



# THE MASK

NEWSLETTER

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## Playing the puck: defensive zone



**New Jersey Devils goaltender Martin Brodeur is one of the league's top puckhandlers. His ability to play the puck behind his net allows his defence more freedom to cover the zone in front.**

The key to defensive zone puckhandling is the goalies ability to make quick alert puck decisions (what's happening during the game i.e. strong forecheck...soft dump ins, etc), with great communication between defenceman and goaltender. Do this and your team will get the puck out of your zone in a quick effective manner.

### **Puckhandling behind the net**

#### **KEYS:**

- Stop puck behind net....skate behind net stop.
- Turn head or body if you have time to read the play.
- Is the defenceman a right or left shot? Leave puck 6 inches from boards, so the defence doesn't get taken out by forechecking opposition.
- Where does your defence like the

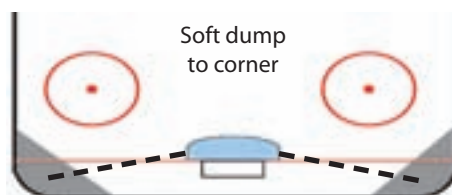
puck?

- Do I have time to play the puck or leave it...pass to defence.
- Is there pressure from forechecker?
- Are wingers in place for a rim around the boards?

### **Hard Rims**

#### **OPTIONS:**

- Leave/set puck fro defence 6 inches from the boards
- If defence goes to corner (soft zone), bank off boards or direct pass.
- Rim puck up the boards, defence call rim.
- Reverse or over to opposite side of dump in.



**Tim Thomas of the Boston Bruins feeds the puck up to his team as they move up the ice. Quick reaction to a dump in like this can help turn your squad back up the ice quickly.**

- Hard shot off glass to clear zone. You should practice this to get a feel for where the glass is and where it ends.

The key is to get to the dump in quickly and read and react to the situation. These plays need to be practiced with your defence to ensure great communication results in strong defensive decisions.

*Jamie Blanchard  
Goaltending Coach  
P.E.I. Rocket (QMJHL)*