



Puck handling in traffic

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Everyone wants to skate down the wing with the puck without having a defender hanging all over him. In reality, you're more likely to find yourself trying to stickhandle through a maze of skates and sticks while keeping your head up so you don't get your block knocked off by a defender.

A hockey game is made up of a series of one-on-one battles.

How you prepare yourself for these battles will be the difference between winning and losing games.

The most crucial battles often take place in prime traffic zones, which are the slot and the corners. The level of intensity in traffic has to be extremely high. You have to be able to think on your feet and be able to withstand physical contact while maintaining possession of the puck.

Tip #1

You want to have a low center of gravity so you can maintain your balance and keep control of the puck. Keep your knees bent and your feet shoulder width apart to create a solid base.

Tip #2

Defensemen are taught to play the body (keeping themselves between the net and their opponent) and control your stick with a stick check. Keeping your hand low on the shaft of the stick gives you more control of the puck during body or stick contact, making it more difficult for your opponent to lift your stick.



Tip #3

Use your body as a shield to keep the puck away from your opponent's reach. Keep your head up so you can anticipate how you might be defended, and can keep the puck as far away from your opponent as possible.

Tip #4

Keep your head up so you know where you are on the ice at all times. It will also allow you to read the ice while looking for a chance to shoot or pass the puck to a teammate and avoid defensive contact.

Remember This ...

Keep your feet moving at all times. If you're moving good things can happen. You can create 2-on-1s, jump into open space and put yourself into a good scoring position. And remember, it's a lot harder to defend a moving target.