

THE SHOOTER ILLUSION

SOURCE: OMHA ([LINK](#))

“Watch the puck.”

That seems like obvious advice for you goalies, but “see through the view of the puck” is a statement rarely taught to young goal scorers.

Goaltenders are taught to line up their angle with the puck, not the shooter. This concept is often overlooked when teaching the art of scoring and capitalizing on chances.

Understanding the tricks your eyes can play on perception could prevent players from continually pounding the puck in the goalie’s glove where they think there is room, when there is no space at all. In a ready position to take a shot, a player’s eye could be more than five feet away from where the puck is on the ice. This is a rather large gap when considering what corner to pick.

THIS SHOOTER’S ILLUSION IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN WHAT AMOUNT OF ROOM THE SHOOTER BELIEVES IS AVAILABLE FROM WHAT THEIR EYES SEE AND THE ACTUAL AMOUNT OF SCORING AREA AVAILABLE FROM THE PUCK’S PERSPECTIVE.

Although the difference between illusion and reality can occur with a shot from anywhere inside the offensive zone, we will look at five scenarios for a right-handed shot where the view could prevent the shooter from picking the successful target to aim for. Remember, it is the area available from the puck’s perspective that determines how much room the goalie is giving the shooter, not the area from the shooter’s eyes.

SCENARIO 1 – IN TIGHT ON YOUR WING



For most shooters looking in this position, their eyes would light up with all the open net on the high blocker side. The illusion shows a clear scoring chance while the result of all that open space would more likely lead to an offensive faceoff or the puck pinging off the glass behind the net. Although the radius from the net to ten feet out accounts for roughly twenty percent of goals scored, most of these goals are scored off rebounds.

One option to score from this location is to put a low shot on net to the off post to try to generate a rebound for a teammate to score. Another other option, if you have enough time, would be to change the angle in your favour and try to create a hole for yourself.

SCENARIO 2 – THE SLOT



The slot is a prime scoring area. Chances from this area of the ice are not to be missed so the illusion of room high, specifically to the blocker side could suck you into wasting a perfect opportunity to score. Although there is some room in the top corners, they are small, and shooters need to be precise when trying to pick the top corners.

Looking at puck level you can see that the room high is much smaller than it appears, and the chances of scoring are greatly diminished. The better option in this location is the shot just above the pads on both posts and through the five-hole with a quick release. The other value of these two locations is that it makes it hard for the goaltender to control the rebound so that even if they do stop it, the chances of a teammate generating a scoring chance are much greater.

SCENARIO 3 – DOWN YOUR WING AT THE DOT



Coming down your wing, at the dot is a prime scoring area and a place where shooting is a strong option. The appearance is that the entire blocker side of the net is open with ample room up top. There is some room to shoot high blocker side and above the pad, but it is considerably smaller than what you see.

The lack of scoring area on the glove side might lead you to believe there is only room above the glove on the short side when in fact there is more room above the pad and absolutely no room in the top corner.

SCENARIO 4 – OFF WING AT THE DOT



The perspective around the dot again shows room high, favouring the blocker side. Although there is some room high, an attempt high blocker side will need to be precise for a positive outcome and the chances of missing the net are therefore greatly increased if attempted. There appears to be some room high glove side but when looking from the puck perspective you can see the window is nonexistent and there is absolutely no room to place the puck. The highest percentage shot from this angle comes just above the pads with some room between the legs.

SCENARIO 5 – IN TIGHT, ON THE OFF WING



Similar to being on your wing, the shooter sees ample room along the entire top of the net. This is certainly an illusion when looking at the puck's perspective. The only shot that is going in is a perfect shot high blocker side. The better option is to shoot for the pads to generate a rebound or to move if you have time. Because the goalie is already in a butterfly position, they will be limited in their mobility. If you can make the goalie move here, it should open up a spot to put the puck.

From the time kids are old enough to raise the puck, it seems like it is the only place in practice a shooter targets are somewhere around the crossbar. The reality of the game is that your chance of scoring greatly increases when keeping the puck low to the ice. Looking at these five scenarios reinforces the room that is available in these key scoring areas.

Players must also recognize the precise scenario while processing defensive positioning, offensive positioning, situational strategy and determine correctly within split seconds to be successful in the offensive zone. The important thing to remember is that the shooter must initially study and understand this principle to be able to make the best of precious scoring chances. This can clearly only be done with a lot of game and practice experience. Without the foundation of strong skills to execute the proper shot, this concept will not help score more goals but working

on a hard low shot above the pads, five hole and small targets in the upper corners will have you scoring more goals now that you know the trick to the shooter's illusion.