

The lost art of passing the biscuit

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Some of you may recall an archived column from a few years back in which I took my fellow coaches to task for not placing nearly enough emphasis on passing.

Well, guess what?

Not much has changed.

I've watched scores of games over the past year in which two or three tape-to-tape passes were a rarity.

Why?

Because too many coaches do not understand that you cannot magically create an excellent distributor of the biscuit by simply shouting, "Pass it, darn it!"

The ability to pass is predicated upon several factors. Let's examine a few of them:

1. SKATING POSTURE

You can never become a high-level passer if your knees aren't severely bent, or your back and head aren't set properly. It also helps if your stick is cut to the correct height, is taped efficiently (blade and knob), and you do not have a Stan Mikita (circa 1966) banana curve on the blade.

2. PUCKHANDLING ABILITY

You must have a strong "feel" for the puck. In other words, be able to handle it while "looking up/out" from a stationary position/and or while moving.

3. THOROUGH UNDERSTANDING OF THE BASIC MECHANICS

I know that the professionals make it look very easy, but there are most certainly a number of essential fundamentals (beyond what is above) that must be mastered prior to becoming a Gretzky-like passing wizard. Coaches, this is where you enter the picture. You **MUST** be capable of both communicating and demonstrating the afore-mentioned building blocks. If you are not 100 percent sure of what they are, please do some research.

4. UNSELFISHNESS

You **MUST** convince your players that a good pass **IS EVERY BIT** as important as a pretty goal, especially at the Travel level or higher. You see, once you exit House hockey, you seldom witness one player dominating a contest.

In closing, I urge all coaches and parents to develop "complete" team players. I absolutely guarantee that if you do so, you will be making an incredibly valuable contribution to the future success of that player.

So, consider taking the first step: **TEACH THEM HOW TO PASS!**

BONUS TIP

A properly executed backhand pass is a seriously potent offensive or defensive weapon. Have your players spend three-to-four minutes each practice working towards mastering it.