

GAMER GUIDE

NHL 23
EDITION



the need to know you didn't know you needed



WHAT IS IT?



The brand new entry in EA's long running hockey series just released in the form of *NHL 23*. The game has received a largely positive reception thanks to its improved gameplay and its focus on making it easy for newcomers to dive right in. The general consensus is that it will be familiar and fun for those who already love the franchise although it doesn't depart much from its predecessor.



NHL 23

There are some new features that help keep the game fresh and move the franchise forward. While not revolutionary, the new stuff may be just enough to shake things up while satisfying those who already loved the core gameplay.

So whether you are a newcomer or back for more helpings of ice hockey, let this guide give you the ropes and get you balanced on the ice.

BREAKDOWN THE BASICS

Mechanics

The various *NHL 23* game modes available include the standard ones from last year, including Be A Pro. Many players spend a lot of time in this game mode, creating their own player and taking over other areas in the game like World of Chel. From greater customization in your Franchise mode Leagues to cross platform Matchmaking, *NHL 23* has made immense improvements across its game modes.



Modes

Ultimate Team

Hockey Ultimate Team (HUT) in *NHL 23* features the chance for players to build their dream teams comprised of the best athletes in the world. Teams can be made up of current NHL athletes and legends from the past, as well as international athletes and even athletes in the Canadian junior leagues for those that love keeping up with prospects. Fans earn new athletes by completing Challenges or winning games to get more Coins or Packs, or by buying HUT Points in the store with real-world money.

When players first jump into *NHL 23*'s HUT, they will get a starter team filled with base-level athletes to get them going with playing games and completing Challenges. Getting better athletes is the name of the game in HUT, and one of the best ways to do that when the player's team is low rated is to complete Challenges.

Challenges are short, team-based objectives that pit the player's HUT team against a CPU controlled team with three Objectives, each of them awarding one Star when completed. If enough Stars are earned, new Challenges are unlocked that include Rewards such as Player Packs, Coins, and items like Jerseys and Goaltender Helmets.

World of Chel

Like most sporting games, *NHL 23* has a wealth of modes for players to participate in, including the standard Franchise mode and Be A Pro mode, where players can either join or manage a team all the way to the moment that they lift the Stanley Cup.

The World of Chel offers fans a completely different experience, giving you the opportunity to express a lot of individuality, compete in Arcade modes against other players, or even join a club and try to achieve greatness together.



Be a Pro

Be a Pro is back once again, and this is your chance to dominate the ice rink and build your own legacy. The usual custom options of name and jersey number won't affect your in-game experience, but your choice of Position will. For those new to the game, we would recommend going with Centre, Left Wing, or Right Wing to give you the most exciting gaming experience. You'll read more about Positions later in this guide.



Franchise

The most significant update to Franchise mode in *NHL 23* is the addition of Custom Leagues that allow you to control almost every aspect of your league.

With Custom Leagues, you are the all-powerful league commissioner that decides on the number of teams in the league from 6 to 48, divisions from 2 to 8, and number of conferences. You can choose to recreate a historic league or a fictitious one of your own imagination.

In addition to the number of teams, divisions, and conferences, you can now change the minimum and maximum salary cap. From rookie salary control to complete playoff customization, Custom Leagues gives you more control over your league than ever before.

Dynamic Schedules allows you to set the number of division games, inter division games, and conference games from 20 to 48. You can also set your league to play between 6 to 84 games, as well as a round robin schedule so you'll have control over your league's schedule from start to finish.

You can even change the format of the postseason by customising the playoff structure. You can format playoffs across your league, division, and conference by determining how many teams qualify (up to 32 teams) as well as control league reseeding structures.

The amount of control you have as the league commissioner is almost limitless.

PLAYERS PLAYERS PLAYERS

✕ Positions +

It can be difficult for the inexperienced, to get to grips with the different Positions and Player Types (called Archetypes which we'll skate into later on) in *NHL 23*. Yet, for Line Chemistry and getting the most out of your team, it's vital to know how each Position operates and what to expect from the various Player Types.

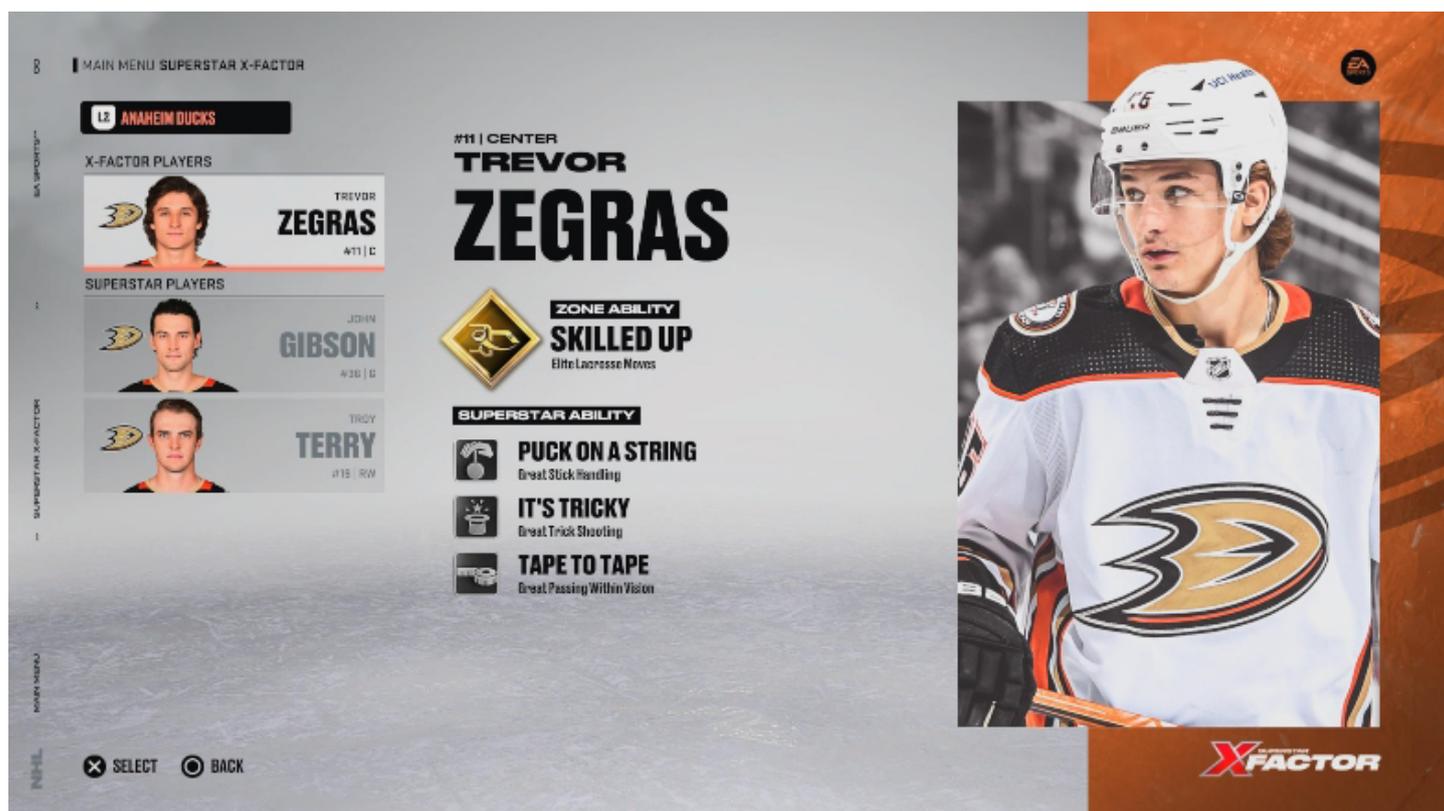
There are three Forward Positions in every even-strength Line (in ice hockey, a Line is a group of Forwards that play together in a "Shift"), which are the Centre, Left Wing, and Right Wing. When you start to lose athletes due to Penalties and deploy Penalty Kill Units, first, you'll lose a Winger and then the other Winger. So, you'll always have a Centre on the ice to take Faceoffs. Behind them, you have a Left and Right Defenseman as well as your Goaltender.



Centre (C)

The Centre is the Forward that plays in the middle position of the front three. Your Centre is the second-most important athlete on the ice – second only to the Goaltender – with possession on each Faceoff being decided by their Skill in the duel.

A Centre is expected to win at least 45 percent of Faceoffs and be the focal point of attacking moves. So, this will require them to take, skate with, and distribute the Puck to the Wings, as well as offer a Passing Lane in the offensive end, often around the slot or closer to the Puck Carrier. In the defensive end, Centres need to cover the middle of the ice or the more central area of the defensive strategy.



Right Wing (RW)

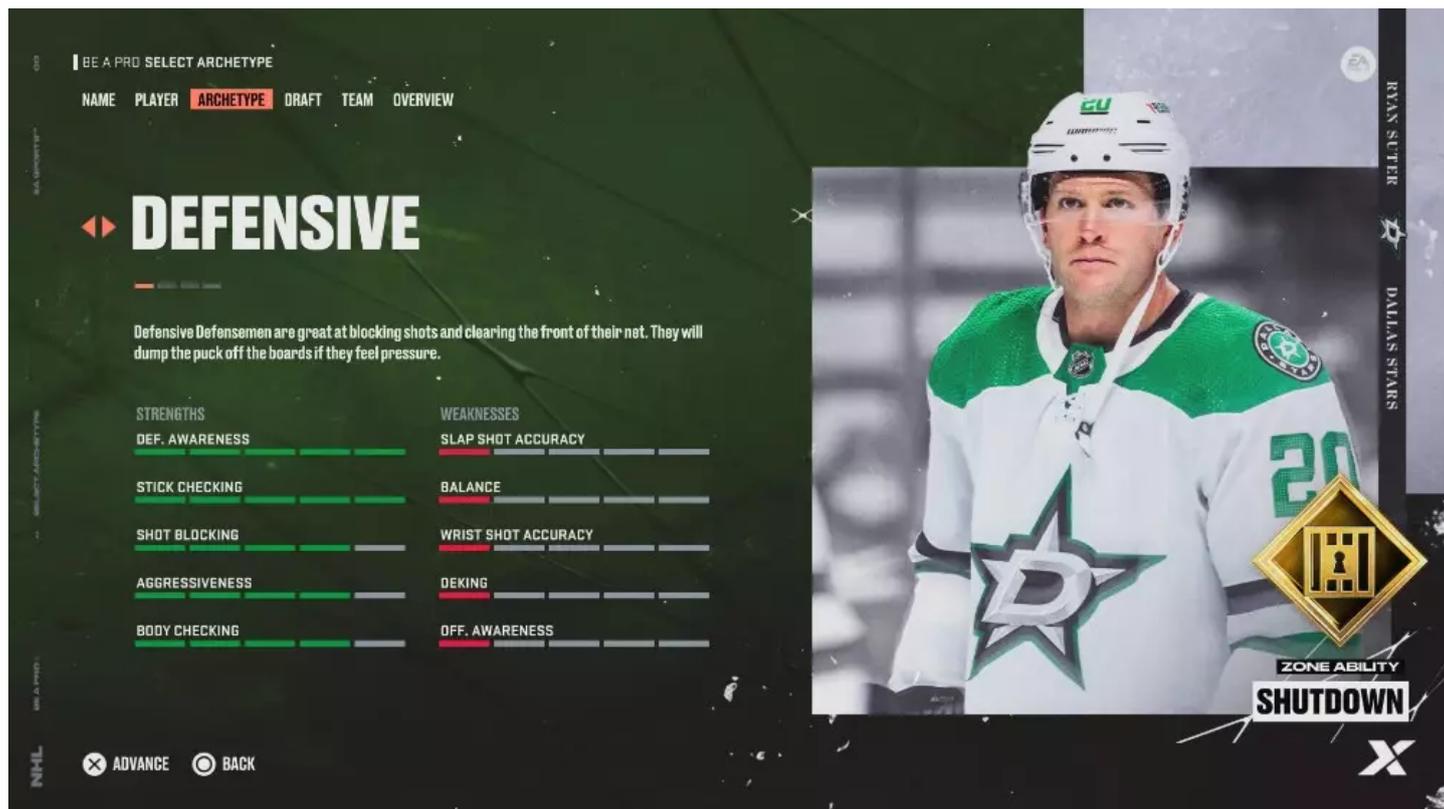
Your Right Wing is the Forward that plays to the right side of your Centre. They are expected to be offensive outlets, feeding passes towards the middle of the offensive end, and speeding down the right flank to get open. They can also be the ones to chase down the Puck on the Forecheck, usually when the Puck is dumped to the right side of the opposition's goal.

A Right Wing needs to pose a threat on the right side to pry away the opposing Left Defenseman, creating space in the middle for the Centre. They are also expected to be able to score plenty of goals as well as cover their flank on the backcheck. If the other team's Left Wing is approaching the defensive end, your Right Wing can be expected to put pressure on them before your Right Defenseman comes in to attempt to win the Puck.

Left Wing (LW)

The Left Wing is your Forward who plays to the left side of the Centre. As is the case with Right Wing skaters, your Left Wing is expected to be able to score goals, carry the Puck, and pick out passes that create goalscoring opportunities. They will both enter the offensive zone with the Puck and chase down dumped Pucks that slide to the left side of the opposition's goal.

Left Wingers also need to be active on the backcheck, often being the first line of defence if an opponent's Right Wing is on the rush. Equally, defensive duties won't tend to draw them too deep into your defensive end, with at least one of your Wingers tending to sit higher up to be ready for a breakout opportunity.



Defensemen (LD, RD)

You have two Defensemen on the ice at all times, with one playing more to the left of the middle and the other playing more to the right. As the Centre is generally expected to play a 200-foot game, Defenseman primarily focus on defending their respective wide areas. So, a Left Defenseman will look to close down the left side.

The job of a Left Defenseman or Right Defenseman is to win back the Puck. In *NHL 23*, this is usually via a Body Check on open ice, along the boards, or with a well-timed Stick Check. As opposing Forwards begin to carry the Puck towards your defensive end, Defensemen will retreat until your Blueline, and then put more pressure on.

Your Defensemen will also be the ones to collapse close to the goal to protect the net from long shots and Forwards skating towards the crease. This can also involve trying to shrug a player who's standing in front of the Goaltender (known as a screen) from the crease or disrupt their game.

In offensive situations, both Defensemen come to the opposing Blueline. They'll usually be within the offensive end, ready to take passes, circulate the Puck, and sometimes hammer slap shots on goal. However, in the event of a turnover, your Defensemen will be the first to retreat.



Goaltenders (G)

Your Goaltender is the player who stands in the crease to attempt to stop the Puck from going into the goal. They are the most important player on your team, will play all 60 minutes of a game, and are expected to stop more than 90 percent of roughly 35 shots that come their way in each game. That said, most Goaltenders will be given 20 or more rest nights throughout the season, particularly on back-to-back game days.

For most *NHL 23* players, goaltending is a passive aspect of the gameplay. Few switch to the Goaltender in games outside of playing passes from a collection behind the back of the net or to avoid freezing the Puck. The main exception to this is the gamers who take on the hefty challenge of playing as the Goaltender in Be A Pro and similar modes.



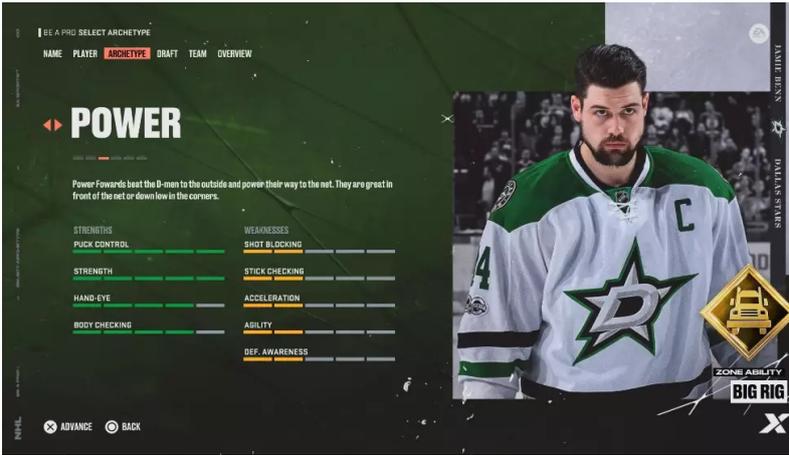
Archetypes +

Within each of the *NHL 23* positions detailed above, there are various sub-roles called “Archetypes” or “Player Type”, which indicate how the player acts on the ice. There are six Forward Player Types, four Defenseman Player Types, and three Goaltender Player Types in the game.

Enforcers don't tend to have much playing skill and are primarily on the ice to be a physical presence, lay down checks, and fight other players when called upon. Usually deployed as a Right Wing or Left Wing, Enforcers tend to have very high attributes in Strength, Fighting Skill, Balance, Body Checking, and Aggressiveness.

Grinders are physically-inclined skaters who revel in attacking the Puck wherever it is, laying down checks, and containing the Puck while awaiting the arrival of more skilled players. Usually, grinders are found as left or Right Wingers because they're so good at board play, and they tend to have high ratings in Body Checking, Strength, Aggressiveness, Shot Blocking, and Stick Checking.

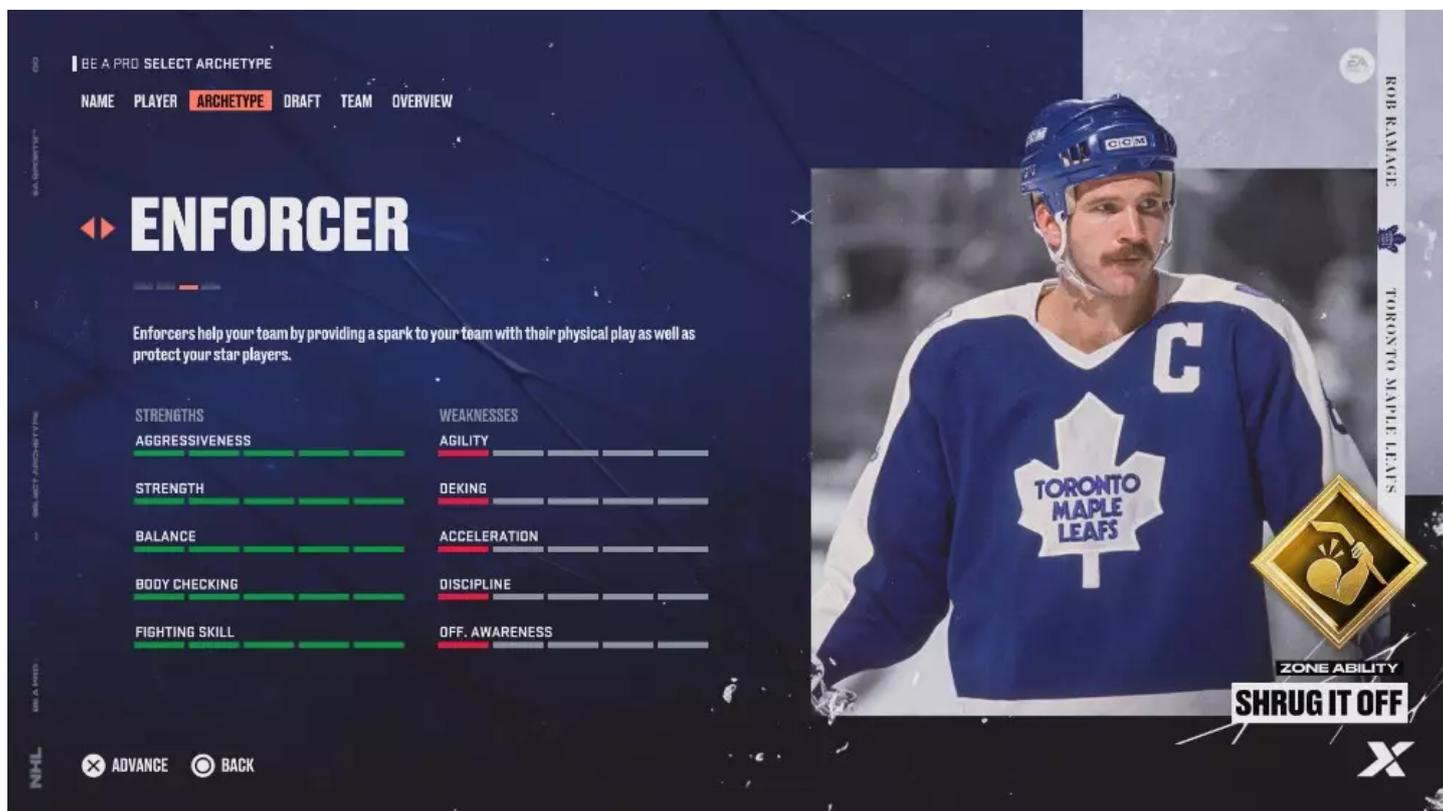
Two-Way Forwards are just as good in the offensive end as they are in the defensive end. True masters of the 200-foot game, you'll often see them described as defensive players because other types of Forwards don't offer as much to the team without the Puck as a Two-Way Forward.



Playmakers are your main offensive outlet, the best passers of and movers with the Puck, and position themselves to create goalscoring opportunities. Playmakers are just as commonly found on either wing as they are in the middle, but a top-class Centre who's a Playmaker will tend to be the star of the team in *NHL 23*.

Power Forwards are the more skilful strong players of the Forward lines. While Grinders and Enforcers tend to be much more focused on physical play, Power Forwards use their strength to out-muscle opponents and make space for big plays. Their top attributes tend to be in Strength, Body Checking, Hand-Eye, Puck Control, Offensive Awareness, and Aggression.

Snipers are the best goal scorers in the team, trusted with firing the Puck on net at any given opportunity. More often than not, Snipers are Right Wingers or Left Wingers, but some Centres have been given the Sniper Player Type in *NHL 23*. Their best attributes have to be shooting attributes and Puck Control, followed by either Acceleration, Agility, and Speed or the pairing of Strength and Aggressiveness.

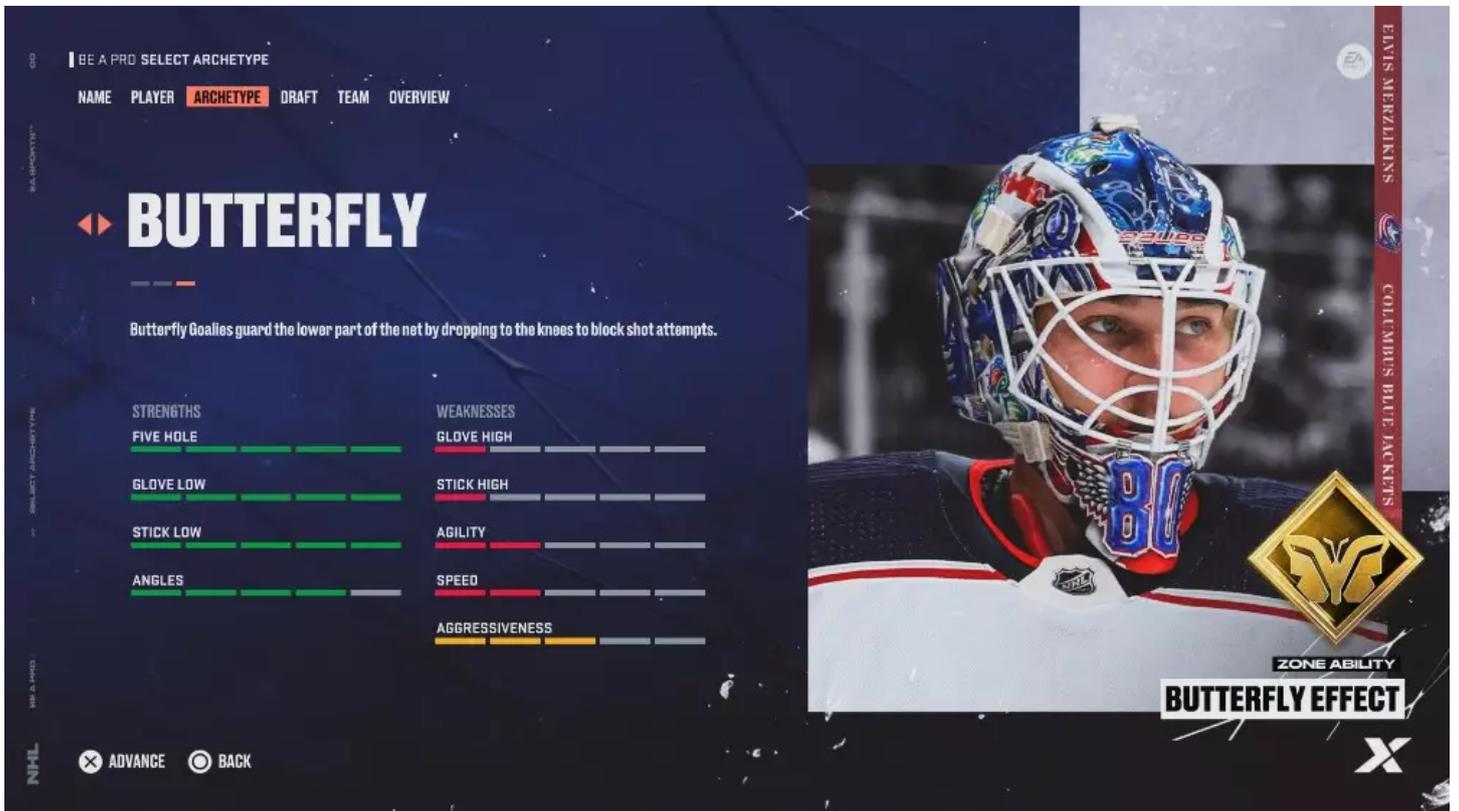


Defensive Defenseman plays with a defence-first mentality, prioritising covering potential breakouts over getting involved in the offence. They are at their best without the Puck, boasting high ratings in all defensive and physical attributes. This allows them to be masters of the takeaway and reclaiming possession.

Two-Way Defensemen are just as effective with the Puck as they are without possession. These blueliners are expected to track back, be physical, and retrieve the Puck as well as move it well, spot rushing wingers, and have a few shots on the goal. Speed, Agility, Offensive Awareness, Defensive Awareness, Passing, Shot Blocking, and Stick Checking are the key traits of this Player Type in *NHL 23*.

Offensive Defensemen are the more attack-minded blueliners who aim to anchor an offensive move and get in on the scoring more regularly. Often boasting high ratings in Speed, Acceleration, Puck Control, Passing, Offensive Awareness, Slap and Wrist Shot Accuracy, and Hand-Eye, Offensive Defensemen can take the Puck in the neutral zone, pick a perfect pass, and then rush to offer another option from the blueline.

Enforcer Defensemen are very similar to the Forward class of Enforcers, simply being Defensemen in their position of preference instead. They, too, excel in Aggressiveness, Strength, Fighting Skill, Balance, and Body Checking, offering another place to put an Enforcer on your lines if you don't want to lose a Forward slot.



Butterfly Goaltenders are accustomed to playing low in the goal, covering the bottom corners with their legs inverted outwards. This Goaltender Player Type is very difficult to score against down low, often rated highly for Five Hole, Stick Low, Glove Low, and Angles. However, they struggle with shots towards the crossbar and with mobility across the crease.

Standup Goaltenders prefer to guard the goalmouth by standing more upright for the most part. This somewhat traditional stance allows them to be faster and more aggressive to skaters who are closing in. A Standup Goaltender's best attributes will be their Glove High, Stick High, Poke Check, Speed, and Aggressiveness. However, covering the high areas comes at the cost of low coverage, with the bottom corners being particular weak spots.

Hybrid Goaltenders play between the Butterfly and Standup stance, with their mobility allowing them to switch between to offer much more even coverage. All of their main saving attributes tend to be rated evenly, with elements like Aggressiveness, Stick Checking, and Angles being a bit weaker. This is the default Player Type of every Goaltender in *NHL 23* currently.



TIPS & TRICKS

A new iteration of EA's hockey franchise means a new year of trying to figure out the nuances of the Frostbite engine and trying to master it to your advantage. If you're new to *NHL 23*, you've come to the right place. Here are some tips and tricks to keep your balance on the icy battleground.

Shooting and skating controls

As in previous NHL titles, you have three different control options: Classic NHL 94, Hybrid, and the Skill Stick. As far as this tutorial goes, we will focus on the Skill Stick controls. The reason for this is that not only is this set the recommended one, but it's also arguably the most effective, and here's why.

The NHL 94 controls are about as basic as you can get, while the Hybrid is a cross between the classic NHL 94 controls and the Skill Stick. The Skill Stick controls are advanced and more difficult to understand, but you will have better control of your players and can change your strategies and lines in-game. You won't have these options at your disposal with the other two setups.

Work on cycling

It's important to work on that cycle game in *NHL 23*. Moving the Puck around can be very useful against opponents who love to be aggressive with their athletes and don't stay in one position. Successful cycling includes passing the Puck around the boards, finding players that are open, and working the opposing team in order to move the Puck into high-danger scoring areas, like the front of the net.



Don't fall in love with one-timers

For those who may be unaware, a one-timer is a play in which the shooter releases the Puck immediately after the pass. This motion includes gearing up for the shot before the Puck is even on the stick.

One-timers were extremely useful in the old Ignite engine days of the game (i.g. NHL 15 to NHL 21). Thanks to the new Frostbite engine and tweaks to the gameplay, defensive players pick up these plays a bit faster. This is especially true when trying a quick one-time play close to the net.

One-time shots do still work in *NHL 23*. However, it is important to try these plays either just in front of the slot or on the point with traffic in front. The latter part is critical, as a player in front can create a nice screen and make it very difficult for the Goaltender to stop.

Change The Lines When Players Get Tired

It is perfectly normal for a player's teammates to get tired if they have been on the ice for a while. This is something that is to be expected in the game and can severely limit the effectiveness of an athlete's performance on the ice if you do not work around the exhaustion of their teammates.

If their teammates are tired, it will make the athlete more susceptible to enemy attacks and less likely to execute moves flawlessly. It will be best to switch them out, changing their lines to ensure that they are using teammates with their stamina at full.



Try Going With The Playmaker Archetype First

There are multiple Archetypes that a player could pick for their gameplay in *NHL 23*. It is worth noting that they cannot change this Archetype while they are in the middle of a game. As such, it is a good idea for a player to think carefully about their Archetype.

If you still aren't certain about which Archetype to pick, it would be best to go with the Playmaker Archetype. The Playmaker Archetype is very easy for new players to get used to while going through the game *NHL 23*, and can be used to get used to the other parts of the game as well.



NHL 23



CONCLUSION

The bigger they are, the harder they fall. On the ice rink it's no different. Get your basics down, get a handle on the theory, and trust your Playmakers. You'll be lifting the Stanley Cup before you know it.