

Shooting on the move



Goaltenders give up more rebounds on shots that they are not prepared for, so although a shooter may not beat the goalie initially with the velocity of the shot, the quick release gives him two chances to score, and most often it will be on the rebound.

Ask any of the great goal scorers in the NHL, and they will tell you the major factor in their success is how quickly they are able to shoot the puck. A quick release is one of the biggest advantages a shooter has on a goaltender. Shoot the puck before the goalie thinks you are going to, and before he has a chance to set up, and the chances of scoring greatly increase. Any hesitation, or any tip-off that you are going to shoot, and the advantage is lost, as the goaltender will prepared, both physically and mentally to make the save. Surprise him and he won't, and your chances of scoring, either on the initial shot, or on the rebound, increase greatly. The following are some tips on shooting the puck on the fly.

Carry the puck in a position to shoot it – “show shot”

Often, goaltenders are tipped off to the fact that a player is not going to shoot, but instead is looking to pass or carry it in deeper to deke, simply because the puck carrier is carrying the puck in a position where he couldn't shoot, even if he wanted to. When skating toward the net, the puck should be carried on the forehand, in a position where it could be shot, passed, or even carried in deeper to deke. Many times on a 2 on 1 situation, you will see a left-handed player attack the net on the “right wing” side carrying the puck in front of him on his backhand. Most players simply do not have the skill to shoot a backhand from that position with any velocity to be a threat to score, so he has taken away the shooting option and is most likely looking to pass. Teach players to carry the puck in a position where they “show shot” so the goaltenders need to respect that option.

Shoot in stride

If a puck carrier has to “get set” to shoot, he loses his advantage on the goaltender. Shooting the puck while in stride gives the goaltender no indication that a shot is coming. However, it is a difficult skill to master as it involves coordinating leg movement (striding) with arm movement (shooting) and it takes some work. Many players worry that they can not shoot the puck hard enough while in stride because they can't use their legs to get more power on the shot. But two factors work to their advantage. One is that they already have some speed because they are moving, as opposed to stopping or standing still, so that speed is transferred to the shot. Secondly, the shot doesn't have to be as hard, and probably won't be because you can't use your legs, but it doesn't need to be, because it surprises the goaltender.

Follow up to the net for the rebound

Most goals are not scored on the initial shot, but on the rebound. Goaltenders give up more rebounds on shots that they are not prepared for, so

although a shooter may not beat the goalie initially with the velocity of the shot, the quick release gives him two chances to score, and most often it will be on the rebound.

Teaching Tips

The most difficult aspect of shooting on the fly is coordinating striding (leg movement) with shooting (arm movement) so it needs to be worked on progressively.

- **Stationary shooting** – Have players stand stationary and shoot the puck, using just their upper body (arms). They should not move their feet at all. Feet should be shoulder width apart, knees bent, and toes of the skates facing the target. Players will want to “turn sideways” in order to utilize their legs, but that is what you can not let them do. To get any velocity on the shot, the puck should be on the forehand, beside the player's skates, not out in front of their body. To get any leverage on the shot, the players top hand needs to be out in front of them, away from their body, arm extended. As they sweep or push through with the bottom hand, they should be pulling toward them with the top hand, utilizing their wrists to snap the puck.
- **Moving shooting** – Once they get the feel for shooting without using their legs at all, the next step is to set a puck in a position where the player can “glide into it: and shoot it. The player should take 3-4 strides, then glide for 5-6 feet, shooting the puck while on the move, utilizing the arms and upper body only. Once they get the hang of that they can carry the puck for the 3-4 strides, glide for 5-6 feet, positioning the puck to shoot it, then release it.
- **Shooting while striding** – Once they get the feel for shooting while move, the next step is shooting while striding. Use the same progression, but don't allow the players to coast or glide while shooting. Have them take 3-4 strides, and shoot while in stride. This is the most difficult part to teach as it requires coordinating upper body movement (arms) with lower body movement (legs) and it will take plenty of practice. But the rewards are well worth it.
- **Practice, practice, practice** – Be sure to incorporate shooting on the fly into many of the current drills that you already do, so that players have a chance to continue to develop this valuable skill.