

RESEARCH AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE TACTICS IN THE ICE HOCKEY

Professional paper

Ruslan Hristov

*National Sports Academy "Vassil Levski", Sofia
Technical and ice sports department, Sofia, Bulgaria*

Abstract

The tactics is very important and decisive factor concerning the correct and successful leading of the competition. The tactical organization has a significant part in the final outcome of each match. Taking that in mind, as well as my professional experience as hockey player, we have decided to research and characterize the tactics in the ice hockey. In order to achieve that we have analyzed the appropriate for the subject literature and have made numerous observations on games of the Bulgarian State Championship, NHL and KHL.

Key words: *method of observations, individual tactical actions, group tactical actions in attack, individual play, group play actions, collective play actions*

INTRODUCTION

The ice hockey is a creative game of the united team, where a person can distinguish the thinking of the coach, the mastership of the players and cheering influence of the public. This is a game in which the success of the individual players strictly depends on their ability to combine the individual technique with the play of the whole team. This is collective sport, combining the individual particularities of the players and the personal thoughts of the coach. This sport is being characterized by high speeds, spectacular power maneuvers and unexpected technical and tactical solutions in attack and defense (Tarassov (Тарасов), 1998).

Using Tarassov (Тарасов) (1998) opinion on the subject and out vision for the game, as a former ice hockey player, we have set for a goal to research and characterize the tactics in the ice hockey.

In order to achieve that we have analyzed the appropriate for the subject literature and have made numerous observations on games of the Bulgarian State Championship, NHL and KHL.

The tactics is very important and decisive factor concerning the correct and successful leading of the competition. The tactical organization has a significant part in the final outcome of each match. Based on that it finds wide application and turns out to be an obligatory element not only the ice hockey, but in all sports as well.

According to Kolev (Колев) (2012), the tactical preparation is a vital part of the complete preparation. It's been mostly determined by the game's rules. The participation and the success in the competitions depend on the correct and appropriate use of the tactical skills, the physical and psychical capabilities under competitive conditions.

The tactics as a term is based on principles common for most games, but still for each one of them it has specific particularities.

Taking an example with the football, the tactics of the football play represent a system of preliminary determined and accessible for performance individual, group-like and collective actions for leading an effective struggle with the opponent, in order to achieve an optimal result under the

particular competitive conditions (Shishkov (ШИШКОВ), 1992). In the handball, the tactics is a particular creative activity of the players in the team, specialized in the organization and the coordination of their individual and collective actions in a meaningful manner with purpose to ac-

hieve maximal effectiveness in the boundaries of the playbook and the team spirit. (Valtchev (Вълчев), 1990). As with the basketball, the tactics is theory and practice of the competitive struggle in the boundaries of a single match against predefined opponent and with the individual duel of each play case in it (Tzarov (Църов), 1993).

The ice hockey is one of the fastest and manly games, in which the win is the result of the simultaneous act of four components: highly developed physical qualities, high level of technical preparation and psychical endurance of the competitors. The fourth component though, is the one without it hardly could be achieved a victory in a match with worthy opponent. In other words, this is a reasonable tactical scheme, as with the play itself, as well with the individual links and the fives (each five players), where significant role plays the experience and the technical capabilities of each one of them.

The tactics in the ice hockey initially wears the marks typical for the other collective sports. Its skillful application and realization, though are being influenced by multiple particularities of the game itself, which contribute for the more complex application in the concrete situation.

The most basic differences between the ice hockey and the other collective sports, are the way of movement on the play field and the terrain itself on which the game is being played. In other words, the movement is carried out by skating with ice skates. The skating on the one hand is not typical for the human, but on the other places the possibility of achieving very high speed of displacement, fast change in the course of movement and sudden change of the pace and the rhythm of the game. On the other side the control over the puck is not being applied by hand or foot, as it is with the other sports, but via additional tool – a hockey stick.

It is important to mention as well the permitted by the playbook force interaction with the opponent, which is being applied both in attack and defense.

The ice hockey is being characterized by continuous struggle between two teams, two collectives who are trying to realize the basic game tasks:

- To take away, win, the puck and to send it away in the opponent gate
- To prevent the opponent from taking away, win the puck and realize goal

According to these characteristics we can determine two main phases of the game: attack and defense. During the individual phases of the game, each team makes influence over the other using opposite interactions.

- Attacking maneuvers
- Defensive counteractions

“It would be very simple to call the attack – action, and the defense-counteraction. In reality the cause and the result are constantly changing places. The attacker follows the actions of the defense and the defense follows the actions of the attacker” (Rovni (Ровни), 1976).

The separate phases (defense-attack) are approximately precisely defined parts of the play, from which each is being characterized with tactical tasks from upper level.

“The attack commence in the moment in which the team takes lead of the puck and takes place until the moment of its definitive lost. With the win of the puck, it appears an opportunity to organize the attack and to make an attempt for a goal” (Koloskoff, & Klimin, (Колосков, & Климин), 1981).

Smith (Смит) (2005), determines the attack as follows : the attack starts when the team wins the objects of the game and lasts until the moment of its losing.

The defense, according to, (Gorski (Горски), 1971) starts when the attack ends, in other words when the team loses the puck and lasts through the whole period of the struggle for the possession of the puck or until the moment of its repossession.

The main phases of the game, attack and defense, we could separate in separate game episodes. Under game episode we understand a specific part of the game, distinguished by space and time, during which it is being solved partial tactical task, e.g.: organization of attack from the position of the gate, by corner of the play field, crossing the blue line in the attack zone, defensive actions in front of the own gate and so on...

The different play situations are the content of the different game episodes. Under the term “play situation” we understand the momentary state of the game, under which in particular interval of space and time, the players, in relation to the gate and the puck, are taking position suitable to their interrelations.

- Coordinated interrelations (player-teammate)
- Not coordinated interrelation (player-opponent)

“Irrelevant to that, that they are not absolutely identical, many of the play situations are often being repeated. Approximately the same situations are being often seen in the game – we are talking about typical play situations. Situations that are precisely defined by the playbook are being called standard play situations” (Smitnq (Смит), 2005).

The classification of the tactics in the ice hockey is being separated to play of the field players and the play of the goalkeeper.

The general phases of the game and the basic elements, which are analyzable, precisely determined and

estimated, are an act of an objective regularity, according to which the game is being played.

Following the phases of the game, the tactics of the ice hockey is being divided in two directions.

- ✓ **Attack** – the team has won the object of the game
- ✓ **Defense** – the team has lost the object of the game

The competitors take part in the game by individual or collective interactions, both in attack in defense.

Those actions could be divided in three groups:

- **The individual play** is being understood as individual play actions
- The play of more than one player is being categorized as **group play actions**
- The play of the entire team is being categorized as **collective play actions**

The individual tactical actions, both in attack and defense, include the entire technical and tactical arsenal of the competitors, and are being divided as follows:

- Tactical actions of the field players
- Tactical actions of the goalkeeper

The group tactical actions in attack, are being based on the play combinations, which are being:

- **In typical play situations**
 - Leaving the defense area
 - Creating local superior number
 - Moving to the middle area
 - Change of players places
 - Moving to the attack area
 - Passes
 - Actions behind the gate
 - Actions next to the rink
- **In play episodes**
 - Typical actions
 - Improvisation
 - Combining improvisation and typical actions
- **In typical positions**
 - Putting the puck into play

The group tactical actions in defense are based on the gaming combinations for counteraction, which are being:

- **In typical play situations**
 - Counteraction against strike
 - Actions in front of the gate
 - Counteraction against passing
 - Action next to the rink
 - Securement
 - Pinching the puck
 - Combined take away
 - Replacement of players
- **In play episodes**
 - Typical actions
 - Improvisation
 - Combination of improvisation and typical actions
- **In standard positions**
 - Putting the puck into play

The tactical team actions in attack are being constituent by attacking systems, realized by:

- Attack in motion
- Attack by position

- Followed by second attack

The tactical actions in defense are being based on tactical systems, in which it is predefined the position and the task of each player: 2-1-2; 2-2-1; 1-2-2; 1-3-1; 1-4; 3-2; 2-3; and according to the way of organizing :

- Personal defense
- Area(Zone) defense
- Combined defense

The tactics of attack and defense in the ice hockey, besides a game of equal teams (equal number of players in each team), there could be a game in superior number (one of the teams has more players) and a game in diminished number (one of the teams has less players).

Regarding the produced analysis of the tactics in the ice hockey it is possible to bring up some conclusions: The tactics in the ice hockey represents purposeful individual, group-like and collective actions of the players from a given team, dictated by the creative thinking of the coach, specialized in the organization and the coordination of their individual, collective and group-like actions in a meaningful manner with purpose to achieve maximal effectiveness.

The tactics is one of the most important elements in the ice hockey, but it is being based on the technical, the physical and psychic preparation of the competitors. During the organization of the play actions there exist a great variety of technical schemes. It is well known that the better and the more prepared a given team is, judging on his previous appearances, the more numerous and diverse schemes he is supposed to have, both in attack and defense and as well in a play with diminished number of players. In many teams those tactic schemes appear to be vital and determine the way the game is being played, but namely the high class teams frequently change them, also during the match, with the purpose of diversity.

Correspondence:
 Ruslan Hristov
 National Sports Academy
 Technical and ice sports department
 Studentski grad,1700 Sofia, Bulgaria
 E-mail: icehockey_nsa@abv.bg

In summary, we can quote professor Kostka (Костка), 1986), that one of the general marks of the development of the game contents is the appearance of new play actions, new way of leading the game, new tactical options which are to be a reflection of the high-quality game. If it is necessary to know the game and its regularities, it is important to above all be based on the research of the game itself, on the research of the interrelation “competitor-environment” (Kostka (Костка), 1986).

REFERENCES

- Bučač, L., & Dovalil, J. (1990). *Ledeni hokey* [The ice hockey. In Czech.] Praha: Olympia.
- Вълчев, Т. (1990). *Хандбал* [Handball. In Bulgarian.] София: Медицина и физкултура.
- Gorchichak, V. (1996). *Učeni a zlepšeni hokejové hry v vřesile* [Learning and improvement of the hockey play in superior number. In Czech.] Bratislava: Olympia.
- Gorski, L. (1971). *Moderni hokej* [Modern hockey. In Czech.] Praha: Olympia.
- Колосков, В., & Климин, В. (1981). *Подготовка хоккеистов* [Preparation of the hockey player. In Russian.] Москва: Физкультура и спорт.
- Костка, В.(1986). *Современны хоккей* [The modern hockey. In Russian.] Москва: Физкультура и спорт.
- Колев, И. (2012). *Система за спортен подбор на колоездачи* [System for sport recruitment of bicyclists. In Bulgarian.] София: НСА-Прес.
- Rovni, M. (1976). *Sportovni hry* [The sport games. In Czech.] Bratislava: Olympia.
- Smithq, Mi. (2005). *The Hockey play book: teaching hockey systems*. New York: Firefly Books.
- Църов, К. (993). *Баскетбол* [Basketball. In Bulgarian.] София: Медицина и физкултура, ИПБ-НСА.
- Тарасов, А. (1988). *Хоккей без тайн* [Hockey without secrets. In Russian.] Москва: Физкультура и спорт.
- Шишков, А. (1992). *Футбол* [Football. In Bulgarian.] София: Медицина и физкултура.