



Goaltending

In recent years much has been written about goaltending. We recognize this and have availed ourselves to literature. We encourage all young goaltenders to do the same. This pamphlet is considered to be an extension of these theories and publications. It is attempted to be perhaps a little more practical than most publications.

We had the privilege of working and socializing with the late and great Larry "Pops" Ross for many years and would like to dedicate this pamphlet to him. Pops was an All-American at the University of Minnesota, one of the most successful high-school coaches in the history of game at International Falls, NHL scout with the San Jose Sharks and has been inducted into the United States Hockey Hall of Fame. We will forever treasure our relationship with Larry as a friend and mentor. He is the catalyst behind this pamphlet and truly an inspiration in our lives as well as the lives of countless players.

We have attempted to make this pamphlet beneficial to both the goalkeeper and the coach.

*That goaltenders are a breed apart has long been acknowledged.

Glenn Hall threw up before games. Gilles Grafton once streaked in Sweden. Gary (suitcase) Smith wore 12 pairs of socks and showered in between periods. Gary Simmons kept a lead pipe handy one year to discourage teammates who might want to initiate him.

***Steve Dryden Winnipeg. Free Press January 20, 1989**

And these are just the guys whose first names start with G. Yet who can blame goalies for their different ways and means?

Theirs is an occupation fraught with wild shifts between success and failure. Mama, "Don't let your sons grow up to be goalies." Who needs the grief?

Lefty Curran, Goalie, 72 Silver Medal in Japan, believes that a goaltender has to go beyond normal when it comes to earning the respect of your teammates as a person, friend and player. He believes that players play harder for a goal tender they like and respect as a teammate than one who separates himself from the team. Teammates will go the extra mile when it comes to blocking shots, defensive posture and getting back into the play on transition.

Gilles Meloche, Goalie, Minnesota North Stars, told us, "The difference between a major league goal tender is between the ears." They have similar talents but their mind separates them. Both players are class acts when it comes to a balance between social skills and talent. They are honest, reliable and very personable guys with a passion for stopping pucks. Thus, the reason for their success.

"I have a theory," says Boston goalie Joe Bertagna, "that the aspect of goaltending is so much more than the mental aspects of the other positions." That may, in part explain the fluctuations (between good and bad streaks).

"A big chunk of their game is confidence which leads to how spontaneous they are and if they're not spontaneous, and their thinking too much, they're not going to be the same goalie." Bertagna, believes problems endured by goalies are more mental than mechanical.

"When a guy turns the corner from being extremely confident to having a little doubt it will show up in his performance."

Style plays a part in the equation that makes up Bertagna's winning and losing formula.

"I've always found flopping goalies are time bombs," he says. "They're going to make great saves, flashy saves. They're going to get in a rhythm where everything is going but there's something seductive about that style and you start to over do it. You start to leave your feet a little too early."

Chuck Grillo says, "That theory gets shot down by Hall of Famers like Tony Esposito and Dominic Hasek. While others are worried about style these guys were busy stopping pucks anyway they could, won with consistency and are or will be in the NHL Hall of Fame."

Most good goaltenders are excellent athletes. Consequently, we feel goalkeepers must eliminate thinking about letting in a bad goal or worry who has a hard shot and negative thoughts. Take pressure off of yourself. Ignore the negatives and get more into the game and just do what comes naturally. Be aggressive, come out challenging and let the puck hit you.

Grant Fuhr says, "If a goal goes in don't blame the others, blame yourself. You will not go very far in this game with nasty glances and blame leveled on the other players after a goal is scored."

To play successfully at high levels the key for the goalkeeper is control and position. He must be in position to get hit by the puck and then control the puck. The advent of large protective equipment has brought on this philosophy in goaltending. A generation ago most good goaltenders wore as little equipment as necessary relying more on reflexes to make the save. The modern outlook is much more advantageous to the goalkeeper. Both the skills of position and control can be measured objectively and can be improved with practice. Good position demands that the goalkeeper shuffle short distances while in complete control of his body. Try to keep the blades of your skates parallel. Quick, smooth movements are necessary while maintaining level shoulders.

Goaltenders must do movement drills constantly. Some goaltenders refuse to work hard at these drills but it is believed such attitudes are detrimental to overall improvement. Just as forwards work on their skating each day, goalkeepers must become proficient in skating short distances. Mike Richter has been tested at Minnesota Hockey Camps with his pads on and he recorded a time equal to the average of skaters in the NHL.

Chuck Grillo was part of a team of scouts that drafted John VanBiesbrouck, Mike Richter, Roman Turek, Arturs Irbe, Yevgeny Nabokov, Mikka Kiprusoff, Vesa Toskala and Marc-Andre Fleury. He also had the opportunity to monitor the development of Wade Flaherty at Minnesota Hockey Camps as a free agent cast off from Buffalo. He says, "No goalie is the same." There are some basic things to look for, such as:

"It's more important that the goaltender stops the puck, not how he stops the puck. Don't worry about the style the player uses.

Does the player show you that he wants to be in there with the game on the line?

Does he relish the opportunity to play in big games?

Does he stop the first puck with his positioning and have the athletic ability to stop second shots?

Does he cut down on second shots?

How good is his stick?

Is the goal tender an extension of the coaching staff?

Is the goal tender well liked and respected by his teammates?

Emotional stability and mental toughness in all situations is a must.

What are his training habits?

Does he play within his limitations?

Does he leave the puck for his teammate in the same place and flat on the ice most every time?

This way his teammate can concentrate on where his other teammates are.

The underlying quality of these players was their work ethic. They are the best conditioned athletes on the teams.

The Goalie uses his positioning to stop the first shot or get hit. He uses his athletic ability to stop 2nd and 3rd shots, Make the first save using your smarts and the 2nd using your skills, The great goalies give their team a chance to win most every game. They thrive on being in pressure situations. They seem to enjoy the moment as much as the win."

Drills to be practiced daily are drills moving forward, backward and laterally. Also to be practiced daily are glove saves, BLOCKER and stick saves, poke-checking and skating.

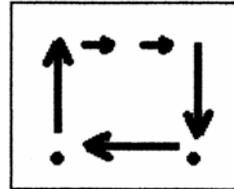
A good adage for goalkeepers to remember is that repetition is the best teacher. Tretiak the Great Russian goaltender said, "it takes 10,000 repetitions for something to become a natural reaction."

THOUGHTS ABOUT MOVEMENT (skating)

1. Stay in a good basic stance. Stick on the ice. Gloves ready. Shaft of stick covers the "5 hole." Try to avoid bobbing up and down when moving laterally. Try to maintain level shoulders. Good knee bend is essential for good powerful movement.
2. Use (and be ready to use) inside edges of both skates.
3. Recovery part of stride should be quick and not be part of the transfer of weight. The edges of the recovery foot should barely touch the ice, not dragged across the ice.
4. Only use arms to move when moving long distances. Keep them in position to stop the puck.
5. Four reasons for movement drills,
 - 1) Good warm-up.
 - 2) Use as an anaerobic exercise work-rest ratio of 1:3.
 - 3) Helps you learn angles and where you are in the net.
 - 4) Become a better skater.
6. Vary speed and distance. For variation also add shooters. Pass and shoot, etc.

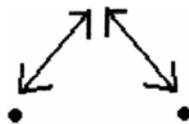
I. Movement Drills (without shooting)

- a. Post to post (good warm-up) slow 5x's,
- b. Semi-circle crease (short, quick feet movement) 2x each way. (High tempo if warmed up.
- c. Rectangular crease. Trace crease. 2 rotations each direction. 2 lateral slide pushes across the top.



d. Letter drills

“V”



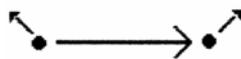
Post to top of crease. Pivot and push to other post. 5 X each way

“Y”



Out and back in front of the crease. Pivot to post, out and back pivot to other post. 3X

“U”



Out on angle. Back to post. Then out on other angle, Back to post. 3X

“W”



Same as "U" only insert a "V" instead of post to post move. 3X each side.

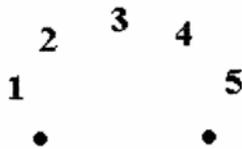
"X"



From post glide out to opposite corner of rectangle crease. Pivot back to post. Glide out to corner of crease on opposite side. Pivot to that post. Repeat 3X's each side.

II. Movement Drills (Pucks on the ice)

a.) 5 Puck Drill

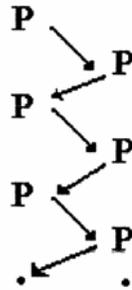


Place 5 pucks on the ice as above. Stand behind the goal and call out a number of the puck. Vary the type of move by number called. High tempo for 30 seconds. (Shuffle if movement is a distance of 2 pucks or less. T-Glide if movement is 3 pucks or more.)

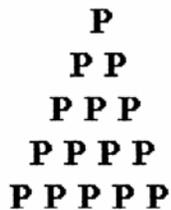
b. "Z Drill"

All movement drill going puck to puck to puck can be done anywhere on ice. But ideally should be done around the crease area.

Place about 8 pucks as diagramed, also post width apart at 18" intervals from the goal line. Goalie must pivot and push to each puck out and back. Goalie should do this drill 1 or 2 times out and back per set. 3 X.



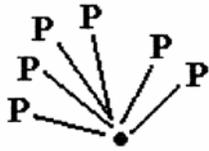
Lateral Drills



Move in slide puck to puck. Each puck about 18" apart. Over and back 2 times. Remove one puck, make distance greater. Stay in parallel slide. Remove another puck. Remove 3rd puck. Goalie must open up to move at this stage.

Note: You can vary drills by adjusting distance moved, repetition, add stationary shooting or passing and shooting to drills.

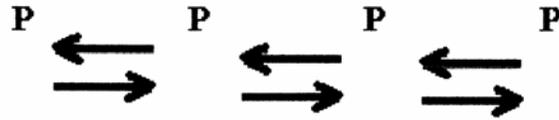
c.) Out and back to post.



From one post go out and back to each puck. Switch to other post. You can vary distances and width of the pucks.

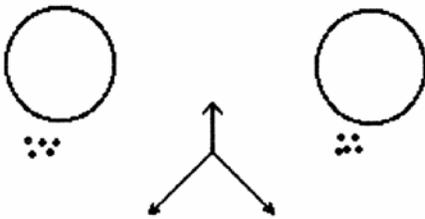
d.) 4 Puck Drill - can be done anywhere on the ice

Go side to side stopping at each puck or changing directions to the instruction of the coach or other goaltender.



III) Movement Drill (without shooting)

1. Same movement as I a. Post to post "Y" only has two shooters with five pucks each at bottom of face off circles alternating shots.



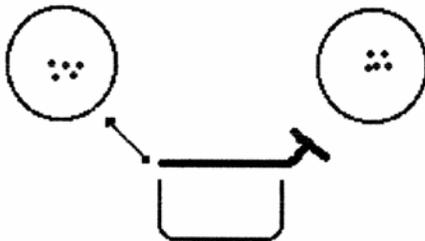
Simulated 2 on 1



2 shooters with 5 pucks each stand at face off dots. Goalie moves out and back to the shooter on one side as he retreats to top of crease the shoot on that side angles his stick indicating a pass to the other shooter. Goalie moves laterally across to stop shot.

- Repeat in opposite direction.

2. "U" following shooter off wing around net and drop pass to shoot in slot. Goalie moves out to shooter, retreats to post goes post to post and out to block shots from shooter on other side. Repeat on other side- 5 shots on each side.



A.) Shot Blocking (4 basic moves to 4 corners of the net)

Shooter, with pucks in the slot, shoots to one corner -1- pucks to the same corner. Give goalie time to recover between shots.

B.) Puck Handling Drills (2 X a week)

1. Direct long shots on goal from blue line- let goalie control the puck and pass it to a specific spot i. e. hash marks or play boards.
2. Dump puck into zone around boards or into corners (both sides) goalie should move puck to the forehand or backhand.

C.) It has been noticed that after time the goalie retrieves the puck when actually time does not allow the goalkeeper playing the puck along the boards or behind the net. In addition, the other players have a stick much more adapted to stickhandling so when ever possible they should handle the puck. A good thing in having a goalkeeper more active in playing the puck probably has a tendency to be overdone.

D.) Thoughts

- a.) First shooting drills of each practice should be for the goalie, long but hard shots.
- b.) On game days let the goalie be successful, drills shouldn't be too difficult, you want the goalie to have confidence going into the game.
- c.) Great puck handling goal tenders with good passing skills give your team an extra player in the defensive zone.

In closing, we took pictures of goalies in training camp from various angles. These pictures showed us how much the goaltender was able to "fill the net". It's amazing how some goalies look big in goal because they fill the net and how others look so small because of their positioning. They give the opponent very little to shoot at. This is something you may want to do on a yearly basis.

"The impulsiveness seen in young goaltenders is not a matter of concern for me. Goalies will become more patient as they get older so those impulsive reactions get tempered to the point where they are a plus."

Chuck Whalen, goalie coach – www.mnhockeycamps.com

Most fans go wild when they see a goalie make what looks like a great save, but the chances are what they are seeing is a save that was made from being out of position."

Mike Richter, goaltender - New York Rangers



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