



# DEVELOPING HOCKEY SENSE

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***"IT IS NOT IMPORTANT, THAT EVERYONE THINKS THE SAME WAY. BUT IT IS IMPORTANT, THAT EVERYONE THINKS."***

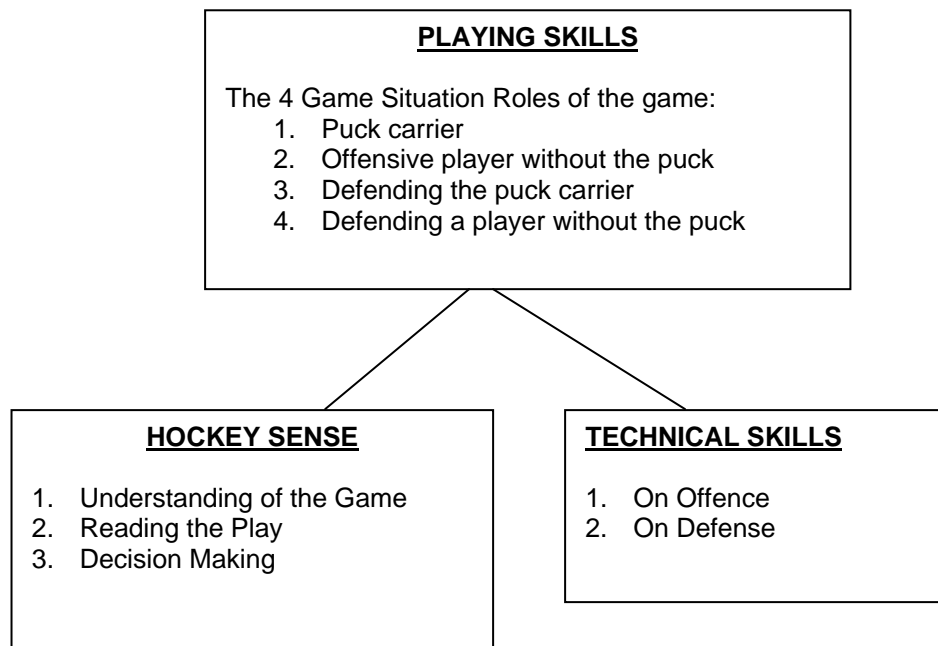
One of the biggest threats for the development of ice hockey is that players are forced to play with a system too early in their development. At an early age playing has to be for fun while learning a wide range of skills. A young player playing in a system (e.g. 1-2-2) too early may get stuck in one position for his whole career and his full potential may not be realised.

Too much emphasis and importance is placed on winning too early in a player's development. This means players are not able to make any mistakes and that blocks the learning! When we are developing hockey sense, it should be done with the theme "learning by playing". To accomplish this, we use:

- Different kind of games
- Game-situation drills.

### Ice Hockey Skills

The playing skills of Ice Hockey can be divided in two parts: Technical Skills and Hockey Sense. The coach needs to concentrate on both of these skill areas to help their players develop the ability to play the game effectively.



### Technical Skills

Technical Skills have been already covered in the Introduction to Coaching and Level I Manuals. They have been further expanded in the Tactics chapters in Level I, Level II and Level III.



## HOCKEY SENSE

Playing means, continuous observing of the environment the game is being played in (reading the game), thinking, and decision-making. This is shown as the player's actions on the ice.

- Understanding the game
- Reading the game
- Decision-making

## Understanding the Game

Understanding the team's goals and the principles of co-operation in different game situations, allows the player to develop a better understanding of the game.

The players understanding of the game can be determined by answering the "golden" rules:

### The 10 "golden" rules of attack play

1. Attack play starts \_\_\_\_\_
2. The puck is \_\_\_\_\_
3. On offence you want \_\_\_\_\_
4. As soon as you get the puck \_\_\_\_\_
5. If a teammate is moving towards you \_\_\_\_\_
6. The players without the puck \_\_\_\_\_
7. The puck carrier \_\_\_\_\_
8. After the offensive blue line \_\_\_\_\_
9. Goals are scored \_\_\_\_\_
10. Defending starts \_\_\_\_\_



## The 10 "golden" rules of defense play

1. Defending starts \_\_\_\_\_
2. On defense you want \_\_\_\_\_
3. There should always be one player \_\_\_\_\_
4. The player with the puck \_\_\_\_\_
5. In the middle zone \_\_\_\_\_
6. In the defensive end you place yourself \_\_\_\_\_
7. You must see \_\_\_\_\_
8. Guard specifically \_\_\_\_\_
9. In defensive zone cover \_\_\_\_\_
10. The attack play starts \_\_\_\_\_

*\*See the last page to find the answers\**

## Decision Making

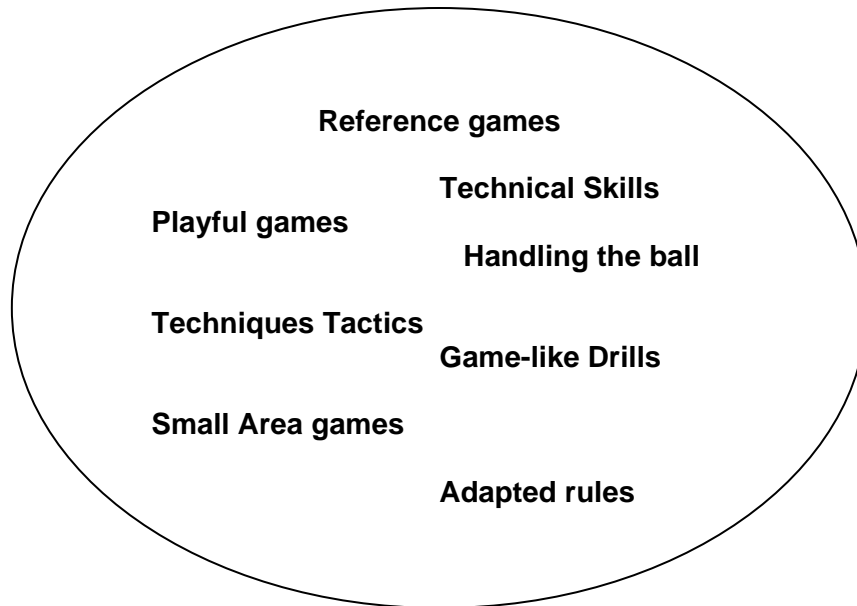
Decisions a player makes during the game are dependent on the playing skills the player chooses to carry out the decision. Essential is the speed and creativity of the decision making that the player makes.

The player has to have ability and playing skills to carry out the decisions he has made during the game, this is as important as making the decisions in the first place. This ability has to be learnt during practice.

## Playing Skills

### Learning Through Games - Learning by Doing

#### The Components of Playing Skills



"Remember these words very clearly: LEARNING IS MOST EFFECTIVE WHEN IT IS FUN!"

#### Games Leading to Play

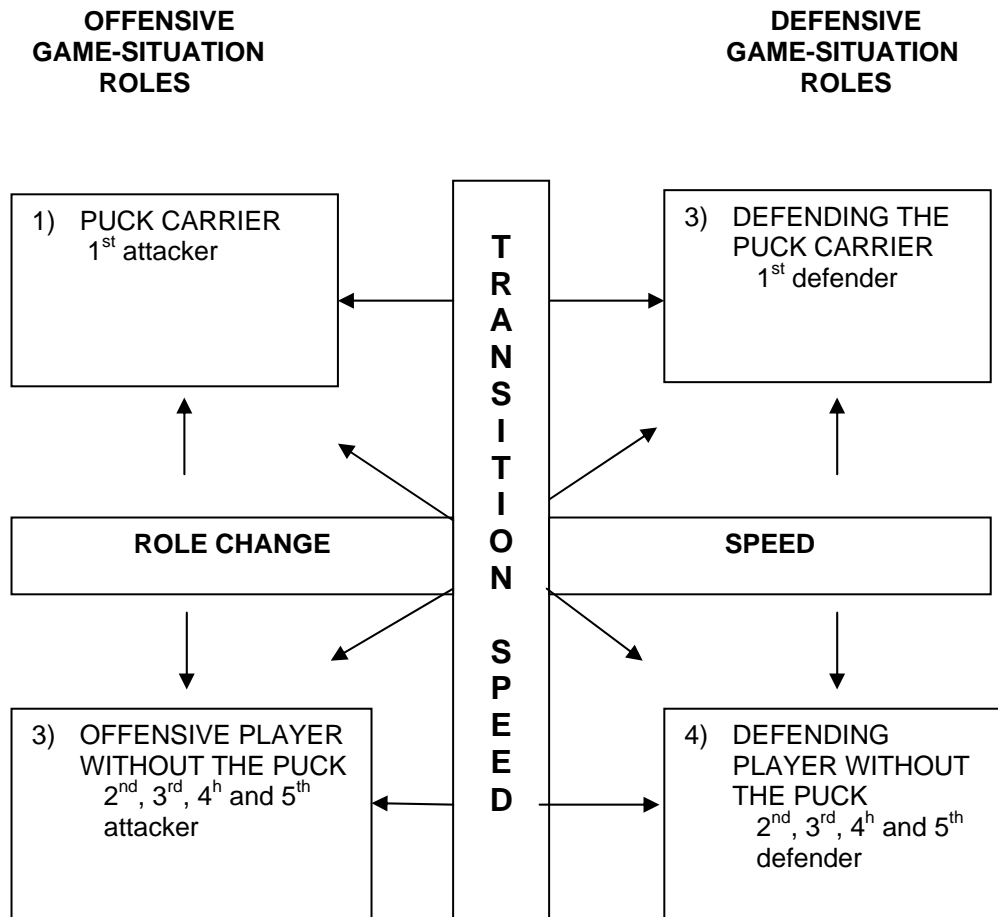
The players learn by playing:

- A. Playful games: Fun games that help the player become accustomed to playing and accept learn through games. For example; tag, kick-puck, football on ice...etc
- B. Adapted rules games: Playing small area games with agreed rules and restrictions. For example 3 on 3; backhand only, all players touch the puck before shooting or no return pass
- C. Games using Game Situation Roles: Developing individual playing skills in Game Situation Roles

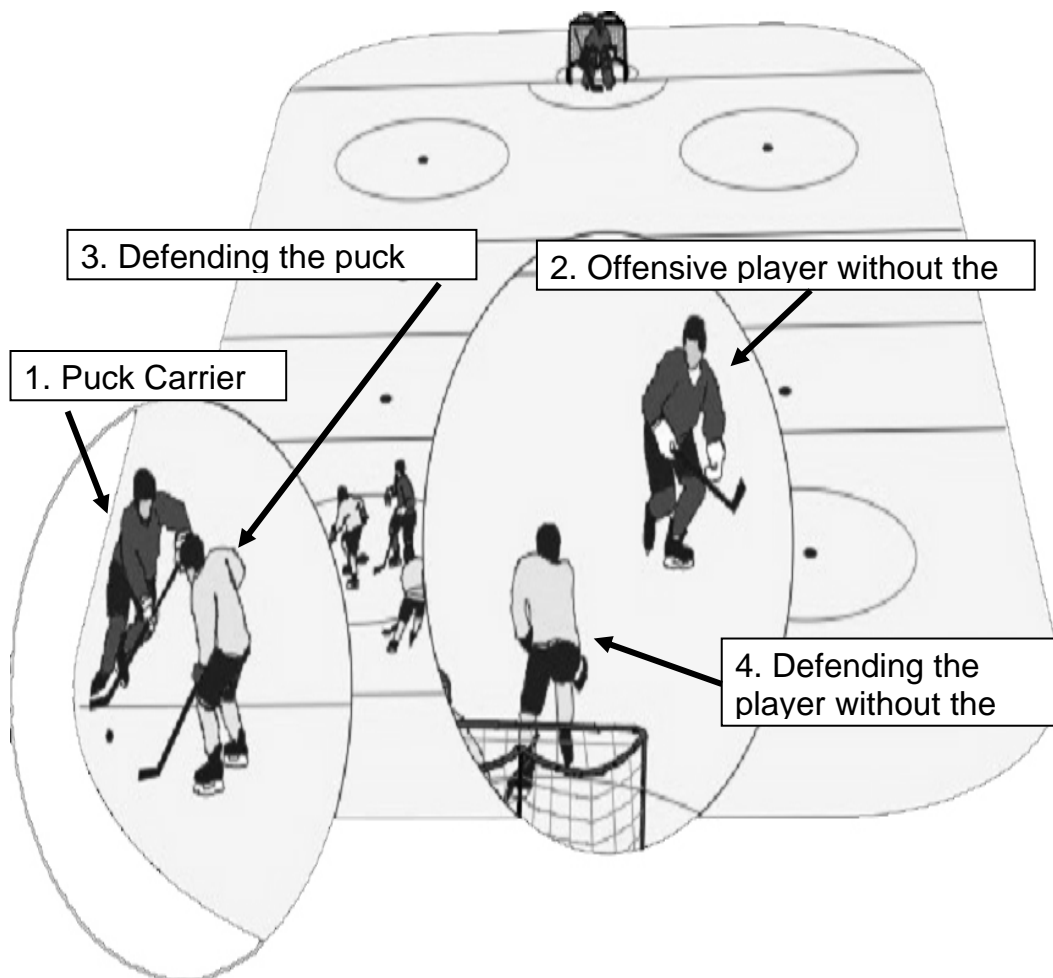
## Game Situation Roles and Learning the Game

It is important in all team sports, ice hockey is no exception, that the players interpret game situations and act on them in a consistent manner.

The game can be learned by learning and practicing the game-situation roles.



By learning the game-situation roles it is possible to learn every tactical skill and all parts of team play in a game. By allowing freedom and adding responsibilities to the possible courses of action in game-situation roles, it is possible to develop a flexible and modern team game system.



## Game Situation Roles - Objectives

### Offensive

Role 1: Puck carrier – the 1<sup>st</sup> Attacker

- Offensive pressure towards the opponent's goal and/or open ice → move!
- Shoot
- Pass - see the nearest passing opportunities
- Carry the puck - challenge the opponent, notice the positioning of the opponent.
- Keep moving to create time and space
- Fake before taking the puck.
- The best passing direction is often behind you
- Give and go (whenever the opponent is playing zone coverage).
- Use the space by continuing to skate
- Act to the actions of the defensemen after a screen

## Role 2: Offensive player without the puck – 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Attackers

- These players help maintain the "balance of power". They:
- Create width and depth
- Defensive readiness to balance
- Fake before cutting.
- Cut to a passing situation
  - From your own side towards the puck
  - From the wide to stretch
- Support
  - Make screens; for the puck carrier and for players without the puck
  - Find empty space - cut through it, clear it, go into it
  - Read and act on the state of the oppositions defending (How ready are they?)

## Defensive

### Role 3: Defending the puck carrier – 1<sup>st</sup> defender

- The principals of this are:
  - pressure the puck and player
  - stay in the play
  - win the puck
- Take away the opponent's space - prevent the shot
  - Move within stick-contact range and block the nearest passing possibility
  - Lead the Puck carrier - steer with your stick
  - Steal the puck only when within a stick length.
  - Keep the opponent out of the play and/or take the puck and move.
- If stealing the puck fails
  - Stay in the play
  - Keep track of the puck and know your role

### Role 4: Defensive players without the puck - 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Defenders

- Be active and move
- Keep track of your opponent and the puck
  - Readiness to support
  - Readiness to attack
- Your distance from your opponent depends on how threatening he is:
  - Stay within stick-contact range in the slot
  - The opponent's distance from the game situation, where the puck is, affects your positioning. Further away he is – further away you can be
- Always play in a low triangle formation in the defensive zone
  - Position yourself correctly, observe and move
  - "Support and play"
  - Talk - let the others know your screens and cuts



## Learning a Team Play with Game-Situation Roles

Game Situation Drills Are:

- Practiced in game like situations like 1 on 1 ..... 5 on 5
- Have varying number of players involved
- Can be either; drills that end after a certain time period or continuous that last longer and come to a natural end
- One-directional; meaning that the your own end is the your end through the entire drill
- Have only one puck in the drill
- Based on the player's hockey sense and ability to make decisions in different situations; which further develop the format of the drill and how the game is played on

The goal of the Game Situation Drills is to enhance and improve players' hockey sense, skills and team work.

Game Situation Drills are separated into 3 Phases:

- Phase 1: Even-Strength Situations
  - 1 on 1 ... 5 on 5 drills
- Phase 2: Man-Advantage Situations to Even-Strength Situations
  - 2 on 1 ... 5 on 5
- Phase 3: Man-Advantage Situations to Man-Short Situation
  - 2 on 1 ... 4 on 5

### Phase 1: Learning by Practicing Even-Strength Situations

Objectives for Player:

- Learn game-situation roles
- To practice man-to-man defense
- Performance of players in game like situations
- Speeding the transfer from one game like situation into another
- Enhance parts of team play and when short handed or during power play
- Improve SCORING

#### 1-on-1 Drills

Playing skills for the PUCK CARRIER and DEFENDING THE PUCK CARRIER

- FORWARD: offensive pressure, creating scoring opportunities, scoring under pressure from the defense, transition from offence to defense
- DEFENSEMAN: pressuring the opponent, regaining possession of the puck, transition from defense to offence

## 2-on-1 → 2-on-2 Drills

Playing skills in game-situation roles, transition from zone defense to man-to-man defense

- FORWARDS: offensive pressure, utilizing overload situations, scoring, transition
- DEFENSEMEN: zone defense → man-to-man defense → transition

## 3-on-1 → 3-on-3 Drills

- As above, defending has increased in difficulty; greater offensive efficiency is also required

## 3-on-2 → 3-on-3 Drills

- As above

### Phase 2: From Zone Defense to Man-To-Man Defense

Man-Advantage Situations to Even-Strength Situations

Finding a Role – “Marking Up”

Practicing Temporary Shorthanded and Extra-Man (Overload) Situations

Objectives for Player:

- Learn game-situation roles
- Practice man-to-man defense
- Speeding the transfer from one game like situation into another
- Developing game like play, both offensive and defensive
- Speeding the transfer between offensive play and defensive play (Speed of transition)
- Enhancing face-off, offensive and defensive play
- Improve players' hockey sense and skills
- DEMAND the transfer/accomplishment of practiced drills into a real game

## 2-on-2 Drills

Playing skills on all four roles

- FORWARDS: offensive pressure, chain of thought – fakes without the puck, making a cut, creating a screen for the puck carrier, transition
- DEFENSEMEN: man-to-man defense, triangle formation, regaining possession of the Puck, transition

## 3-on-3 Drills

Playing skills in all four roles

- FORWARDS: offensive pressure, chain of thought – making a cut, creating a screen for the puck carrier or for a player without the puck, balance, transition from offence to defense
- DEFENSEMEN: man-to-man defense, support (1. positioning, 2. support and cover), regaining possession of the puck, transition from defense to offence

## Phase 3: Creating and Using Overload Situations

Man-Advantage Situations to Man-Short Situation  
“Marking Up” and Supporting  
From Shorthanded and Extra-Man (Overload) Situations

Objectives for Player:

- Zone defense to using overload situations
- Speeding the transfer from one game like situation into another
- Developing game like play, both offensive and defensive
- Speeding the transfer from offensive play and defensive play (Speed of transition)
- Enhancing face-off, offensive and defensive play
- Improve players' hockey sense and skills
- DEMAND the transfer/accomplishment

## 1-on-2 → Transition at Different Strengths

- FORWARDS: offensive security, transition from offence to defence
- DEFENSEMEN: defensive efficiency → creating and using overload situations  
→ TRAP → counter-attack

**2-on-1 → 2-on-2 → 2-on-3 → TRANSITION**

Playing skills in game-situation roles, transition from zone defense to man-to-man defense

**3-on-1 → 3-on-2 → 3-on-3 → 3-on-4 → TRANSITION****3-on-1 → 3-on-2 → 3-on-4 → TRANSITION****4-on-2 → 4-on-3 → 4-on-4 → 4-on-5 → TRANSITION****4-on-2 → 4-on-3 → 4-on-5 → TRANSITION**

Answers:

**The 10 "golden" rules of attack play**

1. Attack play starts as soon as the puck is received
2. The puck is always faster than the player
3. On offence you want width and depth
4. As soon as you get the puck you must move from a narrow space to a broad space
5. If a teammate is moving towards you, try to find a free zone /lane
6. The players without the puck look for a free place
7. The puck carrier always tries to move across the next line
8. After the offensive blue line one player must do strongly towards the net
9. Goals are scored from a slot (Prime Scoring Zone)
10. The defending starts as soon as the puck has been lost

**The 10 "golden" rules of defense play**

1. Defending starts as soon as the puck has been lost
2. On defense you want width and depth
3. There should always be one player forcing the puck carrier
4. The player with the puck should be directed to the outside
5. In the middle zone, there should be at least three players between the puck carrier and the blue line
6. In the defensive end you place yourself between the opponent and your own goal
7. You must see the opponent that needs to be guarded and the play situation
8. Guard specifically the opponent's stick (stick to stick)
9. In defensive zone cover the slot (Prime Scoring Zone)
10. As soon you get the puck, think of attack – play upwards