



GOALTENDING



GOALTENDING

Having a strong goaltender can go a long way to the overall success of your team. The best way to improve your goaltenders is to work with these individuals throughout the season. Goaltending has many key components including most importantly positioning and save selection. These two areas should be emphasized in practice as a mobile and agile goaltender should be able to get into the correct position to make the first save.

An effective practice should include goaltenders in as many drills as possible. Goaltenders should not be thought of as targets during practice but should be included in drills in order to improve both the scoring ability of your team but the play of your goalie. Players must be accountable for their performance in practice and they must understand that head shots etc. will not be tolerated by the goalies and coaching staff.

Goaltenders should face a minimum of 100 shots during practice. These shots include quality scoring chances and game situations. Although taking shots from the slot may be a good way of warming up a goalie it does not simulate a game atmosphere. Coaches must take time to include goalies in their practice in order to ensure that the goaltender improves his or her game while having fun!

Many minor hockey practices often begin with skating. Goaltenders should be encouraged to take part of these drills. Goalies that are strong skaters are able to get themselves into position to make a save. Skating is the most important skill for all hockey players and goalies should not be left behind in this area. Goaltenders at the beginner levels should work on their footwork to start. This will build the foundation for the young player. Once the goaltender has a solid grasp of going side-to-side and his angles then these drills can be altered to include shots as part of the movement drill.

At advanced levels goaltenders may be required to leave the net in order to play the puck it is imperative that the player have the confidence to leave the net, play the puck and return to position without any hesitation. Backwards skating is especially important for goalies as it allows them to play angles and then retreat to the net in case of a cross-crease play. Skating allows goaltenders the opportunity to work on balance and lateral movement and both are essential to overall positioning.

Goaltenders should be competent in all of the basic areas of skating. It is not necessary to have goaltender skating circles and lengths of the ice for a long time as they can work on goalie specific skating drills.

Goaltenders should also take time to work on passing the puck. The goalie can save a lot of headaches if they are able to accurately make the first pass to a defenceman. Goalies should not be expect to make long passes but a quick, accurate pass of 10 to 15 feet can lead to a faster defensive zone breakout. Goaltenders need to be aware of their surroundings and determine if it is best to make a pass or to leave the puck behind the net or to even cover the puck and force a face-off. Goalies should not be taking big chances to play the puck but they should be able to help take some pressure off of their defencemen.

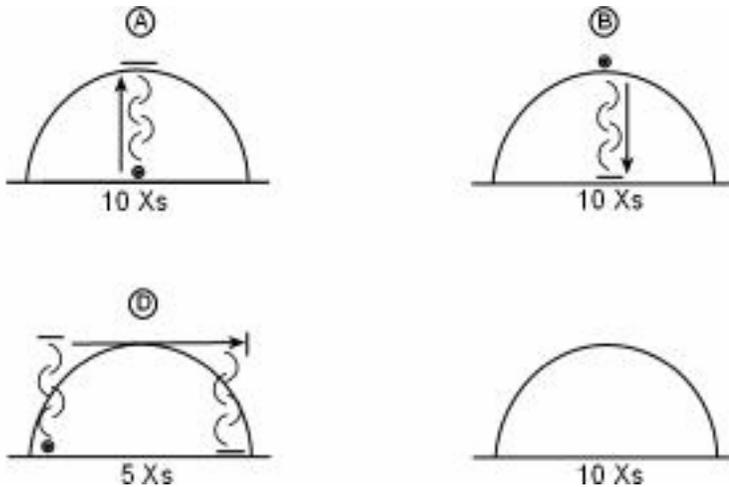


GOALTENDING



Sculling

Examples of goaltender specific drills include sculling which has players use sharp, quick c-cuts using the heel to go forward and the toe to go backwards. Shuffles allow goaltenders to push using their inside edges from side to side in order to improve their lateral movement.



In the defensive zone the goaltender often acts like a quarterback as they are able to direct their teammates. Goaltenders should be involved in drills such as breakouts as they can come out of the net to stop a dump-in etc. Goaltenders see the play develop and should be vocal in helping their defencemen in order to avoid any confusion.

Small area games are a great way to simulate game like situations for all players. This type of activity allows the competitive nature in all players to rise to the surface. Goaltenders will have to deal with game situations such as odd-man rushes, screens and rebounds through these drills.

There are many examples of small area games that include goaltenders as active participants. Three vs. three cross-ice games allow goaltenders to make many saves while keeping their concentration due to the tight confines of the playing surface.

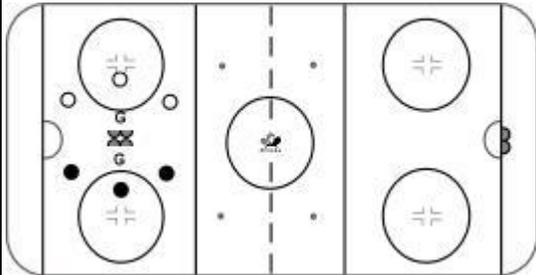
Other examples of small area games that help work with goaltenders is when you put the nets back to back and allow players to shoot on both nets at any time. This forces the goaltender to stay alert to pucks that are being played behind the goal. Goaltenders are also forced to minimize rebounds as either team is able to score at any point.



GOALTENDING



Back to Back Nets Drill



The Coach must place both nets back to back between two face-off circles. Players must play 3 vs. 3 but are allowed to score on any net at any given time. Goaltenders must remain alert in order to prepare for shots at any time at any angle. Also an excellent drill for working on play behind the net.

Variations

The Coach can force the team who takes control of the puck to make a pass to a coach who is standing at the blue line before attacking a goal. This forces the three players to think about defensive responsibilities when the puck is turned over.

The Coach can force one player from each team to remain in each face-off circle at all times. This turns the game into more 2 vs. 2 with the opportunity for the third player to have an open shot when puck control is gained.

Here are 10 tips towards successfully implementing your goalies into practice. These tips will allow the goaltender to have a fun time while at practice while constantly working on their game.

1. 10 minutes crease movement
2. Minimize predictable / repetitive drills
3. Encourage shots from different angles
4. Game-like shots / situations
5. Players finish drills / shots
6. Build enough gap for 1 rebound
7. Calculate shooting / save %
8. Encourage communication and **puckhandling**
9. Encourage foot movements from goaltenders in your drills
10. Respect – coach / players