



3.0 Tactics and Lines

Tactics have been greatly improved in EHM 2007 as there are more options, giving the user greater flexibility and control over how their team plays. The drawback to this, however, is that it appears to be much more intimidating new users who have little knowledge of ice hockey or of EHM. New users need not be intimidated as the Tactics Screen is set out very logically and short explanations of each feature will give users a good start.

This guide is intended to be descriptive, allowing users to understand what each tactical command does rather than giving instructions on what to do. The great flexibility EHM offers means that there is no hard and fast rule. Instead, many different styles can work; it's just a matter of looking at what talents your team has at its disposal and then fine-tuning the tactics to their skills. It's perfectly possible (and Shadd has done this) to win the Stanley Cup using a very defensive system. Something to keep in mind throughout this guide is to **set your tactics according to the strengths of your team.**

If you don't want to choose your own lineups and/or tactics, click on the 'Ask Coach' button located in the bottom left corner of the screen.

The Tactics Interface has been split into four screens, each accessible from the top left of the screen:

- Set Lines – this is the screen you are presented with when you access Tactics from another screen (e.g. from the Roster Screen).
- Tactics
- View Units
- Personal Tactics



3.1 Set Lines

From this screen, the user can choose his lines. The list on the left half of the screen shows which players have been dressed. They are ordered according to position. The right half of the screen shows which players are playing on each line.

To put a player on a line, click on the player's number (located to the left of his name) in the list and then click on a position in a line you wish to place him. A player can play in as many lines as you like but only in one position per line. Under the Goalies section there are two positions (S and B). The S is for the starting goalie and the B is for the backup.

It is possible to swap players between positions on the same line. For example, if you had Boyes playing at centre on the first line and Primeau playing at right wing on the first line and you wanted to swap them over, you can click on Boyes' number located in the left hand list and then click on Primeau's name located at first line right wing and they will switch positions.

The 'Tactics' drop-down button in the top right of the screen allows lineups, team tactics and unit tactics to be saved and loaded.

3.2 Tactics / Team Tactics

From the Tactics Screen, the user can set general team options as well as tactical options that apply to every line. The drop-down menu located at the top right of the screen (initially labelled 'Even Str.') allows the user to view the tactical options for each type of line (even strength / powerplay / penalty kill).

The user has two choices:

- Have the same tactical instructions for each type of line (i.e. all four even strength lines will have the same set of instructions, both powerplay lines will have the same set of instructions, etc) or;

- Have different tactical instructions for each unit (i.e. have a set of instructions for line 1, another set for line 2, etc).

It might be simpler for new users to have the same set of tactical instructions for each type of line as it involves less decisions and tweaking. However, unless each line has a similar set of players, it is better to have individual tactical instructions for each unit in order to get the best out of each unit.

To have the same tactical instructions for each type of line, ensure that the box labelled 'Use Unit Tactics' located in the Advanced Options section of this screen is unticked. The sections labelled Tactical Settings and Tactical Systems as well as the 'Defensive Systems' option (located in the Advanced Options section) control the tactical instructions. Use the drop-down box located at the top right of the screen to switch between each type of line (mentioned above).

To use different tactical instructions for each unit, click on the 'Use Unit Tactics' box. The tactical instructions displayed on this page are then disabled because unit tactics are set on the Unit Tactics screen. Enabling this option changes the name of the Tactics screen to Team Tactics and also the View Units screen to Unit Tactics.

The various Tactical Options and Tactical Settings as well as the Tactical Positioning diagram are discussed below.

A useful feature is the 'Edit' drop-down button located at the top right of the screen. This allows the team tactics for a certain situation to be copied and pasted to another situation. For example, the even strength tactics can be copied and then pasted to the powerplay tactics.

3.2.1 General Team Options

Regardless of whether you choose to set instructions according to line type or according to each individual unit, the General Team Options section of the screen is still used.

Captain & Alternate Captains: One captain and two alternate captains can be selected. The captain will lead your team; the alternates will lead the team while the captain is not on the ice. An alternate captain spot could be used for a younger player who could go on to become captain in the future. Attributes that make a good captain include: influence, teamwork, determination and workrate (a captain needs to lead by example).

Extra attackers: If you're one goal down with only a few minutes of the game left, you might want to take your goalie off the ice and replace him with an extra attacker in order to create more goal-scoring chances. This is called pulling the goalie. This order designates which player will come on to replace the goalie. The first extra attacker spot will be the first choice to replace your goalie, thus it ought to be your best goal-scorer or playmaker. The second choice is used when the first choice is already on the ice and so it would be wise to set him as someone who is not on the same line as your first choice.

Forward usage: The ice time distribution for the forward lines.

- ***Normal:*** The first line plays the most ice time and the fourth line has the least time on the ice.
- ***Equal:*** All four lines will have similar lengths of time on the ice.

- **Overload:** The top two lines receive the most ice time.
- **Just three:** Just the top three lines play. The fourth line won't play at all.
- **Just two:** Plays just the top two lines.

Defensive usage: The ice time distribution for the defensive lines.

- **Normal:** The top defensive line plays the most ice time and the bottom line plays the least.
- **Equal:** All defensive lines play equal lengths of time.
- **Overload:** The top two lines play the most.
- **Just two:** Only the top two lines play.

Powerplay usage: The ice time distribution for the powerplay lines.

- **Favour 1st:** The first PP line plays the most ice time.
- **Equal:** Both PP lines play a similar amount of time.

Line matching: Using this order it is possible to set a certain line to play against a certain line of the opposition. This is useful if you want your more defensive forward line to play against the opposition's first line (the line where their best forwards will be in), for instance.

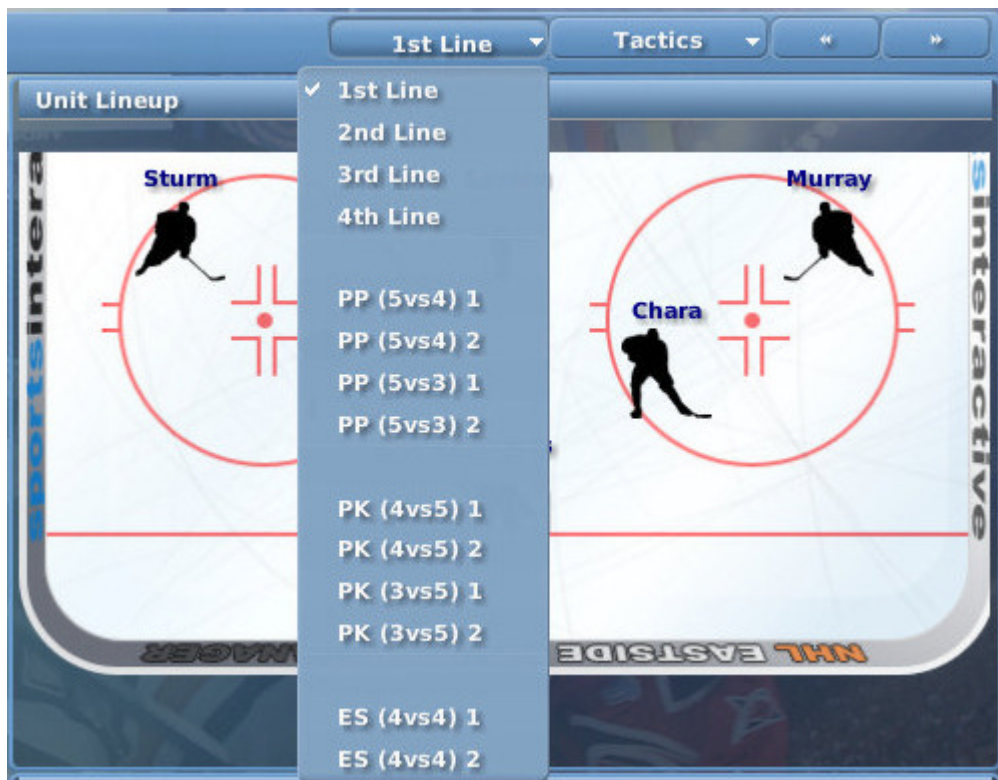
Shot targeting: It is possible to instruct your players to aim for a certain part of the goal. If you find that a certain goalie seems to be letting a lot of goals in a certain part of the net (use the shot chart which is accessible during matches) then it might pay off to concentrate on that part of the net. If the goalie has a weak glove then it might be an idea to aim for the glove. Likewise, if they have a weak blocker then aim for their stick-side.



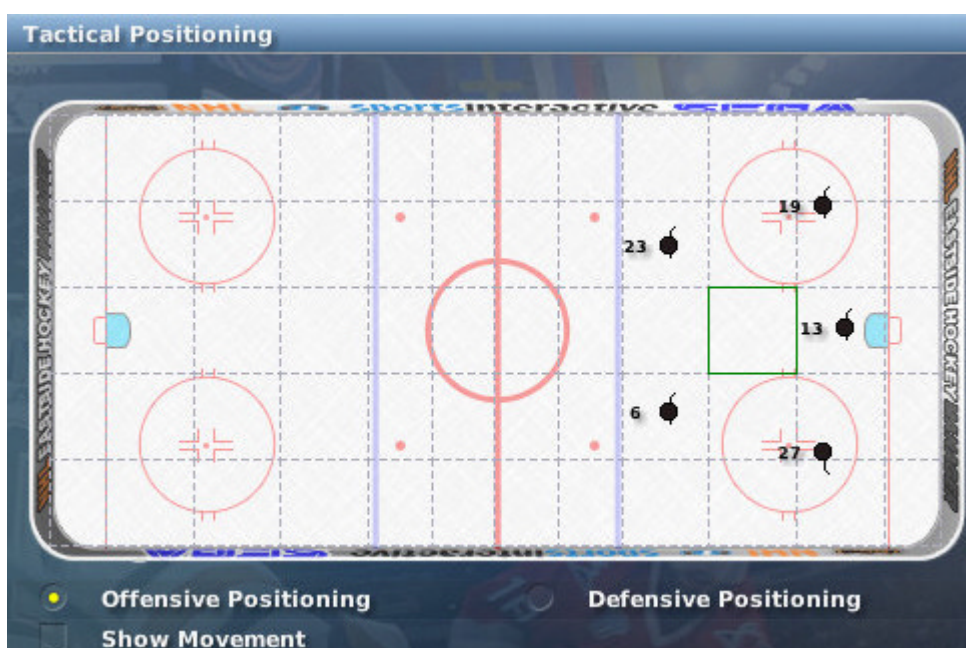
3.3 View Units / Unit Tactics

This screen allows the user to set individual line tactics if he has chosen to do so. In order to enable this screen, the 'Use Unit Tactics' box must be ticked. This box is located in the General Information section (as well as the Tactics Screen).

To switch between units, use the buttons with arrows on or click on the button that is initially labelled '1st Line' (both are located at the top right of the screen).



The 'Show Positioning' option switches between showing the Unit Lineup diagram (when disabled) and the Tactical Positioning diagram (when enabled). The Unit Lineup diagram shows who is playing in which position on that line.



The Tactical Positioning diagram shows how each unit will be positioned whilst on the offence and on the defence. Right-clicking on a square in the diagram will show where the players will be placed when the puck is in that square. With the 'Offensive Positioning' option selected, it will show how the players will be positioned on the offence. Conversely, with the 'Defensive Positioning' option it will show how the player will be positioned on the defence. This is useful for seeing how the various offensive and defensive systems work, as well as forechecking and neutral zone defensive and offensive systems.

The 'Show Movement' option will show how the players will move (in what direction and how far) when the puck is moved between two squares. Right click in two different squares to find out how the players will move when the puck moves from the first square to the second.

The General Information section also displays star ratings for each unit as to how good they are at offence and defence as well as how fast, skilful and tough they are. These ratings are useful for getting a general idea as to how competent each unit is when deciding what tactics each unit should play. For example, it is no use instructing a unit that is poor at offence to play with an attacking mentality. Nor is it a wise idea to instruct a unit lacking in skills to play creative passing.

Tactical Settings and Tactical Systems are discussed below.

3.3.1 Unit Options

Faceoffs: Choose which player in the unit should take faceoffs. Usually it's the role of the centre to take faceoffs but it may be wise to change this if the centre is weak at taking faceoffs. If no-one is selected, the AI will make the forward with the highest faceoff attribute take faceoffs.

Playmaker: Choose which player in the unit should have the main responsibility for setting up plays. If no-one is skilled enough to take on this responsibility then it may be best to not assign it to anyone. A playmaker needs to be able to read ahead of the play and be creative as well as be good at passing the puck. Thus, important attributes include: anticipation, creativity and passing. Speed could also be useful.

Shift length: Set how long the unit plays on the ice before a line change is called. Usually shifts are between 20 and 40 seconds, with more ice-time for the top lines. Longer shifts will more tire the players more.

Defensive coverage: Set how the unit will defend.

- **Zonal:** Players defend an area of the ice.
- **Man-to-man:** Players are assigned a specific player to man-mark.

3.4 Personal Tactics

This screen allows the user to set tactics for each individual player. These instructions will override whatever tactical instructions his line type or unit have been given. Personal tactics are useful if a particular player has an outstanding strength or skill. To set a personal tactic, the box to the right of the instruction must be ticked.

For example, a unit may be set to 'Normal' passing as all but one player in this unit have particularly great passing skills. This one player could then have his passing set to 'Creative' in order to allow him to set up more creative and daring plays.

Another possibility is setting an individual player to play more offensively than the rest of his unit.

However, there is a danger of causing disarray and a lack of cohesion amongst units if many players have different personal tactics. Instructing each player on a unit to play at a different mentality, for example, could create gaps in defence and a lack of players in offence leading to giveaways and conceded goals.

The 'Tactics Apply To' option (located in the General section) toggles between the different personal tactics set for each line type (even strength / powerplay / penalty kill).

3.4.1 Additional Options

Shoot/Pass Bias: Sets whether the player will tend to shoot on goal or pass.

Fighting: Sets the player's freedom when it comes to starting fights.

- **Not allowed**
- **Allowed**
- **Encouraged:** Not only is a player allowed to fight, he is actively encouraged by his GM to go out on the ice and look for a fight. If he has been instructed to check a specific player then he is more likely to start fights with this player if he is encouraged to fight. This is a dangerous tactic as it could lead to longer penalties, game ejections and suspensions for instigating fights. On the other hand, the fights he gets involved in could motivate your team to play with greater determination.

Carry puck: If this is enabled, the player will tend to skate with the puck rather than pass.

Join rush: Determines whether the player will join the attack or stay back in defence.

Player to check: Assign a specific opponent player to check. This should help shut down the opponent's top player or top line.

Goalie orders: This instructs the goalie to either stay in his crease when the puck goes behind the net or to go and collect the puck and pass it to the defencemen (i.e. play the puck). Of course, the goalie will only go behind the net to play the puck when the opposition players are nowhere near the goal. However, the more daring goalie may be more willing to venture out in slightly more dangerous situations.

3.5 Tactical Settings

3.5.1 Mentality

Possible settings: *Very defensive / Defensive / Normal / Offensive / Very Offensive*

Here, the main philosophy of the team's game can be defined. Will you try to score a huge amount of goals? Or will you build your dynasty on a solid defensive rock?

Using an attacking strategy will create more pressure on the opposition and probably more goal-scoring opportunities, but it will also leave the team more prone defensively if the opposition manage to retrieve the puck and counterattack.

The mentality should be based on the players' skills at the team's disposal. If the unit's wingers are solid goal-scorers and the centre is a good playmaker then it would

be wise to set them to a more offensive tactic. This is particularly the case if they do not have very good defensive skills. The General Information section of the View Units screen which shows the star ratings of each unit could be useful in making this evaluation (see section 3.3).

If the unit's players have fairly balanced offensive and defensive skills then they can comfortably play at a wider range of mentalities, although it may be a good idea not to play them very defensively or very offensively as they are not specialists in either area.

Powerplay units ought to play with a more offensive mentality as powerplays are a great opportunity to score goals. Conversely, penalty kill units ought to be instructed to play more defensively.

Useful attributes: Depending on the mentality, all defensive attributes (such as checking, hitting, pokecheck and positioning) and all offensive attributes (such as creativity, passing, stickhandling and wristshot).

3.5.2 Aggressiveness

Possible settings: *Calm / Easy / Normal / Aggressive / Beserk*

Playing a very physical game is more likely to intimidate the opponents more quickly and perhaps even injure them. It will result in the players trying harder to get the puck off the opposition. It can create more fights and this in turn could motivate one or the other teams, depending on who is winning the fights.

However, it is likely to result in many penalties and so there will be more times where the team is short-handed.

Whilst enforcers will relish a beserk style of play, players such as speedy offensive forwards will not.

Useful attributes: Size, weight, aggression, hitting and strength.

3.5.3 Backchecking

Possible settings: *Very easy / Easy / Normal / Hard / Very Hard*

This defines how often the forwards will go back into their defensive zone and help out with defensive duties. Very hard backchecking will mean that the forwards will often go into the defensive zone and defend, whereas very easy backchecking will mean that they don't help out much at all.

The more often forwards come back into their defensive zone, the less opportunity there is to counter-attack. The converse will, however, result in gaps in defence. A defensive mentality may better compliment hard backchecking as it ensures a more defensive style of play.

An offensive mentality could work with hard backchecking if a passing offensive style is preferred to a fast counter attacking style. On the other hand, having the forwards skate up and down all of the rink could tire them out more quickly.

Useful attributes: All defensive skills (such as checking, hitting, pokecheck and positioning) and workrate. Speed and acceleration are useful for counter-attacks.

3.5.4 Gap Control

Possible settings: Very tight / Tight / Normal / Relaxed / Very Relaxed

The gap is the amount of space between the puck-carrier and the defensive player. Thus a tight gap will mean that the defenceman is closer to his opponent. Being closer gives the puck-carrier less space and gives the defenceman more opportunity to check or pokecheck. However, there is a greater chance of the puck-carrier getting past his opponent by deking or by being faster. Also, if there is a tighter gap there is little chance for the defenceman to recover from a defensive mistake, allowing the puck-carrier to get away from his opponent and leaving the defenceman out of position.

Useful attributes: Anticipation, checking, pokecheck and positioning. Other useful attributes include acceleration and speed.

3.5.5 Puck Pressure

Possible settings: Very easy / Easy / Normal / Heavy / Very Heavy

Determines how often the line will pressurise the opposition puck-carrier. Sustained pressure on the opposition will result in more turnovers, but it will also tire out your players. Whilst heavy pressure can pressurise the puck-carrier into making mistakes, it is also possible that the defenceman will make a mistake, allowing the puck-carrier to get around him.

Useful attributes: Anticipation, checking, pokecheck and positioning, stamina.

3.5.6 Hitting

Possible settings: Very easy / Easy / Normal / Hard / Very Hard

This sets how often players will look to make big hits on the opposition. Hitting hard will give a better chance of removing the puck from the puck-carrier's possession and it can intimidate the opposition but it will also increase the risk of penalties and injury.

A combination of very hard hitting and berserk aggressiveness will result in some pretty devastating hits – just don't expect to play even strength too often!

Useful attributes: Checking, hitting and strength.

3.5.7 Tempo

Possible settings: Very low / Low / Normal / High / Very High

Defines how fast the team will play. A high tempo will result in fast zone clearance, rushes to the offensive zone, quick counter-attacks, a lot of movement and a many quick passes. The aim is to catch the opposition off-guard and to get past them before they have time to reorganise and reposition. A faster tempo requires more highly skilled players; they must also be very fast and fit. Less skilful and slow players will result in bad passes, giveaways and a lack of coordination.

A slower tempo could result in less rushed plays, allowing the players to better position themselves, make more accurate passes and find better opportunities to score. It is also less tiring.

Useful attributes: Acceleration, anticipation, creativity, passing, speed, stamina and stickhandling.

3.5.8 Passing

Possible settings: Very safe / Safe / Normal / Creative / Adventurous

Determines how daring and creative the unit will be with their passing play. More creative passes are likely to confuse and disorganise the opposition's defence, leading to good shooting opportunities.

An example is attempting a pass through two defencemen to find a team-mate who is alone in the slot. If the pass succeeds it would present a fantastic opportunity. On the other hand, it's very risky and perhaps it would be safer to pass to another team-mate where there is less risk of an interception and a counter-attack, allowing the team to continue its offensive pressure. Highly skilled players will be needed to pull-off such daring passes.

Whilst on the penalty kill, it would be more effective to play safe passes in order to kill time and so decrease the risk of the opposition getting the puck and creating scoring chances.

Useful attributes: Anticipation, creativity and passing.

3.5.9 Shooting**Possible settings: Very selective / Selective / Normal / Heavy / Barrage**

This instructs the team how often to shoot. Instructed them to shoot often might increase the chances of scoring. It could also increase the chances of the goalie giving up a rebound, giving the forwards a chance to shoot before the goalie has a chance to reposition himself. On the other hand, this may mean that good goal-scoring opportunities can't be created.

By instructing the team to only selectively choose when to shoot, they will wait for good goal-scoring chances before shooting. This, however, may mean that the team will not take advantage of as many goal-scoring chances, thus decreasing the likelihood of scoring a goal.

If the opposition goalie has poor rebound control and recovery attributes then shooting very often may be a successful tactic.

Useful attributes: Rather than any particular attributes, the success of this approach depends more on the team's style and how well the opposition and goalie can cope with a barrage of shots.

3.5.10 Dumping the Puck**Possible settings: Very rarely / Rarely / Normal / Often / Very often**

Dumping the puck involves hitting the puck into the corners of the offensive zone upon arriving at the opponent's blue line. The players will then skate to the puck and battle to keep hold of it before passing it back in order to create a play. Having the puck in the corner will create space in the rest of the offensive zone. Also, if the offence is faster than the opposition then it is possible to get the puck from the boards and create a play before the opposition have had a chance to reposition their defence.

The offence will need the skill to get to the puck first and also the strength to battle for possession of the puck.

This is a useful instruction when playing dump and chase tactics.

Useful attributes: Acceleration, balance, creativity (to an extent), hitting, speed and strength.

3.6 Tactical Systems (Even Strength)

3.6.1 Breakouts

This determines how the players will be positioned and how they will play when getting the puck out of their defensive zone and into the neutral zone (i.e. clearing the defensive zone).

Positional: Players will stand in their natural positions.

Board play: The wingers will be positioned close to the boards with the aim to clear the puck wide via the boards. The wingers will therefore need strength to withstand the physical play that comes with playing close to the boards.

Crisscross: A fast-paced pass-and-move style of play. As the puck is being moved often it gives the opposition less opportunity to pressurize the puck-carrier. However, a bad pass could result in a giveaway. Thus players with good passing are needed for this system.

Free flowing: The players will clear the zone as and how they see fit in the circumstances without playing to any strict orders. This is mainly used on the powerplay as there is less pressure on the offence from the short-handed team.

Wings cross: The wingers will switch positions. If the opposition has a slow defence then having the wingers crossover can expose holes in the defence and create big opportunities.

3.6.2 Neutral Zone Offensive

Sets how the unit will make their way through the neutral zone whilst on the offence (i.e. in possession of the puck and moving towards the opponent's blue line).

Positional: Players will stand in their natural positions.

Crisscross: A fast-paced pass-and-move style of play. As the puck is being moved often it gives the opposition less opportunity to pressurize the puck-carrier. However, a bad pass could result in a giveaway. Thus players with good passing are needed for this system.

Grouped: The players will group together. As a result, the opposition's defence will have to collapse into deep positions as the players move closer to the opposition's blue line. This will create space at the top of the offensive zone, giving greater opportunity to create some offensive plays.

3.6.3 Offensive Zone

Instructs how the unit will position themselves and play in the offensive zone.

Positional: Players stick to their positions in the offensive zone.

Overload slot: The centre stands in front of the goal in order to obstruct the goalie's view and/or to force the puck into the goal. This tactic will work particularly well against smaller and weaker defencemen and a centre who is comparatively strong.

Triangle: The forwards form a triangle in the offensive zone in order to outnumber the defence and to generate some space from which they can attempt to shoot on goal. The centre will look for loose pucks and rebounds.

3.6.4 Forecheck

Defines how the unit will pressurize the puck in the offensive zone.

Positional low: Players will stand in their natural positions and won't apply too much pressure to the opposition. They allow the opposition to come deeper into the neutral zone whilst they position themselves more effectively. It prevents the opposition from rushing into the offensive zone but it also gives the team on the defence less chance to get a quick counter-attack.

Positional high: Players will stand in their natural positions but will apply greater pressure on the opposition closer to the opposition's defensive zone. It can provide greater opportunity to counter-attack if the puck can be stolen quickly. However, there's a higher risk of being outnumbered and rushed. This system is mainly used on the powerplay and on high-scoring lines with good defensive abilities.

1-4: One player, usually the centre, will pressurize the puck whilst the other two forwards will play deeper and form a line with the defence. The centre will slow down the play whilst the deeper four will provide a difficult obstacle for the opposition to get past. Whilst this slows down the opposition's advances, if there is a weakness in the four playing deep then there will be nothing in between the opposition and the goalie.

3-2: One of the forwards will drop deep with the defencemen to cover the opposition's three forwards in order to prevent a counter-attack. The two remaining forwards will play further up and pressurize the puck, trying to slow down the play.

1-2-2: The centre will pressurize the puck and then move back to help the wingers as the puck moves up the zone. Then the forwards will go deeper to help the defence (when the puck moves close to the blue line). This will provide a greater barrier against the opposition but it won't provide much opportunity to steal the puck as the forwards can't press too much so that they can fall back deeper.

3.6.5 Neutral Zone Defensive

How the unit will defend in the neutral zone.

1-2-2: The centre will pressurize the puck and then move back to help the wingers as the puck moves up the zone. Then the forwards will go deeper to help the defence (when the puck moves close to their defensive zone). This will provide a greater barrier against the opposition but it won't provide much opportunity to steal the puck as the forwards can't press too much so that they can fall back deeper.

1-1-3: The centre pressurizes the puck whilst there is a winger positioned further behind him. The other winger goes deeper with the defencemen to cover the three forwards.

2-1-2: Two forwards pressurize the puck, giving a greater chance to steal the puck and counter-attack. However, this leaves the defence weakened and if it doesn't work then there's a possibility that the defence will be outnumbered and stretched.

3.6.6 Defensive Zone

How the unit will defend in their defensive zone.

Positional: The players will stand in their natural positions.

Collapse: The players will collapse around the net in order to prevent either the puck or the opposition from getting too close to the goal. However, this requires strong players and a goalie that can cope with lots of traffic (i.e. lots of players in front of him). This will leave greater space near the blue line and so the opposition may try taking plenty of slapshots from this range – make sure your players are brave enough to block these.

Open: The unit will attempt to steal the puck by forcing the opponent to take on each player one-on-one.

3.6.7 Offensive Faceoffs

This determines how the players will be positioned for faceoffs in the offensive zone.

Basic: A basic positioning which is quite neutral. The wingers are positioned either side of the player taking the faceoff. The defencemen are positioned further behind, at the bottom of the faceoff circle. It's the same positioning as that used in the neutral zone.

Overload: Both wingers are positioned to the slot side (i.e. the side of the faceoff circle closest to the centre of the offensive zone) of the faceoff-taker. This provides greater pressure in the slot but also leaves the wing by the boards open.

Drop pass: The winger that would ordinarily be positioned by the boards in the basic formation is put behind the faceoff-taker. The faceoff-taker passes the puck to him and he can attempt a shot or to create a play.

Point shot: The defenceman closest to the slot in the basic formation is placed close to the centre of the blue line, in line with the goalie. He will receive the pass from the faceoff and then attempt a big shot from the point. The player will thus need to be good at slapshots. This is a particularly useful tactic to use on the powerplay.

3.6.8 Defensive Faceoffs

This determines how the players will be positioned for faceoffs in the defensive zone.

Basic: A basic positioning which is quite neutral. The wingers are positioned either side of the player taking the faceoff. The defencemen are positioned further behind, at the bottom of the faceoff circle. It's the same positioning as that used in the neutral zone.

Lopsided: This puts more players on the slot side of the faceoff, meaning that there are more players ready to clear the slot and block any shots, such as from the point if the opposition are playing a drop pass system.

Overload: Both wingers are positioned to the slot side of the faceoff-taker. This offers greater protection in the slot but also leaves the wing by the boards open.

3.7 Tactical Systems (Powerplay)

3.7.1 Offensive Zone

Instructs how the unit will position themselves and play in the offensive zone whilst on the powerplay.

1-2-2: A fairly balanced system whereby the centre plays furthest forward and the wingers play out wide just behind him. The wingers can feed the centre with passes in order to create plays. The two defencemen stay back by the blueline in order to prevent any counter-attack.

2-1-2: A more attacking version of 1-2-2 whereby the wingers play further forward than the centre. The wingers also play much more narrowly (although not as narrowly as in the funnel system, below). This increases pressure on the slot and in turn on the goalie. This tactic, however, leaves the wings fairly open.

Diamond: Two forwards play up in the slot with a winger and defenceman playing further back on the wings. The final defenceman is positioned on the centre of the blueline (i.e. at the point). Having an extra player will increase the pressure on the opposition's PK team and will possibly create more goal-scoring chances. The defenceman at the point is well positioned to attempt a slapshot on goal. However, with only one defenceman playing at the blue line, the team is prone to being outnumbered on counter-attacks with the possibility of conceding a short-handed goal.

Funnel: All three forwards play right up in the slot. This means that the play will be very central and that there is a great deal of pressure on the net. The forwards will need to be strong to battle for the puck as they try to force it into the net whilst evading body-checks. As there is nobody wide, the wings are left completely open. This is perhaps a good tactic to play if the unit is made up of unskilled, yet strong, players.

Umbrella: The players form a formation resembling the shape of an umbrella. One player is stationed at the blue line and exchanges passes between two players at the point (one either side of him), looking for an opportunity for the player at the blue line to shoot. Two players are in front of the net in order to screen the goalie (i.e. so the goalie can't see the puck). The player at the blue line obviously needs to be a good shooter, while the two players at the net have to be strong since the opposition will do their best to move them away from the net.

3.8 Tactical Systems (Penalty Kill)

3.8.1 Forecheck

Defines how the unit will pressurize the puck in the offensive zone whilst on the penalty kill.

Positional low: Players will stand in their natural positions and won't apply too much pressure to the opposition. They allow the opposition to come deeper into the neutral zone whilst they position themselves more effectively. It prevents the opposition from rushing into the offensive zone but it also gives the team on the defence less chance to get a quick counter-attack.

Positional high: Players will stand in their natural positions but will apply greater pressure on the opposition closer to the opposition's defensive zone. I can provide greater opportunity to counter-attack if the puck can be stolen quickly. However, there's a higher risk of being outnumbered and rushed. This system is mainly used on the powerplay and on high-scoring lines with good defensive abilities.

0-4: A very conservative approach whereby the players form a line and play deep. This reduces the risk of players being caught out of position as they position themselves deeper than the opposition, ready for the offence to come to them.

Attempting a counter-attack using this system is very unlikely but this isn't the main concern whilst being short-handed.

2-2: A more aggressive tactic as the two forwards will play further up and pressurize the puck. This is a risky tactic because if the forwards don't get the puck, there is a big danger that the two defencemen playing deeper will be outnumbered by the opposition's offence. This is a useful tactic if the team is desperate to get that game-tying goal at the end of the final period because it provides a more effective way of getting the puck whilst short-handed.

3.8.2 Neutral Zone Defensive

How the unit will defend in the neutral zone.

0-4: A very conservative approach whereby the players form a line and play deep. This reduces the risk of players being caught out of position as they position themselves deeper than the opposition, ready for the offence to come to them. Attempting a counter-attack using this system is very unlikely but this isn't the main concern whilst being short-handed.

1-3: A more balanced approach between 0-4 and 2-2 whereby one player presses for the puck and three players sit deep. This is a compromise between the two systems as one player presses for the puck so that the danger can be removed and the three others provide some insurance.

2-2: A more aggressive tactic as the two forwards will play further up and pressurize the puck. This is a risky tactic because if the forwards don't get the puck, there is a big danger that the two defencemen playing deeper will be outnumbered by the opposition's offence. This is a useful tactic if the team is desperate to get that game-tying goal at the end of the final period because it provides a more effective way of getting the puck whilst short-handed.

3.8.3 Defensive Zone

How the unit will defend in their defensive zone whilst short-handed.

Tight box: The two defencemen stay in front of the net (i.e. in the slot) in order to ward off the offence. The two forwards chase the puck-carrier. Whilst the slot is covered, this leaves space on the wings.

Wide box: A balance between protecting the slot and pressurizing the puck. The players play a little further out from the slot in order to pressurize the puck-carrier to an extent. However, they don't leave the slot too unprotected.

Open box: The aim is to retrieve the puck by pressing the puck-carrier. This will involve the short-handed team playing further out from the slot. Whilst it will press the opposition into making mistakes, it will leave a lot of room in the slot. If this system fails then an opposing forward may have an easy opportunity right in front of the net. As with the 2-2 forecheck and defensive systems, this is a useful tactic if the short-handed team really needs to press and get a game-tying goal towards the end of the game.