

# Coaching Articles

## The Wrist Shot

### The Best Shot in Hockey

What is the best shot in hockey ? The slap, wrist, snap, flip or backhand shots ? The majority of hockey purist agree... the best shot in hockey is the wrist shot. There are many hockey cliches / phrases such as : "you have to shoot to score, shoot the puck on the net, lean into the shot, get more wood on the shot, we need more shots on net, you don't score 100% of the time with the shots that you don't take etc". Jarome Iginla, last season's leading goal scorer indicated that this season he aspires to increase his shot total... i.e. over 300 shots on net. Yes, indeed the more a player shoots the puck... the better change a player has of scoring!

All great goal scorers in the NHL have a superb wrist shot. Jarome Iginla, Pavel Bure, and Joe Sakic are just several players that come to mind. What makes a great wrist shot . The key components of a great wrist shot are the accuracy and the quickness of release. Skating is the foundation upon which all other hockey skills are built. The level of performance attained by a player in shooting is directly related to one's skating ability. Why ?... because great balance and edge control are essential to generating a good shot. Without good balance and edge control, a player is very unstable on his / her skates and the ability to transfer weight and produce power is greatly reduced.

When studying in greater detail, the shooting phases of the wrist shot, the following comes to mind.

#### Preparatory Phase

As previously mentioned, a strong base of good balance and edge control is essential to shooting. The lower hand moves slightly down the shaft of the stick for greater power i.e. a few inches wider than used when stick handling. The further the hand is down the shaft...the greater the knee bend is required. A player needs to have his / her eyes on the target as well as cognizance of the following:...the wrist shot is a surprise shot which requires a quickness of release!

#### Execution Phase

The puck is cradled in the middle part of the stick. A tight grip on the stick is required. The stick is sweep towards the target. It's important to transfer weight from back skate to front skate i.e. push off the inside edge of the back skate to maximize power. Otherwise, all the power is generated from the upper body and this restricts the effectiveness of the shot. When transferring weight from back skate to front skate, its equally important to get the shoulder into the shot. The upper hand on the stick guides the shot while the lower hand generates the power. The snapping of the wrist i.e. lower hand causes the puck to be directed towards the target.

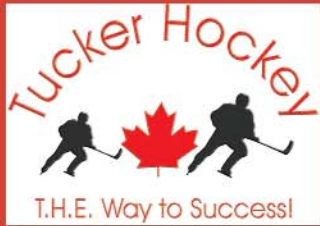
#### Follow through Phase

It begins when the puck leaves the blade of the stick. To keep the puck low i.e. roll the wrists over and to keep the puck high i.e. roll the wrist up. Eye on the target.... follow the stick towards the target. The speed and proper follow through of the arm and wrist will most definitely affect the power of the shot.

To develop a great wrist shot a player requires good strength, mechanics and coordination of the shooting components. All good goal scorers are able to shoot the puck off either foot and generate a shot where space and time are often restricted. Perfect practice makes a perfect shot. All great shooters have and continue to practice their shot. A great example is Brett Hull who has a terrific shot but he's always working on his shot i.e. firing lots of extra pucks after practices.

Practice... practice... practice... .fire hundreds of pucks on a regular basis ...during the off season from a piece of

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plywood in the backyard, during the season on a backyard rink, pond or outdoor community rink or during a team practice.

Shooting drills may include: shooting at the boards from a stationary position, shooting against the boards from a moving position, shooting against the boards starting from one side of rink to the other side, shooting on the goalie from stationary and moving positions, shooting under pressure / being checked , one timers and shooting off the wrong foot, shooting at specific targets i.e. shooter tooters , hung net targets, pylons in the nets, ads / letters on the arena boards, and net posts / cross bars etc.

Food for Thought: In order to win a hockey game a player must score... in order to score a player must shoot the puck... in order to shoot the puck well a player must have good mechanics...in order to have good mechanics he / she must be taught the shooting skill properly and to.... practice....practice..... practice his / her shot. All great goal scorers continue to practice their shot...as previously mentioned.....prime example is Brett Hull.

Yours in Hockey,

Coach Rex

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