ACTION! PC

HOCKEY

Strategy Guide

2012 EDITION

Dave Koch Sports

Action! PC Manual

The Action! PC manual contains instruction for installing and playing the game as well as an overview of menu options. It is found in the main game folder **c:/Program Files/Hockey 2012**.
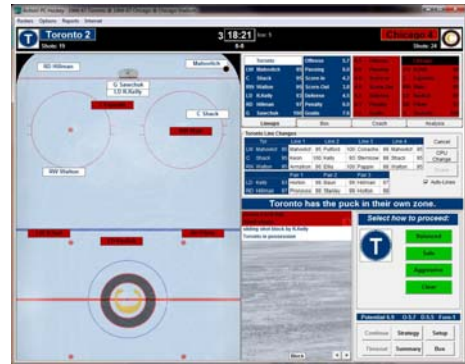
Action! PC Strategy Guide

The Action! Pc Hockey strategy guide contains detailed information on game strategy. It may be found in the main game folder **c:/Program Files/Hockey 2012**. It can also be downloaded from the Action PC Sports Games website at **dksports.com/hockey**. In order to get the most enjoyment out of Action PC Hockey, it is highly recommended that you also read the strategy guide.

Copyright Information

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Setting Lines & Depth Charts

Tips for Setting Line Combinations

Use players that complement each other - When creating lines, it is a good idea to try to put together players with complementary skills. For example, a good passer will help to create scoring opportunities, but without a scorer or two on the ice few opportunities will result in goals. A good scoring line consists of both types of players. Consider defensive skills, too. Players with high takeaway ratings may be very effective forecheckers, while players with high shot blocking ratings may be more effective defending in their own zone. Players with high takeaway ratings create more turnovers which lead to odd man rushes, and good skaters, passers and scorers are best at rushing.

Try to combine players with similar ice time - Putting a 13 minute per game player on the same line as a 20 minute per game player may have you shuffling lines late in the game as the 13 minute player becomes fatigued. Players also become less effective if they average significantly more ice time than in real life, so keeping players close to their real life average will be beneficial in the long run, as well as in the short term.

Consider creating a line to handle a specific role - For example, many teams have a line made up of good defensive players to match up against the opponent's top scoring line.

Consider adjusting lines for home and road games - The home team gets to see who is on the ice for the road team before putting its own lines out at a faceoff. This means that the home team is better able to get its desired match-ups throughout the game. As a result, it may be a good idea to put together lines that are designed to match up against the opponents lines well as the home team. On the other hand, the road team might be better off with a more balanced lineup, with fewer weaknesses that could be exploited.

Progressive Fatigue

Players who are averaging more minutes than in real life will recover from fatigue at a slower rate. This effect is more pronounced as more games are played. As a result, it is good to try to keep player usage in line with real life. Using key players

Toronto Roster — Team Edit Player Lines Depth

Toronto Lines — Fwd | Def | X-Att | Sh-Out | Daily

	Left Wing	Center	Right Wing
Line 1	D.Maloney	D.Sittler	L.McDonald
Line 2	E.Thompson	S.Weir	R.Ellis
Line 3	T.Williams	B.Boudreau	J.Butler
Line 4	J.Valiquette	S.Weir	P.Boutette
Power Play 1	T.Williams	D.Sittler	L.McDonald
Power Play 2	E.Thompson	P.Boutette	R.Ellis
Penalty Kill 1	R.Ellis	------------	G.Ferguson
Penalty Kill 2	J.Jones	------------	J.Butler
3-Man PK 1	------------	G.Ferguson	------------
3-Man PK 2	------------	J.Butler	------------
4-Man PP 1	P.Boutette	------------	D.Sittler
4-Man PP 2	L.McDonald	------------	R.Ellis

☐ Display All Lines

Toronto Depth Charts — Even | Power | Penalty | Goalie

	Left Wing	Center	Right Wing	Defense
1	D.Sittler	D.Sittler	L.McDonald	B.Salming
2	L.McDonald	L.McDonald	R.Ellis	I.Turnbull
3	E.Thompson	T.Williams	S.Weir	R.Carlyle
4	T.Williams	P.Boutette	P.Boutette	T.Johansen
5	R.Ellis	G.Ferguson	B.Boudreau	B.Glennie
6	S.Weir	E.Thompson	J.Valiquette	M.Pelyk
7	P.Boutette	J.Valiquette	D.Sittler	K.Walker
8	D.Maloney	J.Butler	J.Butler	J.McKenny
9	B.Boudreau	B.Boudreau	G.Ferguson	R.Wilson
10	J.Valiquette	S.Weir	J.Jones	

1977-78 Toronto

All Skaters | Forwards | Defensemen | Goalies | Status

Pos	Player	GP	G	Ast	Pts	+/-	PIM	PPG	S%	TOI	PROD	Off	Def	PK	FO	P-Shot	Dur
C RW	McDonald	74	47	40	87	34	54	11	19.3	0.0	----------	8.4	4.3	*	5	9	9
C	Sittler	80	45	72	117	34	100	14	14.5	0.0	----------	8.7	4.4	*	8	8	10
RW	Ellis	80	26	24	50	8	17	3	20.3	0.0	----------	6.6	4.1	**	3	6	10
LW C	Williams,T	78	19	31	50	6	351	6	11.8	0.0	----------	6.5	3.9	-	5	6	9
LW C	Thompson,E	59	17	22	39	17	10	4	12.9	0.0	----------	7.0	3.1	**	5	6	10
F	Boutette	80	17	19	36	0	120	2	13.1	0.0	----------	5.5	3.9	-	6	5	10
C	Weir	30	12	5	17	0	4	0	30.8	0.0	----------	7.1	2.5	-	6	8	3
C	Boudreau	40	11	18	29	8	12	1	15.5	0.0	----------	6.6	2.7	-	6	6	5
C RW	Butler	73	9	7	16	-10	49	1	9.1	0.0	----------	4.9	3.9	**	5	4	10
C	Valiquette	60	8	13	21	2	15	3	16.3	0.0	----------	5.9	3.8	*	6	4	7
C	Ferguson,G	73	7	16	23	-9	37	0	5.9	0.0	----------	4.9	4.0	**	6	4	9
RW	Jones,J	78	4	9	13	1	23	0	7.4	0.0	----------	4.0	4.2	**	3	3	10
LW	Maloney	13	3	4	7	-5	25	0	11.1	0.0	----------	6.1	1.9	-	3	4	10
LW	Hammarstrc	3	1	1	2	1	0	1	16.7	0.0	----------	4.9	3.2	-	3	2	3
RW	Anderson,J	17	1	2	3	1	2	0	7.1	0.0	----------	3.4	2.4	-	3	3	2
C	Ashby	12	1	2	3	-4	0	0	12.5	0.0	----------	4.5	2.1	-	5	3	1
LW C	Evans,P	4	0	0	0	-1	2	0	------	0.0	----------	2.0	1.6	-	5	1	0
LW	Neely	11	0	1	1	-3	0	0	0.0	0.0	----------	5.0	2.3	-	3	1	3
RW	Belanger	9	0	1	1	0	6	0	0.0	0.0	----------	2.0	2.1	-	3	1	1
LW	Hopkins	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	------	0.0	----------	2.5	0.5	-	3	1	2

○ Stats ○ Ratings ◉ Stats + Ratings ○ Current Lines ☑ Display All Players

Active: Skaters 29, Goalies 2
Offense: 5.2, Defense: 4.9, Goalie: 8.3

Exit

Lines and Depth Charts

less in blowout games and meaningless situations in order to keep their average down may make them more readily available late in key games. All forwards are able to average up to 13 minutes per game before progressive fatigue takes effect, even if their real life average is less, and all defensemen may average up to 16.

Penalty Kill Lines

Penalty kill effectiveness depends on defensive and penalty kill ratings. Players who did not kill penalties often in real life will have lower penalty kill ratings (either "-" or "*"), and will be less effective. A "*" rated player has his defensive rating reduced by about 20 percent when killing penalties, and a "-" rated player is reduced by about 40 percent. Players with "**" for penalty killing will not have their defensive rating reduced. Some penalty kill specialists receive three star ratings, and are 20 percent more effective when shorthanded. Players who are also an offensive threat can be effective penalty killers by forcing the power play team to play more conservatively than they otherwise would, in order to avoid giving up shorthanded opportunities.

Forwards can be placed on penalty kill lines without regard to their primary position. On a four man PK line, for example, any two forwards may be used. It is usually best to have at least one center on the line to take faceoffs. Whatever player is highest rated for faceoffs will take the draw.

Forwards at the Point on the Power play

Playing a forward at the point (in a defenseman position) on the power play is one way in which teams try to generate more scoring. In Action PC Hockey, players are not specifically rated to be able to play the point, so you need to look at their specific abilities when making this decision. Here are a few things to consider when deciding whether or not to use a forward at the point:

> **Outside Scoring Rating** - Players with higher outside scoring ratings will handle the puck better at the point, and are more of a threat to score from that position.

> **Defensive Rating** - Players with low defensive ratings are more likely to give up odd man rush opportunities and higher potential plays when the puck is turned over. You may want to keep two defensemen on the point to avoid giving up shorthanded goals, especially if your opponent is using good offensive players to kill the penalty. Having two forwards at the point significantly increases the chance of a rush for the other team if the puck is turned over.

> **Passing** - Since point players handle the puck often on power plays, it helps to have good passers there to set up other players or cycle the puck.

Multi-Position Players

Some players are rated at both defense and forward positions. These players can be particularly valuable in leagues where fewer than 18 skaters are allowed. When playing defense, multi-position players have their offense rating reduced by 20 percent, and when playing forward, their defense ratings are reduced by 20 percent. The maximum defensive rating while playing a forward position is six.

Playing Out of Position

It may sometimes be necessary or beneficial to play a player at a position he is not rated for. Penalties for playing out of position vary depending on the position, and include the following in order of least to most severe penalty:

> **Center playing Wing** - Very small penalty. Centers can play the wings almost as effectively as center.

> **Left Wing to Right Wing (or vice versa)** -Small to very small penalty. It is best to play wings on the side they are rated, but the penalty is minor if they must play the off side.

Wing playing Center - Small penalty. A wing playing center takes a slightly larger ratings penalty that a center playing wing. Another thing to consider is that a wing is likely to have a lower faceoff rating than a center.

Forward playing Defense - Moderate, but less severe on the power play. Forwards can be used at the point to generate more offense on the power play, but they will usually be too much of a defensive liability otherwise.

Defense playing Forward - Moderate. Defensemen should only be used in forward positions in rare situations, such as when no forwards are available to fill a spot.

Depth Charts

Depth charts are used in the following situations:

- Automatically adjusting lines for injured or penalized players.

- Prior to the start of a game, automatically adjusting lines that include players who are not available for the game.

- Having the computer generate lines

Typically, when adjusting lines for unavailable players, players are promoted to fill the higher lines, and the bottom lines are then filled from the depth chart. So if the second line center is injured or takes a penalty, the third line center will play with the second line, the fourth line center will fill in on the third line, and the fourth line will be filled from the depth chart. If there is no available player in the depth chart who is not already on a line, the first line center will be double shifted to fill the fourth line.

Player Availability and Usage

The Player Availability and Usage Form

The Player Availability and Usage form may be accessed by selecting **Edit/Player Availability and Usage**. From this form, you can set availability dates and usage preferences for each player.

Availability Dates

Roster Availability – Set the range of dates a player is available with the team. Additional inactive periods can also be set.

Active – Set a player on the active roster. Players can also be activated from the roster form by right clicking and selecting Active/Inactive.

Always Active When Available – When this option is checked, the player will always be a part of the active roster when he is available and not injured. He can still be manually inactivated at the start of the game. A good way to use this function is to check the box for the full lineup that would be used if all players were available. This will ensure that the lineup that is used will be as close to the ideal as possible.

Player Usage Preferences

Set sliders for how each player should respond to certain situations. Usage settings include:

Inside – Shoot more or pass more when inside with the puck.

Mid - Shoot more or pass more when at mid range with the puck.

Outside - Shoot more or pass more when outside with the puck.

Penetrate – Attempt to penetrate more or less often when given the option.

Deflect – Attempt to deflect the puck more or less often when in the screen position. Players with high inside scoring ratings are better at deflections. A player in the screen position also increases the shooting percentage of outside shots by obstructing the goalie's vision, so a poor scorer may be better off not deflecting the puck.

Player Availability and Usage Form

Rush – Participate in odd man rushes more or less often.
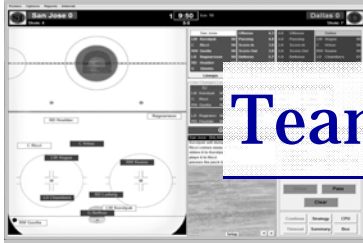
Team Strategies

The Strategy Form

Strategies can be set from the roster form by choosing **Team/Edit Strategy**, or by clicking the **Strategy** button on the game screen.

Offensive Zone Emphasis/System

The offensive zone system used affects how players behave in the offensive zone. This system has no bearing on play in the defensive or neutral zones. Each system has strengths and weaknesses, so try to find the system that plays to the strengths of your team. On the "Line Strategies" tab, you can set systems for each of your forward lines to use. The line strategies apply when an exact combination of forwards is on the ice. When a different combination of players are on the ice, the default setting, from the "Strategies" tab, is used.

The following offensive zone systems are available:

Balanced — A balanced system has no specific strengths or weaknesses. Players will tend to be in locations most appropriate to their position. Since the puck is not being forced to any particular area, turnovers tend to be balanced, and potential won't necessarily be higher or lower for the opponent. This setting is appropriate for most lines.

Point Emphasis — The point emphasis system focuses on getting the puck to the point for shots, while keeping traffic in front of the net to screen the goalie or redirect the puck. It is a good system for teams that have defensemen who can score goals. Offensive zone plays are most likely to begin with a defenseman in possession at the point. Often, three players will be located outside (two defensemen and a forward), and a forward will be in the screen position. As a result, outside shots will be available more often, while inside and mid range shots will not. If the puck is turned over, it may result in slightly higher potential on the other team's possession than in a balanced system. Defenses may be able to counter the point emphasis system by playing tighter to the point in the defensive zone.

Cycle Low — The cycle low system focuses on creating inside and mid range opportunities for forwards. It is a good system for skilled offensive forwards.

Plays are most likely to begin below the goal line with a forward in possession, and the other two forwards in mid or inside positions. It is important to have forwards involved in this system who can both pass to set up opportunities for teammates, and score when receiving passes. Defensemen will usually be located outside, but won't be open for shots as often, and will rarely have a screen to shoot through. Turnovers are more likely to catch forwards out of position defensively, resulting in slightly higher potential and occasional odd man rushes for the opposing team. Defenses may be able to counter the cycle low system by playing closer to the net in the defensive zone.

Defensive — The defensive system makes safe turnovers a priority. Players will not take chances to get into good scoring positions, but will instead focus on keeping the puck in areas where turnovers are not as dangerous. When the puck is turned over, potential will likely be lower, and will almost never result in odd man rushes. This system is appropriate for lines that specialize

in defense, such a checking line designed to face the opponent's top scoring line. It may also be appropriate when protecting a lead late in a game.

Forecheck

Forecheck strategies have a large impact on the overall style of play. Forecheckers play defense in the offensive zone, attempting to create turnovers that might immediately lead to scoring chances. Forecheckers also attempt to retain possession of the puck in the offensive zone. The effects of forechecker use include the following:

High number of forecheckers used

Positive effects

- More turnovers created in the offensive zone.

- More turnovers created that lead to odd man rushes.

- Possession is retained slightly more often after shots that miss the net, are blocked, or saved with a rebound.

Negative effects

- Greater chance of a good scoring opportunity for the opponent once they have beaten the forecheck.

- More penalties as the forecheckers aggressively attempt to get possession.

Low number of forecheckers used

Positive Effects

- Lower chance of high percentage shots for the opponent.

- Fewer penalties taken.

Negative effects

- Fewer turnovers created that might immediately lead to good scoring chances.

- Possession is retained slightly less often on shots that are blocked, miss the net, or are saved with a rebound.

- Potential may be slightly lower on the play following a forced turnover.

Forecheckers may be set from zero to three used. Settings such as 0-1,1-2, and 2-3 are also available. These settings allow the number of forecheckers to vary accord-

ing to the game situation. For example, if 1-2 is the chosen setting, either one or two forecheckers will be used depending on the opportunity to create a turnover. If the opponent's play potential is lower, two forecheckers are more likely to get involved to take advantage of the opportunity. On the other hand, if potential is high, the forecheck will become more cautious, using only one forechecker. Plays with average potential may draw either one or two forecheckers.

Note that the actual number of forecheckers involved in a given play can vary slightly. If the team forecheck setting is two, there may occasionally be plays where either one or three forecheckers are involved. This is because in the flow of the game, players are not always in the same position on the ice when the puck is turned over. A player who is supposed to forecheck may be too far away from the puck to have an influence, or a player who is not supposed to forecheck may join in if he is near the play. Also, the offensive play call affects the number of forecheckers that are involved in a play that follows a turnover. For example, playing aggressively ensures that there will be at least two forwards moving deep into the offensive zone, and if the puck is turned over they will join in the forecheck to try to retain possession of the puck

In the event of an offensive zone turnover resulting from a defensive or neutral zone play call, the forecheck will be the following, regardless of the chosen setting:

Aggressive Offense = at least two forecheckers

Balanced Offense = at least one forechecker

Safe Offense = no more than one forechecker

Zone Entry

The zone entry strategy setting determines how players will attempt to cross the blue line into the offensive zone. The slider can be set towards one of two directions:

Dump and Chase — Players will dump the puck into the offensive zone and try to regain possession. This is the more conservative option, since it will result in fewer neutral zone turnovers and opponent odd man rushes. It will also result in fewer offensive opportunities and shots off the rush, since the offense won't always regain possession after dumping the puck in. Turnovers tend to be in safe locations on the end boards, so potential on turnovers is generally slightly lower. Good forecheckers tend to be better in dump and chase situations.

Skate or Pass — Players will attempt to pass or skate across the blue line. This is more likely to result in neutral zone turnovers and opponent odd man rushes, but it will also generate better scoring opportunities. Turnovers tend

to lead to higher potential plays. Players with high passing and skating ratings are more likely to be successful, while those with lower ratings might be better off dumping and chasing.

Defensive Zone Depth

Setting the depth the defense plays in its own zone can help to limit shots from certain areas, while allowing more from others. Defenses may be set to play tighter to the point or closer to the net. Playing tight to the point helps to prevent outside shots, and can be useful if the opposing team has good outside scorers. On the other hand, this defense will allow more open mid range and inside shots. Playing close to the net will help to prevent inside and mid range opportunities, but will allow open point shots to be had at will. Typically, by adjusting this slider, more will be given up than will be gained. However, if the opposing team is one dimensional in their scoring abilities, such as a team with weak scoring defensemen, an advantage can be gained here.

Defensive Zone Aggressiveness

The defensive zone aggressiveness slider determines how much defensive players will attempt to create turnovers in the defensive zone and turn them into offensive opportunities. Aggressive settings will yield turnovers with higher potential and occasional odd man rushes. It will occasionally leave defenders out of position, however, causing better scoring opportunities for the opposing team.

CPU Coach

The CPU coach tab includes settings to be used when a team is computer coached. These include the following:

Line Usage – These sliders set usage priority levels to each line. When choosing between two lines that are not either fatigued or nearly fatigued, the line with the higher priority setting will more often be used.

Start Period With – Set the lines to be used to start a period.

Breakout Strategy – Breakout strategy sets the computer coach tendencies for defensive zone play calls. Settings to the right on the aggressiveness slider will lead to more "Aggressive" calls, while settings to the left will lead to more "Safe" calls. Below the aggressiveness slider are a set of sliders that adjust the breakout strategy for various game situations. For example, setting the "Overmatched" slider further to the left means that the computer coach will call plays more cautiously when overmatched.

Third Period Adjustments

The third period adjustments tab includes options for adjusting team strategies according to the score late in a game. When the "Increase Forecheck/Aggressiveness" boxes are checked and the criteria are met, both forecheck and defensive zone aggressiveness are increased by one setting. For example, if line one is set to use two forecheckers, but is set to increase under the current game situation, it will use two to three. This tab also includes options to never make adjustments that would cause more than two or less than one forechecker, to never make automatic adjustments when the team is human coached, and to never change any preset value by more than one.

Line Strategies

Line strategy settings allow for separate strategies to be used for each forward line. These strategies take effect when the exact player combinations are on the ice. Otherwise, team default strategies will be used. Line specific strategies can be disabled by checking the box labeled "Don't Use Line Specific Strategies" on the strategy form.

Shadowing

Shadowing instructs a player to focus his defensive efforts on a specific opposing player. This has a few effects. When using auto lines, the player's line will be matched against his shadowed player whenever fatigue levels allow. When both players are on the ice, the shadowed player is influenced mostly by the designated shadow. The disadvantage to this is that it slightly unbalances the defense as a whole, allowing the rest of the opposing team to be more effective. A shadow can work well at limiting the damage done by star players, but should be used with caution against more balanced offenses.

Coach Tab

The coach tab on the game screen allows quick changes to be made to team strategies. Changes may be made to apply to the current shift only or indefinitely. For example, if a change is made to the forecheck setting, and the box for "Apply Changes To This Shift Only" is checked, the new setting will be in effect until new players come on to the ice. At that point, strategies will revert to the appropriate line settings or to the team defaults. If the box is not checked, changes will apply until the box is checked again and new players are brought on the ice.

Offensive Play Calling

Play Potential

Action PC Hockey uses a system of play potential to represent the flow of a hockey game. Each play beginning in the defensive or neutral zone is assigned a play potential number which roughly represents how favorably the play is developing for the offensive team. Plays with higher potential have a higher chance of resulting in a shot on goal or an offensive setup, and a lower chance of a dangerous turnover. On the other hand, plays with lower potential are more likely to result in bad turnovers, and less likely to generate good scoring chances. There are a number of factors that affect play potential, including the following:

Previous Play Result - Certain types of turnovers result in higher or lower potential. For example, an attempt to penetrate that fails will result in higher potential for the opposing team's next play, since the penetrating player may be out of position to play defense after the turnover. On the other hand, a safe clear to the corner from the neutral zone that is recovered by the defensive team will usually result in lower potential on the ensuing play.

Previous Play Call – Playing safe is more likely to lower the other teams potential if the puck is turned over. Playing aggressively may result in turnovers with higher potential. The effect of clearing the puck depends on where the puck is cleared from and cleared to (see the section below on play calling).

Line Changes – Making a line change lowers the potential of the current play. If the defensive team answers with its own line changes, potential goes back up.

Team Strength – A shorthanded team has significantly reduced potential, while a team on a power play has significantly increased potential. Four on four situations tend to have higher potential than five on five.

Team Strategies/Systems – Certain strategies and systems cause higher or lower potential. For example, playing more aggressively in the defensive zone will generate turnovers with higher potential on the ensuing play. Play-

Play Calling

ing more dump and chase will tend to produce safer, lower potential turn-overs than trying to skate or pass to gain the zone.

Ice Quality – Ice quality (displayed just to the right of the game clock) has a small effect on play potential. Lower ice quality creates lower potential, slowing the game down and making it more defensive. This is usually a very small factor, but it becomes more noticeable late in long overtime games.

Intimidation – Intimidated teams have slightly lower potential on each play.

Random Factors – Each play has random factors involved that may in-crease or decrease potential.

Keep in mind that players on the ice do not affect the potential of the play. Better offensive players are better able to take advantage of high potential, while lower rated offensive players may be unable to take advantage of high potential. For each play you should consider, among other things, both the potential of the play and the offensive and defensive players on the ice. For example, you may have a very high potential on a given play, but if you have a poor offensive line on the ice, up against a strong defense, it may not be wise to play aggressively.

Defensive/Neutral Zone Plays

At certain changes of possession, when the puck is in the defensive or neutral zones, the offensive team is given a choice of how to proceed. The options are "balanced", "safe", "aggressive", and "clear" on defensive zone plays; and "dump and chase", "skate or pass", and "clear" from the neutral zone. To help make the decision, play potential, offensive and defensive team averages, and number of forecheckers used by the defense are displayed.

Possible Outcomes of a Defensive Zone or Neutral Zone Play

Offensive zone setup - The offense gains the offensive zone and has a chance to call an offensive zone play.

Shot - An offensive player takes a shot on the initial rush.

Offensive zone turnover - The puck is turned over in the offensive zone.

Neutral zone turnover - The puck is turned over in the neutral zone.

Defensive zone turnover - The puck is turned over in the defensive zone.

Odd man rush turnover - The puck is turned over, resulting in an odd man rush or breakaway for the other team.

Safe vs. dangerous turnovers - Turnovers may have more or less risk depending on how and where the turnover occurs. This is reflected by the potential on the opponent's resulting possession, with safe turnovers resulting in lower potential and dangerous turnovers resulting in higher potential. More aggressive play tends to lead to more dangerous turnovers. The impact of a turnover also depends on what zone it occurs in. For example, a neutral zone turnover is usually more dangerous than an offensive zone turnover.

Cleared puck - Players will occasionally clear the puck out of the zone when under pressure. They are less likely to clear the puck when playing aggressively, and more likely when playing safe. Clears occasionally result in icing calls.

Offside - The offense comes across the blue line offside, or makes a two line pass.

Penalty - Penalties are most likely to be called against the defensive team, but may also be called against the offensive team, or both teams.

Defensive Zone Play Calls

Balanced - Proceed up ice without being overly aggressive or conservative. In most situations, balanced is the best choice.

Aggressive - Players will take more chances moving the puck up ice. Aggressive play will generate more shots on goal than balanced play, but the offensive focus means that players may be caught out of position to defend if the puck is turned over. As a result, play potential for the opponent after a turnover will usually be higher. Turnovers are also more likely to result in breakaways or odd man rushes.

Because forwards will play more aggressively as the puck is moved into the offensive zone, at least two forecheckers will be in play on an opponent's possession that results from an offensive zone turnover. If the team strategy setting calls for fewer than two forecheckers, the setting will increase to two for the opponent's possession following an aggressive play call.

If you were to play aggressive every time you had the option, it would likely result in giving up more scoring chances on turnovers, than it would generate for your team. By choosing the right situations to play aggressively, however, you can help to generate more offense for your team. Some examples of situations that might call for aggressive play include the following:

> **High play potential.** When the potential is high, plays are less likely to result in dangerous turnovers, so you may be able to play aggressively while keeping the risk acceptably low. On the other hand, playing aggressively in low potential situations increases already high odds of a bad turnover, without a significant increase in scoring chances.

> **Favorable match-ups.** Good offensive players are better able to take advantage of high potential situations, especially if they are matched up against poor defensive players. Even if potential is not particularly high, you may want to play more aggressively when good line match-ups occur.

> **Trailing late.** When trailing late in the game, take more chances to try to score goals.

Safe - Players will not take any chances. When pressured, players will usually clear the puck or turn it over in safer locations. As a result, safe play calls will rarely result in scoring opportunities, and will usually result in turnovers. However, when the puck is turned over, it will usually be a safe, low potential turnover. The situations that may call

for safe play are the opposite of those which call for aggressive play, and include low potential, unfavorable line match-ups, and protecting a lead late in the game.

Clear - The effect of the clear play depends on the zone from which it is called. When called from the defensive zone, players will attempt to get the puck out of the zone. Usually, the clear is successful and the puck is recovered by the opposing team in its own zone, or in the neutral zone. If the puck makes it all the way down the ice, icing may be called.

Neutral Zone Play Calls

Dump and Chase – Players will dump the puck into the offensive zone and try to regain possession. This is the more conservative option, since it will result in fewer neutral zone turnovers and opponent odd man rushes. It will also result in fewer offensive opportunities and shots off the rush, since the offense won't always regain possession after dumping the puck in. Turnovers tend to be in safe locations on the end boards, so potential on turnovers is generally slightly lower. Good forecheckers tend to be better in dump and chase situations.

Skate or Pass – Players will attempt to pass or skate across the blue line. This is more likely to result in neutral zone turnovers and opponent odd man rushes, but it will also generate better scoring opportunities. Turnovers tend to lead to higher potential plays. Players with high passing and skating ratings are more likely to be successful, while those with lower ratings might be better off dumping and chasing.

Clear - When a clear is called from the neutral zone, the puck will be dumped into the offensive zone and possession conceded to the opponent. Players will try to play the puck into the corner and set up defensively, so potential is usually reduced for the opponent. Clearing the puck from the neutral zone can be a very effective defensive tactic, and is useful when protecting a lead or making a line change. Icing may occasionally be called on a clear from the neutral zone if the clearing player fails to cross the center line.

Line Changes

A line change may be added to most play calls. Changes can be made for entire lines, or for individual players. When a line change is called for, the potential of the current play is reduced according to which players are changing. Typically, the potential is reduced by .7 if any forwards are changed, and by .6 if any defensemen are changed. If all five players are changed at once, potential is reduced by 1.0.

Maximum potential for a play involving a line change is 4.5, except when on the power play where there is no limit.

Because line changes reduce the potential of the play, it is best to consider the starting potential when making a change. For example, if potential is 3.5, a full line change would bring it down to 2.5. This could make a dangerous turnover very likely, so it might be best to wait for a better situation to make a change. You should also consider the drop in potential when deciding how to proceed while making a line change. It is usually risky to play aggressively and make a line change on the same play, and often it is a good idea to play safe or clear the puck.

Line changes may also be made on offensive zone plays. When making a line change, the offensive team must either dump the puck in or retreat from the offensive zone. Retreating gives up the offensive zone, but increases the chance of keeping possession. Dumping the puck lowers the chance of maintaining possession, but results in very safe turnovers.

After the offensive team makes a line change, the defense has a chance to answer with its own change. If the defense makes a change, the play potential goes back up according to which players are changed.

There are a few ways to make a line change:

- Click the grid heading to enter an entire line. For example, click "Line 1" to enter the first forward line into the game.

- Click an individual player's name in the lines grid to enter him at that position.

- Click a player label on the ice to open a quick sub box. Then double click a player in the list to put that player on the ice.

When a team is shorthanded, they must clear the puck all the way down the ice in order to make a line change.

When only two lines exist for a situation, the last two forward columns and the third defense column in the lines grid are filled from the depth charts. For example, a team may only have two power play units filled on the roster. In that case, instead of two blank forward columns under "Line 3" and "Line 4", they are filled with the next available players at each position in the depth chart.

Typically, when adjusting lines for unavailable players, players are promoted to fill the higher lines, and the bottom lines are then filled from the depth chart. So if the second line center is injured or takes a penalty, the third line center will play with the second line, the fourth line center will fill in on the third line, and the fourth line will be filled from the depth chart. If there is no available player in the depth chart

who is not already on a line, the first line center will be double shifted to fill the fourth line.

Shift length in Action PC Hockey is slightly longer than in real life. This is to create more opportunities for play calling on a shift, while keeping game time to a reasonable length. A typical shift lasts between about :50 and 1:30 if there are no stoppages in play. As the game progresses, shifts will get slightly shorter, and recovery will become slower. Players with more real life minutes will be able to play longer shifts, and will recover strength more quickly on the bench than those with low real life minutes.

Offensive Zone Setup Plays

When a team gains possession of the puck in the offensive zone, a setup play call opportunity may occur. Setup plays occur frequently on the power play, and occasionally at even strength. These plays begin with either a forward in possession below the goal line, or a player (usually a defenseman) with possession at the point. The options available on setup plays include:

Choose a player for a shot — Clicking a player in the play calling box attempts to pass the puck to that player. If the pass is successful, a shot will be taken from the player's current location. If unsuccessful, a turnover will result. Turnovers that result from an attempted pass usually lead to a slightly higher potential for the opponent's ensuing possession. Occasional odd man rushes may also result from turnovers.

Next to each player in the play calling box are his ice location and open status. Ice locations include In, Mid, Out, Screen, and Behind. In, Mid, and Out represent the player's proximity to the net. A player in the "Screen" position is positioned in front of the goalie, blocking his vision. Outside shots are more successful when a screen exists. Screening players may also deflect outside shots. Good inside scorers are most effective at scoring on deflections. Players in the "Behind" position are below the goal line and cannot shoot from their current position.

Each player's status is displayed from zero to three stars. Each star represents about a 30 percent chance of getting the puck to that player. No stars means a less than ten percent chance, and three stars equals about 90 percent.

Pass for a new setup — Clicking the "Pass" button will attempt to cycle the puck for a new setup. When successful, a new setup play will result, or occasionally a match-up play. The chance for success depends on the passing rating of the player with the puck and the defensive ratings of the defending team, and to a lesser degree the passing ratings of the other offensive players. Success chances typically vary between about 30 and 80 percent, but

may be somewhat higher during a power play. A failed pass attempt results in a turnover, usually with slightly lower potential. The lower potential means that selecting pass is somewhat more conservative than passing for a shot. If there are no good options for shots it may be safer to cycle the puck than to try to force the puck to a player.

Shoot the puck – Selecting "Shoot" will attempt a shot by the player who currently has the puck. If the player is behind the net, the shoot option will not be available. A shot taken this way generally has a much lower chance of success than a shot that results from clicking on a player. A good scorer located in the screen position might create an exception. Getting the puck to the net when there are no other good options might also be a good idea, and it may result in rebound opportunities.

Dump the puck – Selecting "Dump" will dump the puck deep into the zone. Usually, the defensive team will recover the puck, but the offense may have a chance at keeping possession, especially if it has good forecheckers on the ice. Since the puck can be directed to a safe area, and players can be in good defensive position, the potential on the ensuing play will usually be significantly lower. That means that, while this option may pass on a potential scoring opportunity, it can be a good conservative, defensive decision.

Retreat - Selecting "Retreat "attempts to keep possession by skating back out of the offensive zone. This is usually only possible when the puck is at the point. Retreating might be used as a last resort if there are no good passing or shooting options available.

Offensive Zone Match-up Plays

Some offensive zone decisions involve a match-up of two players. The offensive player can either shoot, penetrate, pass, or clear.

Shoot – Take a shot from the current location. The shot is usually a lower percentage shot, since it is contested by the defending player. The chance of scoring is lower if the defensive player is highly rated, especially if he is a good shot blocker.

Penetrate – Attempt to get past the defender for a closer, clear shot to the net. The chance of success is based on the ratings of the players involved, and usually ranges from about 10 to 60 percent. Players who are better at penetrating are those that have high offense and skating ratings. It is also worth considering scoring ratings. If the puck handler is not a good inside scorer, it may not be worth it to penetrate. Defensive players that are better able to stop a penetration attempt have high defensive ratings and high takeaway ratings. While success usually leads to a high percentage scoring

chance, failure has negative consequences. The offensive player is usually left out of position to defend, resulting in higher potential on the possession following a turnover, and possibly an odd man rush.

Pass – Attempt to move the puck to another player. Success depends on the passing rating of the offensive player and the defense rating of the defensive player, and usually ranges from about 20 to 60 percent. A good pass may result in an offensive zone setup play or another match-up. A failed pass attempt usually results in a relatively safe turnover.

Clear – Dump the puck deep into the zone and concede possession to the other team. This gives up a potential scoring chance, but it also lowers the potential on the opponent's ensuing possession. As a result, it is a conservative, defensive option that can be useful when protecting a lead or overmatched on the ice

Killing Penalties

When a shorthanded team gains possession of the puck, they are often forced to simply clear it. Other times, they are given options for how to proceed. These options include clear, safe, and aggressive.

Clear – Attempt to ice the puck. Success depends on the players involved and the play potential, but it usually ranges from about 70 to 90 percent in a typical four on five situation. A successful clear usually makes it all the way down the ice, but will sometimes be stopped in the neutral zone. Clears that go the length of the ice take more time off the clock. A failed clear results in a turnover in the current zone.

Safe – Try to get a shorthanded scoring chance, but clear the puck if necessary. Players are more likely to turn the puck over in the current zone, but will occasionally create a shot on goal.

Aggressive – Move up ice aggressively in an attempt to create a shot on goal. A turnover in the current zone is very likely, but aggressive produces the best chance of a scoring opportunity. Playing aggressively when shorthanded is very dangerous, so it is best used only when necessary.

Line Changes – A shorthanded team can only make changes when the puck is cleared all the way to the other team's zone. After successfully icing the puck, an opportunity for a line change is given.

The chances of the various outcomes can vary greatly based on the play potential, players on the ice, and numerous other factors. To give an idea of the strengths and weaknesses of each approach, the chart shows some typical percentages for an average four on five situation in the modern era. The shorthanded team has posses-

sion of the puck in their own zone, with the options to clear, proceed safe, or proceed aggressive.

	Cleared Puck	TO-Def. Zone	TO-N. Zone	TO-Off. Zone	Shot
Clear	85.00%	15.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Safe	50.00%	30.00%	5.00%	5.00%	10.00%
Aggressive	0.00%	75.00%	5.00%	4.00%	16.00%

Typical outcome for Clear, Safe and Aggressive approaches in a four on five shorthanded situation.

Power Plays

When a team on the power play has the puck in its own zone or in the neutral zone, such as after the puck has been cleared, they may choose to continue the power play as normal, or to proceed more cautiously. Choosing "Continue-Safe" is less likely to gain the offensive zone, but it will also give up fewer odd man rushes to the shorthanded team. This is a good option to counter an aggressive penalty kill unit of a trailing team that is trying to generate shorthanded chances. Line changes can also be made at this time. Potential goes down when a change is made, but not as much as when the teams are at even strength.

Empty Net Play

To pull a goalie for an extra attacker, click the "Goalie" button to the right of the line change grid. The check the "Pull Goalie" box and select an extra attacker from the list. The goalie will leave the net immediately, and the extra attacker will be available on the next play. When the team with the extra attacker has possession, play proceeds much like a power play. When the team playing towards the empty net gets the puck, the following options are available.

Shoot - Shoot for the empty net. If shooting from the defensive zone, a missed net will usually result in an icing call.

Advance - Attempt to advance to the neutral zone. This option is only available on plays beginning in the defensive zone.

Clear - Attempt to clear the puck ahead.

Line Matching

A large part of the home ice advantage in hockey is the ability to choose which lines to match with your opponent. This is because, at a faceoff, the road team must put its players on the ice first. The home team can then see who the road team has on the ice and choose its players accordingly. For example, if the road team puts out a strong scoring line, the home team could counter with its best defensive line. If the road team plays a weak defensive line, the home team could exploit it with a strong scoring line.

In Action PC Hockey, when the road team is choosing lines at a faceoff, the home team lineup is not visible, since it has not been put on the ice yet. When it is the home team's turn, the road team's lineup is visible. A good way to match lines is to look at the team rating averages below the lineup. This will give a good feel for the strengths and weaknesses of the opponent's lineup.

Broken and Lost Sticks

Sticks are sometimes broken or lost on shots and other events. When a skater loses his stick, he may be able to hit and block shots, but will not be able to participate offensively. Skaters must go to the bench for one play to retrieve a stick. When a goalie loses his stick, his save percentage is reduced. A goalies can retrieve his stick at a stoppage in play, and sometimes during play when the puck moves out of his zone.

Timeouts

Each team is allowed one timeout per game. Timeouts may be used at any stop in play, and give players 60 seconds of rest time. Timeouts can be used, for example, when trailing late in the game, to restore the strength of a tired scoring line. Time-outs might also be used any time fatigue would cause a bad line matchup, such as when tired players are stuck on the ice after an icing call. Timeouts also reset intimidation levels to zero for both teams.

TV Timeouts

In Action PC Hockey, automatic TV timeouts are called at the first stoppage of play after the 14 and six minute marks of each period. TV timeouts give about 60 seconds of rest time during which players' fatigue is reduced. A TV timeout will not occur after an icing call.
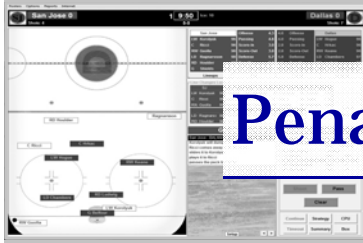
Penalties

Penalties

Several factors go into determining the chance of a penalty. By keeping these in mind, you can help to keep your team at full strength.

Sportsmanship — Players with low sportsmanship ratings are generally more likely to take penalties. Players with very low sportsmanship ratings are much more likely to be involved in fights and coincidental penalties. This can be a negative or a positive. For example, by setting up a checking line with low sportsmanship, good defensive players, and matching it up against your opponent's scoring line, you may be able to intimidate an opposing player into a fight or a coincidental roughing penalty. Putting a good opposing player in the box may be worth the penalty. Also players with lower sportsmanship ratings, especially those with enforcer designation, may gain an intimidation advantage through fights and coincidental penalties. For more details, refer to the "Intimidation" section.

On Ice Match-ups — When strong offensive players are matched up against weak defensive players, the defense is more likely to take penalties. This is because the defense is more likely to be over-matched and out of position, and may resort to taking penalties. Likewise, fatigued players are more likely to take penalties.

Forecheck Aggressiveness — More aggressive forecheck strategies take more chances when pursuing the puck, so they are more likely to commit penalties.

Defensive Zone Aggressiveness — Playing more aggressively in the defensive zone may result in more penalties.

Breakout Aggressiveness — Calling "aggressive" more often will result in slightly more penalties for the offensive team.

Delayed Penalties - Delayed penalties are called anytime a penalty is called on the defensive team and the offensive team maintains control of the puck. Play is allowed to continue until the penalized team possesses the puck. On the play following a delayed penalty call, the goalie leaves the net for an extra attacker. The highest available player on the extra attacker depth chart will be used.

Intimidation

Intimidation

Throughout the course of a game, a team may become intimidated. Intimidated teams hurry and make more mistakes with the puck. If a team is intimidated, it will be indicated on the scoreboard in terms of the effect on play potential. For example, if, alongside the road team, the scoreboard reads "Intimidated .1", the road team will have potential reduced by .1 on each play due to intimidation.

By effectively managing your on ice match-ups, you can gain an edge in intimidation. Intimidation levels are influenced by the following:

Fights — Winning a fight will usually intimidate the other team. Players with low sportsmanship ratings are more likely to get involved in and win fights. The player that wins a fight will usually intimidate the opposing team by .1 or .2. A fight that results in a draw is likely to give a small intimidation bonus to the player with the lower sportsmanship rating, but could go either way.

Stoppage in Play — At each stop in play, intimidation levels may occasionally change based on the players on the ice. If one team has significantly lower sportsmanship on the ice than the other, they are more likely to get the intimidation bonus.

Hits — About 15 percent of hits result in an intimidation of .1.

Home Ice Advantage — Intimidation points are more likely to go to the home team.

Timeouts — Calling a timeout resets intimidation to zero for both teams.

End of Period — Intimidation resets to zero for both teams at the end of a period.

Goals — Scoring a goal reduces intimidation level of the scoring team.

Time Passing — As time passes with no intimidation events, intimidation levels decrease.

Player Ratings

Offense

The offense rating represents a player's overall offensive ability. Players with high offensive ratings increase the chance of a scoring opportunity on a given play. Teams with high offensive ratings will generate more shots on goal. Players with high offensive ratings also tend to make safer turnovers than those with lower offensive ratings.

Player Ratings

Passing

The passing rating measures a player's ability to pass the puck. Players with higher passing ratings will get more assists and will make safer turnovers. Shots have a greater chance of scoring when they are the result of a pass from a good passer. Good passers are also better able to move the puck to create a new offensive zone setup (selecting pass on an offensive zone play). Goalies with high passing ratings (usually up to three) will play the puck more frequently and more successfully. They will more often pass the puck to a teammate, rather than freeze it.

Scoring

Players are rated for both inside and outside scoring. The ratings represent a player's goal scoring ability and the areas where his shots are likely to come from. A player rated 6 inside and 2 outside will have most of his shots come from inside, while a player rated 6 inside and 5 outside will be able to score from both inside and outside. Defensemen tend to have very low inside scoring ratings and higher outside scoring ratings. In general, shots are most likely to score the closer they are to the net, but a poorly rated inside scorer will be unlikely to get the puck there. Below are examples of shooting percentages for three players from different ice position. Keep in mind that these are just estimates, and there are many factors that go into determining the exact percentages for a given shot.

			Estimated shooting % from		
			In	Mid	Out
Inside Outside Scoring Ratings	Player A	Inside 6 Outside 2	14.00%	8.00%	3.00%
	Player B	Inside 6 Outside 5	14.00%	11.00%	9.00%
	Player C	Inside 1 Outside 5	10.00%	10.00%	9.00%

The effect of inside-outside scoring ratings on goal scoring ability.

Note that although Player C has a slightly higher shooting percentage closer to the net, he will almost never get a shot from that position due to his low inside rating. All three players have fairly similar scoring abilities, but their shots will come from different locations. Using a player effectively can help to maximize his scoring. For example, Player B might do well as a point forward on the power play, while Player A is much better off playing closer to the net.

Penalty Shot/Breakaway

The penalty shot rating represents a player's ability on penalty shots, shootouts, and breakaways. It also plays a small role in scoring on odd man rush opportunities.

Skating

The skating rating represents a player's skating and puck handling ability. Players with higher skating ratings are better able to penetrate for a good shot, and won't make as many bad turnovers. They are also more likely to participate in and be successful on odd man rushes.

Faceoff

The faceoff rating represents a player's ability to win faceoffs. Each point represents about three percent on the faceoff percentage. Players with many faceoff attempts and a good percentage of wins tend to get the higher faceoff ratings. Typical centers range from six to eight, wings from two to four, and defensemen less than two.

Defense

The defense rating represents the ability to prevent scoring opportunities. Teams with high rated defensive players will give up fewer shots on goal than those with low rated players. Defensive ratings also have a very small effect on the quality of the opponents scoring chances in stock leagues, and a slightly larger effect in draft leagues. Defensive zone and forecheck ratings are weighted defensive ratings that indicate a player's defensive effectiveness in different areas of the ice.

Defensive Zone

The defensive zone coverage rating indicates a player's ability in his own zone. This rating is calculated automatically and helps to indicates how a player's specific skills affect his defensive play. Players with high shot blocking and penalty kill ratings are particularly effective in the defensive zone.

Forecheck

Like the defensive zone rating, the forecheck rating indicates how specific skills affect defensive play in the offensive zone. Good forecheckers create turnovers and are effective at keeping possession of the puck in the offensive zone. Players with high takeaway and hitting ratings make the best forecheckers.

Takeaway

Players with high takeaway ratings excel at generating turnovers. A defender's ability to stop a penetrate attempt depends largely on their takeaway rating. Players with high takeaway ratings also make good forecheckers.

Shot Blocking

Players with high shot blocking ratings are good at blocking shots and playing in their own zone. These players are also harder to shoot against in a match-up play. Good shot blockers are often the best penalty killers.

Hitting

Players with high hitting ratings can intimidate the other team with hits. They also create slightly more turnovers than the average player, and tend to be better forecheckers.

Penalty Kill

A player's ability to kill penalties depends on both the defense rating and the penalty kill rating. Penalty kill ratings range from zero to three stars.

*** Defensive rating is increased by 20 percent when killing penalties

** Penalty kill rating is equal to defensive rating

* Defensive rating is reduced by 20 percent when killing penalties

- Defensive rating is reduced by 40 percent when killing penalties

Enforcer

Players with high penalty minutes and fights are given an enforcer role. Enforcers are more likely to intimidate the other team by their presence on the ice, as well as by hitting and getting in fights.

Goalie

The goalie rating represents a goalie's save percentage. The average starting goalie is rated about 6.5, and each point represents about 1.1 percent. So in a year where the average goalie has a save percentage of 90, a goalie rated 7.0 will stop about

90.5 percent of shots. The save percentage on a given shots depends on a number of factors, including the shooter, defender, location, shot quality, etc..

Sportsmanship

Sportsmanship affects how often players take penalties, as well as what types of penalties they take. Low sportsmanship players are more likely to take fighting and roughing penalties. Sportsmanship also plays a smaller role in non-coincidental penalties, which are primarily determined by match-ups. See the sections on penalties and intimidation more information.

Durability

Durability represents the number of games a player missed in real life due to injury. Players with lower durability will miss more games due to injury. A player rated five for durability will typically miss about half of the games he would otherwise be available to play in. Occasionally, players will miss slightly more or less than in real life.
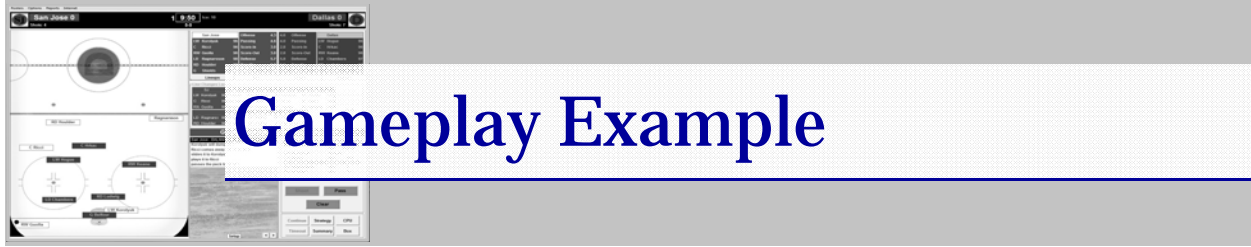
Gameplay Example

Gameplay Example – New York I @ Montreal

Note: The following gameplay examples are taken from the 2010 version of Action! PC Hockey.

The following are excerpts from a game between 1977-78 Montreal and 1977-78 New York I. In some situations, it will follow each play of the game, and in some it will fast forward to interesting strategic decision points. I will be coaching Montreal. Keep in mind that there are many valid ways to coach a game like this. The intention of this guide is to point out the possible implications of each decision, and to help promote a better understanding and enjoyment of the hockey game. The decisions made throughout these examples are certainly not the only correct way to play the given situations. Being creative and creating effective strategies, as well as

Setting Lines

making and learning from mistakes, is what makes coaching hockey interesting and rewarding.

Setting Lines and Strategies

Before beginning the game I will make sure that my line combinations and strategies are appropriate for the game. Here are my lines:

Forwards

Shutt-Lemaire-Lafleur

This is about the best scoring line you could put together. All three players can score goals and set each other up. I should get plenty of production from this line. Steve Shutt is rated as both LW and C, so if Lemaire gets taken out of the faceoff circle I have someone who can step in and win some. As for strategies, I want this line to forecheck aggressively in order to keep possession and get as many scoring opportunities as possible. I might bump up the defensive zone aggressiveness slightly to try to create some odd man rushes from turnovers. If my opponent decides to try to match his scoring line against this line, I might not play quite as aggressively. This line is pretty average defensively, and I might risk giving up as many scoring chances as I create if I am too aggressive. For the offensive zone system, I'll choose balanced, since these are pretty good scorers at different ice positions and I don't want to allow the defense to limit their effectiveness by playing closer to the net.

Lambert-Larouche-Cournoyer

While it is a drop off from line one, this is still a pretty good scoring line. Lambert's strong defensive rating (4.9) prevents it from being a defensive liability that could be exploited, as the other two are among the weaker defensive forwards on the team. This line should do pretty well with the default strategies (1-2 forecheckers, balanced systems and aggressiveness), as it has no specific strengths and weaknesses.

Gainey-Jarvis-Houle

With defensive ratings of 5.7,5.5, and 4.6, this line will serve as my checking line. In this particular game I'll use it to try to shut down New York's dangerous top scoring line of Gillies, Trottier, and Bossy. I don't need this line to score, so they can sit back and make it tough for New York to get through the neutral zone. Using one forechecker allows them to do that, while still giving a chance of creating a scor-

ing opportunity if they get too aggressive and turn the puck over. Playing slightly less aggressively in the defensive zone will slightly lower the quality of the shots they will get. My own plays will have slightly less potential as a result, but that's okay since I'm not trying to score with this line anyway. This line will start off in a balanced offensive zone system, but I might switch to defensive if I get a lead. There is some offensive ability that I don't necessarily want to sacrifice right away, but its primary purpose will be defense.

Risebrough-Mondou-<Empty Spot>

Since the skater limit in 1977-78 was 17, I will have an empty spot in my lines. This spot will get filled differently according to which players are rested, but I have at least a few options. Most often, I'll probably double shift a top forward into this line, like Lafleur or Lemaire. Or I might use Gainey or Jarvis if defense becomes a priority. I could also use Rick Chartraw, a defenseman who can play RW as well. This line will play with default strategies, since its makeup will vary. I might make in game adjustments according to which players are involved in a particular shift. Risebrough and Mondou will probably get used occasionally as fill-ins on other lines throughout the game. Risebrough, with his low sportsmanship rating, is probably my best chance of creating some intimidation.

Defensemen

Robinson-Savard

This is a pair of all-star caliber defensemen. Both are excellent defensively, and can create some offense as well. Combining this pair with my checking forwards will go a long way towards shutting down even the best scorers.

Lapointe-Nyrop

Another solid defensive pair. Lapointe is a strong scorer and passer, so if I need offense I might pair him with Robinson, who is also a good offensive defenseman. Lapointe is a 10 for hits, so he might be able to do some intimidating.

Bouchard-Chartraw

Chartraw might also get some time as right wing.

Goalie

> **Ken Dryden** will get the start in this game. New York might be the toughest opponent Montreal will face, so I definitely want the best goaltending I can get. Over the course of a season, though, Dryden won't be able to play every game. Fortunately, the backup Larocque is a solid goaltender. Larocque will probably get used more often against weaker opponents, and in home games when match-ups can be controlled better.

Game Excerpt #1

We are ready for the opening faceoff. Since I am the home team, I get to see what lines New York puts on the ice to start the game, and can choose mine accordingly. New York chooses the scoring line of Gillies, Trottier, and Bossy. I am going to counter with the checking line of Gainey, Jarvis, and Houle, and the top defensive pair of Robinson and Savard. If I can play my scoring line as much as possible when New York uses lines two or four I can create a mismatch in my favor.

I'm going to select "Safe" as my style for this play. If I win the faceoff, my players won't take chances to create scoring chances, but will focus on making safe turnovers to limit the potential of my opponent's plays. I'll usually

Game Excerpt #1

play Safe when I have this particular match-up. I will occasionally play "Balanced" when my potential is higher.

Play Result – Montreal wins the faceoff but turns it over in the neutral zone. New York dumps the puck in, recovers, and Denis Potvin takes a low percentage point shot (red icon) that is saved and held by Ken Dryden.

Game Excerpt #2

I now have a defensive zone faceoff to the right of Dryden. New York has put line two on the ice, along with the second defensive pair. As the screen-shot above shows, even though this is a good New York lineup, I gain a pretty solid advantage in every category by playing my top line. Robinson and Savard can stay on for now, since their strength is still at 95 after about 40 seconds. I will play "Balanced" if I win the draw, but I'll be looking for opportunities to play aggressively with this match-up.

| New York I		Offense	6.0	7.4	Offense	Montreal	
LW Kaszycki	100	Passing	5.4	7.0	Passing	LW Shutt	100
C Bourne	100	Score-In	4.2	5.8	Score-In	C Lemaire	100
RW Bergeron	100	Score-Out	3.2	4.8	Score-Out	RW Lafleur	100
LD D.Lewis	100	Defense	5.1	6.1	Defense	LD L.Robinson	95
RD Persson	100	Penalty	6.9	7.3	Penalty	RD Savard	95
G Resch	100	Goalie	8.6	0.0	Goalie	G Dryden	100
Lineups		Box		Coach		Analysis	

Game Excerpt #2

Play Result – New York won the draw but lost control. Montreal gained the offensive zone, and Savard took a shot from the blue line that was blocked on a diving play by Dave Lewis. Guy Lafleur was then called for tripping, a two minute minor penalty.

I wouldn't expect this match-up to result in a lot of penalties, since I should be able to control the play well with these players, and they have fairly high sportsmanship ratings. I would expect to draw more than I take in this situation, but good results are never guaranteed. Now I need to kill off a two minute penalty.

Game Excerpt #3

I'll start the penalty kill with my first forward pair and second defense pair, since Robinson and Savard have only a short amount of time left before they will be fatigued. If I win the faceoff, I want to ice the puck. I'll choose "Safe" if I happen to get a higher potential, and save "Aggressive" for if I ever *need* a shorthanded goal.
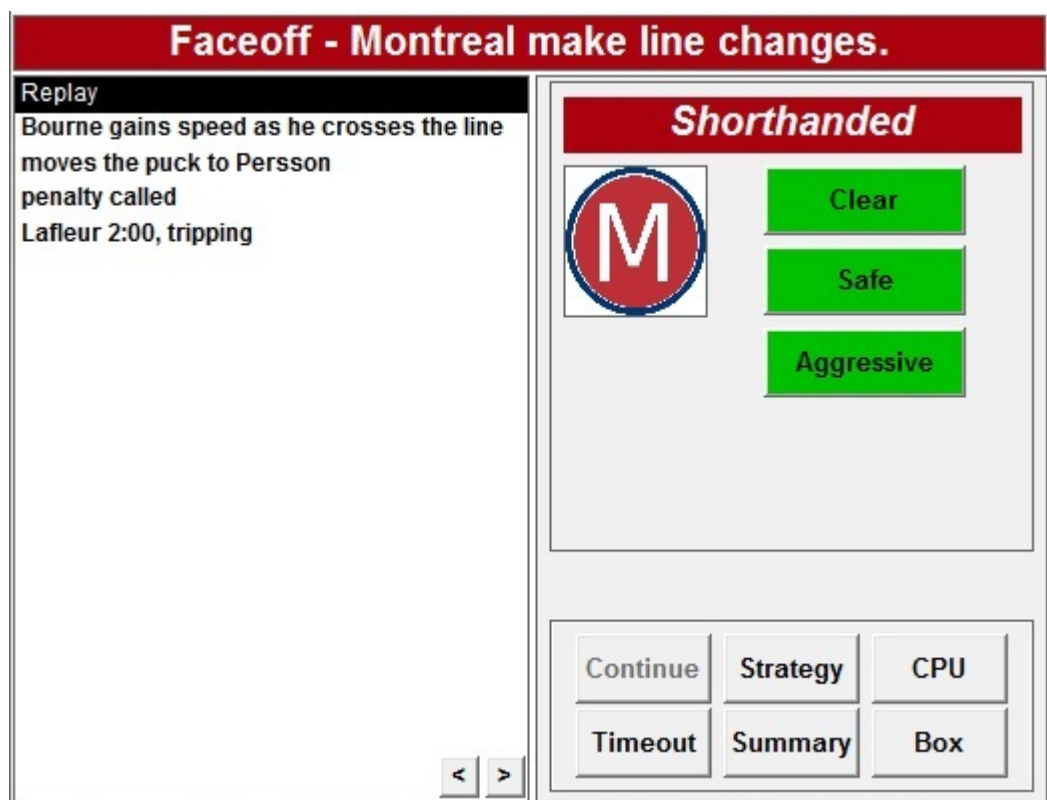
Play Result – Montreal won the draw and was able to ice the puck.

When shorthanded, the only time a change is permitted is when the puck clears all the way to the other end of the ice, so I have the opportunity here. I have no need to change though, since only eight seconds have passed and my players are strong. If I did make a change, New York's play potential would increase slightly for the next play. I'll just choose "Continue" without making a change.

Play Result – New York gained the offensive zone and set up. Trottier took a one-timer that was saved, but New York controlled the rebound. Trottier took another shot that was gloved and held by Dryden for a faceoff.

Game Excerpt #4

We will now move ahead in the game. I was able to kill the Lafleur penalty, and now we are back at even strength.

Guy Lafleur has the puck behind the New York net, with a few passing options. Bouchard at the point is the most open option, but probably not the best. Bouchard is not the greatest scorer, and would be shooting without a screen. It would probably be an easy save and a turnover or a faceoff. Steve Shutt is a good scorer in the mid range position, with about a 60 percent chance of getting the puck. I will try to get him the puck. Another option would be to try to pass the puck to get a new setup, maybe with some better options. Choosing "Clear" would turn the puck over in a safe location, and would likely result in low potential for my opponent's possession. That might be good if I were protecting a lead, or if I had poor offensive players on the ice, but I definitely don't want to give up a scoring opportunity with these players on the ice.

Play Result – The pass made it through to Shutt who beat Resch on the glove side for a 1-0 lead on Montreal's first shot of the game. Assists were given to Lemaire and Lafleur.

Game Excerpt #5

Moving ahead again in the game, we get the following scenario.

I have possession in the neutral zone, with a potential of 5.5. I have the line one versus line two matchup again, and I can see my matchup advantage in the offensive and defensive averages (O-7.3 D-5.1). This is a very good time to play aggressively. Besides having a good matchup and high potential, the fact that the play is in the neutral zone means that I won't risk turning the puck over in my own zone, and there is less chance of giving up an odd man rush on a turnover.

My players are close to getting fatigued, but they can go a bit longer and I don't want to pass up this opportunity. If I did need a change, this would be a good time to call "Clear" and make the change. I can clear the puck into the zone without risk of an icing, and also lower the potential of the ensuing play.
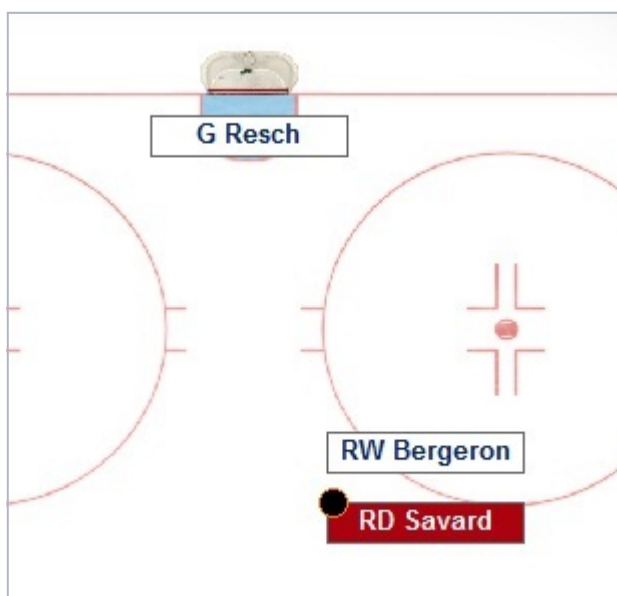

Game Excerpt #5

Play Result – Larry Robinson crossed the blue line and passed to Lafleur, whose shot was knocked down and covered by Resch. Since this is the first

stoppage after the 14 minute mark, we get a TV timeout which allows players about 45 seconds of rest.

Game Excerpt #6

Moving ahead to a later point in the first period, the score is now 1-1. I have an interesting match-up play here.

Serge Savard is matched up against RW Michel Bergeron. Bergeron is a poor defensive player(2.8), and Savard is a good skating defenseman. I could attempt to penetrate, but wouldn't gain very much since Savard is only a 1 for inside scoring. Passing (for a new setup) or shooting are probably about equal here, but since I only have three shots in the game so far I am going to try to shoot the puck. Savard is not a bad shooter for a defenseman, and the shot might produce a rebound.
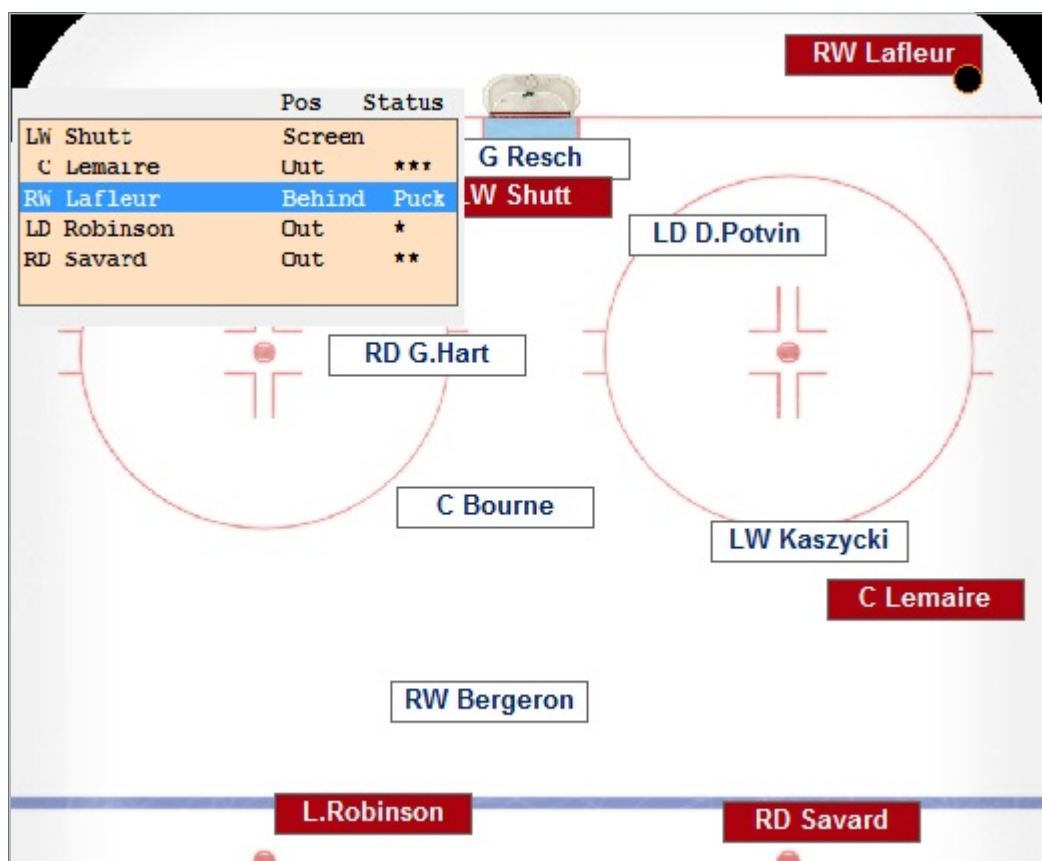

Game Excerpt #6

Play Result – Savard's shot got through to Resch who made a kick save. Montreal retained control on the rebound, and was left with a setup play.

Game Excerpt #7

In this situation, my best option is probably to go to Lemaire in his outside location. Lemaire is better inside, but is not bad outside. He also has Shutt as a screen to shoot through. As a good inside scorer, Shutt has a pretty good chance of deflecting the puck and making Resch's job difficult.

Play Result – Lemaire's shot was blocked by Bourne, and New York was forced to chip the puck back out to center where Montreal regained control.

The game ended up a 3-3 tie, with Montreal out-shooting New York by a 44-

Game Excerpt #7

21 margin. I feel like I was able to control the match-ups and the puck for the majority of the game, and definitely should have won. Sometimes the bounces just don't go your way. A couple of power play goals given up and a great performance by Glenn Resch turned a win into a tie.

Hopefully, this guide has increased your understanding and enjoyment of Action PC Hockey. Good luck in developing your own winning gameplans, and have fun!

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