

## **Coaches Corner:**

### **Today's Topic:**

#### **What do we call the four player positions of inline hockey?**

This is a never-ending discussion with inline coaches and players. Most teams will line up to start the game with two players in the forward position and two players in the defense position. Some with three up and one in the middle back (this is usually a team with lots of confidence).

The big question is what do we call the different positions, to help teach players and to help make it very clear what the responsibilities of each position are.

I will only reference what we have taught at the National Team Level and what we will continue to teach for our High Performance Program with CIHA.

The four positions are referred to as Center Forward / Forward / Defense / Safety. The only difference between the C-F and F is that one of these players is designated to take the face-offs, other than that their responsibilities are inter-changeable.

The key to this is that your defenseman's sole responsibility is to "stay at home" or to always have all the other team players in front of him and not get caught up the floor. The safety is the second defenseman or the third forward!

The safety is the key guy in your four man system - he must know when to jump into the play -- know when to "bail out" of the rush - be solid on defense when needed - support his defense partner - control the breakout pace - and have patience.

It is important that your team learn that when your team has possession of the puck that everyone is now on Offence (and your job is to get in position to support the puck carrier) and when the other team has the puck we are all on Defense. Inline is such a team game that all players must work together as a unit and not have expectations that someone else will do it.... because that sounds like his job -- ie. Defense should be the only guy playing defense!

Remind your team that throwing a long pass half the floor length to a teammate may be good to clear the pressure from your net, but is not worth the effort if the player you passed to has to now play 1 vs 3 or 2 vs 3 on the rush. It is good to relieve the pressure from your end and sometimes better to re-group so you can attack the opponents as a unit with hopes of catching one or two of their players going the wrong way, thus creating an odd man rush.

Hoping this helps with your team this year. Keep in mind that a player sometimes does not always want to be the defenseman, he also wants to be the safety or a forward. Learning to play the other positions makes for a better player in the long run.