

SPECIAL SITUATIONS: Holding a lead * Play late in a period
*** Getting back into the game**

“Children learn in ways adults can no longer remember and make mistakes in ways adults can not predict.”

KEY POINTS TO CONSIDER:

This is minor hockey. Approaches used with adults who have the benefit of years of playing experience behind them rarely apply in minor hockey. Make no assumptions. Everything is new, every play an adventure, every attempt a beginning.

- 1 Reminders are of little value unless something has been taught/introduced.
Eg. “Don’t forget to draw the puck back on the faceoff to the defence.” But when has that ever been a deliberate, practiced play?
- 2 These are not times to experiment. Leave that for practice or exhibition games or controlled scrimmages.
- 3 Do NOT review these special situations before games.
It may create the wrong mindset, that you are predicting trouble. It also tends to make kids focus on tasks unrelated to what the majority of their energy should be spent on.
- 4 Remain calm. Wild arm gesticulations and shouting tends to raise the anxiety level. It’s difficult to focus on a task and mentally prepare amidst noise and the perception that the coach is borderline wacko!
- 5 What is your contingency plan for when things backfire or just don’t work?
Eg. You’re holding a lead in the last minute and on a power play. Then the other team scores to tie it. What will you do? Who goes on? What will you say? What approach is needed? What emotion is needed and appropriate?
 (“...and make mistakes in ways...”)
- 6 Do not give explanations.
Eg. “Joe, you’ll stand in the slot facing the net when the puck is dropped because that way you can...”
No! No time! Tell ‘em what to do and move on.
Be concise.

- 7 If able to, and time permitting, or you're sneaky enough to be able to steal a few seconds at the bench, address the entire team. They have to be able to see your face as you talk. Also, you have to be able to count on more than just the immediate players on the ice to do the task. Get everyone involved and you never know who might come through for you.
- 8 Start with the hot guys. Reputations don't mean a great deal in minor hockey where consistency, growth, maturity etc. change from one month to the next. Go with who is making the most impact that day. Because:
- it rewards effort and current production
 - it virtually eliminates any suggestion of favouritism
 - it spreads the wealth (opportunities) on the team
- There are a handful of kids you may be able to count on daily. But you need more than a handful to accomplish the above tasks

Holding a lead * Play late in a period		
Defensive Zone:	<i>Sag in and low</i>	Take away the 2 nd and 3 rd shots from in close. Force peripheral shots.
	<i>Immediate pressure on puckcarrier:</i>	Usually offence is looking for the big or pretty play. Take away the time. Pressure works.
	<i>No passes on transition</i>	Carry to nearest hole and shoot it out
	<i>High clears</i>	Tougher to stop.
	<i>No rim passes to wings</i>	Easy to pinch on. Predictable
	<i>Active sticks</i>	Tip passes or long shots. Disconcerting for puckcarrier
	<i>Slow line changes on faceoff</i>	Slows momentum. Get kids on the ice then move slowly.
	<i>No D to D passes</i>	Dangerous and inconsistent play in minor hockey.
	<i>Goalie freezes everything</i>	No chances on weak passes or clears
	<i>Use the boards</i>	Very tough in minor to control the puck in the awkward space along boards
	<i>Always pass ahead, never sideways or back</i>	Most puck losses occur on errant lateral plays or carries
Neutral Zone:	<i>Gain centre ice as fast as possible, with or without puck</i>	Soft dump along boards in neutral or up the middle.
	<i>One forechecker who does NOT commit, but funnels</i>	2 forwards wait for pass, both defence between the dots. Have weakside forward take their far side player.
	<i>No upwards movement of def. when opposition has puck</i>	They are better off standing still than moving in the wrong direction.
	<i>No regroup</i>	A big risk. Move it into their zone.
	<i>Play ping pong!</i>	They dump it up boards, you dump it out...etc.
	<i>If they give you a lane to attack, take it!!!</i>	No matter what, the puck must get to the net
Offensive Zone:	<i>On even strength attack, dump</i>	Take no chances on an outnumbered attack against
	<i>On 1 on 1, drive to the net</i>	You never know...
	<i>No D to D passes at blueline</i>	Far too risky in minor hockey. Get the puck low.

Offensive zone (cont'd):	<i>In-fighting along boards, don't expect much help so keep puck low and don't make blind passes</i>	Can't afford to have a 2 nd attacker jump in unless guaranteed possession. And, they can't score from behind their goalline
	<i>Shoot</i>	Shooting is rarely a bad play. Take stuff off the shot to ensure it's on net. No shots from wide angles, however. Eat it instead
	<i>No passes to the point from slot or corners</i>	Keep the puck going to the net, not away from it. When you have pressure near the net, maintain the pressure or turn it up.
	<i>No back/drop passes</i>	Move puck forward. At least you know where it is.
	<i>Avoid unnecessary bodychecks</i>	Check only to block a player's path from the zone. Use the stick instead

* Getting Back into the Game *	
<i>One goal at a time!</i>	A series of short objectives is more manageable. Go for control and real estate, then let's see what happens...
<i>Beat the 1st forechecker as fast as possible</i>	Use a carry if possible
<i>Avoid breakout passes to stationary wings</i>	Too easy to pinch. Look for movement
<i>Both def. MUST jump in</i>	Think as trailing forwards.
<i>Gain lane between dots</i>	Provides more fanning pass options
<i>Use a chip past nearest def., then chase with 2 forwards</i>	Easier to skate to a puck in space, especially when a team is bottling up an area
<i>2 on puck in neutral, with close rear support from def.</i>	Flood a small area of zone. If puck lost, outnumber on transition 3 to 1!
<i>Take it wide and deep with 1 man in very close support</i>	A carry is best. Get puck below dots. It's easier for attacker to skate in straight line and maintain control
<i>Everything to the net – always!</i>	Duh.
<i>On scrambles, def. drop down. 2 Forwards on edge of crease, 1 in slot.</i>	How far is determined by age level. Eg. Atom can go inside ringette line.
<i>From behind net, use wraparounds and walkouts</i>	Passes to point or slot are too dangerous and take puck away from net
<i>Forecheck with 2 + both def. pinch. Watch for wide rim.</i>	To regain puck, you must get it. Often you get it by forcing an error rather than stripping someone of puck
<i>On transition in offensive half, shoot or drive to net</i>	Everyone else is support staff looking for garbage
<i>Neutral zone: if you normally use 1 man forecheck, stay with it. But have def. push up closer and between dots with support forwards taking any pass outside the dots.</i>	Don't bodycheck, but play the body and block lanes. On transition, dump it back in shallow (closer to your forecheckers since you will only have 1 close to puck)

<p><i>Pulling the goalie</i></p>	<p>Have replacement at door nearest to their zone Send him when goalie is 10' away Send him to net if you have puck in lower half of off. zone. Send him to closest quiet zone boards if you have puck in upper half to be support Send him to just over centre if you are on way out of your zone. He must move to support puckcarrier. Role is to stay near net OR work passes. Nothing else. Everyone must know this If puck leaves zone, he hangs around their blueline on transition. Player must be gritty, quick, tough and relentless. Size is completely unimportant since he is not there to stand as a pylon for screen shots (as in pro). Others can be pretty. You need someone who will wreak havoc immediately. You may need to change 2-3 players, but not all, on the fly. Do NOT change defence unless on rush out of your zone. On faceoffs, have 1 at boards, 2 in slot, 1 on circle, 1 inside blueline. (clean faceoff wins are rare. You need to circle the wagons) Make players line up right away. Hurry the play before the defence can get mentally prepared. Get centre to dot and ready immediately.</p>
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