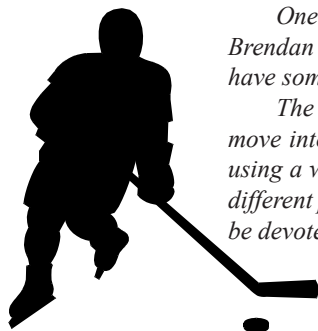


Putting the Snap in the Snap Shot



One of the most important elements necessary to be a productive goal scorer is a quick release. Brett Hull, Brendan Shanahan and Paul Kariya are some of the top goal scorers in the game today and not coincidentally, also have some of the best snap shots in the game.

The advantage gained with the use of the snap shot is shooting before the goaltender has the opportunity to move into proper position. The disadvantage is that you lose some accuracy and control that you would have by using a wrist shot. Nonetheless, the snap shot is a valuable weapon and allows players to shoot from a number of different positions and situations, where they would be unable to utilize any other form of shot. Plenty of time should be devoted to developing proper shooting technique under different conditions that may arise during a game.

BODY POSITIONING

One of the advantages of the snap shot is that it can be utilized while virtually in any position; stationary while facing the net, stationary while perpendicular to the net, moving toward the net, moving laterally across in front of the net, and even backing away from the net. As in any shot, players want to try to get their legs involved in the shot as much as possible. Transferring the weight from back foot to front foot while shooting translates into a more powerful, heavier shot. Certain situations such as standing perpendicular to the net or moving laterally across the front of the net make it easier to push off the inside edge of the back foot while shooting. When players are stationary facing the net, moving toward the net or backing away from the net, it is harder to get the legs involved in the shot.

ADDRESSING THE PUCK

For the best control, snap shots should be taken from the middle to the heel of the stick blade. The blade has more “whip” in it toward the toe causing shots off the toe to rise quicker, but also giving you a little less control. More advanced players can snap pucks off the toe when they are in tight to the net and want to get the puck up high over the goalie in a hurry. Very little back swing is required – bringing the blade of the stick 12 to 18 inches behind the puck is sufficient – the more backswing, the more time required to get the shot off. The blade of the stick should begin in a “closed position over top of the puck

and the stick blade should actually hit the ice 2 to 3 inches behind the puck. This results in flex in the blade and shaft of the stick, which translates into more power on the shot.

HAND & ARM POSITIONING

The bottom hand should slide down the stick (farther down than when normally handling the puck). The top hand should be out in front of the body as the power in the shot is created by pulling back on the top hand while pushing through with the bottom hand. It is essential to be able to move the wrists and arms during the shot. Inexperienced players tend not to use their wrists and also tend to keep their arms close to their bodies. Pushing through with the bottom hand and pulling back with the top hand, the stick blade should start out “closed” over top of the puck, then briefly “open,” then “close” over the puck again on the follow-through. This is the “snap” in the snap shot and is essential to create power for the shooter.

FOLLOW-THROUGH

Transferring the weight and following through with the body in the direction of the shot always adds to the speed of the shot. It is also important for shooters to “stay down” on the puck during the follow-through with good knee bend. Many times shooters follow through in an upward motion when they should be following through in a forward motion.