



# TACTICAL

*Defensive Faceoffs*



REVISED 2/19



## OBJECTIVES

- To provide 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. Conversely, 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 opponent's 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 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 what 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.

## **FACEOFF ALIGNMENTS - DEFENSIVE**

Figures 8-1 and 8-2 are dictated by the alignment of the offensive team. You are attempting to align your players so that they can get to the shooter as quickly as possible. Since the offensive players are trying to tie up your player, the best you can possibly do is neutralize the offensive team and make sure you have a player moving to cover the shooter on the play.



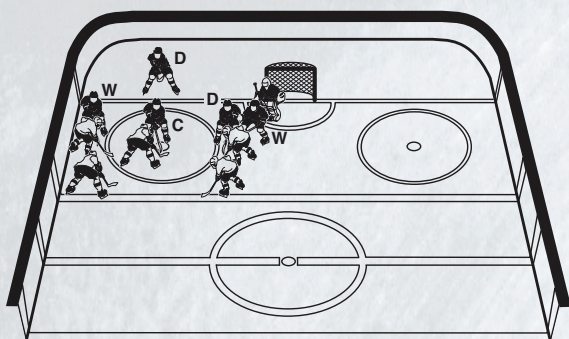


Figure 8-1.

Figure 8-2 ensures one of your players is able to break to the shooter when the puck is dropped.

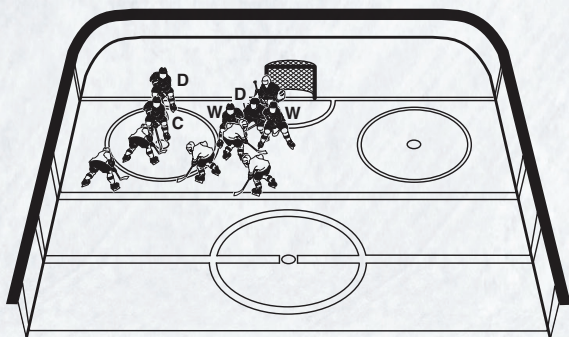


Figure 8-2.

Figure 8-3 is presented to illustrate defensive positioning when your team has a shorthanded defensive zone situation. Again, the player taking the faceoff must be your best. You align your players in order to neutralize the opposing team's strength. First and foremost, position your players where it is easiest to get to the shooter if your center loses the faceoff.

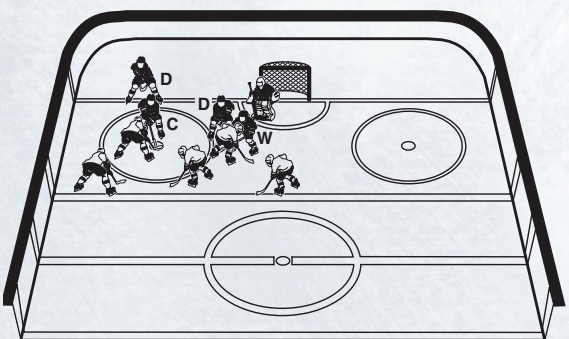


Figure 8-3.

## FACEOFF ALIGNMENTS - NEUTRAL ZONE

Figure 8-4 illustrates the options available to the player taking the center faceoff. He or she may go forward by himself or herself or to either wing. He or she also has the option to draw the puck back to either defenseman to gain control.

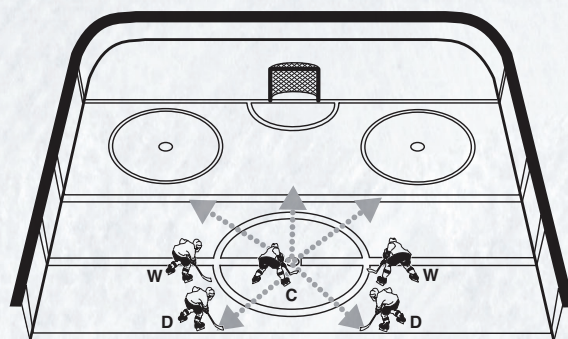


Figure 8-4.

In Figure 8-5, the faceoff player has the option of drawing the puck back for control or going forward to a breaking wing on the far side of the rink.

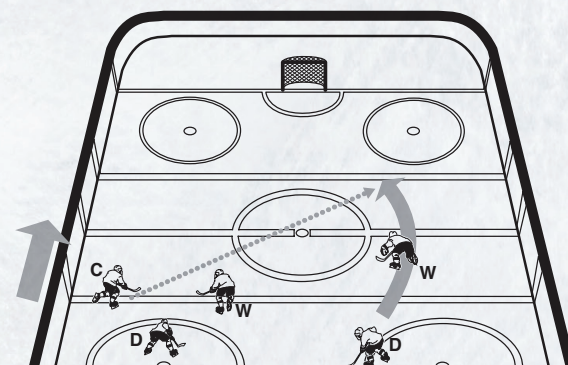


Figure 8-5.

Figure 8-6 is the basic alignment for a neutral zone faceoff. Again, the primary purpose of the faceoff is to gain control of the puck to organize an offensive attack on goal.



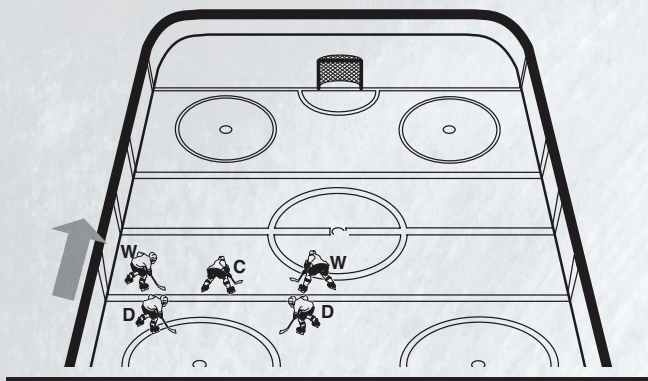


Figure 8-6.