

# **Learning to play ice hockey through game situation roles and objectives**

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<p>The main purpose of this thesis is to describe and create the theoretical basis to teaching the game nowadays in Finland. Also to support the theoretical basis the purpose is to analyze some often occurring game situations through videos and to demonstrate what priority thinking means in basic game situations in a DVD format. The aim of theoretical basis and DVD is to provide better knowledge of the subject and to give concrete examples through videos.</p> <p>The work is done by the request of Finnish Ice Hockey Association to collect the material available, to create more material and to reform the material that is available. The work and video examples come available to the International Ice Hockey Centre of Excellence (IIHCE). A theoretical basis that collects and reforms the material and the video illustrations to support it have been lacking from Finnish Ice Hockey Association.</p> <p>The theoretical basis consist from theory of teaching and learning the game, game situation roles, objectives of playing situations and “Our game”. The video clips show examples of changes of the game situation role and objective of individual player in game situations.</p> <p>The video material used in the DVD is collected from games of Finnish SM-league from last three seasons. After selecting right clips they were further edited with Windows Movie Maker and burned into a DVD. The written part of the thesis guides the reader from teaching team games to history of teaching the game in ice hockey to teaching the game nowadays.</p> <p>The theoretical basis for teaching the game nowadays is now available in one covers with video examples. The theoretical basis and video examples support the learning process of the subject in hand. The theoretical basis gives the knowledge about the learning and teaching the game in ice hockey and video examples support it by giving concrete examples.</p>	
<b>Key words</b> Ice Hockey, learning, game situation roles, objectives of playing situations	

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# 1 Introduction

In Finland the popularity of team sports and especially team games has increased powerfully in the last decades. At the moment approximately 80% of the kids who starts to participate in club sports choose team sports.

At the same time, when the popularity of team sports has increased, also the discussion about teaching the game and learning the game has been going on strongly. What is the best way to teach the game to kids or how do we get the top professional athletes work together in rapidly changing game situations?

Previously it was thought that the basis of teaching the game was developing the individual skills and on the other hand teaching game through different team systems or strategies. The idea was that by developing the individual skills as good as possible and after that organizing the co-operation of players with positions and game system is the way to get the best result. As the game has become quicker it has been noticed that by creating the co-operation of players with game system and strategies doesn't give the best starting point for players to co-operate with each other.

If before the teaching of the game was based on team strategies, in last decades the teaching or learning the game has been seen as a quality of individual player. What kind of selections player makes in different game situations and how those selections help the team performance. It is about the game sense of an individual player. Game systems have been replaced with capability of individual player to react in different game situations. The game is constant reacting in quickly changing different game situations. The players are in different roles depending on game situation. The game was started to teach through game situation roles. In Finnish ice hockey this teaching method that is based on game situations, game situation roles, priorities, game sense and reactions was created in 1990's.

In past couple of years the idea of teaching the game or from player's perspective the learning of the game has moved on to the next level and the quality of player's reaction and decision has been started to determine. What kind of decisions a player should

primarily try to achieve so that it will help his team in different game situations. More precisely it is about priority order of reactions. To what solutions players should primarily attempt in different game situations so that he and the other players would understand the situation in the same way. In Finnish Ice Hockey Association this phase of teaching the game is called “Our Game”.

The purpose of this thesis is to process the phases of teaching the game in ice hockey and based on that, to describe the theoretical basis of teaching the game nowadays. In addition to the writing material there are also collected video clips, which show often occurring game situations and demonstrate what priority thinking means in basic game situations.

## **2 Teaching invasive team games**

Invasion games are team games where the purpose is to invade the opponent's territory with the aim of trying to score more points within the time limit than the opposing team, while trying to keep their score to a minimum. Subcategories include where the object can be carried or caught across the line (e.g. Rugby league, rugby union, touch), it can be thrown or shot into a target (e.g. netball, basketball, handball, lacrosse) or it can be hit with a stick or foot into a target area (e.g. hockey, soccer, Australian rules football). (Webb & Pearson 2008, 4.)

All the invasive team games share many characteristics. For example scoring in all invasive games demands a game object to be sent into a goal (basketball, ice hockey, soccer) or carried or passed across a line or into goal zone (American football, rugby, ultimate). In addition, all invasive games involve the movement of players and a game object in rectangular-shaped playing area. This common shape leads to common movement patterns by players using space in order to score and, at the same time, blocking or protecting space in order to prevent scoring. Because both teams share the same space, they use similar tactics and strategies for attacking and defending.

These similar tactics make it possible to identify and describe the common objectives or principles, which control play, and the tactical decisions that can be used in all invasive team games. Approaching invasive games from generic perspective simplifies their complexity. (Wilson 2002, 21.)

**Table 1.** A generic framework of cognitive concepts for invasive team games (Wilson 2002, 22).

Content area	Attack	Defend
<b>Participants and roles</b>	<b>Offensive Team (possession, attacking)</b> On-ball attacker Off-ball attacker	<b>Defensive team (nonpossession, defending)</b> On-ball defender Off-ball defender
<b>Objectives</b>	Score points, goals Retain possession Advance	Prevent points, goals Regain possession Prevent advancement
<b>Action principles</b>	Mobility Advancement Width Offensive depth	Engagement Defensive depth Contraction Expansion
<b>Action options</b>	<b>On-ball attacker (A1)</b> Attempt to score Retain possession Pass Move <b>Off-ball attackers</b> Provide depth Provide width Advance Move	<b>On-Ball Defender</b> Prevent scoring Dispossess A1 Contain A1 Channel A1 <b>Off-ball defenders</b> Provide defensive depth Contract Expand

In table 1 the player's roles are classified depending on the game situation. In attack the player is either on-ball attacker or off-ball attacker and in defense player is either on-ball defender or off-ball attacker. The table also describes the objectives and also the action principles in attack and defense. Based on these comes action options to four different game situation role. This theoretical model gives good basis to think teaching the game in ice hockey. Invasive team games share common objectives. The games are different but the basic structure stays the same. (Wilson 2002, 22.)

Teaching how to play the game has changed since the history of ice hockey. But how can you teach someone to learn how to play? What is the most productive way to get someone to understand what the game is all about? It's not the same thing as how to teach someone to skate or shoot or tackle. If we think about the greatest hockey players of all time (for example Wayne Gretzky and Mario Lemieux) and why have they been so dominating, it's not like it's because of their unique physical abilities.

“In any sport, you come across these players”, says Peter Vint, a researcher with the US Olympic Committee and a connoisseur of field sense or vision. “They’re not always the most physically talented, but they’re by far the best. The way they see things that nobody else sees – it can seem almost supernatural.” In 1997 in *Cigar Aficionado* interview, former St. Louis Blues goalie Mike Liut said “I’d see him come down the ice and immediately start think ‘What don’t I see that Wayne is seeing right now?’ “. (Kahn 2007.)

In hockey nowadays the concept of reading the game is basic. If the coach understands the concept and has been able to transmit it to players there is a basis for interpreting changing game situations and reacting productively. This way the game improves. The coach shouldn’t work only on individual and team skills, but also on thinking skills of the individual player. The easy and most natural way to develop the game reading and reaction skills is to play different mini-games with modified rules. Through these players learn to be in the right place at the right time. Without an understanding of the game there are no right decisions made. (Wahlsten & Molloy 2002, 61.)



### 3 Teaching to play through systems and skills

Teaching ice hockey used to be that the coach drawing to the board and telling the players where they should be and how they should move. The old way of coaching was the one-way coaching and communication style. The coach told and taught players what they can do and what they can't do. The game became a coach's game where players obeyed the coach's orders and there wasn't that much creativity and it was pretty predictable. There was not much room for individuals react naturally to different game situations. (Wahlsten & Molloy 2002, 88.)

Figure 1 presents how the game was seen before. It was thought that the game flows naturally from end to end and the transition happens only in the defensive zone or in the offensive zone. (Cielo 1996, 7.)

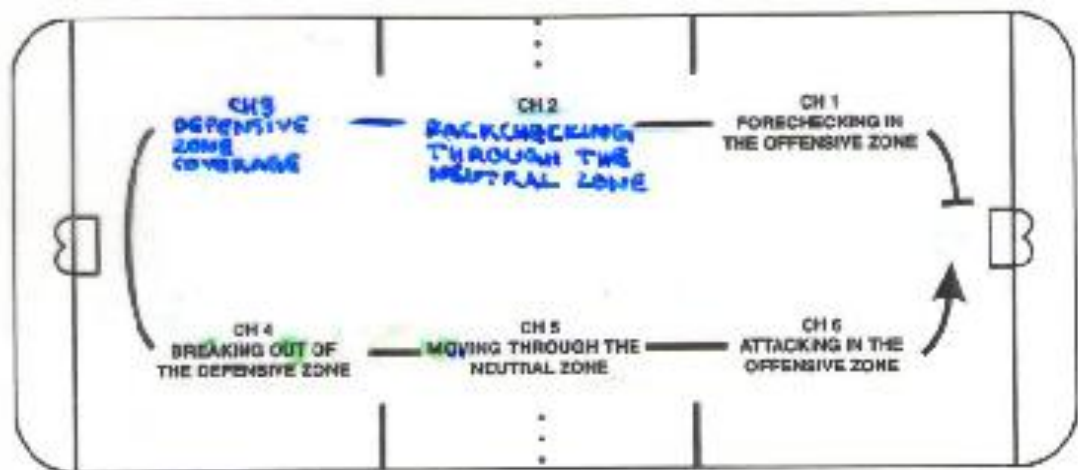


Figure 1. Flow of the game (Cielo 1996, 7).

The old time philosophy was based on game system that was created by the coach was purely a coach's game and the players were obeying the coach's orders. Individuals skills were practiced so that individual player could play the game system better. It was thought that the team that could obey the coach's system better wins and the individuals who play the game were left behind.

When all the players on the ice join in attacking or defending in a purposive common action, then we say that it is an offensive or defensive system of play. The co-operation of the whole team finds its scope in the basic system of play which comprises both the duties of attack and those of defense. The basic system of play in ice hockey consists in the fundamental way in leading attack and defense with precise duties assigned to single players, groups of players and to the entire team in the all zones of the rink, during the whole match or part of it. (Horsky 1983, 8-9.)

The game systems can be viewed in three different categories. These are defensive play, offensive play and special situations. (Smith 2001, 4.) The defensive play systems can be divided into three different parts that are fore checking, neutral zone defense and defensive zone play. Fore checking is about getting the puck back to your team by creating confusion and chaos to other team. The choice of fore checking system will depend on coach's philosophy and what kind of players he has. Aggressive systems rely on skating and hard work. The idea is to attack to opponent before they are organized. In more conservative systems the team waits and lets the opponent get organized and as they start to get out of their zone the defensive team tries to steal the puck.. Fewer systems are available at the neutral zone because the puck is getting closer to the net of the defensive team. Because there is less room for recovery, there is less room for flexibility. But the opportunities to attack the puck are more obvious and specific and it is the attack which is often called "trap" that is the critical. In defensive zone when the puck is even closer to your own net the options of systems are even more limited. Defensive play in defensive zone is basic and direct and the main goals are preventing the opponent from scoring and regaining the possession of the puck. (Smith 2001, 7-51.)

Figure 2 illustrates a defensive system for a team. It's a conservative style fore checking where the idea is to protect the middle. There are precise instructions what every player should do and where they should move. (Johnston & Walter 2010, 102.)

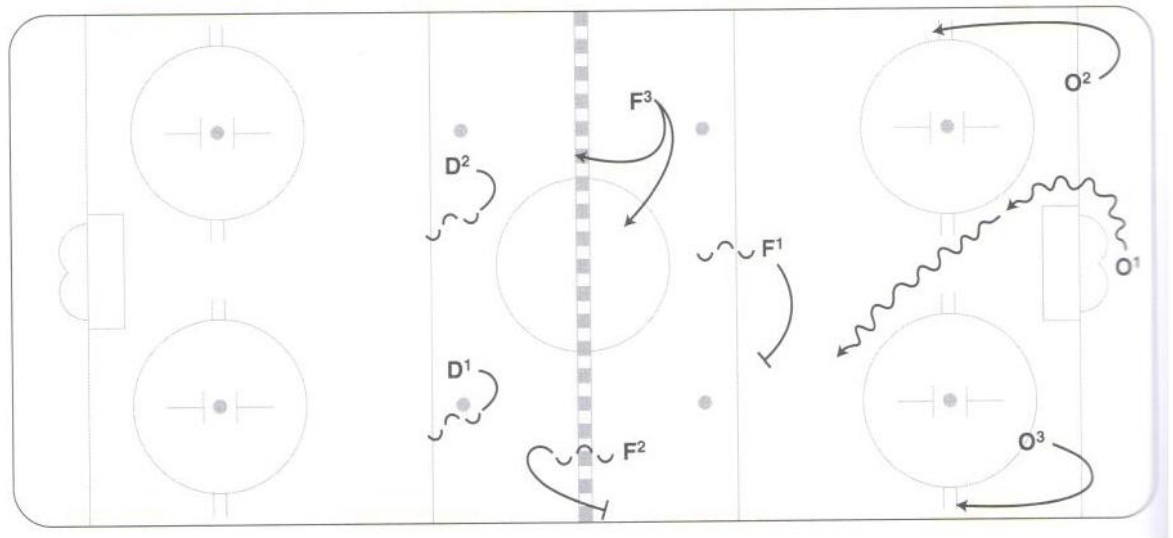


Figure 2. Defensive play strategy (Johnston & Walter 2010, 102).

The offensive game can be divided into three different parts that are breakouts, neutral zone offense and offensive zone play. The objective of the offensive game is to score. Breakout is an offensive play you perform at your own end. Systems for breakout are not complicated and they are kept simple because in breakout it is execution that counts. There aren't plenty of systems for breakout available, but there are plenty of options inside the systems available. The neutral zone offense can be divided into two parts. First part is when you gain the possession of the puck in neutral zone and you start to generate the attack from there. The second one is when you go through the neutral zone after your breakout and you're entering the offensive zone. Offensive zone systems provide basic guidelines, but the players must be given freedom to be creative and innovative. After the initial attack these systems will allow your team to maintain or regain the possession of the puck and to continue the attack to the goal. More goals are scored after sustained pressure in the offensive zone than after the rush. (Smith 2001, 61-145.)

Figure 3 shows an offensive system illustrating a breakout. In picture you can see precise instructions for each individual player what they should do. (Johnston & Walter 2010, 16.)

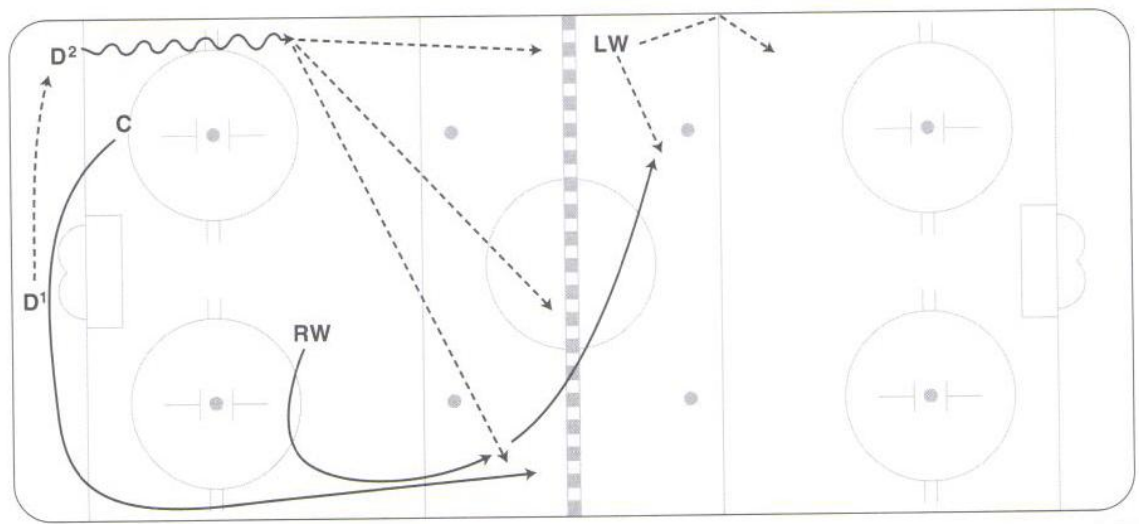


Figure 3. Offensive play strategy (Johnston & Walter 2010, 16).

The special situations can be divided into three parts that are power plays, penalty killing and face-offs. Power play systems are not complicated. They're kept simple and focused only to 2 or 3 areas. Only a few options are available for any power play and it is the execution of the power play that is vital. Penalty killing is an extension to your defensive play. The system can be aggressive, conservative or something from between using parts from both types. Face-offs are divided into offensive zone, defensive zone and neutral zone face-offs. Offensively in face-offs each player has his role in an attempt to get a shot at the net. Defensively every player has his responsibility to prevent opponent from getting a scoring chance. (Smith 2001, 161- 215.)

Figure 4 illustrates special situation strategy for power play. It shows precise instructions and movement patterns for each individual player. (Johnston & Walter 2010, 72.)

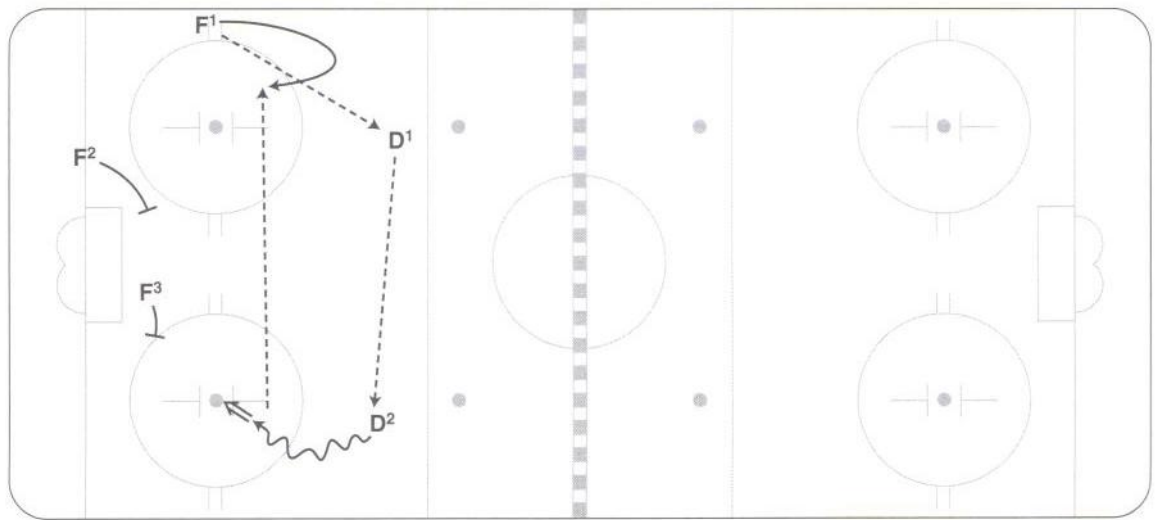


Figure 4. Special situation strategy (Johnston & Walter 2010, 72).

Team tactics equal team play. Team tactics basic idea is to utilize the strengths of the team as good as possible and to prevent the other team from utilizing the weaknesses of the team. On the other hand you try to attack to opponents weaknesses and eliminate their strengths. In team sports it's relevant how well the players co-operate with each other to achieve the common goals in each game situation. Team sports could be as well called as co-operation sports. In the beginning of the development of ice hockey the work distribution was simple. The defenders defend and attackers attack. (Westerlund 1997a, 532.)

A team's tactics and game strategies depend on the skill and game understanding of both the opponent and your own team. Basically the game plan is based on the total of the individual defensive and offensive skills of the players both in individually and in units. As an extreme example, if the team can control the puck for the whole game, then the team wouldn't need defensive team play skills. At the other hand if the team has very few offensive skills they would have to rely more on their defensive skills. (Wahlsten & Molloy 2002, 115.)

Canada has been thought to be the motherland of ice hockey. Figure 5 illustrates the process of teaching the game in Canadian coaching education. When the players have acquired a good foundation of the fundamental technical skills necessary to play hockey, the coach is able to introduce them to individual tactics and then into team tactics

and principles. The next step in the progression is teaching team play systems and, finally a strategy. (International Ice Hockey Federation 2007.)

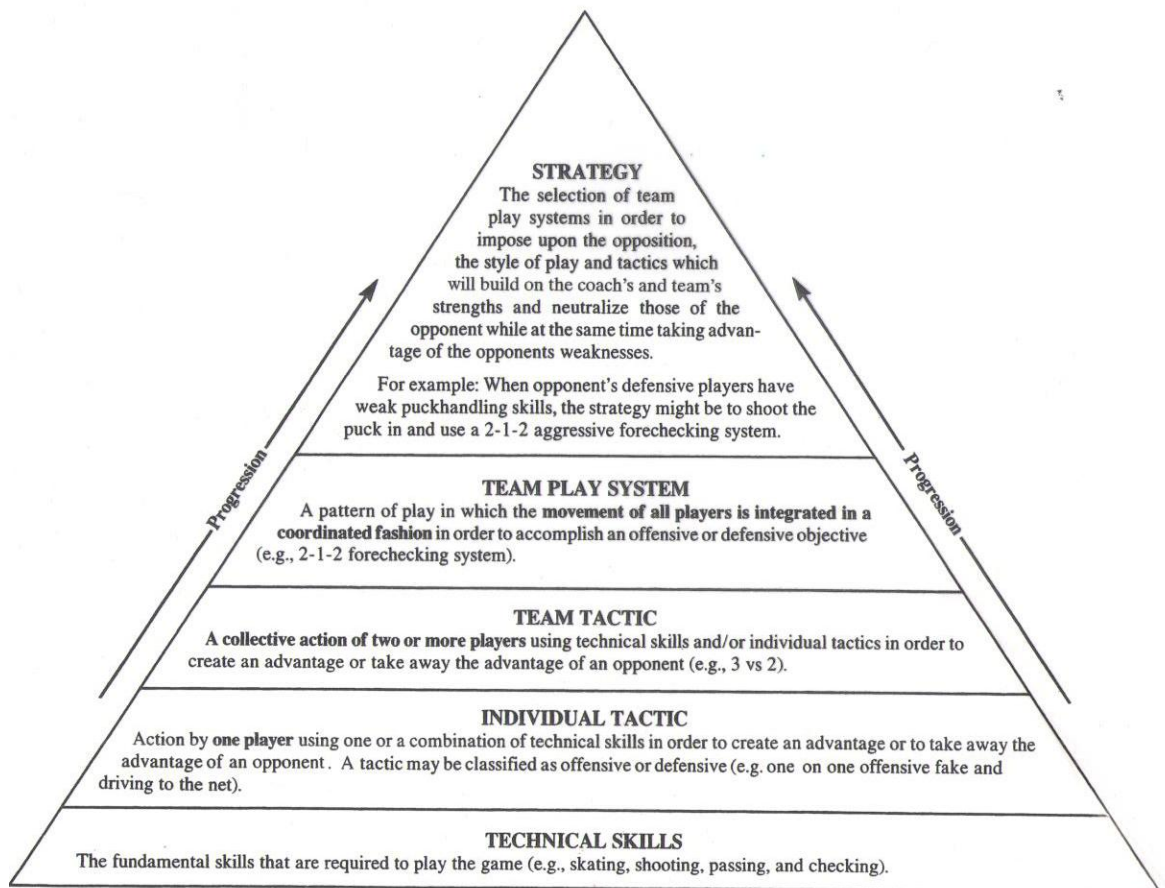


Figure 5. Teaching progression (International Ice Hockey Federation 2007).

Any individual tactic players perform must fit within the team system. This allows more success individually and as a team. With better execution of each individual skill player has there will be an overall improvement in team performance. To make this happen players must be taught right technique, they must be given time to practice the technique and to understand how these skills fit within the team system. (Brithen 2011.)

If the Canadian process of teaching the game has been based on developing the individual skills and game system the Russian hockey has based their teaching of the game purely on the individual skills. Especially developing the offensive skills to the maximum has created a foundation for creative co-operation and team play.

The Russians based their game on high level of individual skills. The Russian players handled all the difficult skills and especially the ones that connect to starting and finishing the attacks. They can deke one or two opposition players in any kind of situation so the player's game tactic was purely individual. Uniqueness of game and skill to handle any kind of hard or unexpected situation on ice are similarities you can find on Russian players. It is true that Russian players were weaker at defending than attacking. Russian hockey identity bases on idea that attack is best defense. It is the most dominative and rational way of building the game. The time you spent defending should be short and quick. Long lasting lock defense doesn't lead to anything good. It is hard to survive long attacks from opponent. Small and devious puck can find a hole from our defense and hit the unguarded corner of our goal. (Tarasov 1972, 9-25.)

It is not the system you choose that makes your team successful, it is how well your players execute the system and whether you as a coach can make players execute it consistently in every game (Johnston & Walter 2010, 9). There is not one system that is the best. Systems in hockey are not hard to learn or complex, but it is true that some of them can be challenging to execute. To execute team system effectively you need to work as a team. A major part in your work as a coach is to create an eager and effective team spirit and once it exists orchestrate it actions. (Smith 2001, 4.)

When the game has become faster it has been noticed that the transition could happen in any of part of the ice or that the team could go back to previous zone they were for example dropping the puck back to defensive zone when the teams is in neutral zone. And if you have been taught only through systems, how can you react to those situations that the coach hasn't drawn to the board?

## 4 Game situation roles and objectives

Ice hockey has developed hugely over the last decades. Players are faster and stronger and every second matters on the ice. Also the teaching to play the game has shifted more towards the individuals than the whole team. If you want to be an elite player it's not enough that you just follow what the coach draws to the board. You have to be able to react and understand every situation as fast as possible.

During the years ice hockey has become more physical and faster. The players have developed into professional athletes. Because of that the players are more athletic than before. At the same time the game situations change faster during the game and the players have to react to the changing situations. The game has developed so that it is not enough anymore that you move through preset lanes instead you need to really be ready to react all the time. You need to understand the game, read the game and make right decisions. (Koho & Luukkainen 2012, 138.)

Learning to play ice hockey is no different than learning something else like mathematics. Like in mathematics in ice hockey there are right and wrong answers. In ice hockey the answer and outcome of the training or the game actions can be evaluated by whether or not the puck is in the net. Coach must create practices and learning environment where the players can learn from game-like situations and get them to solve problems in different situations by themselves. (Wahlsten & Molloy 2002, 88.)

You also can compare ice hockey to jazz. You need both talents and skills to do it, but a basic framework is required within which to exercise these abilities. In both jazz and ice hockey the person has to improvise, the individual player doing the extra unexpected bit makes the system work. The individuals play off each other and constantly adjust to one another during the game. In hockey, just as in jazz, too much planning can ruin everything. (Smith 2001, 5.)

In the late 1980 the way of thinking, how to teach the game, started to change more away from the game systems towards game situation roles and reacting to the current



situation. At the beginning of the 90's Finnish Ice Hockey Association (FIHA) started to use those ideas as their education programs for the coaches. This has led to style of play called "Our Game", which is a philosophy how to teach the Finnish players to play and understand the game. All the Finnish National teams (junior & men) base their game to this philosophy. (Tapola 2010.)

The appendix 1 describes game situation roles and objectives which are based on the FIHA's model. It is commonly used in Finnish coaching education and training programs. This game situation model consists from four different roles. The role depends on who has the possession of the puck. Two of the roles are offensive and two defensive ones. Each role has four objectives in order of importance. Inside the objectives there still are different playing skills, with which player can execute his decisions. (Westerlund, 1997b.)

In ice hockey there needs to be certain set patterns so that players have some basis for their game. But by following the principles of read and react the players learn to play the game better. They learn the game faster, they learn to be more creative and they understand the game better. (Wahlsten & Molloy 2002, 88.)

The quick top ice hockey depends upon the laws that are same in all four game situation roles. In all roles the player should be ready to react to changing game situations. The players have to be able to change from role to role without delay. Possible delays in role changes weaken game speed of the fivesome and give the opponent more time react. (Koho & Luukkainen 2012, 156.)

If we distribute the work only through our game system it's pretty slow in rapidly changing game situations during the game. Winning the playing situation in the game usually is based on the fact that you do something faster than the opponent. Because the game situations change rapidly during the game you have to react based on the game situation. If we want the players to co-operate well in the ice they need to have common goals in different game situations. The decision of the individual and the co-operation of the players happen more often based on the game situation and the game situation goals they have decided. Distribution of jobs based on the game situation

allows the players to make more faster, creative and efficient decisions. (Westerlund 1997a, 532.)

We are returning to the roots of ice hockey when players learned through playing. As the game continuously becomes faster, the players have to make their decisions more and more based on the playing situation and not according to a playing system. Thus game strategy must become faster and more flexible. (Westerlund, 2010.)

The player has to have knowledge about the game situation objectives to be able to make decisions that are beneficial for the team. Good team play is based on consistent interpretation of game situation and co-operation after that. Even though we try to distribute the work of players with game system the decision of player is based on how the player reads the game situation. The co-operation of players can be made easier when we distribute the work through game situation roles and objectives. The player is always in some of the four game situation roles. (Westerlund 1997a, 534.)

For players to be able to cooperate on the ice, they must share common objectives in different game situations. Cooperation based on the game situations makes fast and efficient decision making possible. (Westerlund & Summanen 2001, 24.) When the player is able to recognize the game situation role he is in and knows the objectives of each role he can make decisions that are beneficial for the team.

## **5 The objectives of playing situations**

Team mates should have common objectives in each playing situations to cooperate better. The players have to recognize all the time changing situations and to choose the right objective for the action. It is important that the players understand playing situations on the same way and can choose the same objective in changing playing situations.

### **5.1 Objectives of offense**

In the offensive situations the player with the puck is a key player and leader of the offense. The four players without the puck should read the space and time of the puck carrier.

#### **5.1.1 Scoring**

Scoring is the number one thing in offensive game. When the player has the puck in a scoring chance the first objective is to score a goal. (Westerlund 1997, 533a.)

In scoring situations it's all about a duel between goalie and the puck carrier. In these situations it is only a goal that shows the success of puck carrier's performance. To be successful in scoring situations the puck carrier should be sneaky, straight forward and determinant. The objective of scoring is primarily used in the offensive zone because in the neutral and defensive zone you have to first win the space to get in to the scoring opportunity. The most important thing in the actions of the puck carrier in the scoring situation is will to score. Without the will to score it is hard to utilize the scoring situations. (Koho & Luukkainen 2012, 158-159.)

The first task of the player without the puck is move to an open place to the slot where its possibility to get pass or work near the goaltender, screen and rebound loose pucks. In this objective the player is trying to get towards opponent's goal into a scoring chance. The non-puck carrier has to constantly move so that he either sees or at least knows where the puck carrier is. The jobs that non-puck carrier has to do in this objective are moving in to a open place where he can be passed and the support work in

scoring including screening, deflecting the shots and rebound play. (Koho & Luukkainen 2012, 162.) When the puck is in a scoring zone the first objective is scoring (Westerlund 1997a, 533).

### **5.1.2 Offensive pressure (winning space)**

Winning space towards opposite team's goal by skating (from a tight place to open one or into another zone) or by passing (to an open space or to a player in motion) are the tools of the puck carrier to create the offensive pressure.

When you are winning the space you are moving the puck towards the opponent's goal with skating or passing. In this objective good puck handling, skating and passing skills are required from the player. (Koho & Luukkainen 2012, 159.) When the puck is not in a scoring zone the first objective of the team is win the space towards opponent's goal to get into a scoring chance (Westerlund 1997a, 533).

The players without the puck should help the puck carrier and win space to get open for a pass forward. In this objective the players offer passing possibilities so that the team can move the puck towards opponent's goal. (Koho & Luukkainen 2012, 163.) When the puck is not in a scoring chance the objective is to get in to the scoring chance by winning the space (Westerlund 1997a, 533).

The non-puck carrier should help the job of the puck carrier by speaking, keeping the stick on ice, getting away from his defender and actively moving into an open place (Koho & Luukkainen 2012, 163).

### **5.1.3 Puck control**

If it's not possible to win space the next option is keeping the puck possession with the own team. The puck-carrier is moving and protecting the puck or passing it backwards or laterally to a player in open space. By keeping the puck possession the team is trying to buy time to organize and start the objective of winning the space. (Koho & Luukkainen 2012, 160.) When team is unable to win the space the objective is to make space for the puck carrier and keep the puck possession (Westerlund 1997a, 533).

In this objective the players without the puck offer themselves into a position where the puck carrier can pass to him either laterally or downwards (Koho & Luukkainen 2012, 164). When the team can't win the space the objective is to keep the puck possession and make space for the puck carrier (Westerlund 1997a, 533). The non-puck carrier can use voice, actively moves into an open place, reacts to others' actions, keeps his head up and stick on the ice (Koho & Luukkainen 2012, 164).

#### **5.1.4 Transition from offense to defense**

In some situations it is wise to start thinking defense while you have the puck possession by playing the puck as far as possible from the own goal. In this objective the puck carrier moves the puck in such way that the situation doesn't end into a takeaway by other team. This happens either by skating or dumping the puck. (Koho & Luukkainen 2012, 160.) Attacking team must also prepare for protecting the own net. Player's must be ready to change from offense to defense immediately when the puck possession is lost. When the other team gets the puck there must be readiness to change from offense to defense quickly. (Westerlund 1997a, 533.)

In this objective also the non-puck carrier's most important job is to make sure there is right balance in the attack so that the team isn't over attacking. When you have defensive readiness you try to make sure that the other team doesn't get into dangerous attacks after takeaway. The whole team can't always attack in this objective but the thing is that one or two players balance the attack defensively with their positioning or movement. But every player should be always ready if transition happens. (Koho & Luukkainen 2012, 165.) During the attack the team must also prepare for defense if the other team gets the puck possession. When the opponent gets the puck the team must be ready to change from offense to defense. (Westerlund 1997a, 533.)

### **5.2 Objectives of defense**

In the defensive situations the player defending an opponent with the puck is leader of the defense. The four players defending opponent's non-puck carriers have to read 1 on 1 situation around the puck.

### **5.2.1 Preventing the opponent from scoring**

Eventually it's the goaltender, which has the biggest responsibility to prevent opponent from scoring. Player's job is to help the goaltender by co-operating, controlling the area around net and blocking shots.

When the opponent has the puck in the scoring zone the objective is to protect your own net. Opponent's scoring is highly related to goaltenders performance. Also the players can help the goaltender and block shots. (Westerlund 1997a, 533.) In scoring chances player who is defending the puck carrier has to always position himself between the player and the goal. The whole objective of preventing the opponent from scoring is based on this. When you add few tools to right positioning the player has all the skills needed for defending. These skills are blocking shots, active stick pressure, angling the puck carrier into bad position and ability to perceive right distance. (Koho & Luukkainen 2012, 166.)

In this objective the most important thing for a player who is defending the non-puck carrier is correct positioning. The defender should position himself between the player he is defending and a goal. The defender has to also see the puck carrier and his own man without turning his head. The player is able to do this by creating a triangle with his positioning. When player does this he is able to block the passing lanes to man he is defending and react to changes in puck possession and to movement of his player. The defender has to position so close to player he is defending that he can give stick pressure to player and make the non-puck carrier harmless. (Koho & Luukkainen 2012, 169.)

When defending the non-puck carrier you have to be ready to react to his movements. While defending the scoring chances, keep readiness to change your job to defend the puck carrier. If you are defending the non-puck carrier in front of the net you have to be able to be tough with little bit of body pressure and make sure that your player doesn't get the puck. (Koho & Luukkainen 2012, 169-170.)

### **5.2.2 Regaining possession of the puck**

In defense the second objective is to regain the possession of the puck (Westerlund 1997a, 533). Regaining the possessions of the puck is highly related to preventing offensive pressure from the opponent. Also the ways to do it are quite similar. In regaining the possession of the puck the skills needed from the player defending opponent's puck carrier are narrowing the distance to opponent, stick pressure, body pressure and moving in game ready stance. (Koho & Luukkainen 2012, 168.)

Positioning, defending against your man and cutting off potential passing lines are actions of the players defending opponents without the puck. Also skills like readiness to change the role to defending against puck carrier or to reactions to loose pucks are important.

The player defending the non-puck carrier helps his team's objective of regaining the possessions of the puck by positioning correctly, blocking the passing lanes and creating 1 vs. 1 situations into 2 vs. 1 for the defending team (Koho & Luukkainen 2012, 170).

### **5.2.3 Preventing offensive pressure from the opponent**

When the opponent is not in the scoring zone the objective of the defending team is to prevent the opponent getting into the scoring zone. The defending team is trying to take away the space from opponent so they can't move towards your goal. (Westerlund 1997a, 534.) When preventing offensive pressure from the opponent, the biggest thing is not to let the puck carrier come in to center lane, where he has more opportunities to move the puck. Most needed skills in this objective are blocking the centre with own movement, by stick pressure and by body pressure. Player who is defending the puck carrier has to angle the opponent into smaller space meaning towards the boards. (Koho & Luukkainen 2012, 167.)

The objective of the defending team is preventing the opponent from getting into the scoring zone. The defending team is trying to prevent the opponent from winning the space towards goal. (Westerlund 1997a, 534.) When you are preventing the offensive

pressure as a defender of the non-puck carrier the most important thing is correct positioning. With his movement the player has to prevent opponent's players from getting into center lane and at the same time block pass attempts to a player he is defending. The players defending non-puck carriers has to be ready for change to become the defender of the puck carrier. The defender has to move so close to his player that if he gets the puck he can't win the space forward but instead he has to move towards boards or back up. (Koho & Luukkainen 2012, 170.)

#### **5.2.4 Transition from defense to offense**

During the defense the players have to have readiness to change quickly to offense (Westerlund 1997a, 534). The first priority of player who is defending the puck carrier is of course preventing him to score, but also to keep readiness to change from defense to offense in all zones. Readiness to change quickly to offense comes from good game stance. By having good game stance you can get to loose puck quickly before opponent. Previously mentioned ways to create a loose puck and attacking to loose pucks should be practiced. The biggest thing in readiness to make a transition from defense to offense is patient defending. At the same time when player is defending the puck carrier, the player should observe where the rest of the players are. If you are able to take away the puck from opponent the information of knowing where the rest of the players are helps the player to make good decisions when turning into a puck carrier. In transition from defense to offense the most important moments are second before you get the puck and second after you get the puck. When a transition happens you have to react to it immediately and quicker than the opponent. (Koho & Luukkainen 2012, 169.)

The player defending the opponent without the puck has to always know how all the players are positioned. So when the team gets the puck he can offer himself in to good place where the puck can be played and it's beneficial for the team. The better choice of movement and positioning player makes at this moment helps the team create good offensive game. Behind these actions is ability to read the game. The reaction after regaining the possession of the puck has to happen rapidly. More ready the player is to this, the quicker he can react to changing game situation. At some situations players



can cheat a little bit and anticipate the offensive game. This way the player can maybe win loose puck, block a pass or get into a breakaway. At the other hand if you anticipate at the wrong moment it can cost a goal into your own net. The game is continuous pursuit of right decisions. (Koho & Luukkainen 2012, 171.)

## **6 The purpose of the thesis**

The purpose of this thesis is to describe the phases of teaching the game in ice hockey and based on that to create a theoretical basis to teaching the game nowadays. Also to support the written material the purpose is to analyze some often happening game situations with video examples and to demonstrate with those examples what priority thinking means in game situations.

The benefit of this thesis is that it creates a theoretical basis of “Our Game” that is the teaching philosophy nowadays in Finland. The goal is to find all the information needed from one place. The thesis comes available to Hockey Centre and is used in Finnish coaching educations. It’s useful for Hockey Centre and educators, that the information is collected into one covers. Also the videos help to understand the theoretical basis presented in the thesis. The theoretical basis and videos create better conditions to teach and learn about the information presented.

## 7 Methods

The idea of this thesis came from Finnish Ice Hockey Association. The lack of material and knowledge in the field about the teaching philosophy of Our Game has been a concern in FIHA. There was a clear need for a thesis that collects the information available into one theoretical basis and for video clips to show concrete examples. The knowledge is collected from all around the world, from different cultures and philosophies. The bibliography used is from five different decades.

The planning of the thesis started with independent work of generating an idea of content of the theoretical basis and videos. The plan got clearer after meeting with representative of school Jukka Tiikkaja, Hockey Centre Head of Training Tuomo Kärki and ex-head coach of Finnish national ice hockey team Erkkä Westerlund. Through the process of making the thesis there were meetings with the supervisors. In these meetings the content and direction of thesis was evaluated and sharpened.

The videos have been edited from the game footage of SM-league. The authors watched games from the last three seasons. After creating the theoretical basis the authors evaluated situations from games that gave clear examples about the objective thinking in game situations. The authors didn't have much previous experience about editing and creating videos. The goal was still to create as good video examples as possible.

The content of video examples lived through the whole process and until the theoretical basis was finished there weren't any videos selected so that they would support the written part well. The criteria's for video examples were that they give as good examples as possible about the written material and clearly seen actions of the player from the video. Videos were converted into right formation with Full Video Converter 10 and edited with Windows Movie Maker. After editing, a DVD (Appendix 2.) was made from edited videos.

The DVD consists of nine video examples that show nine different game situations where individual player makes a change of game situation role and objective. The DVD also has information about every video clip that tells what happens in the exact example.

## 8 Philosophy of Our Game

Finnish Ice Hockey Association has developed their own game teaching philosophy that base on game situation roles, objectives and to reaction in game situations. If the teaching of the game before based primarily on teaching skills and game systems, now the ability of player to react in different game situations has become the primarily goal of learning. In order to improve the cooperation of players, the priority order has been put to use in game situations to solve them. It means the order of game situation objectives that players follow and choose the objective from it in rapidly changing game situations. This phase of the teaching philosophy has been started to call “Our Game”. Our Game bases on game situation roles and objectives. Every time player steps on ice he has to recognize and understand his current role and has to act according to the objectives.

Ice hockey is a game, where the purpose is alternately to attack bravely with five players and to defend actively with five players (Jalonen 2006).

**Table 2.** Objectives of defense and offense in order of importance (Rautakorpi 2010).

<b>Offensive objectives</b>	<b>Defensive objectives</b>
1.Scoring	1.Preventing the opponent from scoring
2.Offensive pressure	2.Regaining the possession of the puck
3.Puck control	3.Preventing offensive pressure from the opposition
4.Transition from offense to defense	4.Transition from offense to defense

In table 2 the objectives of defense and offense are presented in order of importance. In offense, scoring is the first objective. If the player or team is not in scoring situation the next objective is to win the space (offensive pressure) towards the scoring zone. If the player cannot win the space the next objective is to keep the puck control. If the situation threatens your goal it is sometimes wise to give away the puck and prepare to defense. This describes the reaction order of objectives in offensive game. The defensive game follows the objective order presented in table 2 the same way. (Rautakorpi 2010.)

The game is all about time and space. By defending you try to take it away from the opponent and by attacking you try to make it and then win it. It's always important that the five players on ice stay together. It's not clever to attack with two or three players against the opposite three or four players. It's a basic principle in ice hockey that if you attack wisely, you're making a huge favor for your defense. If we lose the puck or chase for the loose puck there are still five guys to react for the situation. (Rautakorpi 2010.)

When thinking the game through game situation roles the idea is that the player is always in one of these four roles depending who has the possession of the puck. It doesn't matter is the player forward or defender when talking about game situation roles. The main thing is that which team has the possession of the puck. (Koho & Luukkainen 2012, 156.)

**Table 3.** Different game situation roles of positions (Rautakorpi 2010).

<b>Forward</b>	<b>Defender</b>
1. Offensive puck carrier	1. Offensive puck carrier
2. Non-puck carrier	2. Non-puck carrier
3. Defending the puck carrier	3. Defending the puck carrier
4. Defending the non-puck carrier	4. Defending the non-puck carrier

Table 3 presents the different game situation roles of positions. From table 3 you can see that the forwards and defenders share the same game situation roles. The role only depends on does your team have a puck or not. (Rautakorpi 2010.)

Understanding the basic principles of ice hockey requires that you first understand the four game situation roles and objectives. A good player can play in any of the four roles. The player has to also be capable to react if the direction of the game changes so the change between roles would be as quick as possible. When learning to play, the emphasis should be in these things. (Luukkainen 2012, 72.)

The audience usually recognizes the best scorers in ice hockey. Those players are experts in the game situation role number 1 which is offensive puck carrier. Those play-

ers who can play well in that role usually dominate in the scoring lists. In the international hockey nowadays it is crucial that player also handles the rest three roles with his expertise. (Koho & Luukkainen 2012, 156.)

The objective of thinking the game through priorities is to leave room for the choices of coaches and especially for the choices of the players. Priorities standardize the game, but eventually the player makes the choice inside the game. The players choose do they start winning the space immediately after stealing the puck or do they play it downwards and after that upwards. The priorities don't give straight answers what to do in certain game situation, but they give solutions and an order where the solutions should be evaluated. Based on this the most crucial thing is how the players recognize the situation in the game and after that choose the best objective and action possible based on the situation, which is highly impacted the position of the opponent's players. (Koho & Luukkainen 2012, 140.)

Our Game bases on having the puck possession as much as possible. Concrete examples can be seen for example when the opposite team stops your attack, you don't always dump or chip the puck forward, but drop it back to your defense for a new try. Immediately after the drop, the puck carrier has to react according to the priority order. It means the puck carrier has to win the space if it's possible and not just turn back behind the own net. Rautakorpi (2010) points out, that main thing in offensive play is always to score, not just keep the puck possession. Puck control is a condition that we are able to win space. Only having the puck possession doesn't lead you to anywhere. You have to play it by the priority order. (Rautakorpi 2010.)

When the thinking of the game situation and transition started at the end of the 80's in the international ice hockey the focus was on how quick the player changes from defense to offense or between game situation roles. Now the thinking through objectives has gone one step further. Now the most important thing is how player changes from some objective of game situation role to the highest objective of the next game situation role following the objectives in order of importance. As an example the player is creating offensive pressure as a puck carrier. The player passes the puck and becomes non-puck carrier. The crucial thing is what objective he chooses and starts to play

when he becomes the non-puck carrier. Does he continue winning the space or does he settle to puck control. Figure 6 shows the concept of thinking through objectives and options of transferring from some game situation role and objective to another game situation role and objective. The change can happen between all the roles. The figure 6 shows that when a player changes from game situation role to another he doesn't only change the role but also objectives and he has to choose what objective he starts to play in the new role.

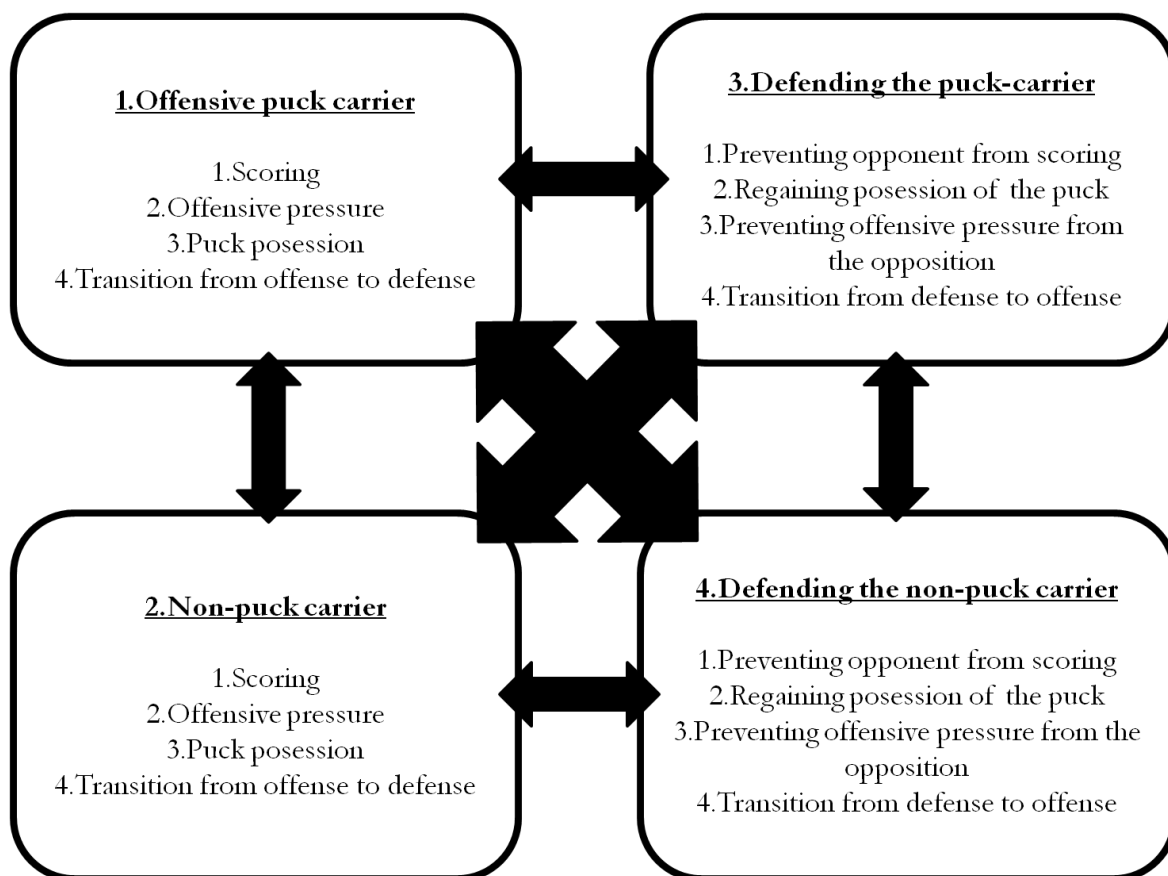


Figure 6. Game situation roles, their objectives and possibilities of changing them.

Cooperation of players based on objectives can be thought to be the production of this thesis. Based on the figure 6 the authors evaluated different practical and often occurring game situations from videos and the actions of players based on the objectives. Authors have analyzed with the example videos how the player's action can be described in practical game situations with the theoretical model based on thinking through objectives.



## 9 Video analyses

In the first three video examples we are observing the center's playing in straight attack. In first two clips we can see the center winning the space towards the opponent's goal. Third video when the center settles for making the space.

First two clips have many similarities and it's a situation that happens many times during an ice hockey game. The center tries to get to an open place for a pass from the defense. As the center gets the puck he is already moving forward by skating. The opposite team defenders have to react to the center coming with good speed and it creates open space for the winger who gets the pass. Important is that after the pass center keeps winning the space without the puck towards the net. He jumps from the priority winning space with the puck to winning space without the puck. Now the winger is able to either shoot the puck to the net or give the center pass or shot to deflect, which creates a scoring chance. If there's a rebound or the puck goes behind the goal line, center has good chances for getting to the loose puck first. In these two videos the player changes his game situation role and objective from offensive pressure as a offensive puck carrier to offensive as a non-puck carrier. Figure 9 shows the roles and objectives of the player in the videos 1 and 2 and the change between the roles and objectives that occur in the video. Figures number 7 and 8 show the important events in videos 1 and 2.

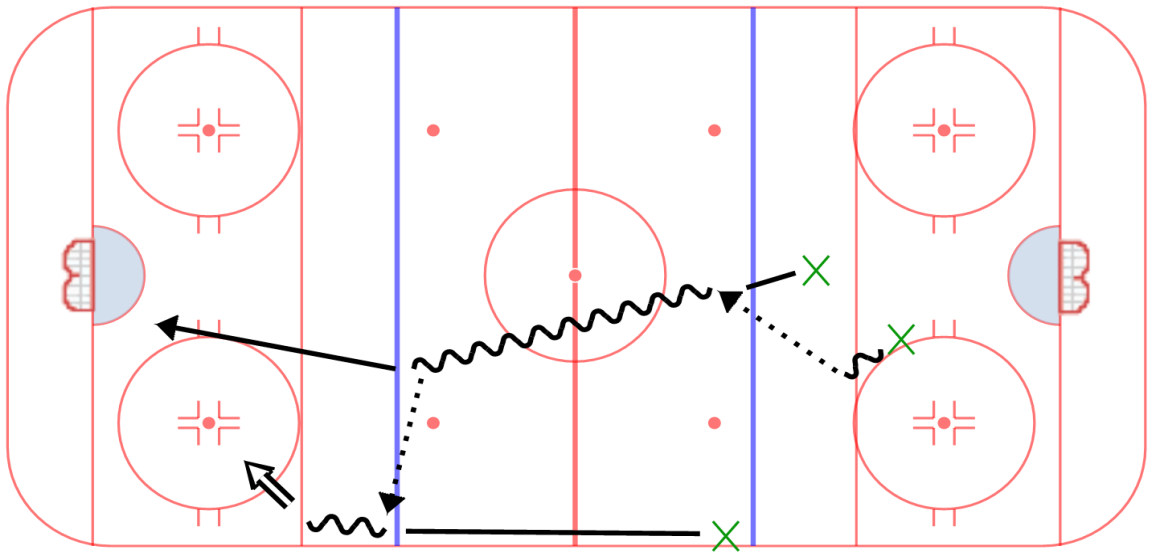


Figure 7. Illustration of important events in video 1.

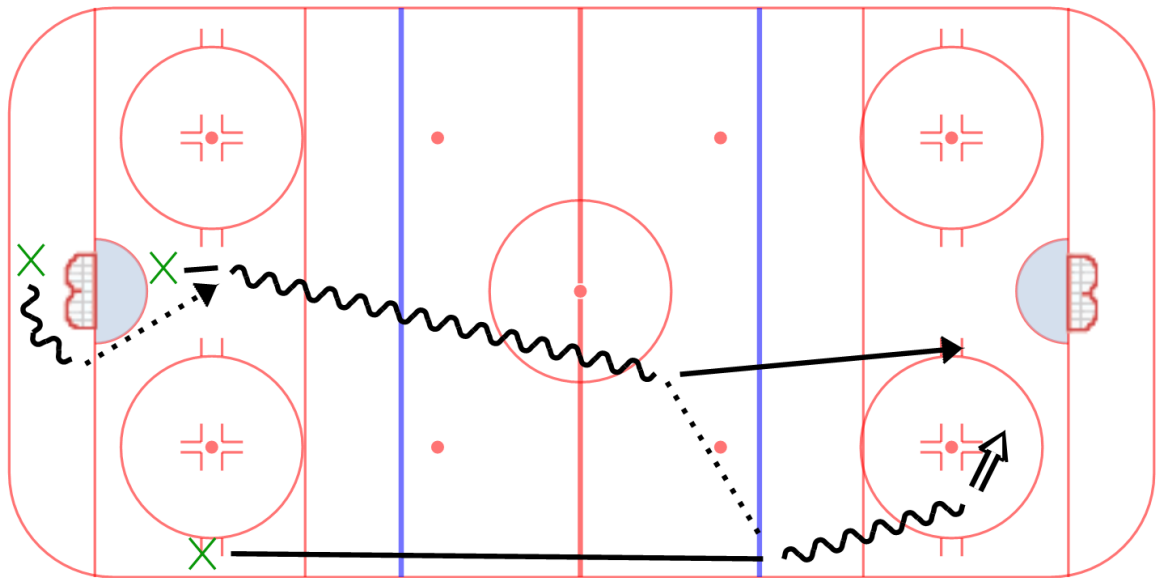


Figure 8. Illustration of important events in video 2.

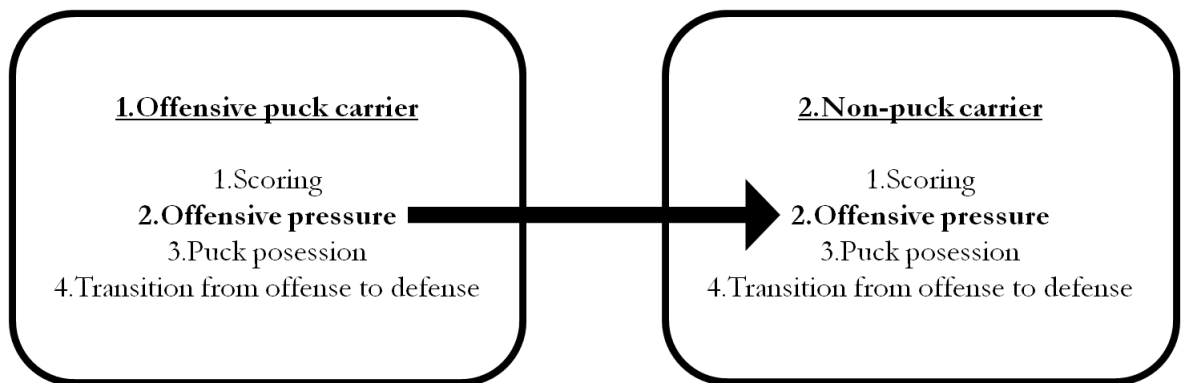


Figure 9. Change from offensive puck carrier in offensive pressure to non-puck carrier in offensive pressure in the videos 1 and 2.

Third video shows a different example when the play doesn't go by the priority order. The winger is carrying the puck over the middle and the center is coming behind. But instead of winning space toward the net, the center decides to skate behind the puck carrier asking for a drop pass. That drops the center from the winning space to making space and the straight attack ends to the corner which is not a wanted situation. The player changes his game situation role and priority from offensive pressure as a non-puck carrier to puck possession as an offensive puck carrier. Figure 11 shows the roles and objectives of the player in video 3 and the change between roles and objectives that occur in the video. Figure 10 illustrates the important events in video 3.

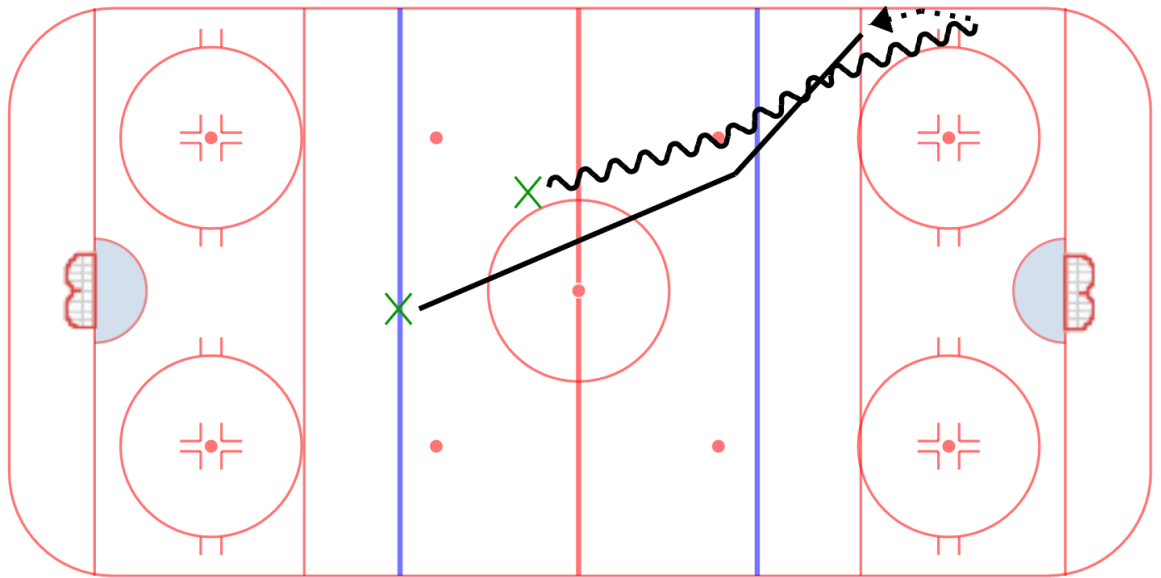


Figure 10. Illustration of important events in video 3.

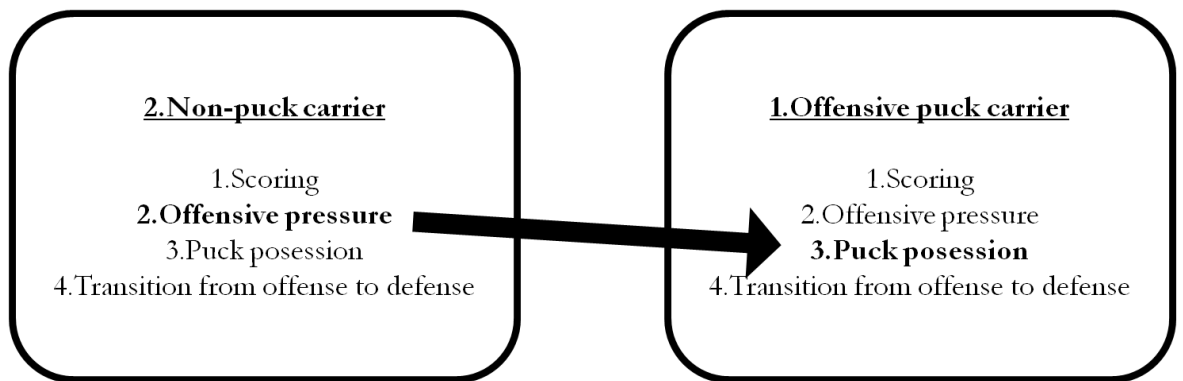


Figure 11. Change from non-puck carrier in offensive pressure to offensive puck carrier in puck possession in video 3.

In the next three videos (4, 5 and 6) we are observing the defender's game in three different situations. All three are similar in the way that in each three the defender makes the right priority change into the offensive pressure after initial situation.

In the fourth video is a situation that happens often during a game in the defensive zone. Defender is carrying the puck behind his own net and he is facing a hard pressure. In this situation there are two opposite forwards giving pressure to the puck carrier. Defender makes the right choice and passes the puck to his defensive partner who immediately starts to win the space towards opponent's net. The important thing in this video is what the first defender does after the pass. He takes the hits from two



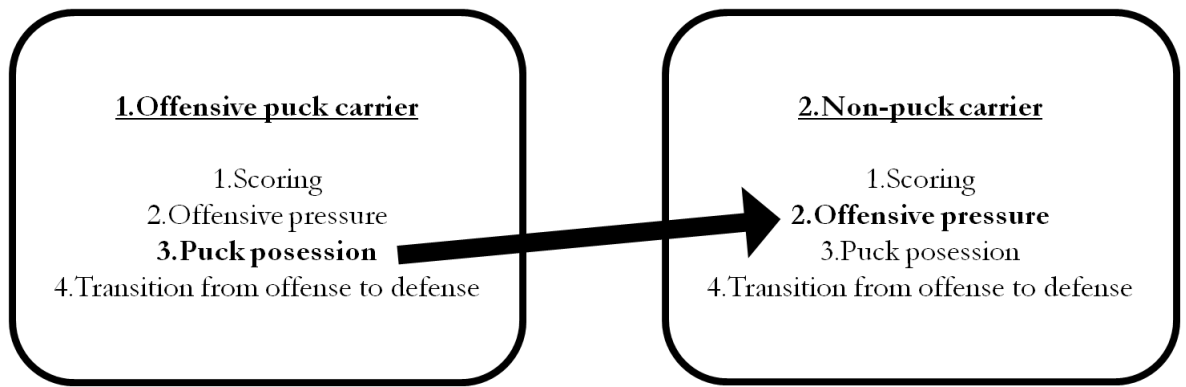


Figure 13. Change from offensive puck carrier in puck possession to non-puck carrier in offensive pressure in video 4.

In the fifth video we are observing the defenders actions in the offensive zone. Defender is keeping the puck and moving laterally in the blue line. He waits until the pressure comes close and makes a pass to the boards to forward. Immediately after the pass the defender beats the opponent in 1 on 1 and offers him available for a pass towards a goal. He gets the puck back and creates a goal. In this video the player changes his game situation role and priority from puck carrier making the space to non-puck carrier winning the space/scoring and when he gets the puck back he changes to puck carrier scoring. This is a prime example of jumping always to the highest priority available which in offensive zone is scoring/winning the space. As in previous video also in this example the defender creates an overload attack situation by his quick change to priority of offensive pressure as a non-puck carrier from puck possession as an offensive puck carrier. Figure 15 shows the roles and priorities of the player in video 5 and the change between the roles and objectives that occur in the video. Figure 14 illustrates the important events in video 5.

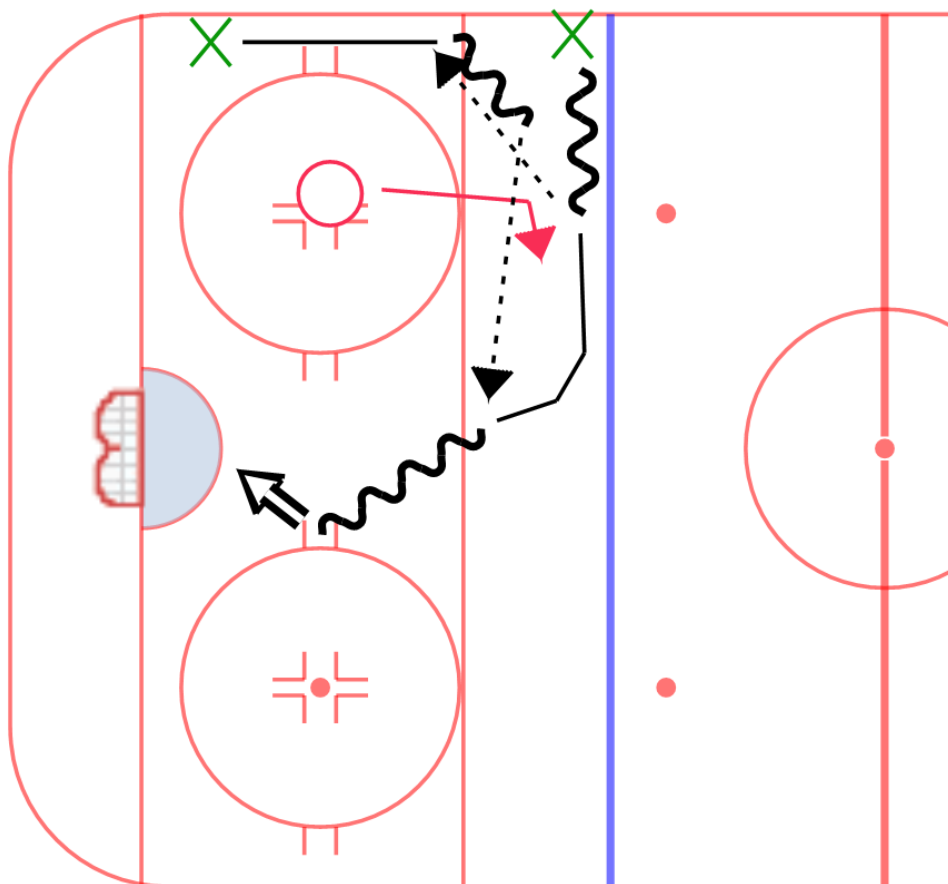


Figure 14. Illustration of important events in video 5.

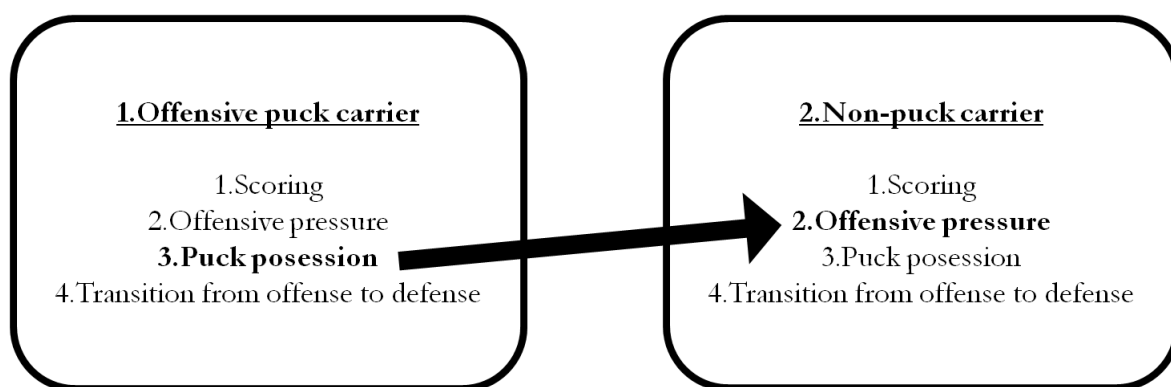


Figure 15. Change from offensive puck carrier in puck possession to non-puck carrier in offensive pressure in video 5.

In the sixth video we are observing the defender who makes a turnover in the defensive zone. The puck goes into the corner and there is a battle for the loose puck between the forward and the defender. The forward gets to the puck first, but the defender starts immediately to steal the puck and gets it. After the defender gets the possession of the puck he right away starts to win the space and skates to the middle of

the ice and beats the back checker who is the forward who lost the battle in the corner. The defender shows great understanding of the game in the moment when he regains the puck possession. He immediately puts his legs to work and starts to win the space and create offensive pressure by skating. The defender changes his game situation role and priority from regaining the possession of the puck as a defender of the puck carrier to winning the space as a puck carrier. It is a great example of quick transition between defensive and offensive roles and because of that he can make a good play by bringing the puck up by skating. Figure 17 shows the roles and objectives of the player in video 6 and the change between the roles and objectives that occur in the video. Figure 16 illustrates the important events in videos 6.

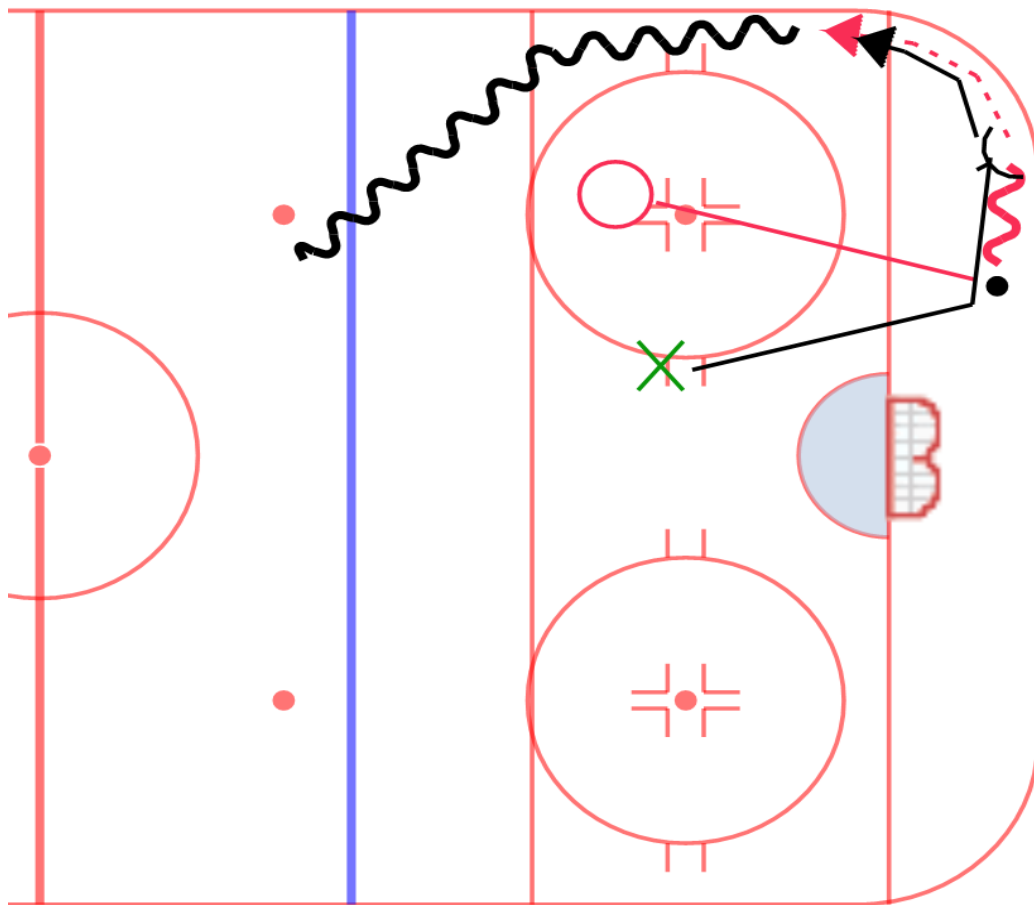


Figure 16. Illustration of important events in video 6.

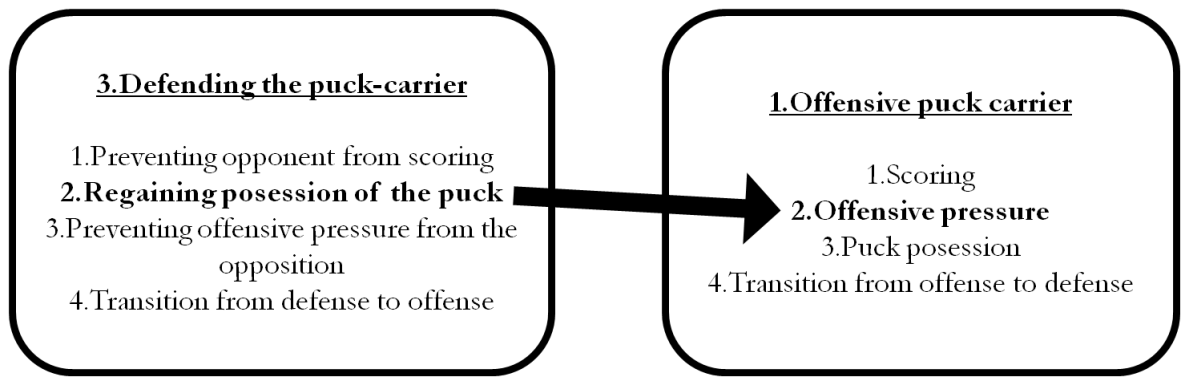


Figure 17. Change from defending the puck carrier in regaining the possession of the puck to offensive puck carrier in offensive pressure.

The video clip number seven shows how the forward is giving pressure to the defense in the offensive zone. After the tackle behind the net forward reacts quickly to the pass and starts immediately back checking the puck carrier by steering him to smaller space. Back checker catches the puck carrier, which has to make a pass to keep the puck possession. The opposite puck carrier tries a lucky pass to the other side of the rink, which gets cut down in the middle. The back checker notices the change in puck possession and starts immediately winning space towards the offensive zone. He gets a short pass in neutral zone and is already in good speed and skates for the breakaway while the other team is still figuring out what happened. The player changes his game situation role and priority from regaining the possession of the puck as a defender of the puck carrier to offensive pressure as a non-puck carrier. Figure 19 shows the role and objectives of the player in video 7 and the change between the roles and objectives that occur in the video. Figure 18 illustrates the important events in video 7.



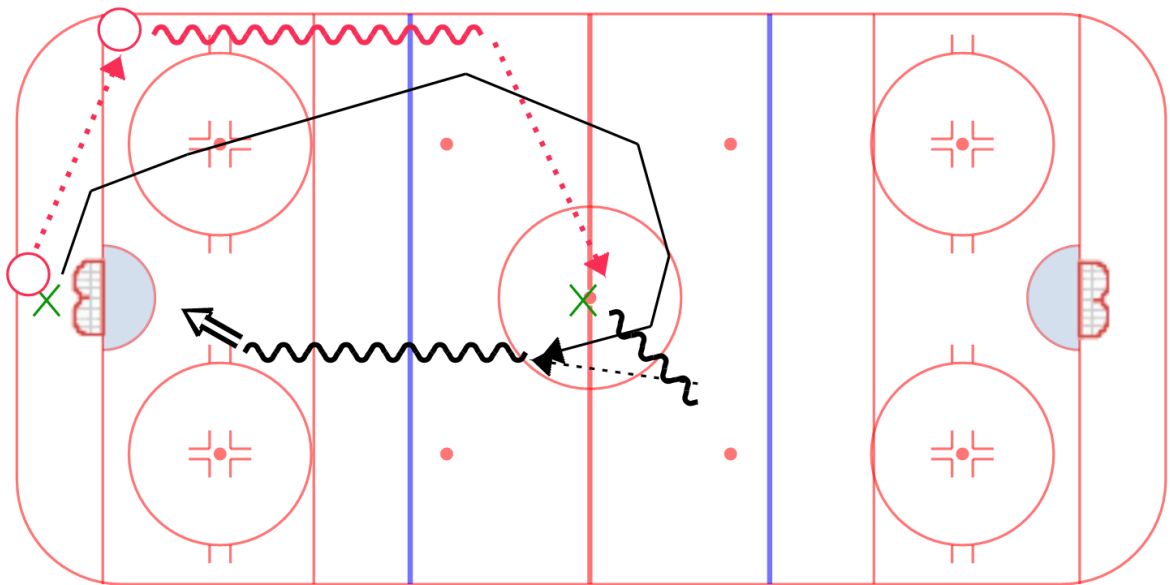


Figure 18. Illustration of important events in video 7.

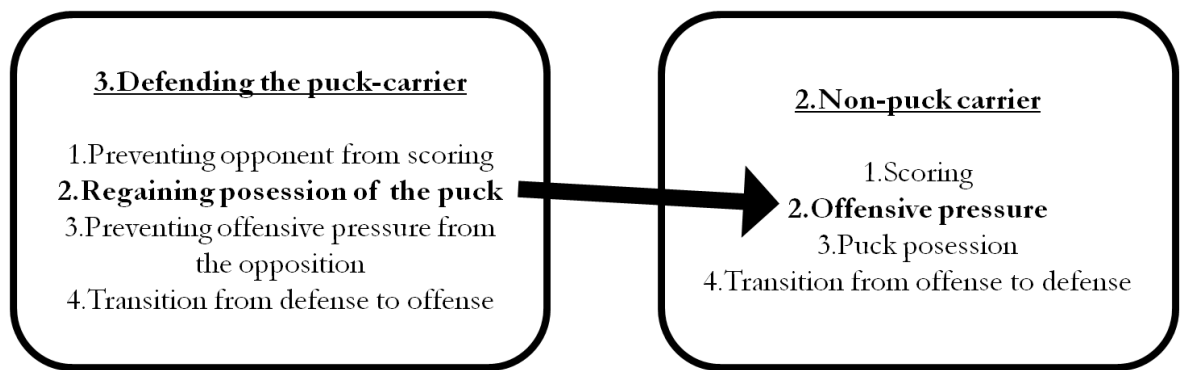


Figure 19. Change from defending the puck-carrier in regaining possession of the puck to offensive puck carrier in offensive pressure.

In the eighth video the opposite team defender gains the possession of the puck after a battle in the boards and tries to pass it behind the net to the other defender. Forward coming behind the net notices the pass and starts instantly pressuring the defender. The defender plays it sloppily and the forward is able to steal the puck by quick reactions. Right after the steal forward keeps his head up and notices what the situation is. He wins space by passing in front of the net, where is other forward waiting for the pass. He receives the pass and puts the puck in to the net. This whole situation started because of the first forward read the situation and started right away for checking. The player changes his game situation role and priority from regaining the possession of the puck as a defender of the puck carrier to offensive pressure as an offensive puck carrier. Figure 21 shows the roles and objectives of the player in video 8 and change be-

tween the roles and objectives that occur in the video. Figure 20 illustrates the important events in video 8.

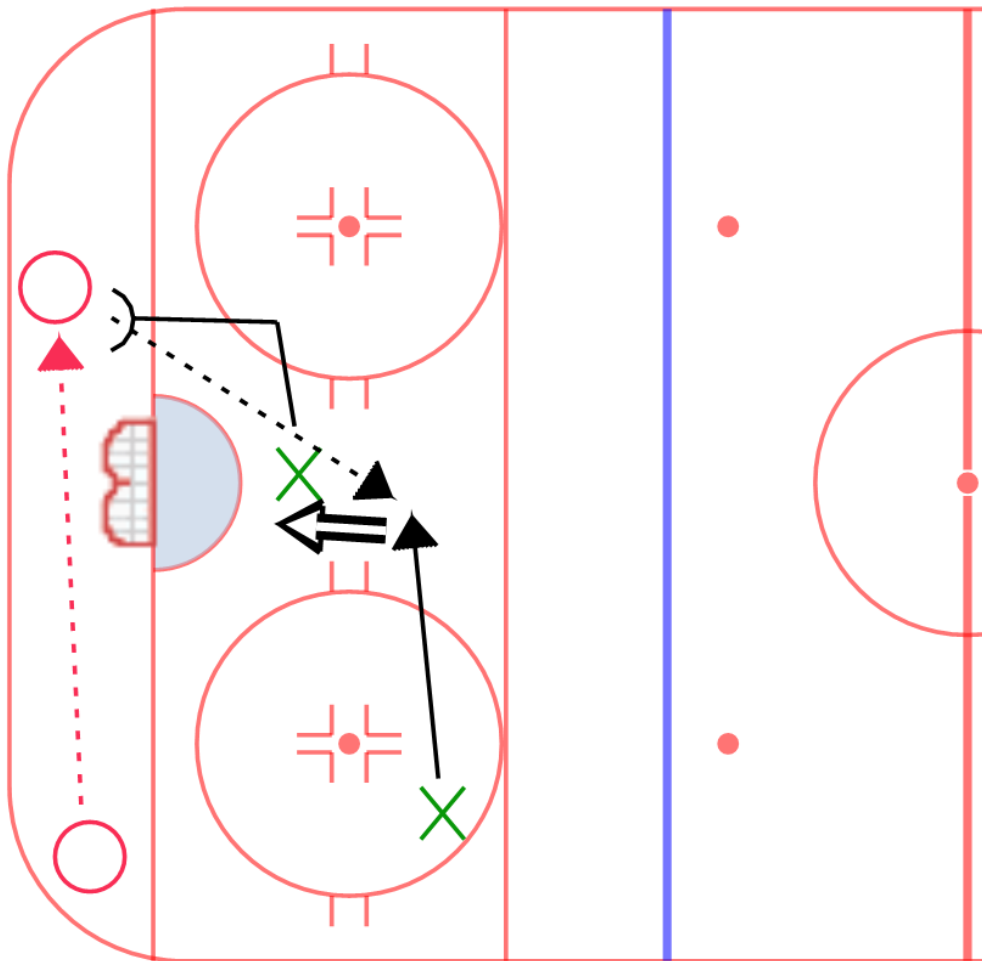


Figure 20. Illustration of important events in video 8.

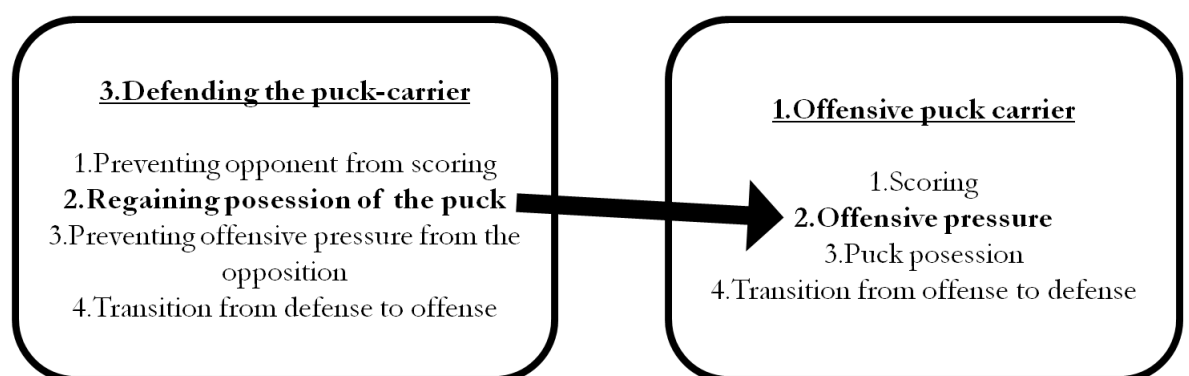


Figure 21. Change from defending the puck carrier in regaining the possession of the puck to offensive puck carrier in offensive pressure in video 8.

The ninth video starts from the faceoff in the offensive zone. The winger in the boards picks up the puck after the faceoff, wins space towards the middle and starts the scoring by shooting the puck to the net before the defenders get in the way. After the shot he reacts to the rebound but the defender gets there first. Important thing is, after he doesn't reach the puck, he quickly turns around and starts to back check. Same team's defender notices the back check and because of that is able to give hard pressure to the puck carrier and the offense stops before it even started. The player changes his game situation role and objective from scoring as an offensive puck carrier to regaining the possession of the puck as a defender of the puck carrier. Figure 23 shows the roles and objectives of the player in video 9 and the change between roles and objectives that occur in the video. Figure 22 illustrates the important events in video 9.

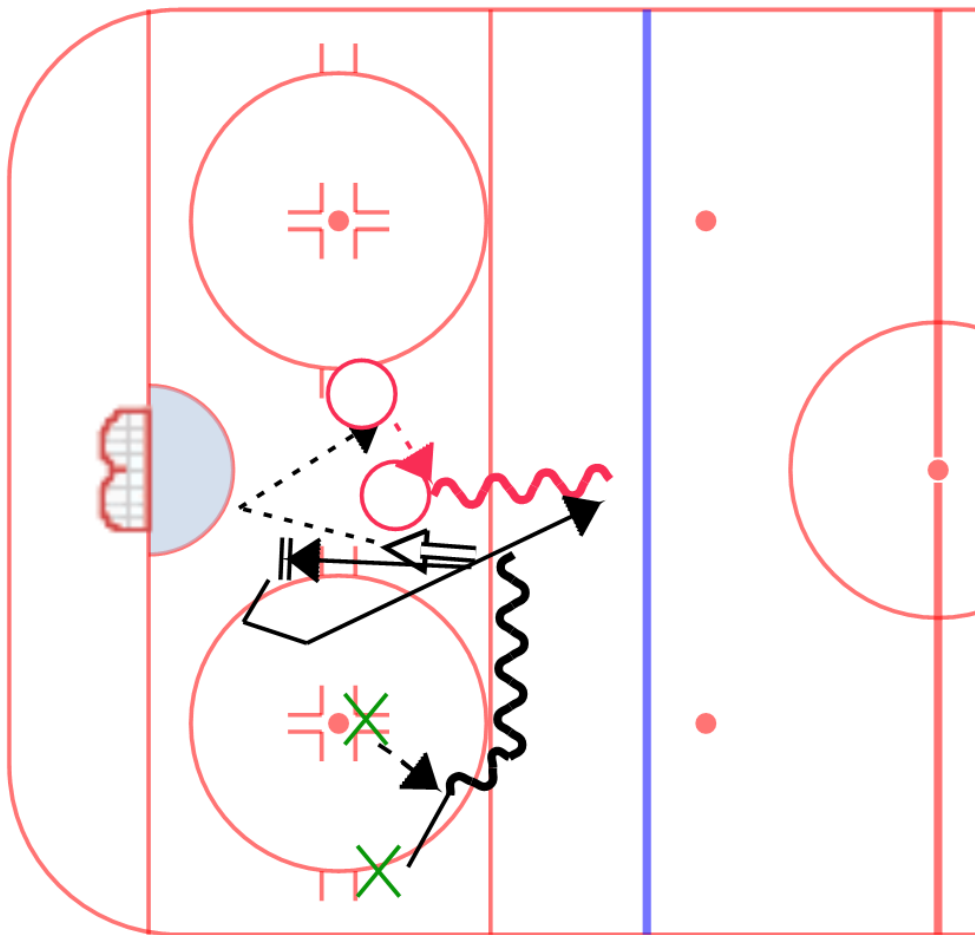


Figure 22. Illustration of important events in video 9.

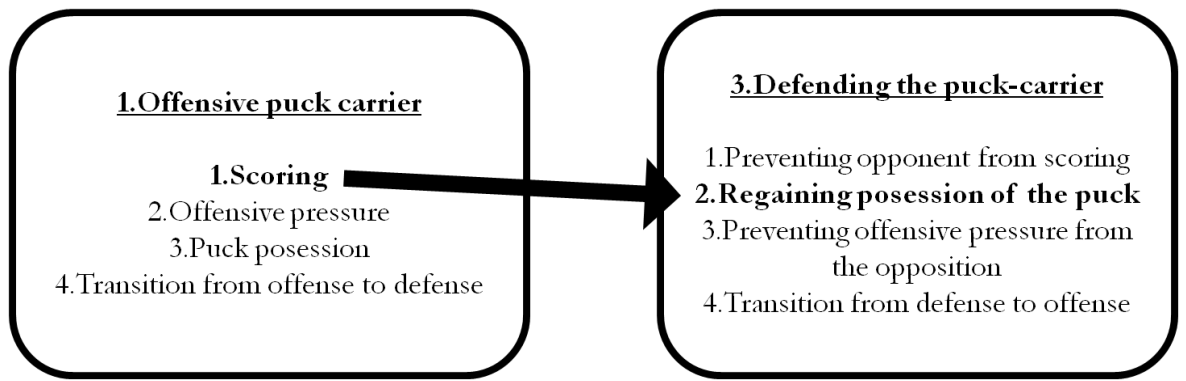


Figure 23. Change from offensive puck carrier in scoring to defending the puck carrier in regaining the possession of the puck in video 9.

## 10 Discussion

The objective of this thesis is to describe the phases of teaching the game in ice hockey and based on that to present the theoretical basis to teaching the game nowadays. This thesis is by its nature a developmental work. Also to support the written material the purpose is to analyze some often occurring game situations through videos and to demonstrate what priority thinking means in basic game situations.

Focus of teaching the game during the last few decades has changed from game systems to reacting in playing situation. When earlier players actions and cooperation were guided through game systems, nowadays the basis is understanding the game and reacting according to current game situation. Most important objective in teaching the game is that the player learns to react.

Theoretical basis in teaching the game has changed. The aim of this thesis is to collect material about teaching the game and create new theoretical background about the reacting based game teaching in ice hockey. Wilson (2002) describes (page 4, table 1.) well teaching invasive team games through game situations. This theoretical framework gives great starting point also for teaching the game in ice hockey.

In Finland game teaching has developed in recent years to a level that is called “Our Game”. Our Game’s essential development stage has been the introduction of the priority order in reacting and improving the cooperation of the players. There is very little theory knowledge about this kind of game teaching. The aim of this thesis has been to use the existing knowledge to create new information for the modern style of teaching the game. Practically this means creating new information to teach Our Game. At the same time we hope that this work helps FIHA to develop their players and coaches education system and to define Our Game better.

One of the biggest challenges faced in the process of making the thesis was the lack of material. There are several different views about teaching and learning the game. The idea of Our Game is FIHA’s philosophy and basically all the other countries have their

own. Even though the concept of reacting in game situations, game situation roles and objectives has been there from early 90's there is not that much written material or researches about it. And most of the material is in different sources and to get the whole picture you have to pick things from different sources. Like said earlier, one of the biggest objectives of this thesis was to create theoretical base, where all the material can be found from the same place.

The philosophy of Our Game has attracted lots of attention and it has become a general topic in Finnish ice hockey and everybody has an opinion about it. The term Our Game is used a lot in conversations concerning ice hockey and it's more thought to be a game system or tactic. The basic idea of Our Game is to serve as a teaching philosophy. The lack of material and information might have led to this kind of misunderstanding of the concept even in professionals of the ice hockey. To get this philosophy into everyday action everywhere in the Finland the people connected to ice hockey need to get to same page and understand the philosophy.

It would be useful for Finnish ice hockey to collect the information into one place and find a way to share it to people in everyday work in the field. It's only a margin of people who have opportunities to come into FIHA's seminars. One of the ways could be more effective use of Hockey Centre. Hockey Centre is controlled by Finnish Ice Hockey Association and the International Hockey Centre of Excellence. Hockey Centre serves as a tool where material is served to people across the Finland and the whole world through the internet. By using Hockey Centre more effectively and getting people to use it more the information could be shared widely. Also more material and researches should be done about the subject. The philosophy of Our Game has become the identity of Finnish Ice Hockey and the ideas of it are used in Finnish Ice Hockey Association educations. The material that is used to educate and that is send into the field should be clear and more comprehensive. Now the material is more Power Point presentations and short sentences. It would be useful to the people on the field to have kind of guidebook where all the information is collected into clear and easy to read formation. And most of all the material should be so clear that coaches could provide and teach it to the players, who are the most important to master it. This information should be available for players and coaches.

This thesis and the videos will be available in Hockey Centre. Also the purpose is to use this material in Finnish Ice Hockey Association educations. The functionality of this thesis and the usefulness of the videos can't be evaluated because they haven't been used or tested yet.

As a production of this thesis came the video examples about actions of individual player in basic game situations. The video material serves as a support for the written material. The videos will be available in Hockey Centre and serve as a tool of education. The purpose of the videos is to give concrete examples of how the objective thinking works. Videos help to educate because they show a concrete example in real game. They also serve as a tool for coaches. By watching video examples, they can get ideas how to teach a random situation, and what are the main things or skills needed to perform in that current situation. Watching videos with a player or team also brings new dimensions to coaching. As we go higher in age groups and levels, the meaning of practices decreases, and the meaning of games rises. It also shifts the teaching balance more towards the games. The videos play a big part of learning process through the games. With this theoretical model the players actions can be analyzed in different playing situations.

In this thesis the amount of video examples had to be limited. For future development there should be more video examples of variety situations with different amount of players. In ice hockey players actions are always dependant on other players and their actions. And the idea of Our Game is to get the whole fivesome work with the same ideas and objectives. The videos in this thesis only concentrate on one player at the time. In future the videos should concentrate on more players at the time starting from co-operation of two players and ending to co-operation of the whole fivesome. Also specific video examples from different zones and specific video examples about forwards and defenders would be useful to use the potential of video tool. To develop this work even further would be the step to practical drills. Which type of practices are the most suitable for this kind of philosophy?

In this thesis we concentrated on developing theoretical model for game teaching. The model was tested through the video examples in different game situations. With the future model it's possible to develop the game, learning of the game and focus on game situations that are essential for winning and take the game to a new level.



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# Appendices

## Appendix 1. Playing skills in game situation roles.



### PLAYING SKILLS IN DIFFERENT ROLES

#### 1. OFFENSIVE PUCK CARRIER

##### Scoring

- Shooting from the slot (the element of surprise; different shots)
- Passing to an open player in the slot
- Carrying the puck to a better place (challenges the defense; fakes)

##### Offensive pressure

- Carrying the puck from a tight space to an open one (or into another zone)
- Passing forward (to an open space, to a player in motion)
- Dumping the puck to move the game forward
- Switching roles to non-puck carrier (give and go)

##### Puck control

- Moving and protecting the puck
- Passing backwards or laterally to a player in an open space

##### Transition from Offense to Defense

- Dumping the puck out or in
- Quick role change into defensive player

#### 2. NON-PUCK CARRIER

##### Scoring

- Getting open for a pass to the slot
- Offensive pressure by blocking (for puck carrier/player without the puck)
- Readiness for rebounds
- Screening the goalkeeper

##### Offensive Pressure

- Getting open for a pass forward
- "Clearing" space in front of the puck
- Supporting the puck carrier by blocking

##### Puck control

- Getting open for back passes of lateral passes
- Making space for the puck carrier by blocking

##### Transition from Offense to Defense

- Supporting the puck carrier, supporting the attack
- Quick change into defensive roles

#### 3. DEFENDING THE PUCK CARRIER

##### Preventing the opponent from scoring (main responsibility lies with the goalkeeper)

- Cooperating with the goalkeeper
- Blocking shots

##### Regaining Possession of the Puck

- Playing defense against the puck carrier
- Playing defense against non-puck carrier

##### Preventing Offensive Pressure from the Opposition

- Staying between the opposition and your own goal (defensive side)
- Steering the puck carrier into a small space (protecting the middle)

##### Transition from Defense to Offense

- Quick change into offensive roles
- Depth in defense

#### 4. DEFENDING PLAYERS WITHOUT THE PUCK

##### Preventing the Opponent from Scoring

- Covering opponents in the slot
- Defending blocking opponents

##### Regaining Possession of the Puck

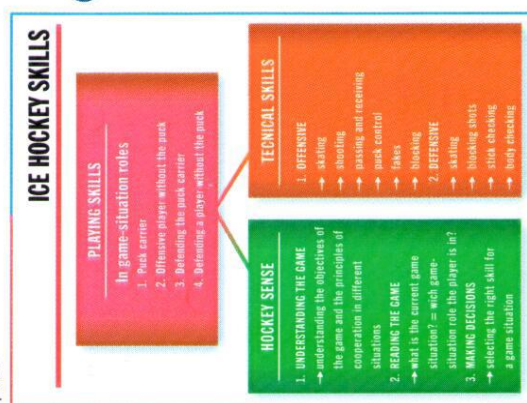
- Positioning, man-to-man defense
- Cutting off potential passing lines
- Closest player ready to recover loose pucks

##### Preventing Offensive Pressure

- Staying between the opposition and your own goal
- Cutting off potential passing lines toward the center
- Supporting the defender that is on the puck: double-teaming the opponent
- Transition to defending the puck carrier

##### Transition from Defense to Offense

- Defensive depth: fourth player makes attacks possible
- Quick change into offensive roles



## Appendix 2. DVD