



Introduction

Often overshadowed by other prolific EA Sports titles like Madden and NCAA Football, NHL is a blast to play. The franchise may have got its start in the 16-bit era, but the game has never been so realistic as it is today. The dynamic artificial intelligence in this years iteration will blow you away, in more ways in one. IGN Guides is back with another guide jam-packed with time-tested strategies to improve your offense and defense. You'll be scoring, deking, and body checking like a pro after reading this guide.

So what are you waiting for? Lace up your skates and let's get going!

In this NHL 08 strategy guide, you'll find:

- **OFFENSE** // Tips for offensive hockey play—deke and shoot like a pro.
- **DEFENSE** // Defensive coaching.
- **DYNASTY** // A breakdown of the various stages of Dynasty play, from starting a dynasty to building it up in the off-season.
- **FAQ** // A quick Q & A covering frequently asked questions.

Guide by: Jim Chamberlin

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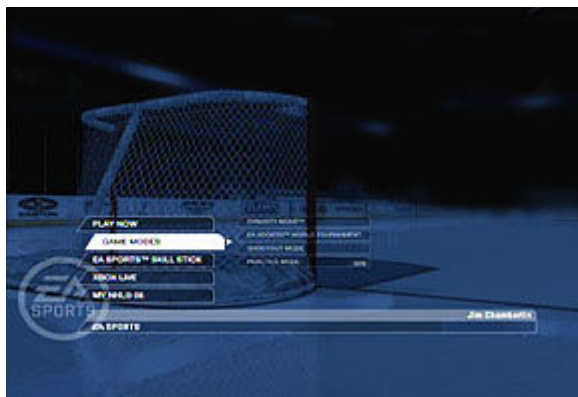
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NHL 08 Basics

EA Sports has included a number of modes in NHL 08 to add to the replay value. Below, you will find brief descriptions on the primary types of game play, which will help you out when navigating the menu screen.

Play Now

Using the "Play Now" mode, you will be taken to a screen where you can choose the team you want to play and which you wish to play against. Whether you're playing against the CPU or a friend, this is the quickest way to get right into a hockey game.



Dynasty

A favorite mode of ours, Dynasty allows you to become the head coach and general manager of any team you wish. Play each game while recruiting athletes as you prepare to take your team to the playoffs. We will be covering this mode more in depth in another section in the guide.

EA Sports World Tournament

The tournament brings together countries from across the globe. Instead of players being grouped into traditional NHL teams, they are grouped together according to their nationality. Canada, for instance, has their own team. You'll have several game options to choose from, such as how teams are eliminated.

Shootout Mode

When games are tied after the last period, a shootout is called. It puts one player against the goalie. Out-score your opponent, and you'll win the game. Practice this situation in this mode so you'll be all set for when the time comes.

Practice - Shooting Drill

The goal is set up with four targets in it, one in each corner. Carefully aim your shots and knock down the targets. This is great practice for the real game.

Practice - Skating Drill

Take the puck and make your way through the middle of the cones/pylons. Skating isn't just about pure speed; you need to maintain control of the puck.

Practice - Team Practice

Fine tune your offense by bringing in your entire team to play against another team or just their goalie. The number of options here is limitless.



Practice - Goalie Practice

Put yourself in the position of goalie. Swat down pucks and cover the five-hole. You can face multiple opponents or just one. Ace this practice and you can take over during an actual game.



Create Plays

The play creator allows you to create and test custom plays. You are allowed to use multiple players and test out the pre-set play in practice mode. You can save the play and call it during a game.

NHL 08 Offense

In this section, we will be covering the offense of NHL 08. Unlike football, only your offense can score points for you, so it's crucial to be able to advance the puck down the ice and get shots on goal.

Camera Angles

Believe it or not, the camera angle you play with can make a lot of difference in your success in the game. You need a camera angle which will not only let you see the goal well, but be able to see enough of the ice to find teammates which are open and in position for a high percentage shot.



Spread It Out

As you and your teammates rush down the ice, keep your guys spread out. If you get everyone in one particular area, it can make it difficult to get the puck to the net.

Spreading out your offense can create larger passing lanes and gives the defense more ice to cover, increasing the chance they may over-pursue you, leaving one of your guys open for a quick one-timer. Pass the puck around and make things happen.

Aim Your Shots

To do this, check the game's settings/options and make sure that the shot aim is set to "manual," and not "auto." Manual aiming gives you the opportunity to aim your shots. If the goalie is favoring one side of the net, you can aim the shot so that the puck is hit to the open side of the net. Take the time to practice your shooting.



Don't Rush It

Just because you have got the puck and have made it into your opponent's zone, it doesn't mean you have to immediately shoot the puck. Take a look around. Do you have help coming? How is the goalie positioned? Set something up which leads to a high-percentage shot. You win by the number of goals made, not by the number of shots attempted.

Screens

Using other opponents to set up screens can be confusing to the goalie. Since you're being hidden for that split second, you can take a shot and the goalie may not even see it coming. Just be careful in your timing, or you'll just hit the puck off of your own guy.

Wrap Around

If you have managed to gain control of the puck behind the opponent's goal, try and make a sharp turn in the front of the net. The goalie will likely come to the near side of the net to protect it. Because of this, aim your wrist shot to the far side. Remember that to aim your shot, the shot aim must be set to "auto" in the game settings.

Fake 'em Out

Deke moves are intended to protect the puck from the defender and also fake them out. You can deke left or right in order to get past the defender and get to the goalie. We strongly recommend viewing the in-game tutorial on this subject. It contains instructions which are game console specific, so take a look at it.



Desperation

If you are leading late in a game, the opponent may put another man on offense and pull the goalie. When this happens, a message will appear on your screen. Keep an eye on this and take advantage of it when the occasion arises. Without a goalie to defend the net, it isn't very difficult to score.

Pull Back

If the defense is successful at swarming you, feel free to pull the puck out of there. Pass it towards the opposite end of the ice. You don't want to be knocked down and your goalie all on his own during a fastbreak rush. Pull back and re-group.

NHL 08 Defense

In this section, we will be covering the defense of NHL 08. Follow our tips and you'll be well on your way on stopping even the best teams in the NHL.

Don't Be Too Aggressive

I'm not referring to body checks necessarily. This is more about general pursuit. It is very easy to over-pursue someone on the ice. This kind of mistake will often result in your opponent getting an easy shot at the goal.

Clog The Lanes

Putting your body between the puck handler and the goal means the opponent will find shot attempts to be difficult. You will be able to deflect a lot of shots if you can get in there.

The same sort of theory is true about passing lanes. If you can skate into the passing lanes, you can not only intercept passes, possibly leading to fast breaks, but it can also simply deflect passes. This will cause an offense to get out of sync and will frustrate them.



Get Down!

If you are out of position when an opponent is winding up for a slap-shot, dive in front of him. This dive will likely deflect the puck.

Poke Checks

Although you can play a man very close, you're always running the risk of over-pursuing him. A poke check causes the controlled player to poke at the hockey puck, with the intent of causing the puck handler to lose control of the puck. This isn't a very aggressive move, but it can work if you're positioned properly and are persistent.



Smash 'Em!

Poke checks may work well at times, but body checks are often the most effective. A well-timed, well-aimed body check can send a guy to the ice in a heartbeat. But, be careful. If you miss him, you will have to catch up to him and the rest of the play. A big hit can lead to exciting fast breaks, and who doesn't love fast breaks?!

Careful Passes

If you have managed to gain control of the puck near your own net, be careful of passing the puck around. Passes can be intercepted and deflected pretty easily down there because there tends to be a lot of guys grouped a few feet in front of the goal. Be patient and find the open man. Now isn't the time to help your opponent!

Clear!

If the offense is able to put a lot of pressure on your defense and is getting a lot of shots at the goal, try and deflect the pass. If at all possible, fling it down to the other side of the ice. It will give your team some time to regroup and will force the offense will do the same.

NHL 08 Dynasty

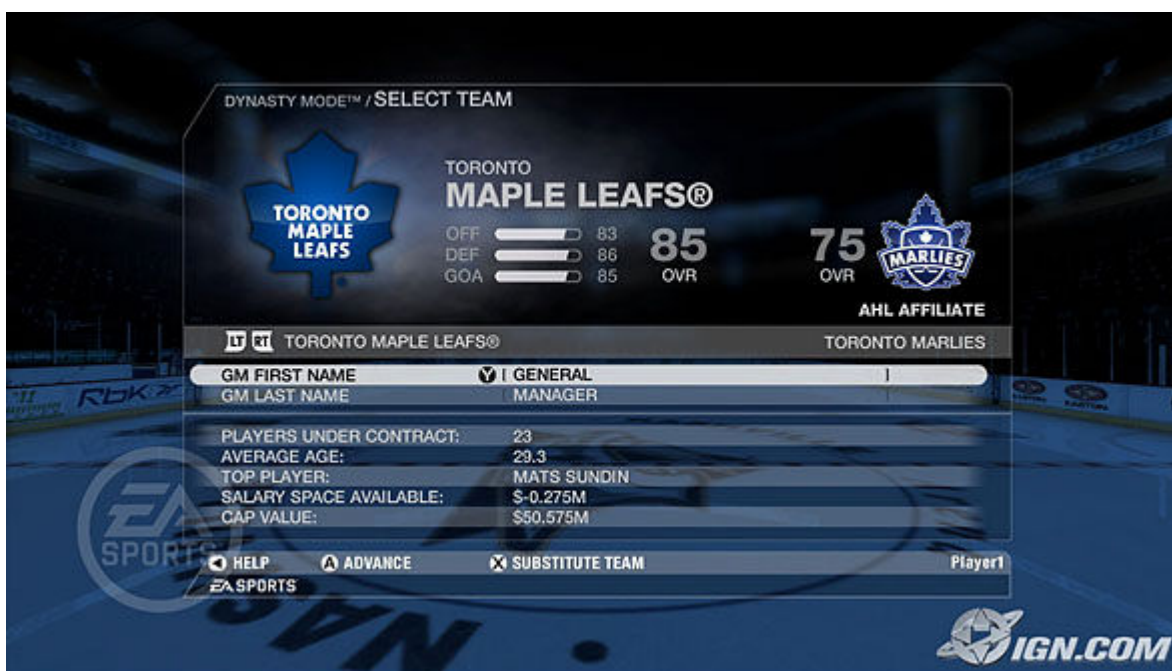
Set Up	Regular Season	Team Development	Post-Season
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Dynasty mode has become a mainstay of EA Sports titles. NCAA Football, Madden, NBA Live, etc all allow you to take control of any professional team and turn it into a dynasty. Not only are you able to play every game, but you are put in the general manager's position, responsible for player contracts, trades, drafting, scouting, training, and even setting the ticket prices. With so many tasks, it's easy to feel overwhelmed. Read the following section for a helping hand.

Set Up

As you're setting up your dynasty, you will have a number of settings to play with. Skill level (game difficulty), period length, which rules are adhered to, and how the playoffs work are just some of those options. Take the time to adjust the settings to your liking. Chances are, however, most of the default settings will work just fine for you.

After you've got the settings configured, you are now able to select the team you want to take over. You'll probably have a favorite team, so go ahead and pick it. If you aren't a big hockey fan, you have a lot of different ways to look at this. You could take a sub-par team with the intent of drastically improving them over a period of time, or you could just take the easy road and choose a good team and keep them in good shape for the fifteen seasons you'll be in control of them.

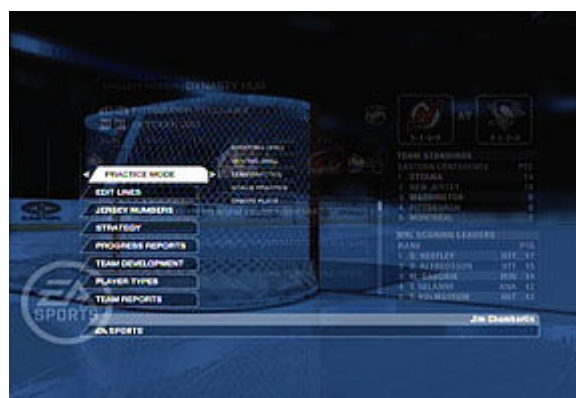
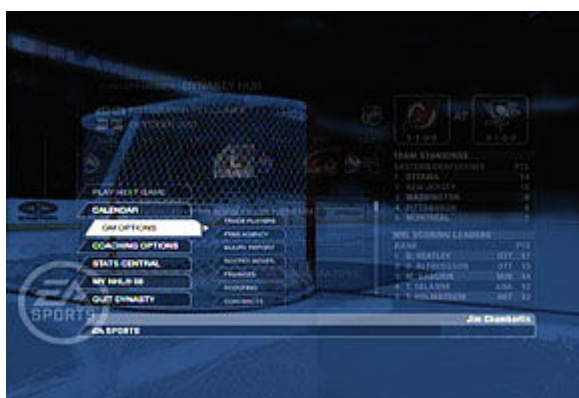


After you choose your team and change the general manager's name to something more personal, you will have to deal with those teams which are not compliant with the NHL salary cap. You can either have the CPU "fix" the rosters or you can choose to play without the salary cap. While playing without the salary cap may sound like fun, it will take away from the realism NHL 08 offers.

Set Up	Regular Season	Team Development	Post-Season
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Regular Season

When you get to the Dynasty Hub, take a look at the various menus to get a hang of where everything is. You'll be able to find the calendar, the general manager options, coaching options, stats central, etc.



Roster Adjustments

Before you get right into playing the actual games, take a look at your roster and the free agents list. You may be able to find a player which could replace one or two of your current players. Don't focus just on player attributes, but also look at the expected salary. As general manager, you are responsible for keeping the team under the NHL's salary cap. You can't go wild and spend all of your cash on a stud.

Finances

In addition to dealing with players, you must work on the team's financial business. Ticket prices and merchandising markups are under your purview. When you visit these screens in the game, you will be told how they compare to the other teams in the NHL. Charging too much money for tickets, for instance, may drive fans away, so keep them in line with other teams. If your team is playing well, you can increase the prices to bring in additional revenue. That being said, try and watch the attendance. If you notice a sharp drop, lower the price.

As the season gets under way, you will receive offers to sign players which have been released by a particular team. You can choose to sign the player or pass on the offer. Regardless of the move you make, you will be able to view the player's attributes, so that you don't have to sign a guy without knowing anything about him. If you don't need what the player brings, pass on the offer.

Scouting

During the NHL draft, you will need the best information available to you. Use your scouts to study talent in Canada, the United States, and Europe. Don't overlook the scouting of talent. Accurate information can lead to a great draft during the off-season.



Set Up

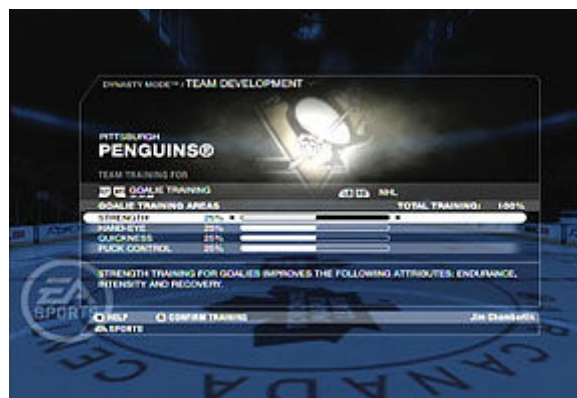
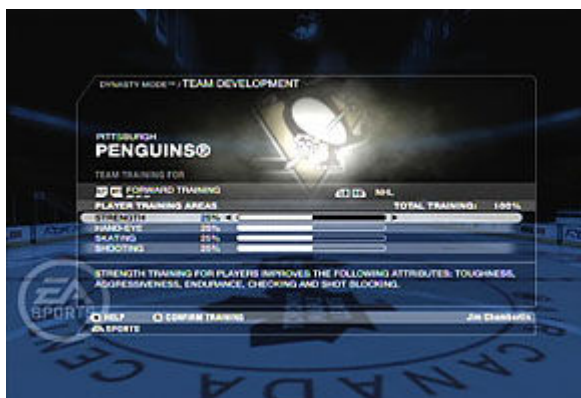
Regular Season

Team Development

Post-Season

Team Development

You can assign your team's trainers to work with your players. They will work with them on specific aspects of their game and conditioning, all of which will depend on what you tell them.



Adjusting the sliders for each player position will customize how the trainers work with the players. While the default sliders are fine, customize the sliders to help out those players who are particularly lacking in one or two areas.

Below is a series of charts, showing which player attributes the training can affect:

Forward Training	
Training Type	Player Attributes Affected
Strength	Toughness, Aggressiveness, Endurance, Checking, and Shot Blocking
Hand Eye	Passing, Deking, Puck Control, Faceoffs, and Discipline
Skating	Speed, Agility, Acceleration, and Balance
Shooting	Wristshot Power, Wristshot Accuracy, Slapshot Power, Slapshot Accuracy, and Deflections

Defense Training	
Training Type	Player Attributes Affected
Strength	Toughness, Aggressiveness, Endurance, Checking, and Shot Blocking
Hand Eye	Passing, Deking, Puck Control, Faceoffs, and Discipline
Skating	Speed, Agility, Acceleration, and Balance
Shooting	Wristshot Power, Wristshot Accuracy, Slapshot Power, Slapshot Accuracy, and Deflections

Goalie Training	
Training Type	Player Attributes Affected
Strength	Endurance, Intensity, and Recovery
Hand Eye	Glove High, Glove Low, Stick High, and Stick Low
Quickness	Speed, Agility, 5 Hole, and Breakaway
Puck Control	Passing, Rebound Control, Pokecheck

Set Up	Regular Season	Team Development	Post-Season
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Post-Season
Once the regular season is complete, the playoffs will begin. If you have played well enough, your team will be in the playoffs. How they are played will depend on the settings you selected during the dynasty mode set-up. Win it all and bring the Stanley Cup home with you!

Off Season
Now that the season has wrapped up, you'll receive a letter with a list of players who have retired. Pay close attention to this list because if someone from your team has retired, it may be a blow to your team. In any case, any time a player retires, it is up to you to find someone to fill his shoes.

Draft

One of the very first events on your off-season calendar is the NHL Entry Draft. Which order you draft will depend on trades made during the year and of course how well you did last year. If you won the Stanley Cup, don't expect to get the first pick.

DYNASTY MODE - SCOUTING PROFILE

TIM
WINCHESTER

AGE: 19 POSITION: RIGHT
HEIGHT: 6'4" HAND/FOOT: RIGHT
WEIGHT: 218lbs NATIONALITY: CANADA

ATTRIBUTES ARE
RATED OUT OF 10

☒ ALL SKATERS

1913 C. WINCHESTER

OFFENSE

DEFENSE

ATHLETICISM

DEFLECTIONS

7.0

ACCELERATION

7.0

SHOOTING

6.0

AGILITY

5.0

FACEOFFS

7.0

DURABILITY

7.0

OFF AWARENESS

5.0

ENDURANCE

7.0

PASSING

6.0

SPEED

7.0

PUCK CONTROL

7.0

TOUGHNESS

5.0

SLAP SHOT ACCURACY

7.0

POKE

7.0

SLAP SHOT POWER

7.0

WRIST SHOT ACCURACY

7.0

WRIST SHOT POWER

7.0

SAVE

BACK

Jim CHAMBERLIN

DYNASTY MODE - SCOUTING REPORT

JORGEN
KURKA

AGE: 20
HEIGHT: 6'0"
WEIGHT: 170lb

POSITION: CENTER
HAND/FOOT: LEFT
NATIONALITY: GERMANY

ACCURATE: 1
FAIRLY ACCURATE: 1
UNRELIABLE: 1
UNKNOWN: 0

LEAGUE INTEREST

ALL SKATERS

ALL COUNTRIES

PLAYER	OFF	DEF	ATH	PM	LT
J. KURKA	6.0	7.0	7.0	1ST ROUND	1ST
T. WINCHESTER	6.0	7.0	6.0	2ND ROUND	1ST
T. GARDNER	7.0	7.0	7.0	2ND ROUND	1ST
R. BARNARD	7.0	7.0	7.0	2ND ROUND	1ST
J. MARK	7.0	7.0	7.0	2ND ROUND	1ST
S. LANCEY	7.0	7.0	7.0	2ND ROUND	1ST
S. DEBRASHEL	7.0	7.0	7.0	2ND ROUND	1ST
S. BARNARD	6.0	6.0	7.0	2ND ROUND	1ST

OFF

BACK

SMART PLAYER

FAST

AM. CHAMPION

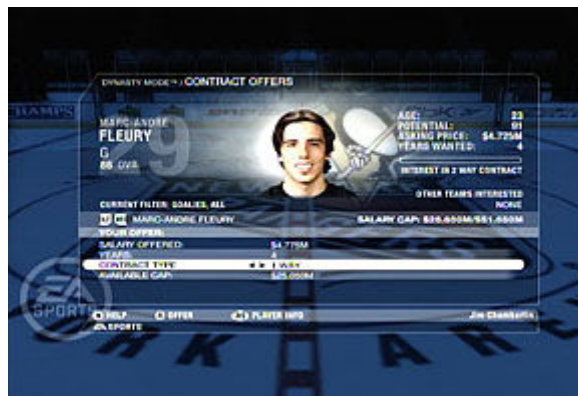
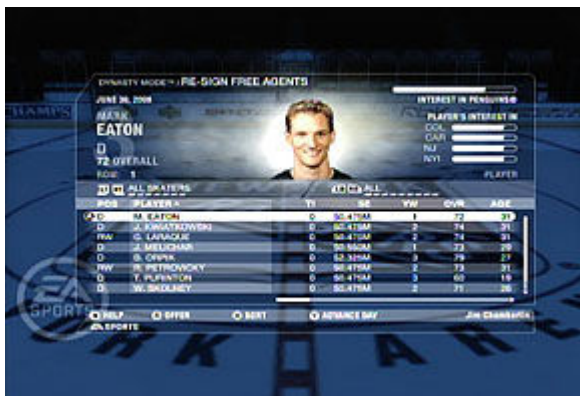
ALL SPORTS

You will be given a lot of information of each of the players who have entered the draft. If you did a good job at scouting, the information given will be accurate. If not, the information given will be inaccurate.

Although you haven't re-signed your un-signed players yet, you can get a few long-term prospects. If you've got a good team, look for guys who have a high potential rating. These guys have can be good if you give them time and some training.

Re-Signing Players

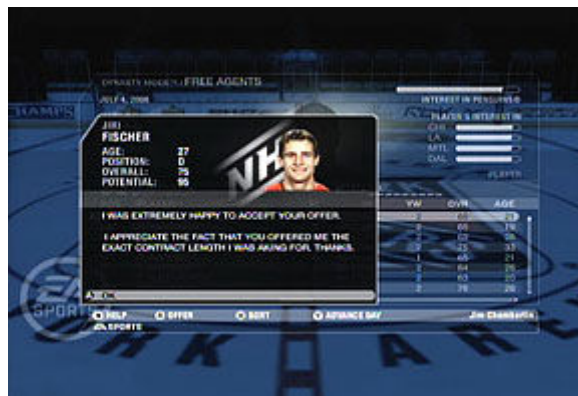
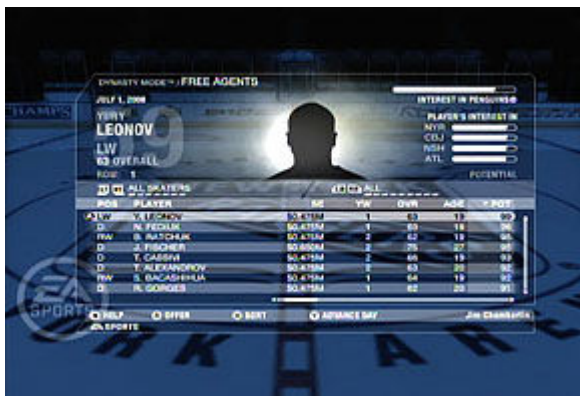
Any player you don't re-sign will be released and become a free agent. This is usually a good way to get rid of guys who complained all the time during the season or whose contract demands are too high.



When you re-sign your players, keep in mind that you must comply with the NHL salary cap, so keep an eye on it.

Free Agency

Although you have likely re-signed a lot of your talent, you should take a look at the free agent market, as there may be someone who would work well on your team. Any recently drafted players which were not signed will also be here. You can capitalize on another team's mistake or misfortune. Take the time to see what is available and compare it to what your team needs. If you've retained all of your starters, take a look at the second and third string guys. A team with a deep bench can withstand the loss of a starter due to serious injury during the season. While you may not want to think of losing your stars, it can and will happen.



You'll have over a month to offer contracts and await their responses. You've got plenty of time to look into what sort of talent is out there. Just remember that you do have a salary cap.

With a full roster, you can move a few guys to the minors and advance to the month of October and play some hockey again.

Enjoy the game!

NHL 08 FAQ

Below is a list of frequently asked questions we saw our readers asking in the forums.

Q? After reading your tips on offense, I'm still having problems scoring. Please help!!!!

A! Once you get your team down the ice, set up your offense. Cycle the puck and pass it to the guy who's cutting to the goal in the slot. You don't have to do anything fancy here, and you'll score a few goals a game with this basic type of offense alone.

Q? How do I meet the "He Shoots, He Scores" achievement for the Xbox 360 version?

A! "He Shoots, He Scores" requires the goalie to score a goal. Your only real chance to make this happen is when the opposing team pulls their goalie. An open net is really your only shot.

Q? Is there any way to play a shorter season in dynasty mode?

A! No, there aren't any options for this in the game. For those of you who simply don't have the time to play 80 games each season, you'll have to sim some of your games.

Q? What are two-way contracts?

A! That type of contract means a player will be paid a lower amount of money if he is sent to the minors and will not have to clear waivers.

Q? I continue to get disc read errors with my game. Is there any way to fix it?

A! Unfortunately, there's no sure-fire way to fix them. Save your game frequently, so that you don't lose any dynasty mode progress.

Q? How do you initiate a fight?

A! If you really want to initiate a fight, wait until late in the game. A team which is losing by several goals will be much more willing to throw down. Hit the slash button when you're next to a guy and you'll likely instigate a fight. You're on your own now.