



Forward Two Foot Stop

By Rex Tucker

Learning to stop properly is imperative in the game of hockey. The ability to make sudden stops is as important as making quick starts. During a game a player may be required to shift from offensive to defensive positioning. This skill will often depend on a player's ability to perform immediately some form of stopping action. For example, stopping skills are specifically used when players are killing a penalty in their own zone.

From a safety standpoint, stopping is one of the first skating skills that should be taught and mastered by young hockey players. So many beginners have difficulty stopping because they have trouble controlling their skate edges. To ensure quick and controlled stops during a game, players require strong balancing and edge control skills.

There are many ways to stop on a pair of skates which include the following: Forward two foot snowplow stops, forward one foot snowplow stops, forward T-stops, forward two foot stops, forward one foot stops, backward two foot snowplow stops and backward one foot snowplow stops.

The forward two foot hockey stop is the most common stop used in a hockey game. It is the most efficient and effective of the hockey stops because if done correctly a player is very stable and well – balanced on his or her skates.

Players need to stop on a dime and with confidence both to their right and left sides so they are always facing the play. A common problem with many players is that they favor their strong side most of the time and will turn their backs to the action. For example, the majority of left handed shooters will stop more confidently to their left/stick side. A good power skating program will teach balanced skating. Players will discover their strong and weak sides and will have the opportunity to bridge their skill gap.

The forward two foot hockey stop involves turning sideways to the line of travel. Here are the key teaching points required to perform a proper two foot stop to the left.

- When skating forward, a player will focus his or her eyes

in the direction he or she wishes to travel/turn. The player will turn their head, shoulders, chest, hips and knees and feet sharply to the left. It's important not to drop the shoulders while stopping.

- To stop properly, a player needs to lift/unbend their knees so as to release their weight. This will get the player off his or her skate edges – to glide on the flats of the blades for a split second as they turn sideways. Otherwise, the player will perform a two foot tight turn on their blades not a two foot stop.
- Once the player releases their weight and turns in a 90 degree change of direction, he or she will bend their knees deeply. This bending of the knees will reapply the player's weight downward towards the ice.
- In the hockey stop, a player must stay low – bending of the knees so they act as shock absorbers as the stop begins. This allows a player to maintain their weight over the balls of their feet. The player's weight will be on the outside edge of the inside skate and the inside edge of the outside skate cutting the ice. The greater the knee bend and the downward pressure, the quicker the stop. If a player's skate chatters as the stop occurs, it means the player's weight is too much on the heel of the skate!
- Weight will be applied equally on both skates with the feet shoulder width apart or slightly wider in the hockey stance position. The head is up with two hands on the stick. The player is now in a very stable and balanced position and ready to change direction and stay in the play.

When young or beginner hockey players lack good balance and edge control common stopping problems occur such as: stopping on the outside edge of the outside skate and falling over – sometimes face first, dragging the inside edge of the inside skate and/or chattering of the inside blade or chattering of both blades due to improper weight distribution.

Often during the course of a minor hockey season, coaches will line their players up on the goal line and have them skate the lines. It's treated mostly as a conditioning drill with very little attention given to proper starting, striding and stopping technique. As a result, players will cheat on the drill and stop only on one side most of the time – their strong side!

Cont. page 10

“The more you learn, the more
you realize you don't know”

-Anonymous

Two Foot Stop

cont. from 7

Being able to stop correctly on either side is so important for effective and balanced skating. During a game a player will often stop suddenly to prevent or reduce physical contact with an opponent, to quickly change direction so as to properly follow/stay in the play and to change direction and deceive/skate off an opponent.

The short game of hockey requires a great deal of stopping and starting. Rather than making big turns, which takes too much time and can take a player out of the play, especially while defending, try mastering the art of stopping. It will make you a more complete and effective hockey player!

