the late guy that no one identifies.

**XI. Penalty Kill**

 On a 5 on 3 power play (pp) I instruct my players to try and get into a “box and 1” formation where all the players in the box are on their “forehands”. Dependent on what type of personal we have, we might try and step up a big one timer from the point or if we have skilled forwards create a backdoor play. With the box and 1 set up, we’re looking to create open seams. Get the penalty killers out of position in order to create a cross seam pass to a shooter. The best way to do this is by getting all the players in their designed positions and encouraging them to allow the puck to do the moving. Quick crisp passing is essential.

Penalty kill for this set up

With the box and 1 formation the defensive system I would use is a “triangle” formation, and tries to keep the formation as tight as possible. We don’t want to give up any cross seam passes. We want to take away shooting lanes with our bodies and passing lanes with our sticks. We want to have active sticks that are on the ice. We would also want a switch to occur. The forward that goes out to the strong side defensemen with the puck, if that pass goes to the off-side defensemen, I would want our strong side defensemen to front that defensemen (not too aggressively) but make sure he is in the shooting lane. Waiting or stalling for help from the forward until he gets back into position. This “switch” or rotation will occur when the offensive team is able to change the angle of attack (when the puck moves east to west). The net front defenseman’s’ responsibility is not to get tied up with the net front forward and ensure that all cross crease passes are intercepted. I still want them to play tough in front of our net, take control of the net front either by winning stick battles or knocking players down.

The second type of power play system I like to teach is what I refer to as “below the goal-line”. I like to set up two forwards below the goal-line on either side of the net and allow them to make passes, in order to bring the penalty-killers low and allow for a big shot from the top and then have the forwards converge on the net. I find a lot of times this will entice the defensive killers to try and jump down leaving an open seam up top. I also instruct the strong side defensemen to create a ‘pick” on their forward allowing the offside defensemen to fall underneath for a big shot and have everyone else converge on the net.

To effectively defend this set up our defensemen must be patient when the forwards are passing the puck behind our net. They cannot panic and take themselves out of position. They can’t get mesmerized by what’s occurring behind the net because the real danger is in front of the net. It’s important that their feet face “up-ice” as much as possible, all the while having really active sticks. On any bobbles by the opponent’s forwards, we want our defensemen to activate and try and strip the puck away and knock players down. The forward on the penalty kill must have an active stick and he too must not get caught up or mesmerized by the down low passing. He must understand to have his stick in the proper passing lane(s) and be prepared for a sort of pick or interference. Where he might consider embellishing it to draw a penalty or to fight through it and make sure he is in the proper shooting lane to block a shot if the pass should get through. On any shots on net I instruct all players to collapse to the net and knock the opposition’s players down. Play tough on any shots on net and win our one on one battle’s with an emphasis on clearing the front of the net.

The third type of system I like on the 5 on 3 is the umbrella. This system is good if you have players with good shots and quick releases, it also helps if you have some big body forwards with good hand eye co-ordination who can stand in front of the net to create commotion. The idea of this formation is to move the puck around the umbrella and find a good angled shot, or to find one of your net front players for a shot-pass or direct pass where they can make a play in tight. Again you want all of your flank players playing their opposite sides available for one-timers. And the player that plays at the top of the umbrella to make good decisions with the puck and have a good shot that he’s able to get through.

The way I would defend this set up would be with a tight triangle, with one forward player and two defensemen. Again in order for this penalty kill to be successful, the players must have their bodies in the shooting lanes and sticks in the proper passing lanes. They have to play passive when the other team has control of the pucks but on any bobbles we want to attack the puck and knock the oppositions’ players down. It’s important that each player front the necessary player and understand were trying to eliminate cross seam passes.

In the neutral zone the idea is that the forward has to “steer” the play. Make the other team commit to enter through one half of our zone (ideally make them dump the puck in but on a 5-3 can be very difficult) but at least if the forward steers properly potentially our defensemen can step up and possibly create a turnover. The main idea is to not let them enter the zone “full speed” create some sort of friction. And make them make a good hockey play.

Face-offs- in the defensive zone we utilize 3 face-off plays if our center man is able to win the draw. The first is the board side defensemen ties up their strong side winger and our off-side defensemen retrieves the puck from the corner and we strong side rim. (See diagram)

The second is when our center man wins the draw to the corner our board side defensemen rims the puck hard around to clear the zone.

Lastly, after a win we will have our board side defensemen soft chip it behind our net and have our inside defensemen peel off and rim hard far side.