

Work *Your* Offense From Behind *Their* Net

(Originally submitted as an article by Greg Siller for Hockey Player Magazine - www.HockeyPlayer.com)

If you have ever watched Wayne Gretzky in action, you have, no doubt, seen him initiate scoring opportunities from *behind the opponents net*. Wayne Gretzky takes advantage of a seldom utilized (but well protected) area on the rink I call the *captain's chair* (the shaded area behind your opponents net - See Figure 1). The *captain's chair* gets its name due to a player's ability to survey the ice (and a teams' offensive options) from that location. Utilizing the *captain's chair* in your team's offensive attack *will* guarantee you additional scoring opportunities.

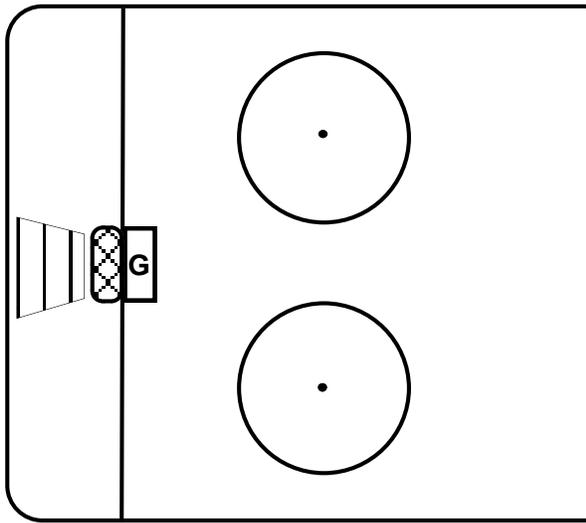


Figure 1 - Captains Chair

Why Is It Effective?

Using the *captain's chair* in your offensive attack is effective for (at least) three reasons:

- *Most defenders will not commit themselves behind their own net.* Most amateur coaches instruct their defensemen not to chase an attacker behind their own net because they will commit themselves and be out of the play for a brief moment. In many cases, this instruction is accurate. Because if an attacker skates with the puck behind their opponents net, and a defender chases him, the puck carrier will emerge from the other side of the net to create a scoring opportunity while the defender is momentarily out-of-the play behind his own net.
- *It focuses the play deep in the offensive zone.* By controlling the puck from the *captain's chair*, you force the defending team to concentrate on the play deep in that location. This creates an opportunity for a defenseman or forward to position themselves in the slot (or other scoring location) unnoticed, ready for a scoring opportunity.
- *It provides the attackers with time to get into an open position.* If the defenders do not challenge a player in the *captain's chair*, the offensive team has time to get their players into open scoring positions.

2 Ways to Work It

Once your team has moved the puck into your offensive zone, you can work your offense from the *captain's chair* by passing the puck directly to an open teammate in the slot or use a give-and-go play to get it to the slot.

To get the puck directly to the slot, the center (or other player in the *captains chair*) fakes to one direction (the right in this example) and then moves with the puck to his left just enough past the net to make a clear pass to the slot (see Figure 2). As the right defenseman (RD) sees the initial fake to the right, he moves in from his point position to the slot for a one-time shot to the far side of the net. During this play, the left wing (LW) maintains a position in front of the opponents net to draw one defender away from the center and the right wing (RW) works to get open for a secondary outlet pass.

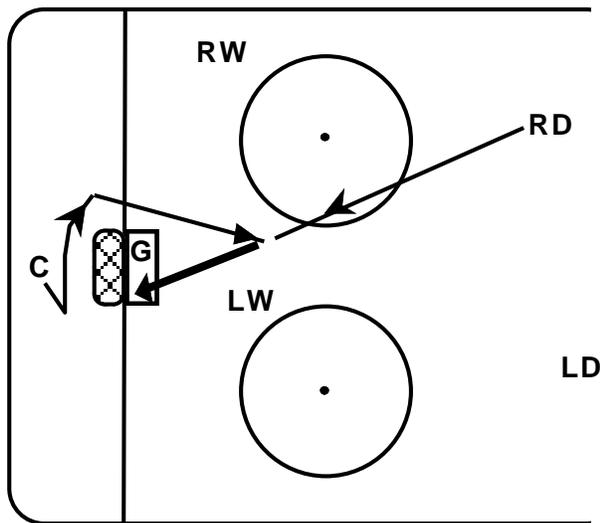


Figure 2 - Directly To the Slot

The Give-and-Go version of this play is executed when the slot is well covered by the defending team. In this example, the center, again, fakes to one direction and then moves with the puck to the other direction just enough past the net to attempt a clear pass to the slot (see option 1 in Figure 3). If the center reads that the slot is covered, he makes a pass to RW (option 3). As the defending team shifts to cover the new puck carrier, C, LW, and RD all reposition themselves to get open for a pass from RW. If RW passes to either RD or LW (options 1 and 2), a one-time shot is executed to an open area of the net. If neither of these two options is available, a return pass to the center is made to restart the process again.

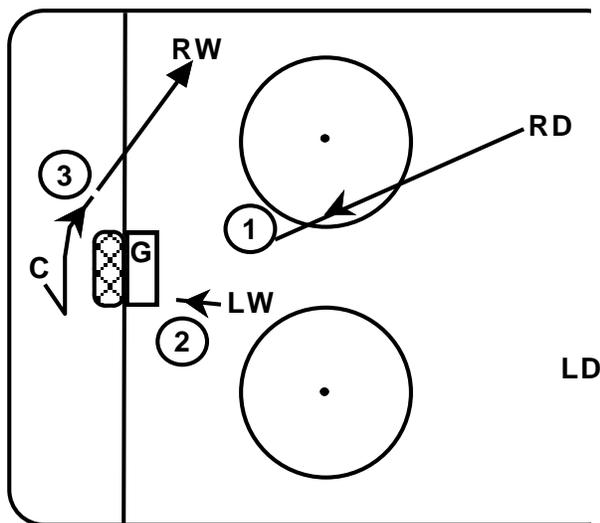


Figure 3 - Give and Go

Many scoring opportunities can be added to your teams' offensive arsenal by effectively using the *captain's chair* in your offense. If you don't believe me, just ask my friend Wayne!

Greg Siller, founder of Pro Learning Systems (www.ProLearning.com), has put his 25 years of ice and roller hockey experience into authoring several hockey articles as well as two highly acclaimed hockey books; [*The Hockey Practice Playbook*](#) and [*Roller Hockey: Skills and Strategies for Winning On Wheels*](#).