



## The Value of Individual Stats

Hockey is a team game, and with very few exceptions, it takes all 6 players on the ice to create the goal scoring stats that everybody seems to want. As I tell my players and their parents at the beginning of the season, "the only thing certain about statistics is that they are wrong". Players and parents who are fixated on statistics really do not understand that statistics alone do not advance a player. Goals, assists and plus minus are only a small part of the story for each player.

College and professional scouts look at 22-25 categories when evaluating a players potential for playing at higher levels. The goals and assists stats that are reported are only two of the categories. It is quite likely that the two more important statistics are never reported; GPA and ACT scores.

Youth and high school coaches should be very careful in their use of statistics. I can remember a pee wee coach who posted the stats after every game. By mid year the players were arguing over them each week and they quit passing the puck to each other in pursuit of personal stats.

Tracking give aways, take aways, and blocked shots is very valuable information to high school coaches. Even at the top levels of the game some teams fail to do this and as a result do not have a clear picture of player effectiveness. Plus minus and face off wins is also important to know for coaches and players.

The problem with statistics, especially at the youth and high school level is getting them done accurately and consistently. At the high school level the best way to do stats is to breakdown the game film. This also has challenges as we had a camera freeze mid way though a game due to the very cold arena we were playing in. Some nights our camera person seems to be somewhat distracted and the film is not as good as we would like it to be. This method is time consuming as it takes one half hours to break down each game.

The use of extensive stats should begin at the bantam/u14 level as an introduction to statistics for the players. Below bantams statistics are unnecessary and will not provide any real value to players or coaches.

As with any coaching tool, statistics can be helpful or harmful. If you use them be sure to use them correctly.

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