



Offensive Face-offs.

You always read or hear NHL players talk about doing the 'little things' that help to win hockey games and one of those little things is Face-offs. Everyone has a responsibility on a face-off and the teams that control face-offs, control the puck more and usually end up winning those games.

The Offensive face-off is a part of the game that is often taken lightly but presents a very good opportunity to score. It is one time during a game that you know exactly where your opponents are set up in their zone, so you can turn this into a good scoring opportunity with set plays.

There are a number of different plays that can be executed. The basic offensive face-off set up is: centreman in the middle, wingers on both sides and defense behind. Here are three alternate examples you can try to create scoring chances:

1. Have the wingers switch sides so that they are on their off wings. From the right hand face-off circle have the centreman win the face-off back, the left winger (presuming it is a left shot) can come off the Right side boards, around the top of the face-off circle and would be in a great shooting position with the right winger in front of the net creating a screen. This can also be done on the left side with the right winger coming off the boards.
2. Another option is to have the defense switch sides. With the face-off on the right hand circle you have the Left defense (or left shot) on the boards and the Right Defenseman (or right shot) in the middle of the ice creating a one-timer. Therefore with your basic face-off set up, the centreman wins the draw back to the defenseman on the boards who would then pass it to the defenseman in the middle for a one-timer. The wingers drive to the front of the net to create interference.
3. When I played for the Florida Panthers, one of our best centremen was Brian Skrudland. His favorite set play was on the right side face-off circle – he would win the puck forward into the closest corner. He would then beat their centreman and defenseman to the puck and make a blind pass behind the net. In the meantime, the Left winger that was in front of the net would circle behind the net (usually) on the far side, receive the pass behind the net and would then pass the puck in front to the Right winger that had been on the boards. We had great success with this and scored a number of times.

A couple of key things to remember about face-offs in any zone:

1. Always make sure everyone on your team is ready.
2. Always make sure everyone knows what they are doing on each face-off.
3. Try different things to keep your opponent off balance.

Best of luck throughout the season. I hope this helps you score more goals!

Mike Hough