

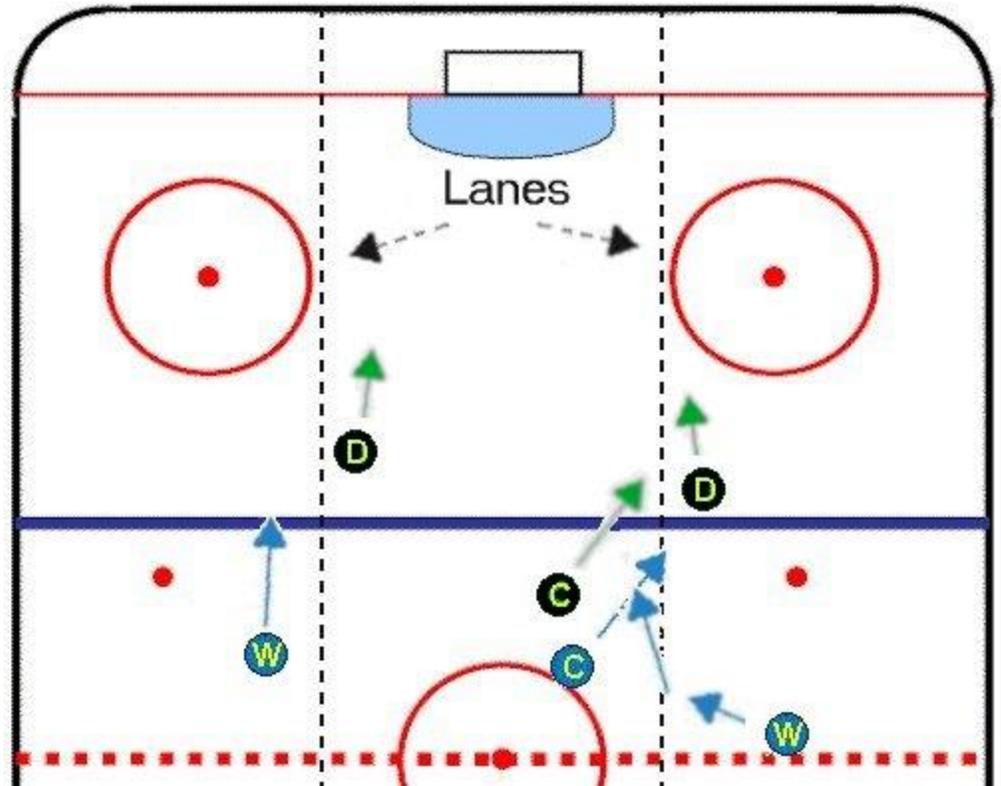
## Lanes

You want to put some effort into playing your position, so that your line mates know where to expect you. But hockey is a very fluid game, so you need to exercise some flexibility. One of the fundamentals of hockey strategy is the concept of three lanes across the ice.

The point to filling lanes is to avoid bunching up. If we have two or more people bunched close to the puck then it's fairly easy for the opponents to keep them corralled in a safe portion of the ice. Instead, if we can spread out our attack then it's much more difficult for the other team to first keep track of us and second control us.

In general, the puck carrier will dictate a lane change. If the center has the puck and the opposing center corrals him toward the outside then the wing on that side should recognize what's happening and slide over to the adjacent lane. The same applies if we start with a wing carrying the puck up the boards and he gets forced into the center.

You'll generate many more opportunities if you fill the empty lane when you don't have



the puck. Or, look for someone in the next lane when you do have the puck.

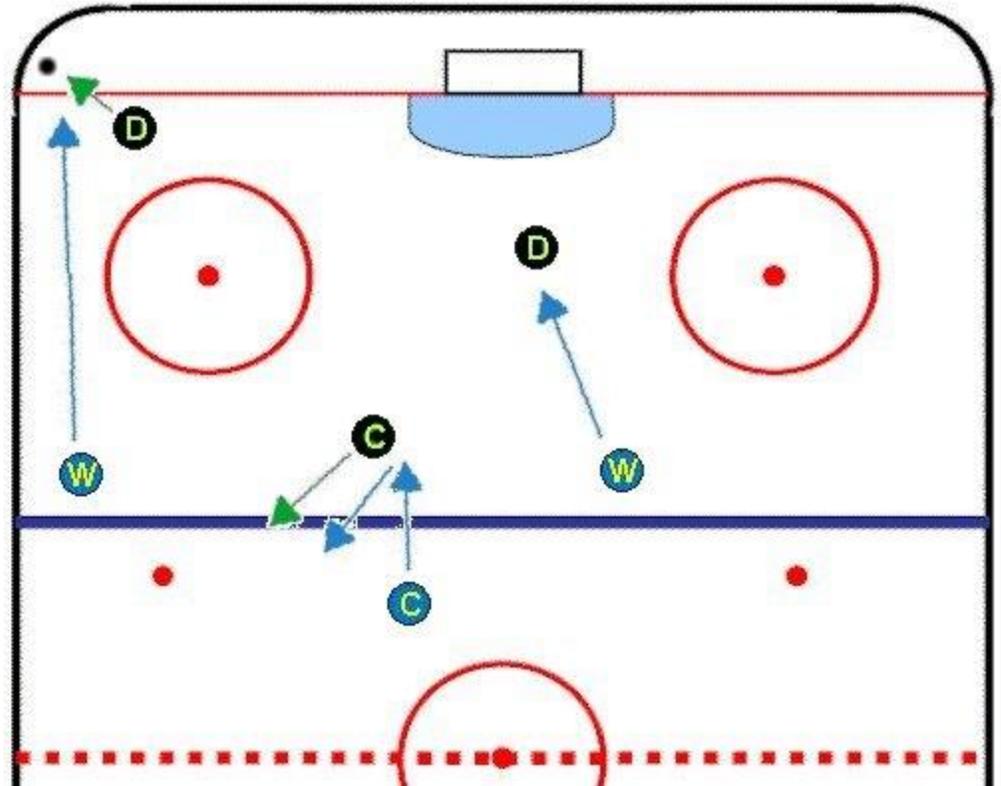
## Offensive triangle

Similarly, one of the basic flexible formations is the offensive triangle. One of the primary goals of the offensive triangle is to generate shots and take advantage of rebounds.

If it's a dump in then the first person in should go to the puck. Go to the puck hard. Get there first, or barring that, get there before the opponent gets control of the puck, or barring that, before the opponent has time to look for someone to pass to. This is important. That first person needs to expend all of their energy getting to that puck. Otherwise the other team has an easy breakout.

The other two offensemen in need to watch what happens with the first person.

If the opponents get control of the puck before the first person gets there, then the second person should cut off the passing lane to the other opposing defenseman. That's going to be the puck carrier's first outlet. Again, it's important to hustle to get there before they even try the pass. The third person should look to cover the next opponent in the zone, usually the center in the high slot. This third person should turn to



hang with this opponent and not assume that they can cut off the pass clean. If you get burned then it's a 3-on-2 the other way.

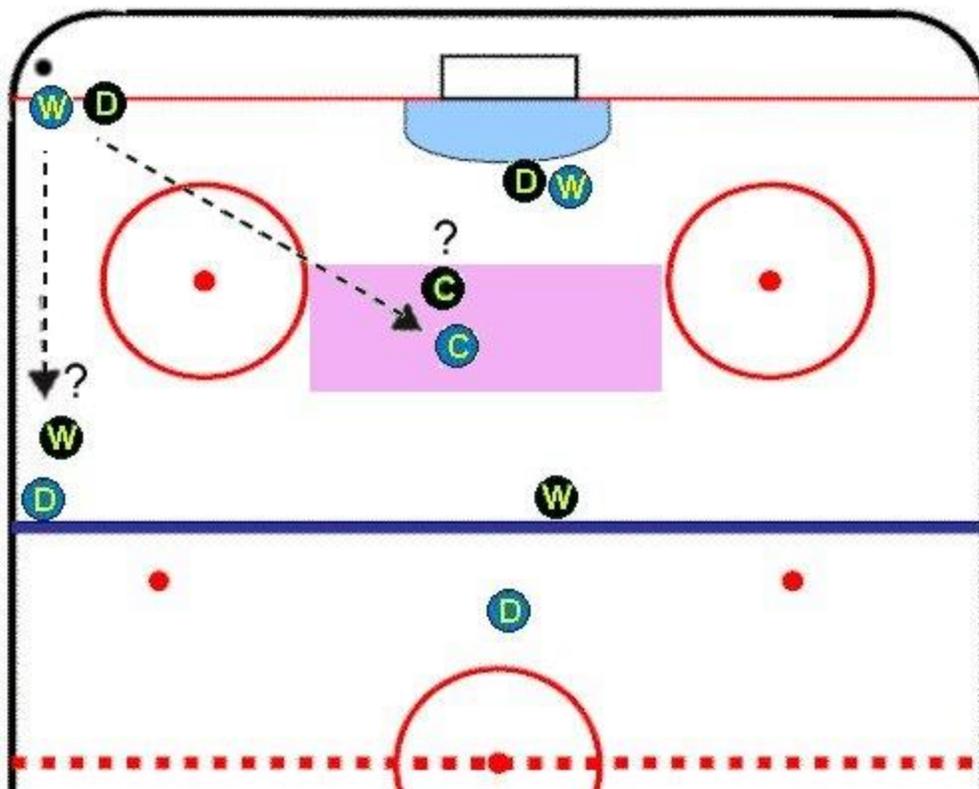
If our first person in has control of the puck then the second person should charge the goal. The third person sets up in the high slot.

The person in the corner with the puck has two high-percentage passes. One is to your point man and the other is to the high slot. You need to pay attention to what the opponents are doing.

In I league it's common for the opposing wings to get sucked down deep into their own zone. If a third person enters the scrum for the puck, pay attention to where he came from. If he came down the boards then there's a good chance that your point man is wide open. Make a firm pass to him. If it's a weak pass then the opponents will be able to catch up to it before it gets to him.

If the third person into the scrum comes from center ice, then the guy in the slot is probably open. In that case, your man in the slot is probably wide open. Usually, that third person will park himself against the boards, expecting you to try passing to the point. Your best bet is to work yourself around the corner a little ways toward the net to get a clear passing lane into the slot.

The player in front of the net has two main tasks. First, screen the goalie. Second, try to take advantage of rebounds.



You screen the goalie by turning to watch the play and try to get between the goalie and the shot. In I league a lot of shots will get through when the goalie can't see the puck.

If it looks like the opposing team is going to try to clear along the boards, DO NOT head to the far boards. If you want to cut it off, do so behind the net. If you go to the far boards then you'll be way too far out of position to have any chance at a rebound, which is where most goals come from. If the puck does end up going across the face of the goal to the far side then you need to scramble to it. You become the guy in the corner and the other guy heads to the net.

It's important for one person to stay in the high slot, between the circles, from the line connecting the face-off dots to the line connecting the top of the circles. A lot of rebounds end up in that area. If you get in too close then the rebound is going to end up behind you, in perfect position for the other team to scoop it up and break out. If you're too close to the blue line then the rebound will never dribble out to you.

The guy in front of the goalie has a couple of other things he can do. One is, if the opposing defense is blocking a lot of passes and shots, this guy can pester them. Make sure they know you're there, bump into them, whack their sticks or their shins. Just mess with their concentration so that they let more shots through.

If the defense isn't good at blocking passes then you can try do the opposite and try to get them to lose track of you. When you first enter the crease they'll probably mess with you. Just back up a few feet and many I league defenders will fixate on the puck and forget you're behind them. Then you can slide back in on the far side of the crease from the play. You'll be wide open for a tip-in.

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### **Face-off basics**

### **Center face-off - we win the draw**

80% of the time we want to pull the puck back to the defense. On those face-offs the wings need to be ready to help get the puck back to the defense. If the puck comes dribbling back slowly then it would be



front of the opposing defense. That should give the wing an opportunity to pass the puck to someone wide open across the ice, giving all three the ability to charge into the zone at full speed.

### **Defensive neutral zone - we win the draw**

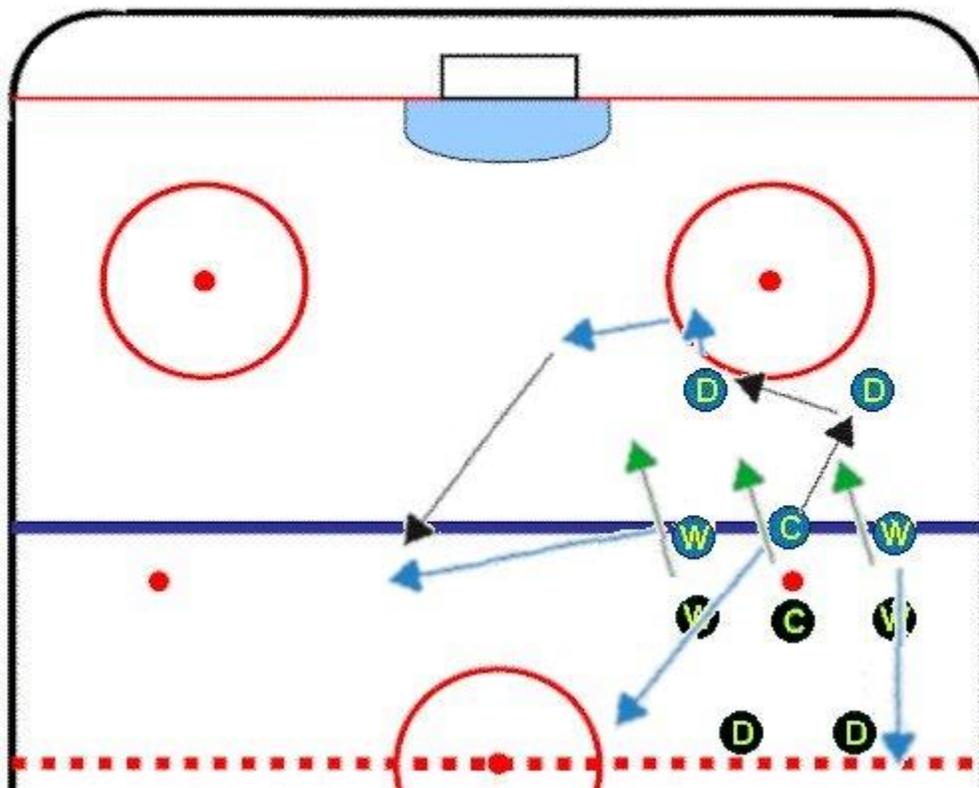
Our goal is to break out to the open side of the ice.

Once again, the center tries to pull back to the defense. If the center gets tied up then the outside wing should be the primary wing to try to help get the puck back to the defense.

If the puck goes to the outside defenseman then he'll immediately pass it to the defenseman on the open side.

Once that happens, the wing on the open side should break across the ice. The defenseman then has the option to pass to that wing or to skate it forward out of the zone himself. Pay attention to what the other team does and talk to each other. If the opposing wing heads toward the puck carrier then he should try to pass it up to the wing quickly. If the opposing wing hangs with our wing then our wing should try to lead him away from the puck

### **Defensive neutral zone - we win the draw**



carrier, usually by heading up-ice. As soon as the opponent breaks free of our wing the puck carrier should make the pass.

While all this is going on the other two on the offensive line should be breaking forward to fill their lanes.