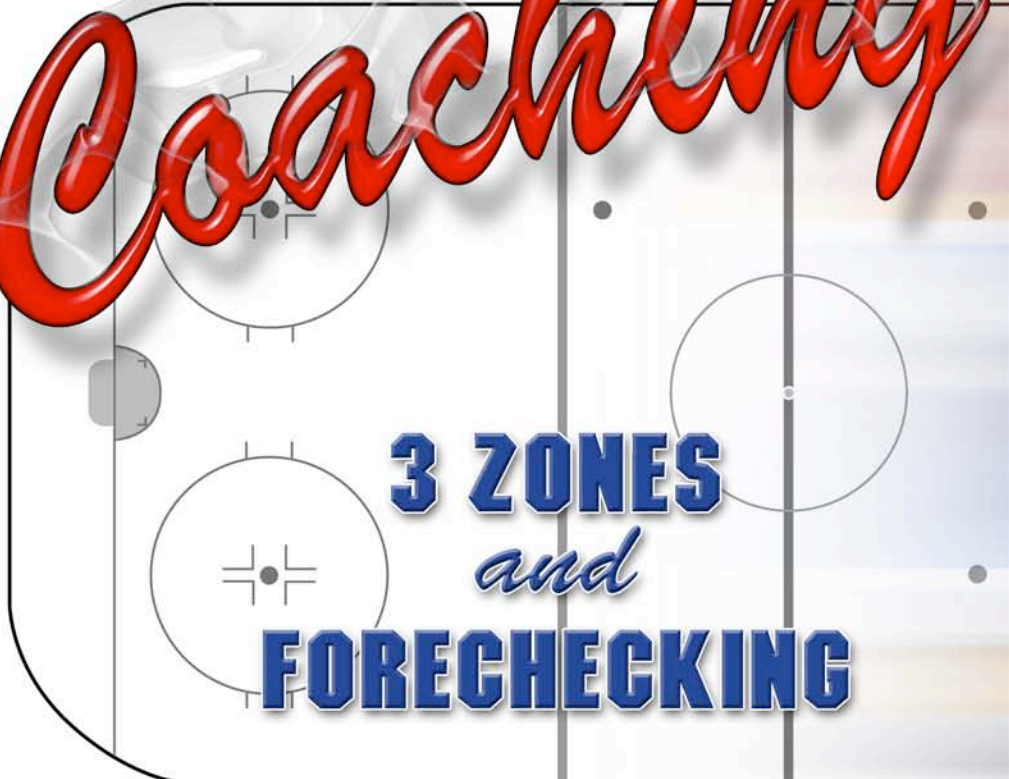


BOB HALKIDIS

Coaching Tips



3 ZONES
and
FORECHECKING

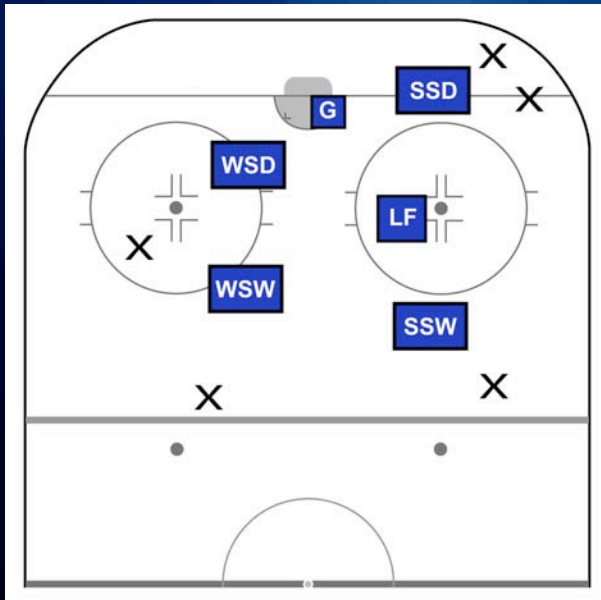
The diagram shows an ice hockey rink with the three zones (defensive, neutral, and offensive) clearly marked. The center circle and face-off circles are also visible.



Defensive Zone Coverage

We have one main system and three secondary systems of coverage in our own zone. They are:

1) **Man and zone combination** (The main system)



These two are playing man to man:

SSD - Strong side defenseman battles and pins the puck carrier. Totally commits to this man and forgets everybody else.

SSW - Strong side wing plays tight to SS opposing pointman. Does not allow this man to touch the puck.

These two are playing zone:

WSD - Weak side defenseman stays off far post. Does not chase, just stays at home.

WSW - Weak side wing cheats into low slot to back up low forward. Weak side pointman is still his responsibility.

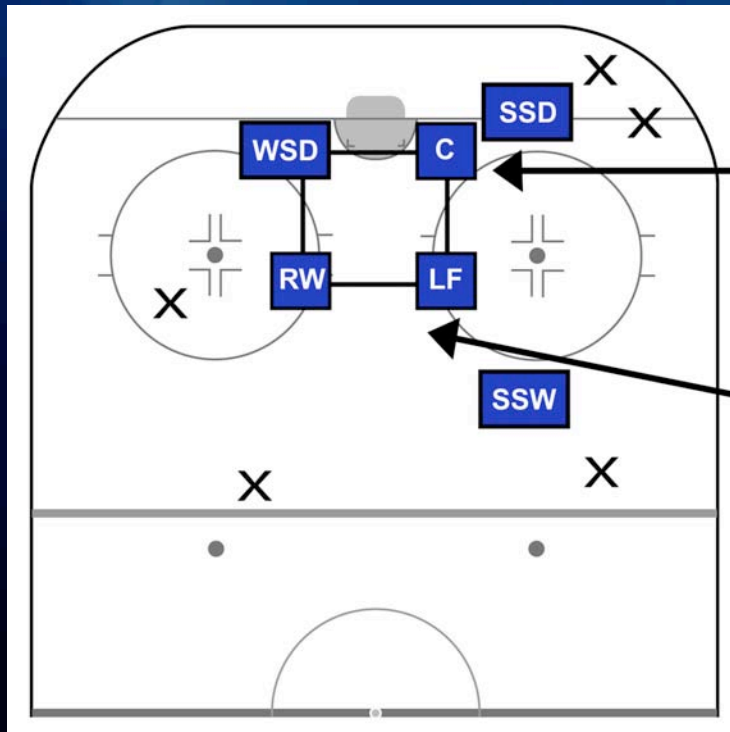
This man is reading the play:

LF - The low forward first plays the zone, waiting for a second attacker to commit, then picks him up. Once he picks up the second forward, he stays man on man.

Defensive Zone Coverage

2) **Box plus one**

We would use this against a team whose foot speed and quickness we can't match. We concede the outer areas and long point shots, but we allow nothing to penetrate the perimeter. Only ONE man pursues the puck, with center backing up the pursuit. Anyone who tries to penetrate the perimeter gets hammered.



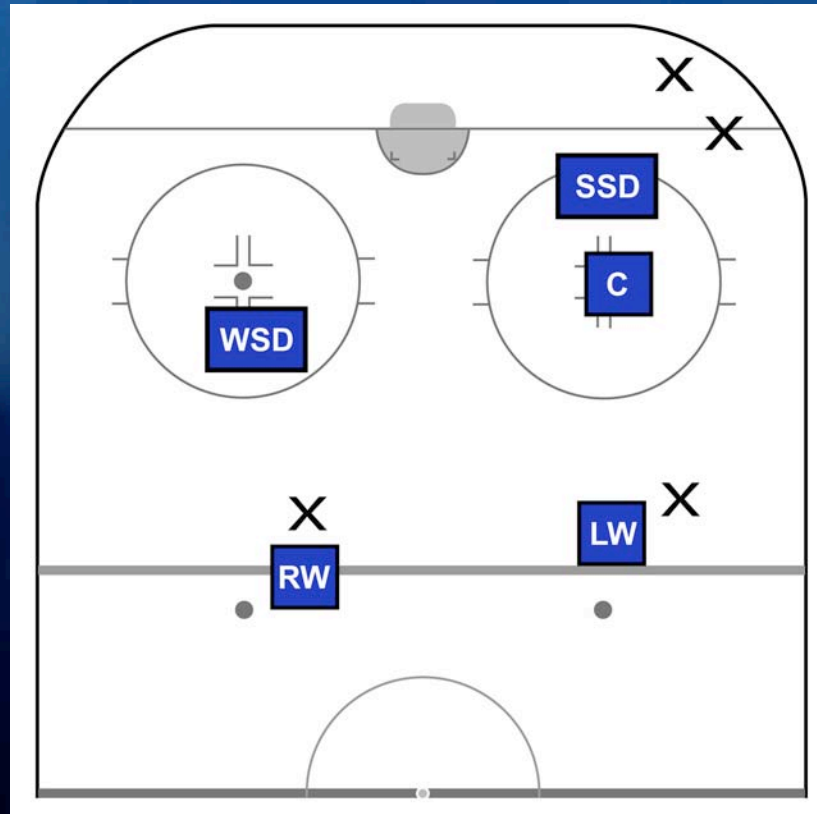
LOW FORWARD DOES NOT LEAVE THE PERIMETER.

2 HIGH FORWARDS CONTRACT TO TOP OF CIRCLES.

Defensive Zone Coverage

3) **Strict man to man**

We might use this against a team we feel we can dominate physically, or is not very quick up front.

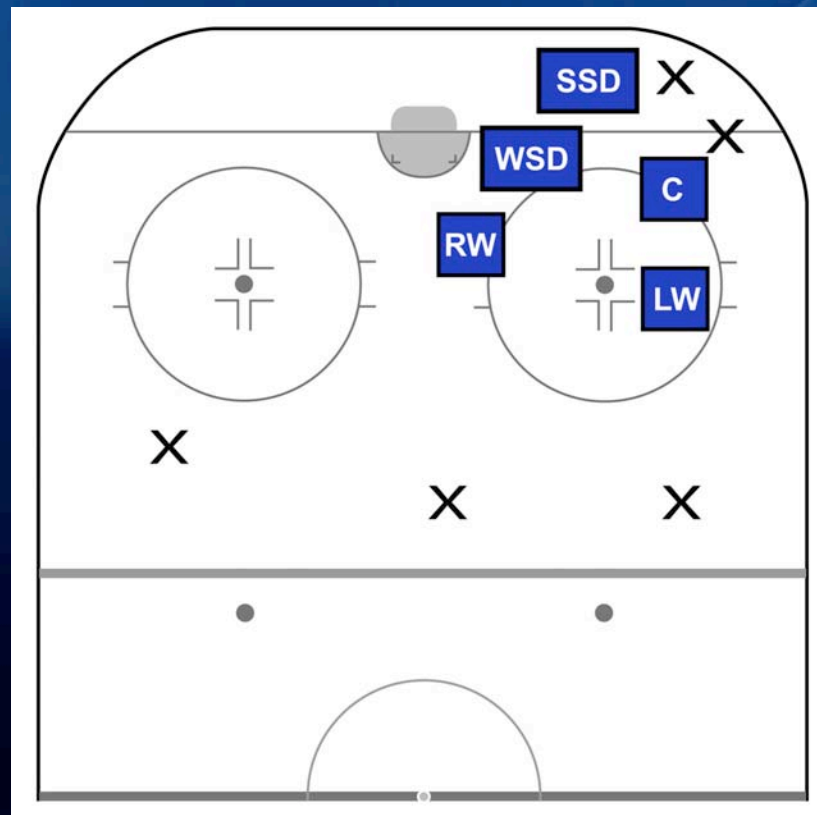


Defensive Zone Coverage

4) **Blanket**

We'll use this against a team that plays a 2-3, 1-4, or any other very passive system.

Here we outnumber them 5 to 2. They have three men open, but there is no way to get it to them through all the congestion. Since they are so badly outnumbered, we get possession quickly.



Elements of Neutral Zone Play

Defensive

We want to make it as difficult as possible for our opponent to advance the puck in the neutral zone. To that end, these are things that we must accomplish in the neutral zone.

1) **Serve a purpose:** When the puck is moving through the neutral zone toward our net, you must serve a purpose. You must not be a spectator watching the other team on offense. You must either be picking up a man, a lane, or closing the gap waiting for the play to dictate your next action.

Elements of Neutral Zone Play

- 2) **Control lanes and get holdups:** Forwards are responsible for picking up attackers in their lane. Once you commit, communicate this to the defenseman on your side. If the man crosses over ahead of the defenseman, remain in your lane. If he attempts to cut behind the defense, stay with him.
- 3) **Deny time and space:** Defensemen control the gap as aggressively as they dare. When their wide lane is picked up by a wing, they are free to step up and play the puck or make the big hit. We do not want to give any time or space to puck-carriers. Front forechecker works hard to force puck-carrier into a hurried decision.

Elements of Neutral Zone Play

4) **Protect the blue line:** We do not want to allow the puck to be skated over our blue line. We want to force our opponent into a turnover or at the very worst a dump-in. If our gap control is good, then we will attempt to protect the red line.

5) **Punish the opponent:** We will not stick check or riverboat gamble in the neutral zone. It is the hallmark of our teams that the neutral zone is where we look for opportunities to wear our opponents out with relentless and ruthless physical play. We make every hit we possibly can.

Elements of Neutral Zone Play

Offensive

On the regroup:

- 1) Occupy two lanes with speed
- 2) Post up the far lane
- 3) Head man the puck
- 4) Read the gap
- 5) Read and support the puck-carrier

On the rush:

- 1) Widen and deepen the attack
- 2) Get the puck to the wide man
- 3) Drive the middle lane
- 4) Read the gap
- 5) Read and support the puck-carrier

Elements of Neutral Zone Play

- Everything we do in the neutral zone while we have the puck is governed by the concept of time and space. If the opponent's gap control is good, therefore denying us the time or space to carry the puck and make a play, we sink the puck deep in their zone. We do not turn the puck over.
- If their gap control is poor, we exploit it with a rush, driving through the middle lane hard at their net, with the puck entering the offensive zone on one of the wide lanes, with the idea of getting the puck to the net.

Elements of Successful Offensive Zone Play

- 1) **Get the puck to the net:** Any puck on it's way to the net has a chance to go in the net. Good offensive teams are not picky about the way they score. We want quantity, not quality.
- 2) **Get traffic around the net:** If we are committed as a team to shooting, we can anticipate pucks going to the net and be positioned to screen, rebound or deflect. Frequently there is a price to pay for driving to the opponent's net. We must be willing to pay it.
- 3) **Pursue the puck:** We want to force mistakes out of our opponents. Take away their time and space and therefore their options. Heavy pursuit leads to defensive breakdowns.

Elements of Successful Offensive Zone Play

4) **Punish the opponent physically:** The obvious value of being physical in their end is that of intimidation, but finishing checks decisively is of tremendous tactical value. When you take an opponent out of the play, you are creating a momentary power play which may lead to a scoring chance.

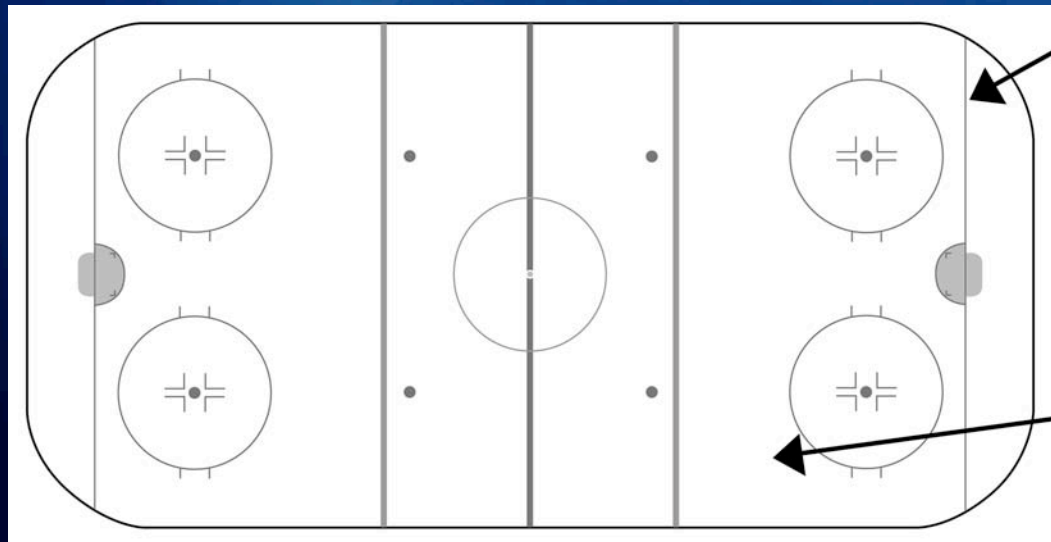
5) **Get open:** We don't need more than two men pursuing the puck. The third man looks for open ice that he may be able to shoot from. Puck-carriers should look for open ice in the seams to draw defenders to them, while looking for the open man.

Elements of Successful Offensive Zone Play

6) **Cycle:** Our high man has the green light to pinch to go to the net. One of the other two must cover for him immediately. When we have possession, we want to be in constant motion, looking for opportunities to shoot, pass, or walk to the net with the puck. One man has the puck, and the other four look for support opportunities.

7) **Be defensively aware:** We must avoid turnovers, bad pinches, too many men caught deep, and offensive zone penalties. If we are to be aggressive, we must be intelligent. A high percentage of the goals most teams give up can be attributed to a lapse in the offensive zone.

Elements of Successful Offensive Zone Play



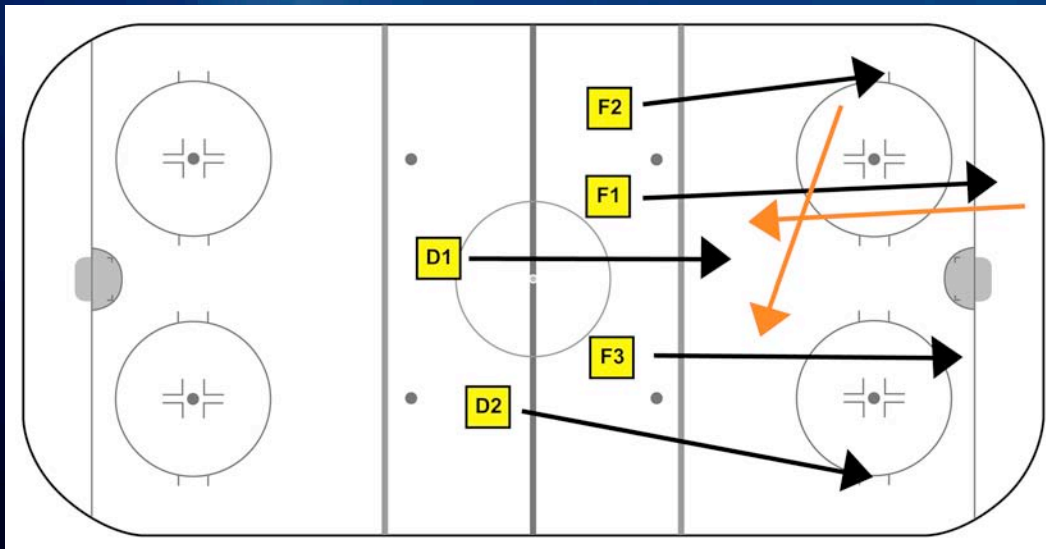
THE PUCK IS HERE...

THE MOST DANGEROUS MAN ON THE ICE IS HERE. THE GOOD GOAL SCORERS COME FROM THE SIDES OF THE ICE AND DO NOT CROWD THE NET TOO EARLY. STAY HIGH IN THE SLOT AND TO THE WEAK SIDE, AND YOU WILL USUALLY BE OPEN., AND SO WILL THE PASSING LANES.

Forechecking Systems Overview

In order of most to least aggressive:

4-1: Good with an aggressive team that will finish checks. Forces many turnovers.



F1 HEAVY PURSUIT OF PUCK, COMES BACK HARD THROUGH MIDDLE

F2 SS WING CUTS OFF SS WRAP, OR BACKS UP D2

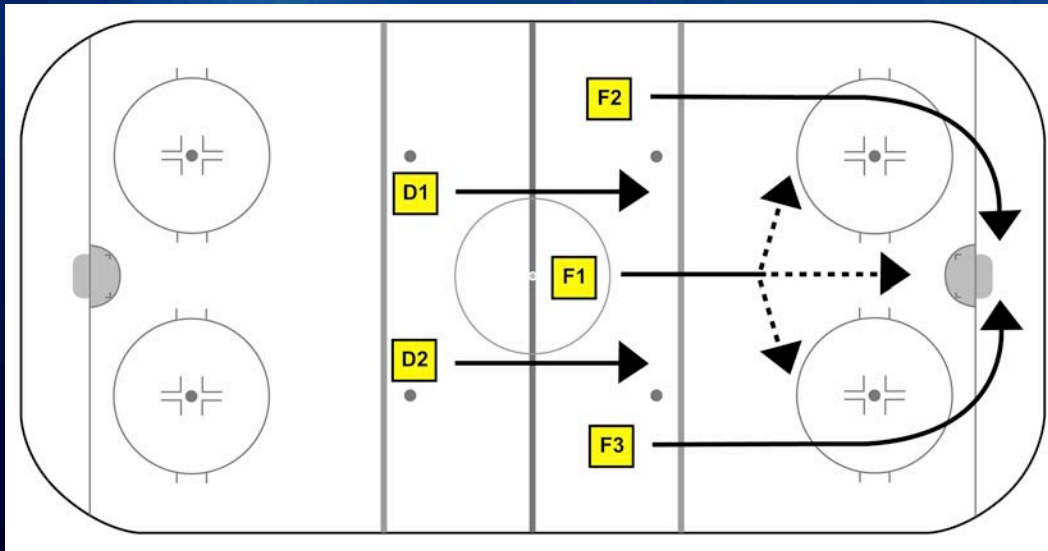
F3 DENIES D TO D PASS

D1 CUTS OFF MIDDLE

D2 CUTS OFF WS WRAP

Forechecking Systems Overview

2-1-2: Aggressive system that can yield offensive zone turnovers. Depends on a smart 3rd man high.



F1 HEAVY PURSUIT

F2 CUTS OFF NET AND FORCES PASS OR WRAP

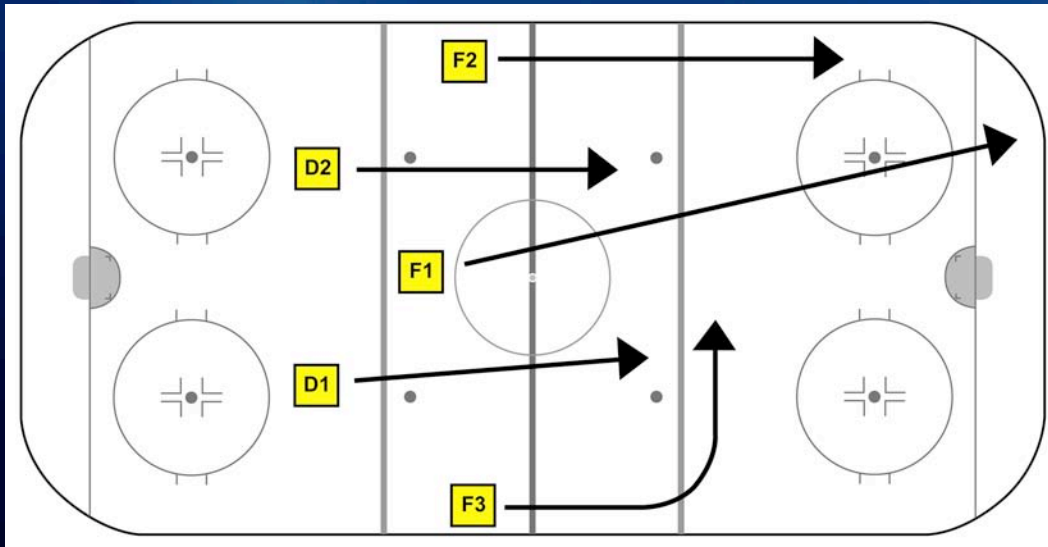
F3 REACTS TO PLAY

D1 REACTS (PINCHES OR RETREATS)

D2 REACTS (PINCHES OR RETREATS)

Forechecking Systems Overview

1-2-2: Can be aggressive or passive



F1 HEAVY PURSUIT

F2 CUTS OFF SS WRAP

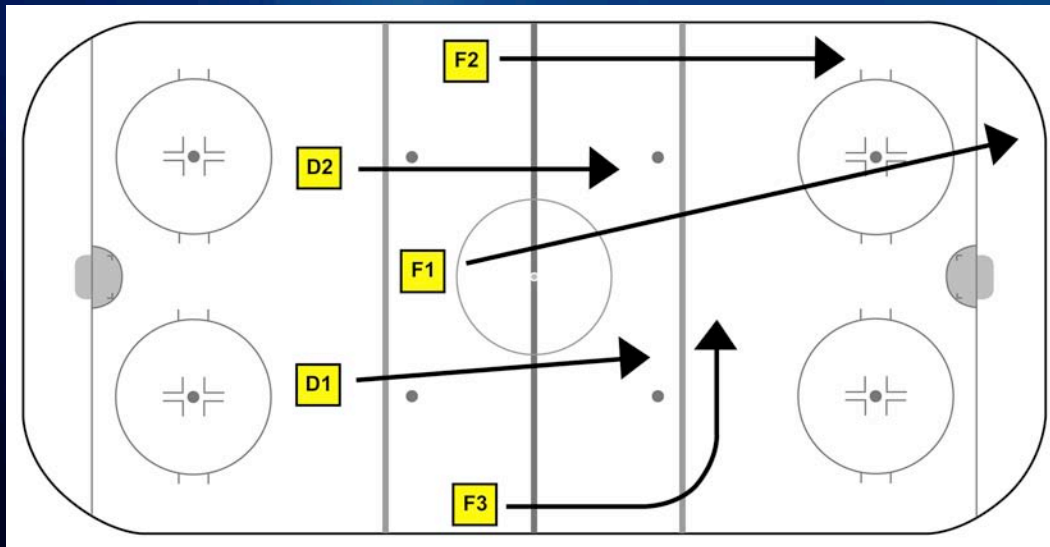
**F3 CUTS OFF WS WRAP,
THEN CUTS ICE IN HALF**

**D1 REACTS (PINCHES
OR RETREATS)**

**D2 REACTS (PINCHES OR
RETREATS)**

Forechecking Systems Overview

2-3: Allows for two forecheckers to be aggressive while extra man on blue line prevents odd man rushes.



F2 PENETRATES AND PURSUES

F3 BACKS UP F2 AND REACTS TO F2'S ACTION

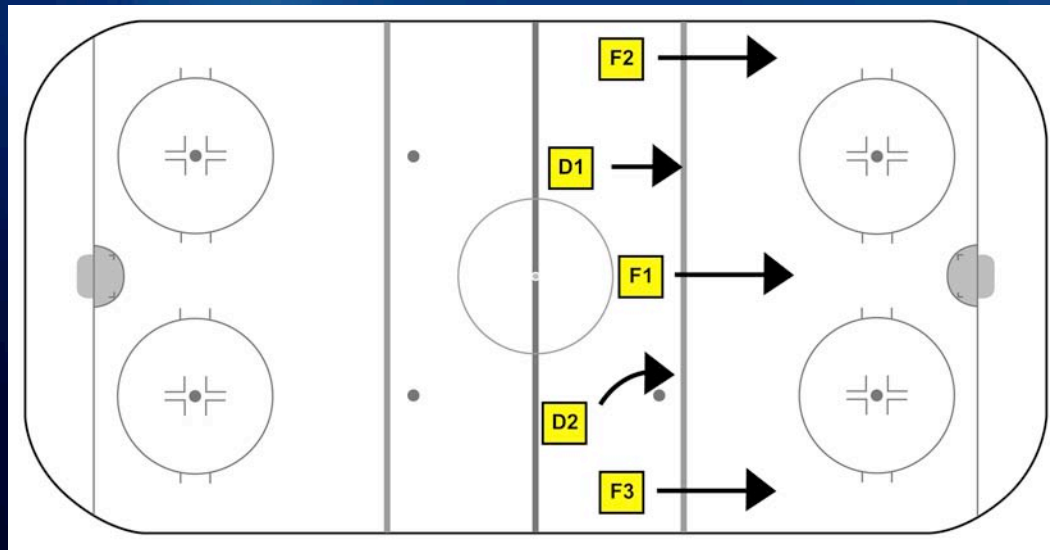
D1 REACTS (PINCHES OR RETREATS)

D2 REACTS (PINCHES OR RETREATS)

F1 IN EFFECT, IS ANOTHER DEFENSEMAN. DOES NOT PENETRATE. MIGHT PINCH IN HIGHER PERCENTAGE SITUATION.

Forechecking Systems Overview

1-4: Defensive oriented system that doesn't allow odd man rushes. Few offensive zone turnovers created.



F1 PATIENTLY WAITS,
THEN FRONTS PUCK-
CARRIER

F2 PICKS UP HIS LANE

F3 PICKS UP HIS LANE

D1 STAYS UP IN GAP

D2 STAYS UP IN GAP

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3 ZONES
and
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