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# CENTRAL MASS COBRAS

## 12U PLAYBOOK

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For Cobra Eyes Only

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# Foundational Principles

“When we play well as a team... we all look better as individuals.” -Wayne Gretzky

Welcome to 12U hockey. As we continue to get older, individual skill contributes less and less to the result of the game. As an example, Connor McDavid, one of the greatest hockey players on the planet, has been in the NHL for 10 seasons, has had 4 losing seasons, made the playoffs in only half of them, and has never played in a Stanley Cup championship. So, the question we ask ourselves is: What qualities do successful teams all have in common? The answer can be broken down into one simple sentence: They all **work hard** and **support their teammates**. All our successes will flow from following these two principles.

## Team Rules

We have two rules on this team and they will be enforced:

1. Work hard
2. Support your teammates

Everyone that has been chosen to play on this team has demonstrated the qualities of a successful player and is capable of understanding, and living by, these two rules. Your intelligence, dedication, and strong desire to improve have landed you on this team. This is a special group of players and, because of this, our expectations as coaches are high. There will be times this season when it may become hard; an extra sprint in practice, a pulled goalie with 2 minutes left in the 3<sup>rd</sup> period, a 12-2 loss. We have chosen you because we know that you can, and will, grow from each of these experiences. Not everyone is willing to push themselves to reach their full potential and that's ok, we don't want everyone. You are here because you have shown us that you have what it takes. Some of your friends decided they would rather take the summer off, relax, and leave hockey behind for a couple of months. But not you. You are a Cobra and you will dominate your next winter season.

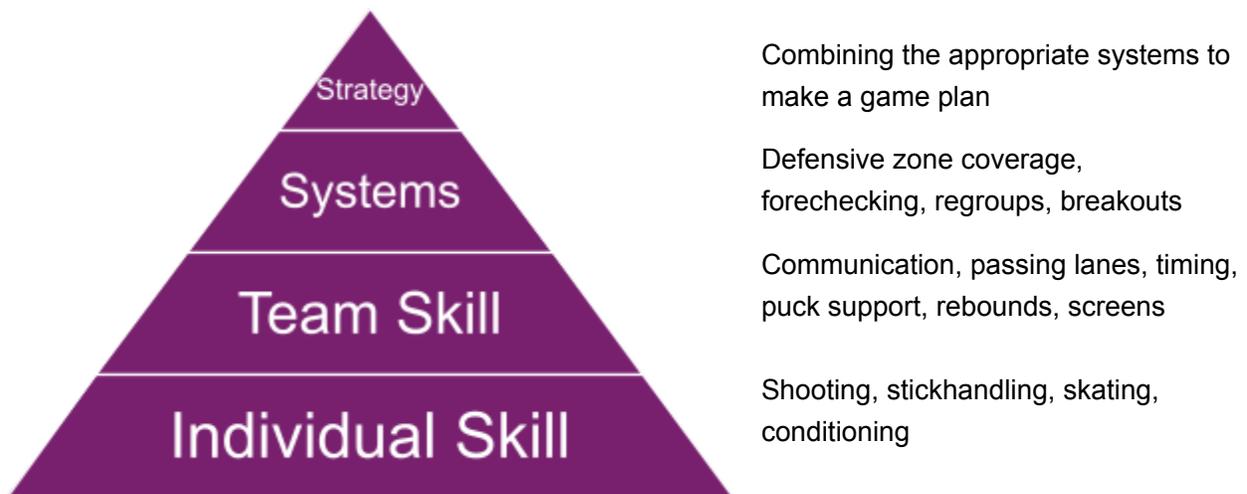
## Examples

Which rules do the following actions violate?

- Messing around in line at practice
  - This violates the rule of working hard
- Making fun of someone's haircut
  - This violates the rule of supporting your teammates
- Not backchecking on a play that you think is unimportant
  - This violates the rule of working hard
- Breaking one of our two rules will result in a decrease of ice time. These actions are under your control, putting you in control of your own time on ice.

## Basic Concepts

No other sport combines toughness, speed, timing, and raw talent in the way hockey does. Most people don't have the slightest idea of how much hard work and effort it takes to become an exceptional hockey player. But you have lived it. That makes you an extremely special person and you should take pride in that. However, individual skill alone is not enough to win hockey games. One of the primary goals this season is to start shaping the way you think about the game of hockey, away from your own individual perspective, to one of the team. The following image describes the foundation on which successful hockey teams are built.



This playbook is designed to help players, coaches, and parents learn how to *think* the game more effectively. It will outline the responsibilities of each player during basic situations of the game. Coaches are responsible for strategies. Players are responsible for knowing the systems, their roles, and executing on ice.

# Offensive Zone Attack – Attack Triangle



When our team has the puck in the offensive zone

## Overview

The purpose of the Offensive Zone Attack Triangle is to:

- Score a goal

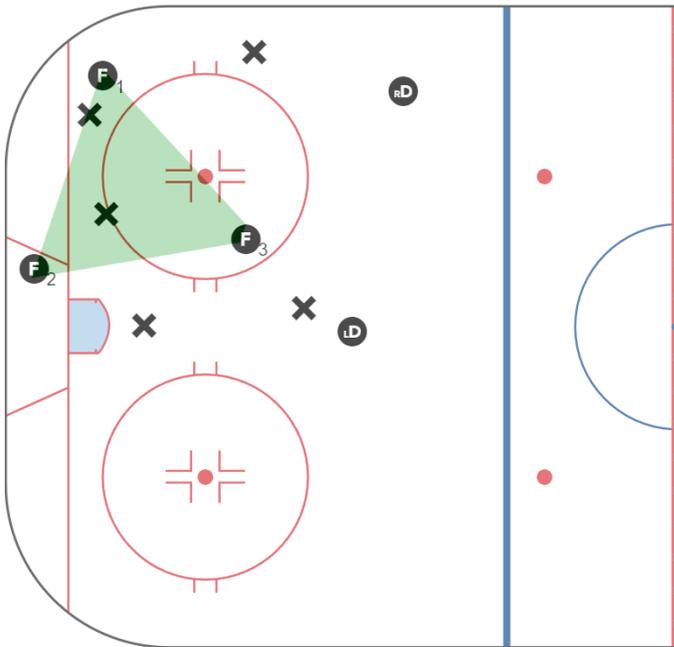
The Offensive Zone Attack is governed entirely by **Concepts**. This means that the position you are playing does not matter. Each player on the ice is playing **Offense**. Each player must be able to understand and execute all five roles.

- You are encouraged to use as much creativity as you'd like in the offensive zone
- If the puck is about to be shot towards the net and you are F1-F3, attack the net as quickly as possible
- Defensemen should always be looking to find open passing lanes, especially in the high slot
- If someone carries the puck into your position, swap places with them

## Responsibilities

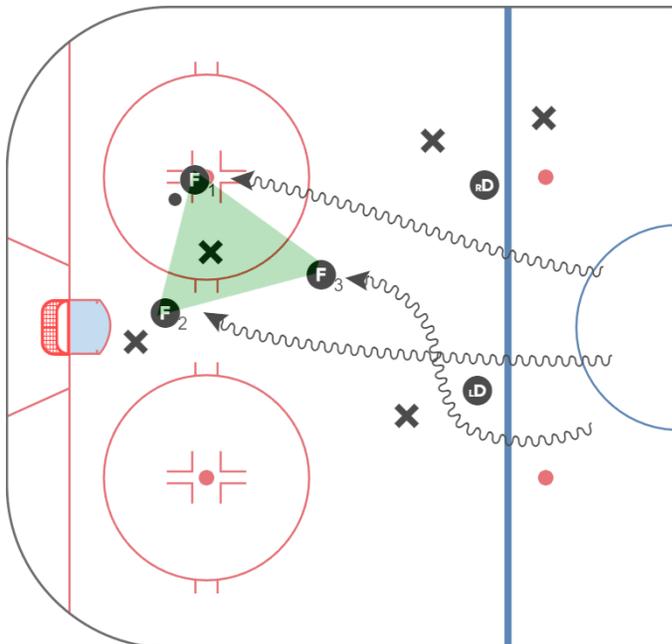
- F1, F2, F3
  - Try to maintain an active Attack Triangle
    - Use the area behind the net if it is open
  - If you do not have the puck, always be looking to find an open passing lane
    - If you are behind an opposing player, **you are not open** and should find a new position
  - Do not blindly pass the puck in front of the net, take a hard shot instead
- D1 – Strong side
  - Hold the blue line, do not leave the zone early
  - Get in an open passing lane
- D2 – Weak side
  - Look to find a soft spot in the high slot and call out if you are open
    - Only call for the puck if no one is between you and the puck carrier
  - Look to collapse nearly as low as the lowest opposing player
    - If no opposing player is anywhere near the blue line, then you are not helping by standing at the blue line

## Attack Triangle – Zone Possession



- **F1** carries the puck, looks for a high-quality shot or pass
- **F2 and F3** maintain a triangle and find passing lanes
- **D1** holds the blue line, looks to find a good passing lane
- **D2** tries to sneak into the high slot in a passing lane. Calls for the puck **only** if there is no one in between them and the puck carrier

## Attack Triangle – Rush



- **F1** carries the puck into the zone, looks for a high-quality shot or pass
- **F2** drives hard at the net looking for a pass from F1, a screen of the goalie, or a rebound opportunity
- **F3** delays and stays high to provide a passing option for F1 in the slot
- **D1 and D2** skate hard to follow the forwards, looking to pick up a lost puck or finding an open passing lane. This is not a time for

the D to rest, it is time to **score**.

# Defensive Zone Breakout – Read and React



When our team has the puck in the defensive zone

## Overview

The purpose of the Defensive Zone Breakout – Read and React is to:

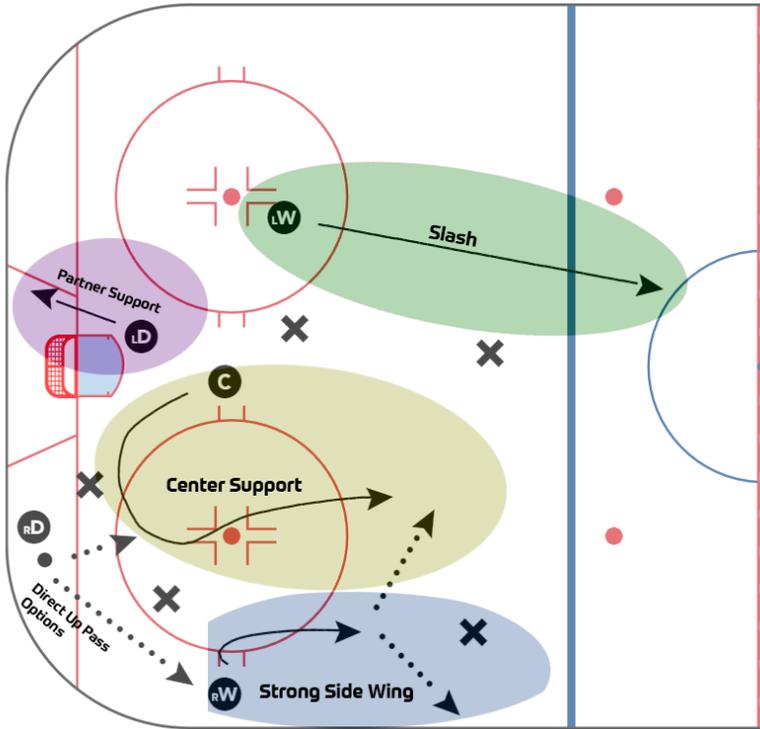
- Exit the defensive zone *with control of the puck*
- Exploit any positional weaknesses to generate a rush

The Defensive Zone Breakout is governed by **Positions**. This means that each position, Left Defenseman, Right Defenseman, Left Wing, Center, and Right Wing all must do their own jobs and no one else's. Trust your teammates to do their jobs and you do yours.

## Responsibilities

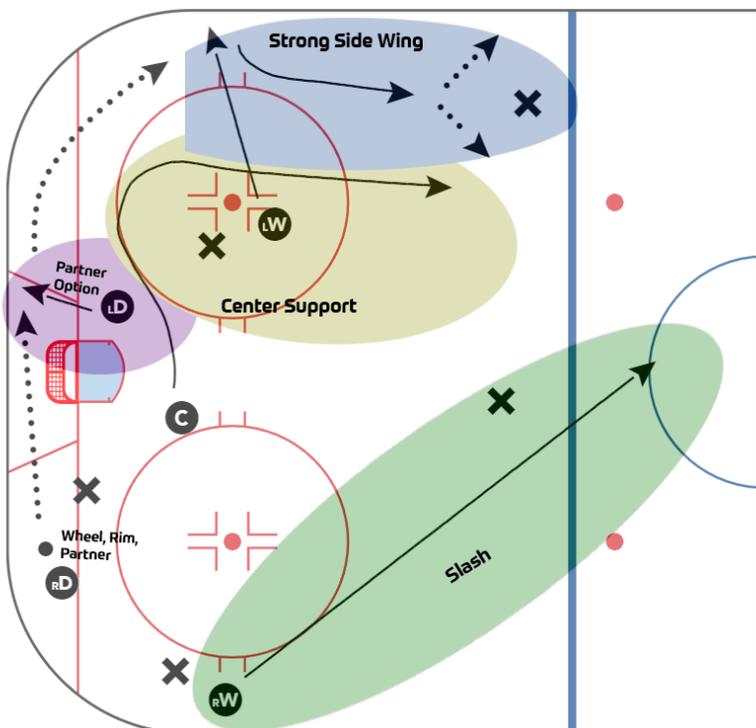
- Strong Side Defenseman
  - Protect the puck and read the pressure
  - Decide quickly to use **Direct Up** or **Wheel, Rim, or Partner**
    - Listen for a suggestion from the bench or from your partner
- Weak Side Defenseman
  - If it is safe to do so, become the "Partner" passing option behind the net
- Center
  - Swing through the "Gate" and time your swing to become a passing option for Direct Up
  - Do not leave the zone ahead of the puck – be ready to reposition for D zone coverage or to start a new swing on the opposite side of the ice
- Strong Side Wing
  - Get to the hash marks as the passing option along the boards
- Weak Side Wing
  - Hook slowly towards the middle while the breakout starts to develop
  - Read if the D will **Direct Up** or **Wheel, Rim, or Partner**
    - If **Direct Up**, become the "Slasher"
    - If **Wheel, Rim, or Partner**, get to your side's hash as quickly as possible

## Direct Up and Slash



- **Strong Side D** makes a direct pass to C or Strong Side W
- **Center** swings low between the post and the inside hash marks as a pass option for the D; continues as a pass option for Strong Side W
- **Strong Side Wing** gets to the hash marks as pass option for the D
- **Weak Side Wing** when safe, exits the zone as a down ice pass option

## Wheel, Rim, Partner



- **Strong Side D** changes sides behind the net with Wheel, D to D pass, or Rim
- **Center** swings low between the post and the inside hash marks as a pass option for the D; continues as a pass option for Strong Side W
- **Strong Side Wing** gets to the hash marks as pass option for the D

- **Weak Side Wing** when safe, exits the zone as a down ice pass option

## Defensive Zone Coverage – Sagging Zone



When our opponent has the puck in the defensive zone

### Overview

The purpose of the Defensive Zone Coverage – Sagging Zone is to:

1. Stop the scoring threat
2. Get the puck back and break out of the zone

Defensive zone coverage is governed by **Positions**. This means that each position, Left Defenseman, Right Defenseman, Left Wing, Center, and Right Wing all must do their own jobs and no one else's. When our opponent has the puck in the defensive zone, every player on our team is playing **Defense**.

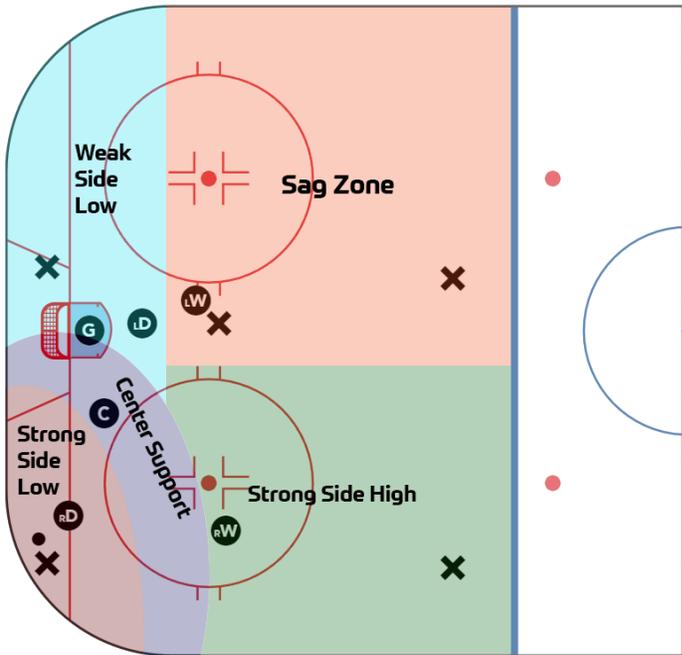
### Responsibilities

Trust your teammates to do their job, *and you do yours*

- Puck Side Defenseman
  - Pressure the puck carrier
    - Decide to “Force” or “Contain”
  - Stick on stick, body on body
  - Look to recover quickly and win the race back to the net, if necessary
- Weak Side Defenseman
  - Position low in front of the net
  - Cover anyone that comes into the low slot
- Center
  - Stay in a support position near the strong side of the net until there is a chance to strike
  - Attack the puck if the strong side D can disrupt or pin
  - If strong side D is outmanned, center must help
- Strong Side Wing
  - Stay between the faceoff dot and top of the circle
  - Prevent and disrupt a pass or player that enters your coverage area
- Weak Side Wing
  - “The Sagger”
    - Pick up uncovered players out front
    - Cover the slot

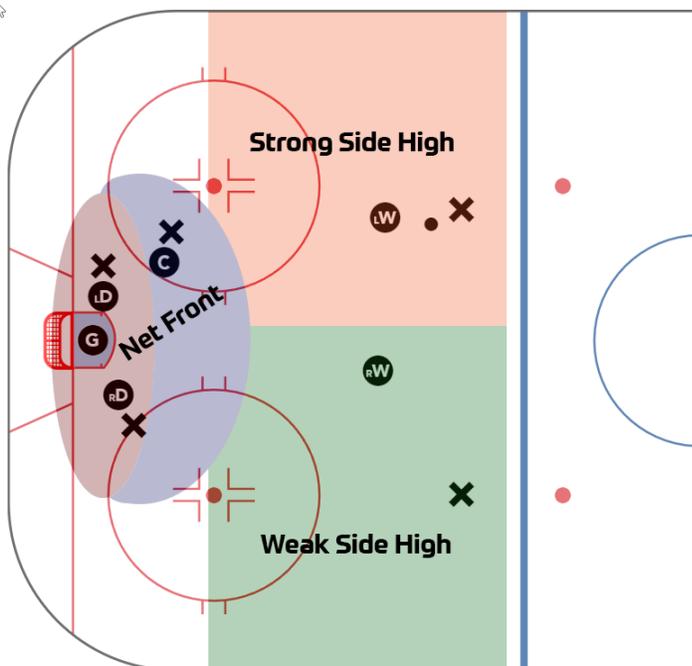
- If the puck goes to the point, attack it immediately
- Be aware of the puck being rimmed around the boards, act fast to beat the opposing team to the hash and start a breakout

## Puck Low



- **Strong D** decides to Attack or Contain
- **Center** keys off of the Strong Side D, Attacks on attack; Contains on contain
- **Strong Side Wing** prevents puck movement towards the point
- **Weak Side Wing** is the *Sagger*
- **Weak Side D** covers the most immediate threat in the low slot

## Puck High



- **Both D** get back to the net as quickly as possible, pick up a body and push them out
- **Center** picks up any open threat out front
- **Strong Side Wing** attacks the point *in the shooting lane*, looking for a shot block off the shin pads for a breakaway chance
- **Weak Side Wing** looks to disrupt the D to D pass for a breakaway chance

# Offensive Zone Forecheck – 2-1-2 Stack



When our opponent has the puck in the offensive zone

## Overview

The purpose of the Offensive Zone Forecheck – 2-1-2 Stack is to:

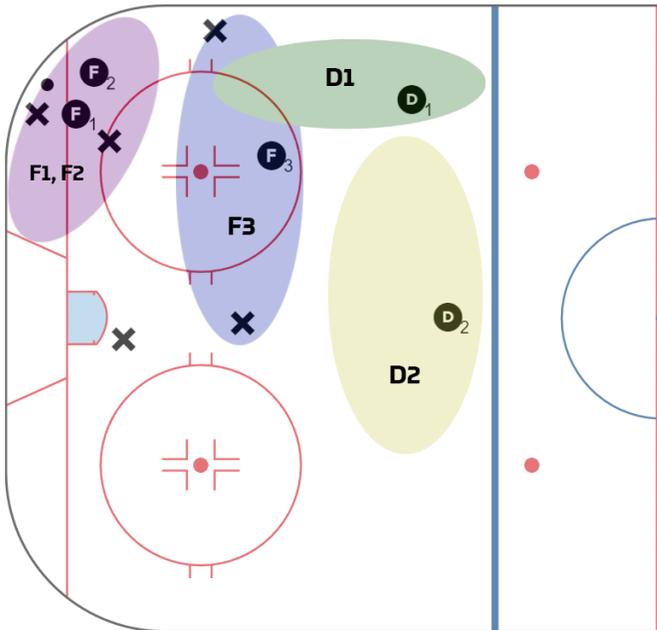
- Force a turnover to get the puck
- Prevent the opposing team from breaking out

The Offensive Zone Forecheck is governed entirely by **Concepts**. This means that the position you are playing does not matter. Each player on the ice can become F1, F2, F3, D1, or D2 on any given play. Each player must be able to understand and execute upon all five roles. The order in which you enter the zone determines your responsibility; First one in is F1, Second is F2, Third is F3, the Fourth and Fifth take on their respective side's D1 and D2 role. This should motivate you to get to the offensive zone as quickly as possible. If you are a forward and are the fourth or fifth player in, **do not assume an F1-F3 role** unless a defenseman returns to the blue line to take that spot.

## Responsibilities

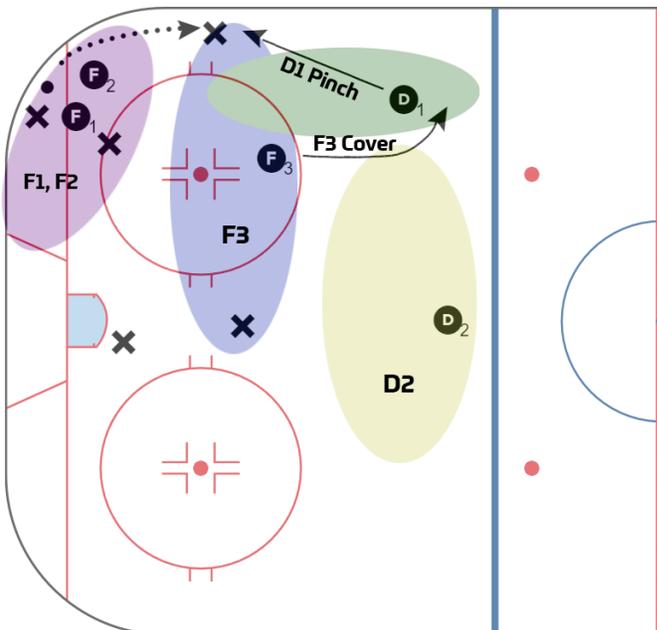
- F1 - The first player to touch the offensive blue line
  - No rules, be relentless. Look to hit and pin the puck carrier as soon as possible
- F2 – The second player to touch the blue line
  - Follow F1 and hunt for the puck
- F3 – The third player to touch the blue line
  - Stay above the hashmarks and wait for a high percentage opportunity to attack.  
**Never become the 3<sup>rd</sup> man low**
  - Cover the D1 position if they decide to pinch
    - If the D1 decides to pinch you **must** back off and cover his spot
  - Switch to F1 or F2 only if one of them is already coming back high to cover F3
- D1 – Strong side
  - Hold the blue line, pinch for any puck that you can win or tie the race to
    - Trust the F3 to cover your pinch and do not hesitate if you think you can get the puck
- D2 – Weak side
  - Stay within a stick length of either side of the blue line
    - If an opposing player leaves the zone early, go with them

## 2-1-2 Stack Forecheck – Puck Low



- **F1** pressures the puck carrier hard, look to hit and pin
- **F2** hunts the puck, tries to win possession
- **F3** stays high, covers for D1 Pinch or attacks high percentage plays
- **D1** holds the blue line, looks to cause a turnover with a pinch
- **D2** plays as a safety in middle, follows opponents out of the zone if they leave early

## 2-1-2 Stack Forecheck – D1 Pinch



- **F1 and F2** continue to stay hard on the puck carrier
- **F3** goes back towards the blue line to cover for the D1 pinch
- **D1** pinches to cause a turnover, body on body, stick on puck
- **D2** continues to play as safety in the middle, follows opponents out of the zone if they leave early

# Neutral Zone Forecheck – 1-2-2 Wall



When our opponent has the puck in the neutral zone

## Overview

The purpose of the Neutral Zone Forecheck – 1-2-2 Wall is to:

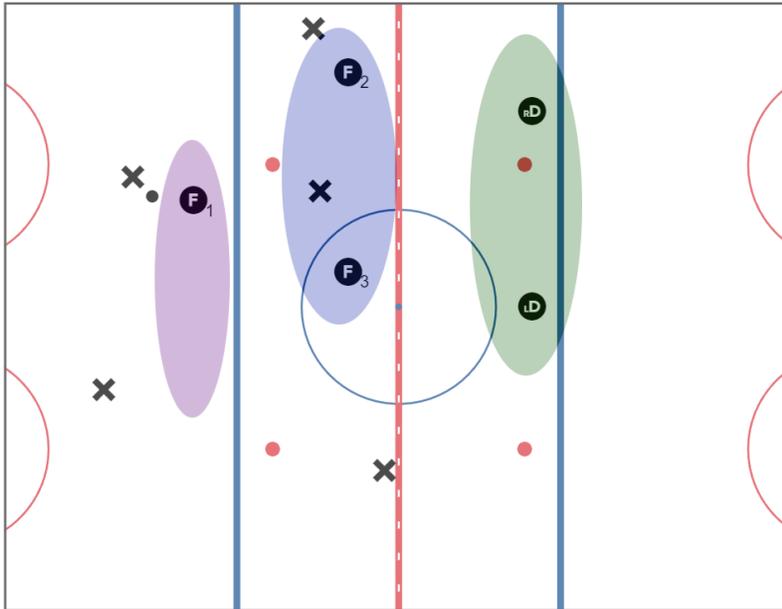
- Force a turnover to get the puck back
- Be prepared to transition quickly to defensive zone coverage

The Neutral Zone Forecheck is governed by **Concepts** for the Forwards and **Positions** by the defensemen. Each forward on the ice can become F1, F2, or F3 in any given play. Each forward must be able to understand and execute upon all three roles. Defensemen should never take on F1, F2, or F3 forechecking roles in the neutral zone.

## Responsibilities

- F1 - The first forward to attack the puck
  - Pressure from inside out, forcing them to make a play to the wall
- F2 and F3 – The other two forwards that were not first to attack
  - Maintain a bubble between the opposing defenseman and your position that will give you time to attack any forward pass
  - Stay about 1/3 of the ice width's away from your partner (F2 or F3)
  - Make a "wall" with your partner, keeping an eye on them and staying at the same distance as them from our goal
- Left and Right Defensemen
  - Maintain a position in between all opposing players and our goal
  - Stay about 1/3 of the ice width's away from your D partner
  - Make a "wall" with your D partner, keeping an eye on them and staying at the same distance as them from our goal

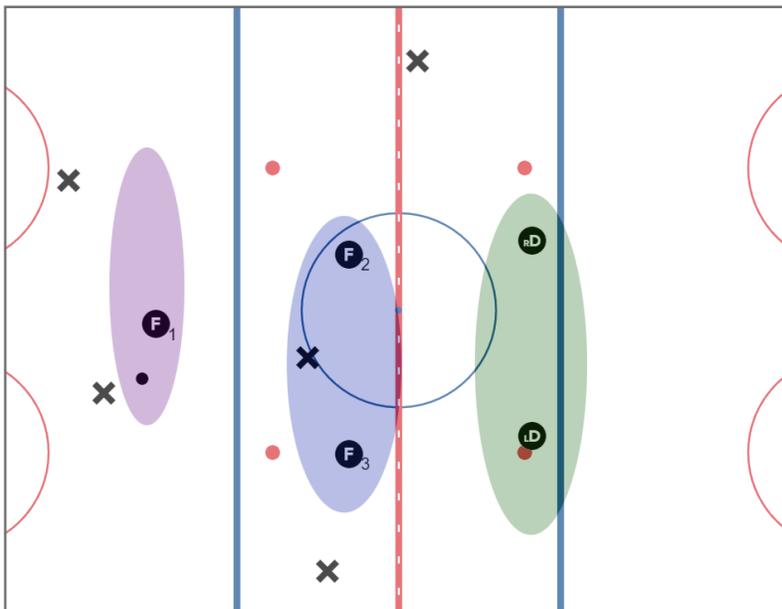
## 1-2-2 Wall Positioning - Right



ice pass

- **F1** pressures the puck carrier hard to force them to make a play toward the wall
- **F2 and F3** make a “wall” in the neutral zone, staying about 1/3 an ice width’s apart from each other
- **Both D** make a “wall” closer to our net, staying about 1/3 an ice width’s apart from each other. D steps up to disrupt the cross

## 1-2-2 Wall Positioning - Shift



- **F1** stays hard on the puck carrier, forcing from the inside out
- **F2 and F3** both shift their positions slightly towards to other side, maintaining the “wall”
- **Both D both** shift their positions slightly towards the other side, maintaining the “wall”. D steps up to disrupt the cross ice pass

# Neutral Zone Regroup – Post Up



When our team has the puck in the neutral zone

## Overview

The purpose of the Neutral Zone Regroup – Post Up is to:

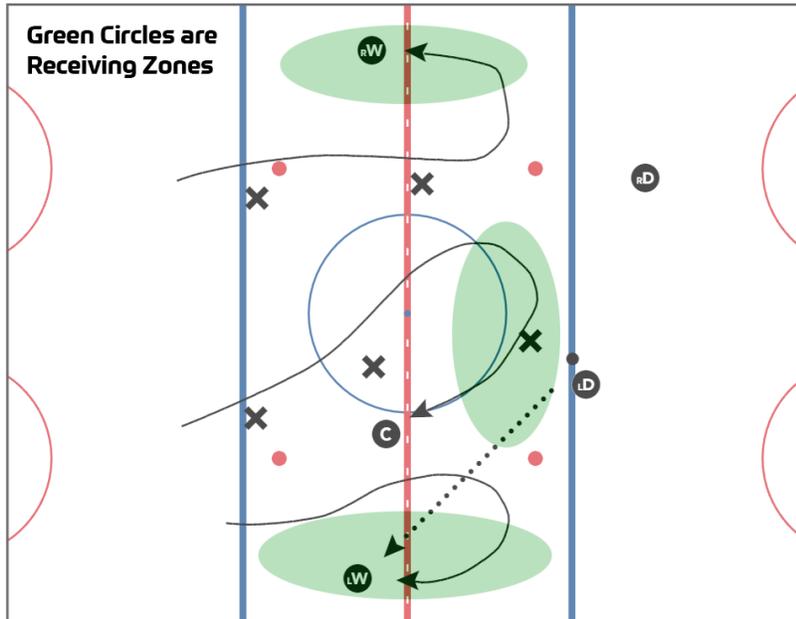
- Enter the offensive zone with control of the puck

The Neutral Zone Regroup is governed by **Positions**. This means that each position, Left Defenseman, Right Defenseman, Left Wing, Center, and Right Wing all must do their own jobs and no one else's. Trust your teammates to do their jobs and you do yours.

## Responsibilities

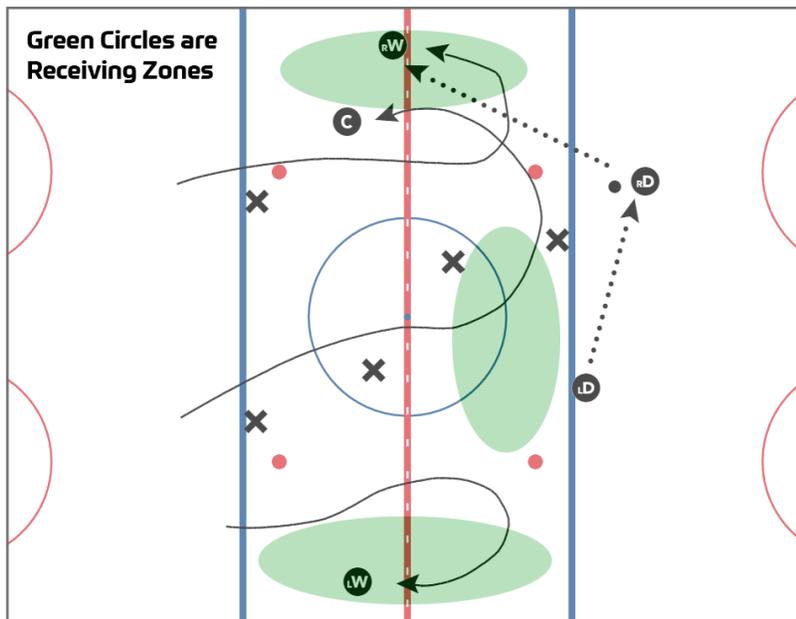
- Strong Side Defensemen
  - Look to make a pass to one of the three forwards in their receiving zone
  - If none are open right away, then look to your D partner
- Weak Side Defensemen
  - Position yourself a stick's length behind your partner and about 1/3 of the rink's width away
  - Be ready for a pass from your D partner, then look up ice for one of the three forwards
- Center
  - Swing low through the middle receiving zone
  - If the pass goes to one of the wings, become the support option for them
- Left Wing
  - Take a path back towards the defenseman and then swing up through the left-side receiving zone
    - Be ready for a pass at any point
- Right Wing
  - Take a path back towards the defenseman and then swing up through the right-side receiving zone
    - Be ready for a pass at any point

## Post Up Regroup - Direct



- **Strong Side D** looks to make a quick pass up to one of the receiving zones
- **Weak Side D** supports partner a stick's length behind and 1/3 rink width apart
- **Center** swings through the middle receiving zone then up to support wings
- **Left and Right Wings** swing through their side's receiving zones

## Post Up Regroup - D to D



- **F1** stays hard on the puck carrier if it switches sides
- **F2 and F3** both shift their positions slightly towards to other side, maintaining the "wall"
- **Both D** both shift their positions slightly towards the other side, maintaining the "wall". D steps up to disrupt the cross ice pass

## Defensive Zone Penalty Kill – Simple Box



When our opponent has the puck on the power play in our zone

### Overview

The purpose of the Defensive Zone Penalty Kill – Simple Box is to:

- Minimize the number of scoring chances
- Protect the front of our net
- Kill the clock by wasting the opposing team's time

The Defensive Zone Attack Penalty Kill is governed entirely by **Concepts**. This means that the position you are playing does not matter. Each player must be able to understand and execute upon all four roles.

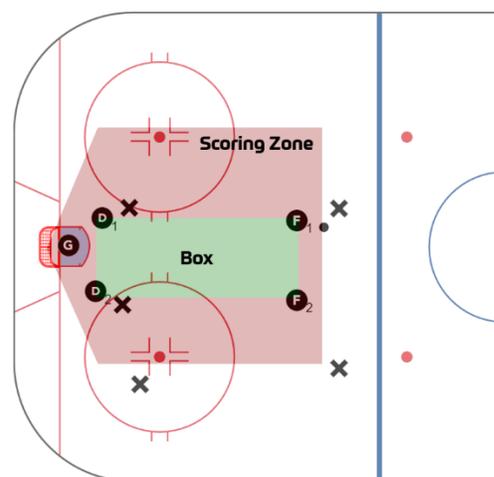
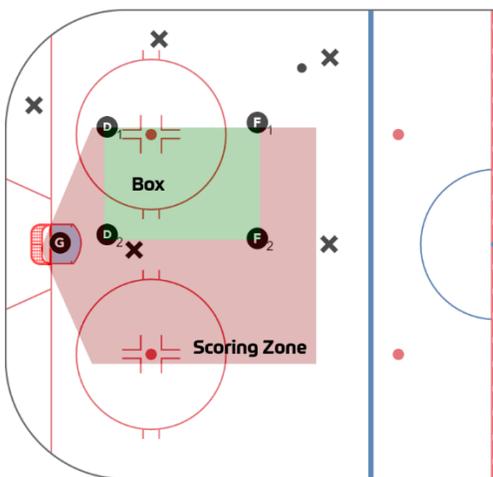
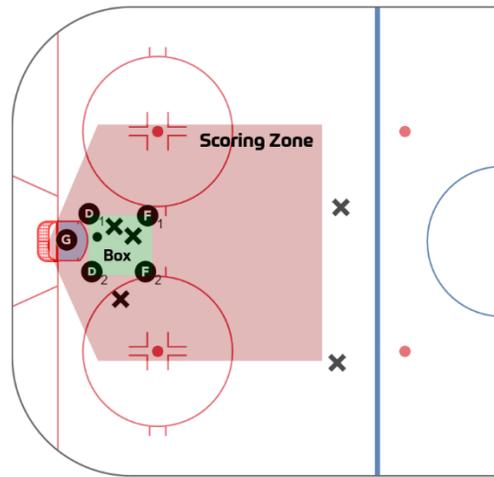
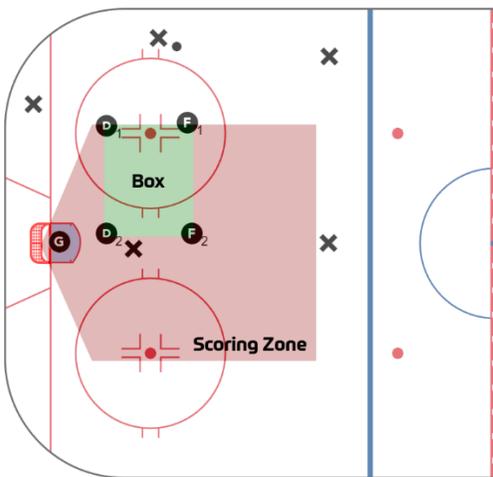
### Responsibilities

- D1, D2
  - Cover the low scoring area, one on each corner of the box
  - Do not leave the scoring area unless there is a high percentage play to get the puck
  - Immediately move the puck out of the scoring area if possible
  - Look to make a safe pass or put the puck glass and out
  - If there is an opponent in front of the net, the weak side D should prioritize clearing that player out, physically moving them
- F1, F2
  - Cover the middle and high scoring area, one on each corner of the shifting box
  - Do not leave the scoring area unless there is a high percentage play to get the puck
  - If your partner comes over to your side, swap positions with them
  - Get the puck out of the zone when possible
    - Try to put it off the boards to reduce the chance of an icing

## Penalty Kill – Simple Box

The following pictures represent how the box shifts and changes size as the puck is moved around the defensive zone.

- Let the opposing team control the puck outside of the scoring zone
  - The longer the other team has the puck in the white area, the less scoring chances they will have
  - Attack the puck outside of the scoring zone only if it is loose and can be easily obtained
- Do not let the opposing team penetrate the box with control of the puck
- If one of your teammates enters your coverage area, swap positions with them
- Maintain an “active stick” keeping it in the passing lanes as much as possible





# Offensive Zone Powerplay – Box + 1



When our team has the puck on the powerplay in the offensive zone

## Overview

The purpose of the Powerplay Box + 1 is to:

- Score a goal

The Box + 1 Powerplay is governed initially by **Positions**. This means that when we first set up the Powerplay with possession of the puck, each position, Left Defenseman, Right Defenseman, Left Wing, Center, and Right Wing should go to their defined spot. As the puck moves around the perimeter, each player continues to maintain the box.

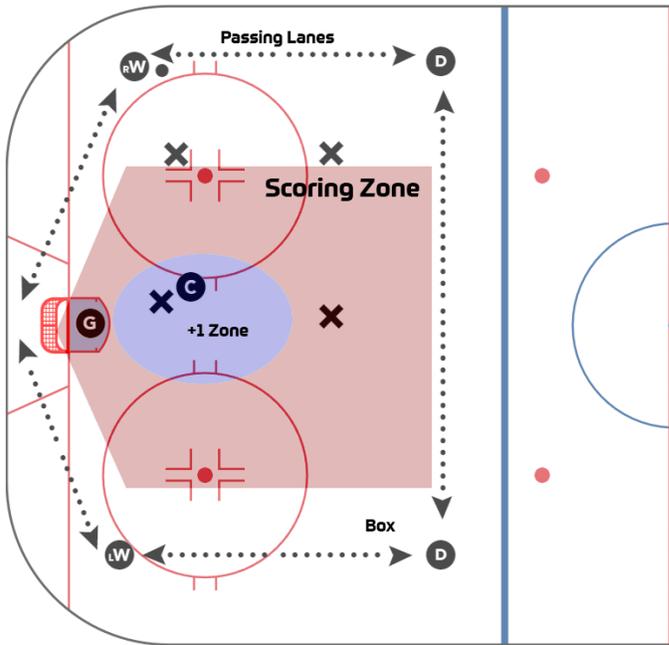
The primary objective is to get the puck into the +1 Zone, ideally with a shot from the Scoring Zone.

- Move the puck along the outside, near the boards or blue line, until there is an open opportunity to move into the Scoring Zone for a shot
- If the puck is about to enter the +1 Zone and you are F1-F3, you must attack the net as quickly as possible
- Defensemen should always be looking to find open passing lanes, especially in the high slot

## Responsibilities

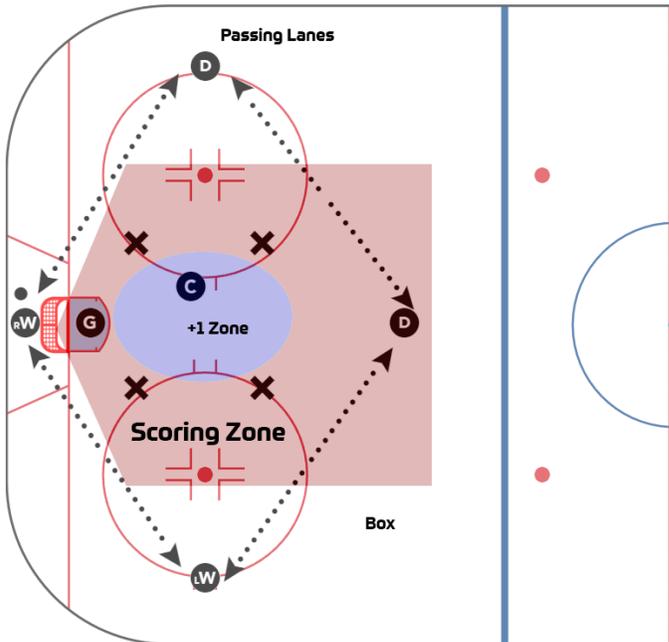
- LW, RW, LD, RD
  - Form a large “Box”
  - Move and pass along the perimeter of the Offensive Zone until a lane to the Scoring Zone opens up
  - Shoot from the Scoring Zone or pass to the +1 in front of the net
  - **Only make a D to D pass if it is 100% certain to get there**
- C
  - Establish a position in the +1 Zone and wait for a shot
  - Keep moving around the +1 Zone to distract defenders and create confusion

## Powerplay – Box + 1 Setup



- **Center** establishes a position in the low slot, constantly moving around in the +1 Zone, waiting for a pass or shot
- **Right Wing and Left Wing** establish a position on their side low, between the hash and the goal line along the wall
- **Left and Right Defense** maintain a position at the blue line, staying wide in open ice (ideally in an open passing lane)

## Powerplay – Box + 1 Shift



- **All Positions** maintain the box shape, shown here as a diamond, as the puck moves around the perimeter. Look for an open lane to the Scoring Zone and a shot or pass to the +1