



Tucker Tips

How to improve a player's scoring ability?

How to increase a player's scoring ability and point totals is a common question at all levels of hockey. When analyzing the hockey skill set, the technical progression is developing skating, to puck control, to passing and to shooting. Skating is the most important hockey skill. With better skating skills a player's edges will improve. It will also enhance overall balance / ability to transfer weight, to stride with the puck and create a stronger foundation for better shooting and scoring opportunities. In addition, good puck control, passing skills and hockey sense are essential in executing effective offensive tactics which will enhance scoring chances in a game.

When thinking of shooting – use the following philosophy. If a player has a better shot, the player is more confident, with increased confidence more shots are taken in a game and therefore more goals being scored. Wayne Gretzky has said “You miss 100% of the shots you don't take”.

The natural shooting progressions are proper mechanics, accuracy, quick release, hardness / power and shooting under pressure / game situations. There are various types of shots - wrist, snap, slap, flip, backhand and one timer shooting. Each type of shot must be mastered from a stationary position first, then while moving and later under pressure / game situations. Brett Hull, one of the greatest goal scorers of all – time, practiced shooting 200 pucks each practice. Alexander Ovechkin is often at the top of the leader board each season with shots on goal and goals scored. However, he requires nearly 400 to 500 shots per season to score 50 goals!

For example, the accuracy of a player's wrist shot involves the following components: good control of the puck on the stick blade, the player's head is up, player's eyes are on the target, and the player points the stick blade towards the chosen target on follow through. At the minor hockey level, the wrist shot in stride is the most common shot. Whereas at the professional level it's the snap shot in stride. Next time you watch a game make a mental note of the most common shots taken – the game within the game!

Once a player has developed and become accomplished with

the various technical shot progressions, the next step is to learn, practice and incorporate more individual offensive tactics into their game. Offensive tactics provide a player with more options on the ice, a player will maintain position of the puck in the offensive zone and create more time and space for themselves. Finding and creating space are two skills that accomplished goal scorers such as Jarome Iginla have mastered. Offensive tactics include but are not limited to the following: Driving to the net / shooting in stride, deking, deflections, wrap - arounds, walk outs, delays, open up pivots, Russian stop ups, outside to inside cuts, inside to outside cuts, stagger and lateral moves etc. A good combination of technical shooting ability and individual offensive tactics provides a player with more tools in the tool box.

Sidney Crosby, the world's greatest hockey player, always keeps working on his game – face-offs, puck protection, scoring ability, and most recently his backhand shot. Sidney Crosby is extremely talented but no one works harder to improve on their game. Sid, we hope to see you again in the NHL working your on ice magic in the very near future! If a player wants to be a better scorer and /or a more complete player he or she must continue to work on their game.

A good technical hockey skills coach can help a player improve his or her offensive game. Remember if a player has a better shot, the player will be more confident in their shot, will take more shots on net, and with the increased volume of shots the player will score more goals! This is a simple rule in hockey to help develop and take a player's game to the next level!

**Employ your time in
improving yourself by
other men's writings so
that you shall come easily
by what others have
labored hard for.**

~Socrates