



TACTICAL

Offensive Faceoffs



REVISED 2/19

OBJECTIVES

- To understand the objective of faceoffs
- To outline the responsibilities of players during a faceoff
- To provide faceoffs in various situations

INTRODUCTION

Faceoffs involve gaining possession of the puck in order to create scoring chances or eliminate a scoring chance from your opponent.

There are many ways to accomplish these goals by your center winning the faceoff and by having your wings and defensemen move in to gain possession during a faceoff. All of the players reacting positively after losing a faceoff will allow them to have the opportunity to quickly regain possession of the puck.

CRITICAL OBJECTIVES

1. Have your best faceoff person take the faceoff wherever it may be on the ice.
2. Have your two best faceoff people on the ice at all critical times in case one of your best gets thrown out of the faceoff circle.
3. Every player on the ice needs to know each of their responsibilities whether you win or lose the faceoff.
4. Be aware of scoring chances created from faceoffs during a game.
5. Be aware of your opponents' scoring chances from faceoffs.

IMPROVING FACEOFFS

If you want to improve your team's faceoffs, there are three critical components to address:

- focusing
- setting objectives
- valuing the importance of this part of the game

Ways to improve your team's focus and overall performance are to set faceoff objectives. An objective can be to win 60% of all faceoffs.

Talk about the importance of faceoff play during the course of a game. Reward good execution. Spend time practicing the techniques and tactics of faceoffs.

Finally, make faceoff success a matter of pride with your team. It can represent partial victory in any game that was won or lost.

ZONE OBJECTIVES

- **Defensive Zone:** Limit the possibility of allowing a scoring chance against your team. You have a chance to start a successful attack.
- **Neutral Zone:** Enhance your opportunity to attack and limit your opponent's chance of entering your zone.
- **Offensive Zone:** Create a scoring opportunity and create continuous sustained pressure.

SITUATIONAL OBJECTIVES

- **Power Play:** The question you need to answer, especially in the offensive zone, is whether you faceoff for possession or whether you attempt to score off of the faceoff?
- **Penalty Killing:** Most coaches agree that defensive posture must be the first priority in a penalty-killing situation. However, when a scoring or offensive opportunity presents itself in a penalty-killing situation, remember

that power-play units do not tend to think defensively, so seize the moment.

Another area to consider is how to cover a faceoff in the defensive zone:

- Identify which opposing player takes the majority of the faceoffs.
- Does your opponents put a player along the boards? Should they be covered?
- **Pulled Goalie:** This situation is the same that exists in a power play. Should you try to score off the draw or play for possession? If there are only a few seconds remaining, there is no question. You must attempt to score off of a set faceoff play.

RESPONSIBILITY OF THE PLAYER TAKING THE FACEOFF

1. Take charge and be the “quarterback.”
2. Know the linesmen, how they drop the puck, and what they allow around the faceoff circle.
3. Know the playing rules.
4. Know the faceoff abilities of your opposing players. Know their strengths, weaknesses, and faceoff strategies in all situations.
5. Know your team’s strategies in all situations.

FACEOFF READS

1. Read how the opposing team sets up.
2. Read the techniques of the opposing faceoff player.
3. Read how the opposing faceoff players hold their sticks.
4. Read how the linesman conducts a faceoff.

Key Elements

1. Arriving at the faceoff dot:
 - Go to the dot when your teammates are ready.
 - Establish position over the faceoff dot.
 - Physically control the area where the puck will be dropped.
 - Be confident.

2. Stance:

- Stand with your feet wider than shoulder width, knees bent and good balance over your skates.
- Be in a position to take control, and move quickly.
- Keep your eyes on the linesman’s hand.

3. Faceoff:

- Use your whole body.
- Keep your arms close to your body.
- Use the power of your legs, shoulder and back.

4. Stick blade:

- Keep the blade slightly off the ice.
- Use an up-and-down motion.
- Do not be too anxious nor tense.

NEUTRALIZING YOUR OPPONENT

- Block the motion of the opposing centerman’s stick. This will create a loose puck for you to sweep back with a second swipe.
- Move quickly into your opponent, checking his or her stick, then body. The puck can be retrieved by a teammate.
- Stick check your opponent’s stick, spin into his or her body and kick the puck back to a teammate.

OFFENSIVE FACEOFF ALIGNMENTS

This alignment allows the center to attempt to win (draw) the puck back to the shooter (defenseman). The wings interfere (hold up) the opponent’s players so the shooter can get the shot away. It is preferable to have a left-handed center taking the faceoff in the right circle (and vice-versa) because it is easier for him or her to draw the puck to his or her backhand (see Figure 6-1).

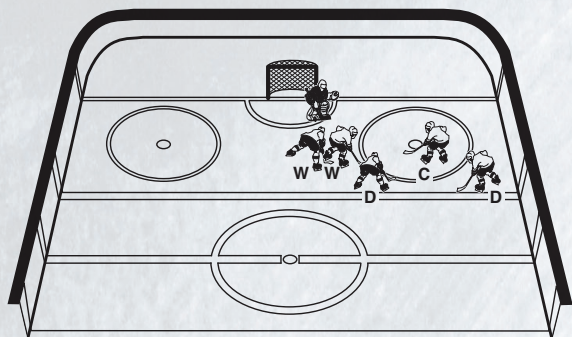


Figure 6-1.

The alignment in Figure 6-2 is again dependent on the strength of the player taking the faceoff. The situation here is to attempt to win the draw to the player on the boards, who then passes back to the defenseman for a shot on goal. This alignment may also open up the slot area and force the defending team to place a man on your player along the boards.

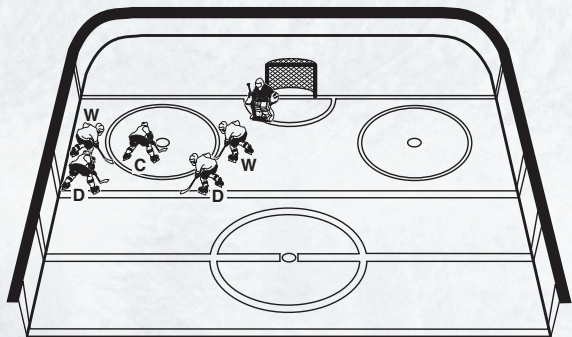


Figure 6-2.

This is the most common alignment for a faceoff in the offensive zone (see Figure 6-3). Here the player attempts to win the faceoff back to the shooter in the slot. Again, the player on the circle in front of the net attempts to interfere with the defending player, so the shooter has time to release the shot. There is also a safety value in the presence of the defenseman (a player for a backup shot or puck control in the zone).

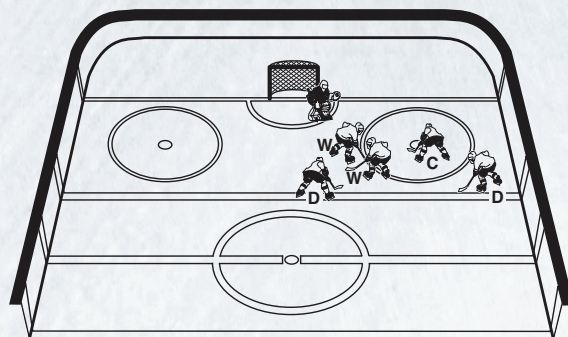


Figure 6-3.

Offensive zone faceoff alignment when you have pulled your goaltender becomes very important because you must win the faceoff (see Figure 6-4). In these situations, use your best faceoff player and your most experienced players. Attempt to gain possession of the puck on the faceoff and work the puck for a good shot on goal.

Figure 6-4 places a great deal of emphasis in interference of the opposing players once the puck is dropped. The offensive team must tie up the opposing player in order to gain control and take the best possible shot on goal. It is important in all player advantage situations that the shooter attempt to put his or her shot on goal.

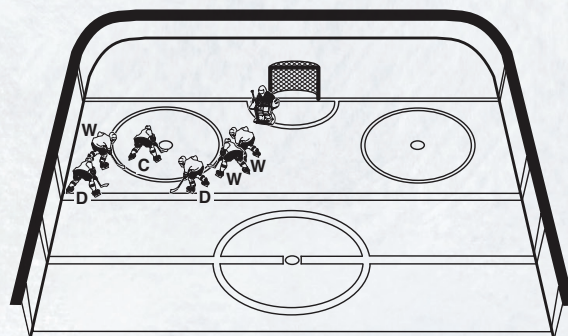


Figure 6-4.

In Figure 6-5 use your strongest possible player positioning to ensure, if the faceoff is won, that your team gains a good shot on goal. As in all faceoff situations, gaining control of the puck is your primary concern.

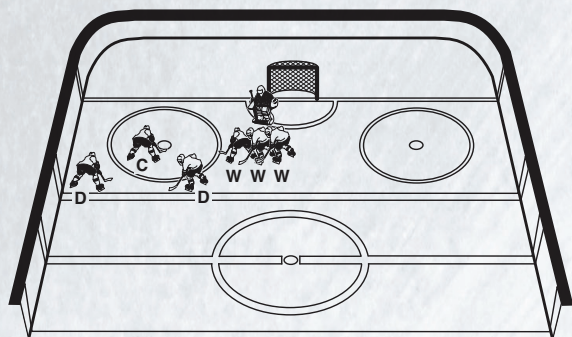


Figure 6-5.