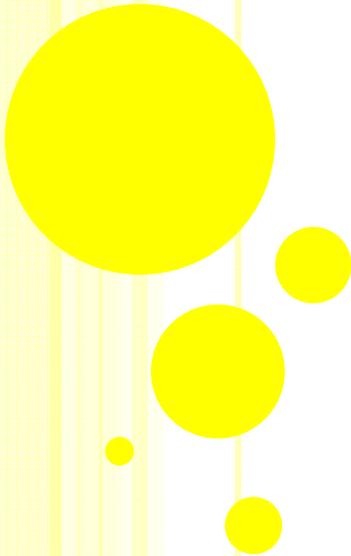


THE BEAR ACADEMY

Session 6 – One Two Three Zone Penetration



Excellence in Education and Performance

2019 edition

BASIC UNDERSTANDING

One two three zone penetration refers to the roles of attacking players entering the attacking (offensive) zone. The only time you are a LW, RW, C is when the puck drops and in the defensive zone. After that, it is all about F1 (player with the puck or closest to a loose puck or closest to an opponent with the puck), F2 (player closest to F1) and F3 (player furthest away from the puck).

LW skaters usually end up swinging across or changing lanes at some point of the rush, so they end up coming down on the right side of the ice. Thus, it is very typical to see left handed skaters playing LW positions.

RW skaters are typically right handed for the reason mentioned above.

C skaters are two way skaters who 1) play well on both ends of the ice on and off the puck; 2) understand support, timing and has great vision; 4) are leaders as they control both the defensive and offensive ends of the ice especially since they set up face-offs and usually enter zones as a third man (anticipation).

Lane Awareness is the concept that the neutral zone has 3 lanes that each should be filled with an attacking skater at all times when parallel and can only have 2 skaters in the same lane IF there is depth to the attack.

If the puck changes lanes a lot in the neutral zone (passing or criss-crossing) it is a very good thing for the attacking team. For the defending team you want less puck movement, the puck skated by one player through the zone and preferably skated by that player in either of the outside lanes.

ENTERING THE ZONE ODD MAN 3 ON 2

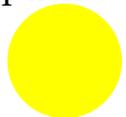
Normal Responsibilities

- 1) There are exceptions but F1 should enter the zone in lane 1 or 3 to draw the defenders outwards and open up the middle as much as possible for an inside attack deeper in the zone.
- 2) There are exceptions but F2 should DRIVE THE NET HARD through the middle to create depth on the attack and force defenders deeper into the attacking zone.
- 3) There are exceptions but F3 first creates the WIDTH of the attack by coming in the opposite far lane of F1 first, then cutting across to create DEPTH (triangular creation). Timing is key, awareness is key as there are deviations to how to approach this position.

Key to F1 is vision. Enabling the right speed, distance, poise or drive given what the defenders give you.

Key to F2 is speed and determination. Drive the net hard.

Key to F3 is time/space (distance / staying open) and timing. Your job is to anticipate and position yourself in an optimal position given what your teammates and the opposition is doing. Key concept is “take what is given” by the opponents. If the opponents give you the backdoor then take it, if they give you the high slot then take it, if they stay high on the puck carrier then take the low route etc.



ENTERING THE ZONE BACK-CHECKED

Normal Responsibilities

- 1) The same responsibilities apply as odd-man penetration. But one a few key components will make options fewer.
- 2) F1 will have to decide quicker and use deception more as you don't have an open player given to you (as in an odd man rush). If the back-check is deep, you are most likely going to try to find F3 **WITHOUT SHOWING THIS TO THE OPPONENT**. If the back check is soft (high in the zone or the defending players are spread out/hot on the puck), you would seek to find F2 or shoot the puck most likely. If you have no options, change in speed and direction will be your best bet. Key concept is to look at the attack as "layered 2 on 1's". Attack or draw outwards the first defender and make a play around him or drive around him, then go to the next. Remember, lateral movement flattens the D, skating deeper keeps the defenders speed higher so now you want them to turn around and skate with you which will cause them to give up their "view" towards your supporting teammates.
- 3) F2 will drive the net but most likely end up supporting F1 on the strong side if a shot or pass does not come.
- 4) F3 will have to read whether he should come over for a drop pass from F1 or remain high in case F1 and F2 end up deep in the zone.
- 5) This is when sustained pressure become a new topic of understanding.

Note: if you can't skate the puck into the zone with ease, dump the puck. Depending on where F2 and F3 are positioned, you will use a cross dump or soft strong side dump. If you are all alone, dump the puck **SOFT** on the side of the ice **YOUR TEAM** has its bench since the opponents are likely to pick the puck up and seek a quick play up the ice.

ANGLE OF THE ATTACK

The only way you keep a goalie at an advantage AGAINST you as a puck carrier is if you skate straight towards him whether you are coming in from the side or straight ahead. Thus, lateral movement and straight movement (i.e. straight north to south and NOT towards the net) will keep exposing the goalie as you go along. The best attack is always lateral movement or lateral passing for a shot etc. This opens the goalie up where if he comes out at you he will be open on the backdoor. **THUS YOU WOULD BE SMART TO ENTER THE ZONE AS WIDE AS POSSIBLE AND THEN CUT INWARDS** (or turning quickly outwards if gap control is against you) **WHEN AN OPPORTUNITY IS GIVEN**. Why? Well if you cut in on a D he will be flat AND the goalie **MUST** move laterally. If the other D stays high he is also flat and **ALL THREE** forwards will now have higher speed than the defense. Cutting **INWARDS** (or turning quickly outwards) will also **FORCE THE D TO MAKE A CHOICE**. They must either stay with you and be flat (i.e. a pass will take them out of play) or stay with the support (and give you space so if you accelerate you will be very dangerous).

What you end up seeing a lot at the younger ages is that skaters just skate north until they run out of options. They **DON'T** put the D in a situation where they **MUST** make a choice (i.e. cutting or turning). Puck carriers frequently throw the puck on net last second (which is fine if there is net pressure) or they just keep skating the puck in circles (bad idea and absolute last resort because you are not utilizing the rule “change in speed and change in direction is the best attack”).

Defensively you want the exact opposite to happen. You want the puck on the outside the **whole** time. Your gap control and stick position (steering ability) will determine how effective you are.

READING THE DEFENSE

There are two things the defense can do on an outmanned attack 3 on 2. They can give you the outside (good gap control) or then can give you both the inside and the outside (bad gap control). If they have good gap control and they give you the outside, 1-2-3 zone penetration (F2 hard to the net and F3 coming across) is the best attack. But what if the D give you that blue line and the gap control is off. Well then you can take the lateral route inside the blue line (the Gretzky route) which keeps the D flat. The supporting forwards can now skate deeper in the zone and towards the net expecting a pass at any time or an opportunity to get a rebound should the D stay with the supporters (i.e. the puck carrier will be able to skate the puck in). The **KEY POINT** here is that you are forcing the defense to make a choice. Do they stay with the attacker or do they stay with the supporters. Thus, if the gap control is bad and the opportunity to cut across is open then take it and **KEEP YOUR FEET MOVING**. If you don't see net pump fake (deception) to get the goalie to drop or pass the puck if a teammate is open. But I assure you that something will be available because it is impossible to defend all solutions being outmanned defensively.

So what does the defense do in this situation? Well 1, you improve your gap control because you want the puck on the outside. If the skater cuts to the middle the strong side D should stay with the puck carrier and put a stick on the puck as soon as possible. If there is a pass **YOU DON'T CHASE THE PUCK**. The weak side D will stay on the weak side. If there is a pass you play the passing lanes. Since we are in a "bad" spot, you want to make it as easy on the goalie as possible by avoiding as many passes as possible so he can work the puck carrier. One pass may happen but it will happen sooner by attacking the puck carrier and if there is no pass, we will at least force a shot sooner rather than later.