



TECHNICAL

Shooting I



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OBJECTIVES

- To identify the shooting skills used by young players in ice hockey
- To outline for the coaches the progression for introducing shooting skills
- To identify the key elements of all the components of shooting
- To identify common mistakes young players make while learning these skills

INTRODUCTION

Shooting is the most practiced of all fundamentals. The purpose of shooting the puck is to score a goal. This leads to the single most important factor to stress to the players: **be sure the shot is on the net!** There are several components associated with becoming an effective shooter:

- **Head Up** — Players will have a better chance of hitting a spot on the net if they are looking at it.
- **Form** — Players must execute the shots using the key elements of correct technique if they are to develop the speed, consistency, and accuracy necessary to be an effective shooter.
- **Accuracy** — If the shot is not on the net, there is virtually no chance of scoring. Developing accuracy takes a great deal of concentration and practice by the player.
- **Quickness** — Time spent handling the puck provides opposing players with the time needed to position themselves for strong defense. When the situation dictates, players must be able to shoot the puck quickly.
- **Variety** — Shooting situations within the game vary greatly. The skillful player must, therefore, have a variety of shots that match the opportunities that develop. The amount of time a player has, the location, and defensive player positioning require that different shots (or variations of the same shot) be used.

There are three types of shots discussed in this chapter. They are:

1. wrist shot
2. backhand shot
3. flip shot

Shooting, more than the other fundamentals, depends upon strength that is related to a player's physical maturity. Therefore, coaches of younger players are likely to find that, because of their age, they are unable to generate the speed and power desired to perform some shots such as the snap or slap shots. As players grow, develop and train for strength and power, their shooting will become more forceful.

For younger players, however, emphasis should be placed on the development of correct technique, particularly of the forehand and backhand wrist shots.

Without this attribute even the shooting ability of the strong, powerful player will be limited.

FOREHAND WRIST (SWEEP) SHOT

The wrist shot is sometimes referred to as the “sweep” shot. Its attributes include speed and accuracy. Be sure that your players have mastered this shot before moving on to other types of shots.

As the name implies, this shot involves sweeping the puck toward the target. Power is supplied by the arms, wrists, legs and through proper weight transfer. The hands are held approximately 12 to 15 inches apart. The puck should be positioned at the side of the body, behind the back foot, with the player's weight evenly distributed on both skates. The shot is initiated by a transfer of the body weight to the skate closest to the target (front skate). The proper sequence is illustrated in Figure 15-1.



Figure 15-1. Execution of the wrist shot.

As weight is transferred, the arms and hands complete the forward motion of the stick toward the target while dragging or sweeping the puck on the blade of the stick. The puck should be positioned at about the middle of the blade and travel to the toe as the shot is completed. The correct arm action includes the top arm/hand pulling back toward the body while the lower arm/wrist sweeps forward.

To accomplish this push-pull (wrist-sweeping) action, the player must exert maximal effort with the hands and arms. Weight may be best utilized in the shooting action by driving off the rear foot and following through to the front foot. The follow-through of the stick usually will dictate the height and accuracy of the shot (low follow-through, low shot; high follow-through, high shot). The toe of the stick blade should be pointing at the target at the conclusion of the follow-through.

Review of Figure 15-1 shows that the top portion of the stick moves very little, while the blade has moved a great deal. It is the speed of the blade that creates the puck speed.



Figure 15-2. Follow through of the wrist shot.

Weight transfer is important for another reason besides initiating the movement. As the weight moves toward the target, the force application to the stick through the lower hand causes a bending of the shaft. The release of this bend adds further speed to the stick blade, which results in greater puck speed.

Key Elements

- hands held approximately 12 to 15 inches apart
- shot begins with the puck at the side of the body and behind the back foot
- blade of the stick cupped over the puck
- weight transfer to the front skate
- height and accuracy of the shot dictated by the follow through
- puck movement from the middle of the blade to the toe

Common Errors

- insufficient weight transfer (results in weaker shots and causes players to fall away from instead of moving toward the target)
- poor wrist action (results in slow movement of the stick blade, thus little force is transferred to the puck)
- top arm and hand are held too close to the body (limits movement)
- poor follow through (results in shots missing intended target)

SUGGESTIONS FOR COACHING

1. Have your players practice the sweeping movement in a stationary position ensuring that the weight is transferred and the stick blade is moved quickly through the range of motion.
2. Use drills that allow the player to take at least 5 to 10 consecutive shots. Figure 15-3 shows two arrangements that work well for player practice.
3. The wrist shot involves a considerable amount of arm/wrist strength. Older players should be encouraged to improve their strength both off and on

the ice. Younger players should concentrate on perfecting the technique for the shot. Shooting is easily practiced off-ice as well.

4. For young players, the technique of the shot may be better developed by using lighter pucks that are properly suited to their strength. The success this generates may go a long way to develop confidence through the satisfaction gained by shooting a crisp and accurate wrist shot.
5. Coaches should introduce shooting drills progressively, starting with stationary shooting, to shooting while moving, to situational drills simulating game conditions.

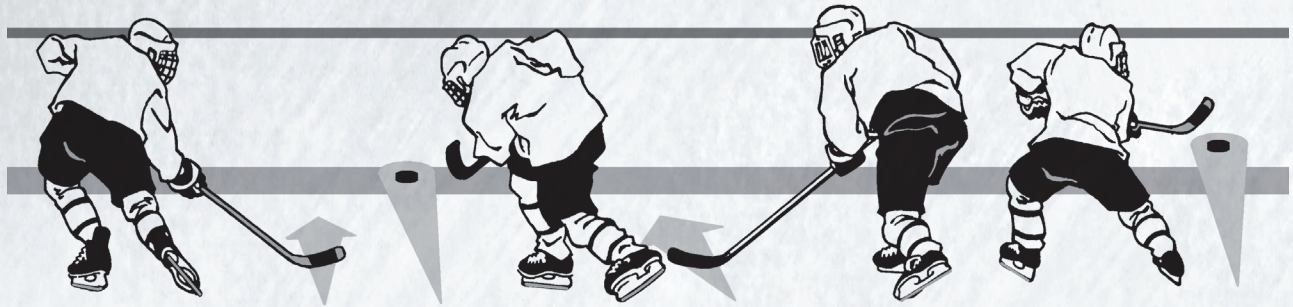


Figure 15-3. Practice arrangements for working on shooting.

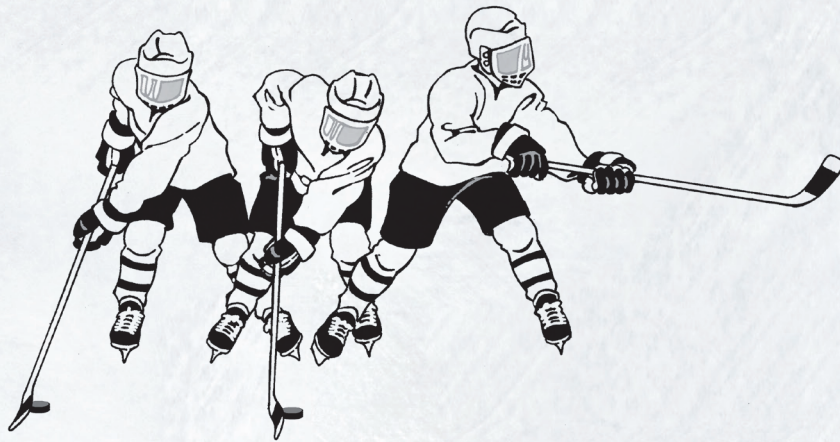


Figure 15-4. Sequence for completing the backhand shot.

BACKHAND SHOT

The backhand shot is one of the most difficult shots to perform. **Like the wrist shot, an important objective is to generate speed of the stick blade.** As illustrated in Figure 15-4, the backhand shot is initiated with the puck on the backhand side of the stick and the blade cupped over the puck. The puck should begin between the heel and the middle of the blade. The wrist of the bottom hand is flexed while the upper arm is close to, instead of away from, the body. The shot begins with a weight transfer toward the target. The bottom hand

pulls the stick and the puck simultaneously forward toward the target in a sweeping movement. The bottom wrist snaps from a flexed to an extended position. The top hand follows the bottom hand (rather than opposing, as in the wrist shot) and the top wrist snaps from extended to flexed position. This causes the top arm and elbow to move away from the body. Once again, the height of the follow-through will determine the height and accuracy of the shot. At the conclusion of the shot, the toe of the blade should be pointing at the target. **Like the wrist shot, you should stress form and accuracy with your players before working on speed.**

Key Elements

- hands held approximately 12 to 15 inches apart
- shot begins with the puck at the side of the body and behind the back foot
- blade of the stick cupped over the puck
- weight transfer to the front skate
- puck movement from the middle to the toe of the blade
- height and accuracy of the shot dictated by the follow through

Common Errors

- poor sweeping action
- improper wrist action
- follow through goes toward ceiling instead of toward target

SUGGESTIONS FOR COACHING

1. Have the players practice the sweeping movement, weight transfer, and quick movement of the stick blade in a stationary position.
2. The suggestions for coaching the forehand wrist shot are also useful for teaching your players the backhand.

THE FLIP SHOT

The flip shot is most commonly used when a player is attempting to relieve pressure by clearing the puck from a zone. It is also useful when there is a scramble

around the net and the puck must be lifted quickly over an obstacle.

The flip shot is a much neglected but very effective shot. At all levels, but particularly with young players, the ability to flip the puck can make the difference between a goal or a shot into the goalkeeper.

When shooting a flip shot, the primary objective is to raise the puck high up off the ice. Very little emphasis should be placed on the velocity of the shot. To execute the flip shot on the forehand, the hands should be in the same position as the wrist shot — approximately 12 to 15 inches apart. The task is to get under the puck and propel it upward. This shot, unlike others, is usually made from in front of the body with the puck on the toe of the stick blade (see Figure 15-5). The shot begins with the wrist of the bottom hand extended and the wrist of the top hand is flexed. A good flip shot requires a sharp, quick wrist snap, and a sharp, exaggerated upward movement of the stick blade. As illustrated in Figure 15-6, the blade of the stick should be opened rather than cupped at the end of the shot.

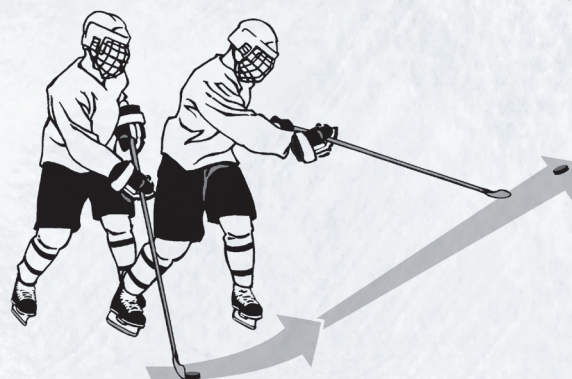


Figure 15-5. Puck position/shooting motion for the flip shot.



Figure 15-6. Cupped, straight and open stick blade positions.

The backhand flip shot is most often used in scramble situations in an attempt to shoot over a prone goaltender. With the backhand flip shot, it is helpful to draw the puck back slightly. The fundamentals of this shot are the same as those for the backhand sweep shot. The difference occurs at the follow-through. The wrists and blades should extend quickly toward the ceiling.

Key Elements

- hands held 12 to 15 inches apart
- initial puck position in front of the body on the forehand flip shot
- quick wrist snap that results in blade rotation from cupped to straight to open position
- exaggerated upward movement of the blade

Common Errors

- too much forward movement of the stick blade
- not enough upward motion of the blade
- starting the puck near the toe when executing the backhand flip shot

SUGGESTIONS FOR COACHING

1. Teach and practice the shooting motion without pucks.
2. Place obstacles in front of the shooter, forcing the puck to be lifted into the air. Gradually increase the height.
3. Select or develop drills that will force the players to utilize the flip shot.
4. Progress from stationary to movement drills that will simulate game conditions.

LEARN MORE

Click on the following link(s) for more information on the topics covered in this chapter. *(Internet access is required).*

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