Goalie Development Handbook

Goaltending is a critical element to any hockey team. Often the goaltending can make or break a team. Certainly, good teams win games with only adequate goaltending, but rarely will a team win a championship without great goaltending. But it is an area that does not receive as much attention as the other positions on the team. There are several good reasons for this:

- There are 7 or 15 times as many skaters as there are goaltenders on a team;
- Most coaches do not have any goaltending experience;
- The position is fundamentally different than any other role on the team; and
- The Head Coach has too many other duties to focus much time on specialized functions.

The purpose of this handbook is to provide practical advice and materials to support the Head Coach's development of their goaltenders. This handbook deals with goaltending on a strategic level.

To get the most out of the time and resources you must devote energy to your goaltending, by doing these three things:

1. Appoint a Goalie Coach
2. Expect the Goalie Coach to read the goalie development guide (this document) and implement the key functional areas.
3. Monitor the improvement and development of your goaltenders.

RAHA Goalie Committee guiding principles:

- Foster a goalie culture that encourages experimentation with the position and retention year over year
- Providing regular and structured age/skill-appropriate training opportunities for goalie development
- Enabling an athlete-centered developmental feedback loop - with individualized development plans
- Educate coaches and parents on the position of goaltending and provide support structures to reinforce a goalie-aware hockey culture

The Goalie Coach

Just like any other player on the team, a goalie needs to be developed. The first step to developing a goalie is to evaluate them using the process outlined above. The second and most important step in the process is to assign an adult on the team to work with the goalies. This person does not necessarily need goaltending experience. The Goalie Coach just needs to be an adult volunteer who is willing to work with one or two players in a specialized role. If the team is short with on-ice help, an adult who does not skate can still help the goalies. What is important is that the goalies receive special attention from someone who can concentrate on their play and help them work through various challenges during the season.

Here are the duties of the Goalie Coach:

1. During practice, the Goalie Coach works with the goaltenders on their specific practice drills and to run individual drills that will improve the goalie's development areas.
2. During games the Goalie Coach monitors the goalie's performance and looks for areas that need further practice and development.
3. The Goalie Coach will prepare and monitor the goalie development plan.
4. The Goalie Coach will provide encouragement and support for the goalies.

The third step in developing the team's goaltenders is to write a development plan for each of them. The Goaltender Development Form included in Appendix A is provided to create some structure.

One way to conduct the development process is to have your goalie complete the first page of the form, and then the Goalie Coach helps the goaltenders complete the second page of the form.

Of course, the Head Coach can be involved with either of these tasks. But the most critical part of this process is that the goaltender should do a lot of the work and participates in determining their development areas. It is very important for goaltenders to be thinking about their game, as well as getting the ice time to play their position.

During the middle of the season, the Goalie Coach should review the development plan with their goaltenders to see if they are on track and if any adjustments should be made. Then toward the end of the season, this form can be used as an evaluation of the goalie's overall season and performance.

Goaltender Practice Patterns

Practices are tough on the goalie. They must do 200-foot wind sprints in 20 pounds of equipment with skates that are built for shuffling 6 inches at a time. They face countless break-aways, odd man rushes, unchallenged slap shots, and multiple pucks flying at them at once. Needless to say, practice is not always a goalie's favorite part of playing hockey.

Goalies need to practice differently than the rest of the team. But there are only one or two goalies and 15 skaters on the squad. Naturally, the practice is built around the needs of the majority. Goalies use different skills than the rest of the team and they should be practicing differently. Here are a few common-sense guidelines for goalies and their coaches to use during practice.

1. Skating drills: After an initial warm-up skate with the team (10 or 15 minutes), the goalie should be excused from the wind sprints, endurance building and other "skater" drills. Instead, they should be working on their T-glides, shuffles, "ups and downs", half-split kicks, flexibility, and 20-foot sprints.

The goalie uses small, intricate movements that require excellent balance (skating very slowly usually requires a different kind of balance than moderate speed
skating). A goalie should also practice sudden, quick-skating bursts where they move 10 or 15 feet and then stop.

Example: https://video.hockeycanada.ca/en/c/goaltending-039-skating-team-warm-up-with-goalies.96839

2. Conditioning drills: Just like a goalie's skating skills, their conditioning needs are different than a skater's. In game situations goalies crouch and shuffle, and then make a reflex movement followed by a controlled fall and returning quickly to their crouch. So part of the conditioning a goalie needs is to do those things.

3. Flow drills: Most practices involve a high percentage of drills that develop individual skills. This means skating, stick handling and shooting all in one drill. Usually, these drills end up with an odd- man rush, a breakaway or a fast break on the goalie. These are good drills for everyone, but they wear out the goalie quickly. Not so much from making the save, but from the constant up-and-down they're forced into on each play. Often the shooters aren't spaced far enough for the goalie to recover, causing frustration and confidence problems. So, the goalie gets tired before the practice has really started, and all they've been is a target. During these drills, the goalie needs to do two things: don't worry about making saves; and work on their lateral movement skating skills. When the skater fakes, the goalie should move laterally with the shooter on their skates. The goalie should not go down on these drills, but develop their skating, balance, and positioning skills. This is hard work too, but it's the right work for this drill. Bottomline: Space out the shooters - make sure your players don't pepper the goalie. Let goalies recover between shots and in between drills – when exhausted, they use poor technique.

4. Stick handling drills: All goalies need to learn how to handle the puck. All goalies should participate in stick handling drills, but with limited skating. Goalies usually don't need to handle the puck for more than 10 feet or a couple of seconds. So, there's no reason for them to learn how to stick handle around a series of cones.
Have them stick handle in an isolated area moving forward 5 to 15 feet and then make a pass to a specific target 15 feet away. That's what goalies do in a game. One area a coach should not be accommodating is allowing their goalies to perform stickhandling drills without their catching glove.

5. Situation drills: A lot of drills are designed for the defense and the goalie to fail. Tip drills, 3 on 1s, 2 on 0s, and one-timer feeds are all drills where the whole point is to generate offense (i.e. score a goal). The goalie should get scored on a lot during these drills and may get frustrated, tired or lose confidence. Both the goalie and the coach need to recognize this before the drill gets started. The coach should instruct the goalie to practice their positioning and lateral movement skills and place less emphasis on making the save.

6. Idle Time: Most practices involve a substantial amount of time where goalies aren't involved. This should not be "time off" for the goalie. They should cool off for a minute and then get back to work. During breaks they should be skating "The Square". They can also be working on stretching, 20-foot sprints, stick handling, puck-juggling (put the puck on the back of their catching glove, turn the glove over quickly and catch it in midair) and side-to-side pushes (like when the puck is behind the net).

The Square: this is a basic skating drill all goalies should do at least once or twice each practice. Place four cones about 8 to 10 feet apart into a square. The goalie will skate these four cones in their crouch, always facing the same direction. Start at the "lower left" cone facing forward and skate forward to the "upper left" cone. Then shuffle to the "upper right" cone. Then skate backward to the "lower right" cone. Finally, t-glide to the "lower left" cone and have them take a breath or two and do The Square in the opposite direction.

The goalie's practice plan needs to be different than the skaters' program because they need to develop different skills. The goalies need to be diligent and disciplined by practicing the "right things" and be trained how their practice needs differ from their teammates. Coaches should recognize and accommodate this difference within their regular practice regimen. The best way to handle this is not to alter the team's practice plan, but to make room for your Goalie Coach. Give them time with the goalies where they work on their specific conditioning and practice needs. Practice for a goalie isn't always going to be fun, but it should always be productive.

A Goalie Drill Even Your Players Will Like

Goalies like to take shots during practice. Players like to shoot. And everybody loves “small game” drills. Here’s one where you can keep a quarter of your team busy in a small area.

The game is called Ten. The goalie is in the net with a shooter placed at the hash marks between the face off circles in the slot. Two other skaters are placed on each side of the goalie at the top of the crease – a total of three skaters and one goalie are in this game.

The object of the game is to score points. The first team to score 10 points wins. The skaters score points by getting the puck in the net. The goalie scores points by:

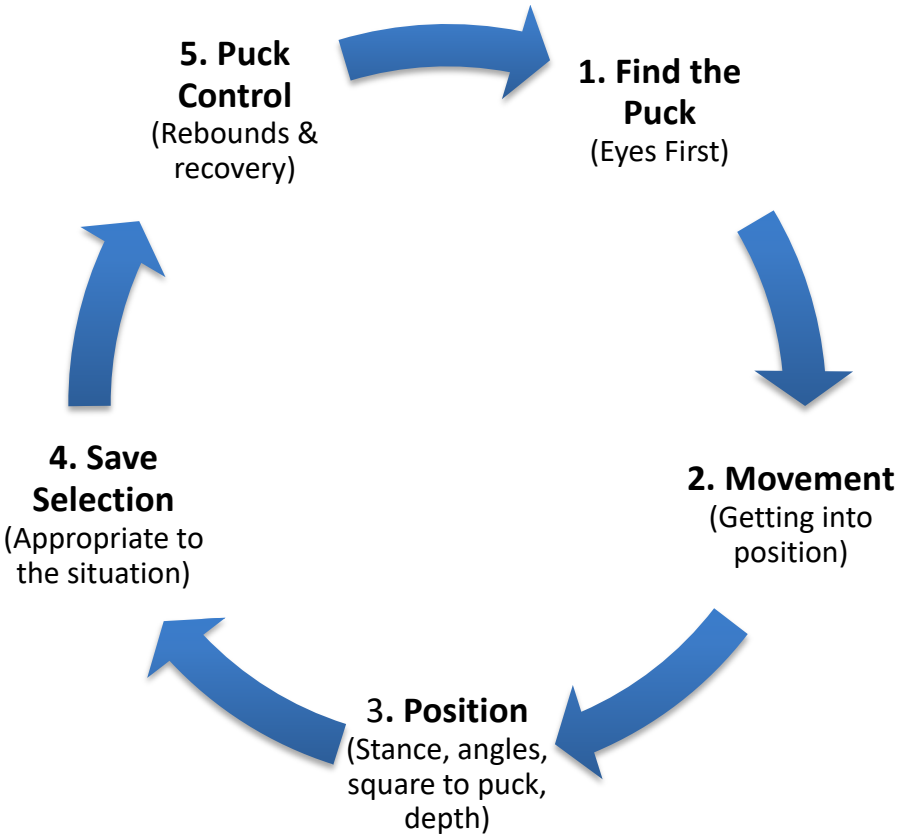
- Freezing the puck
- The puck touches the boards (or glass), or goes behind the goal line, or
- The puck touches the blue line.

The player in the slot starts the game and has two options: shoot directly on goal or shoot for a tip-in to either player. The two skaters can tip, redirect, or shoot the puck – they may not touch or screen the goalie. They also may not pass between each other. The puck stays in play until a point is scored.

This drill teaches the goalie to manage rebounds and it develops their anticipation and reflex skills. The skaters get close-in scoring chances, develop tip-in skills, and learn how to keep the puck in play. Everyone has fun.

It takes about one minute to play each point in the game. If you have five minutes for this game, have them play a game of “Five”. If you have 10 minutes and two goalies, let them each play a game of Five. After you teach your players this game, they can play it anywhere on the ice and the kids will make up rules as they go along. This is a low-supervision, high impact drill that can help keep your goalies sharp and your shooters challenged while they have fun!

Save Cycle is comprised of 5 key areas of focus for solid goaltending



THE 3 H's

Coaches can help goalies with a simple way to think about the position. If a goalie's head/eyes are tracking the puck, the body will follow. If the body follows, the hands must then be in the proper position. Moving their body requires activating their hips/core. So, the coach can work with the goalie to ensure that their movements are correct as they follow/track the puck.

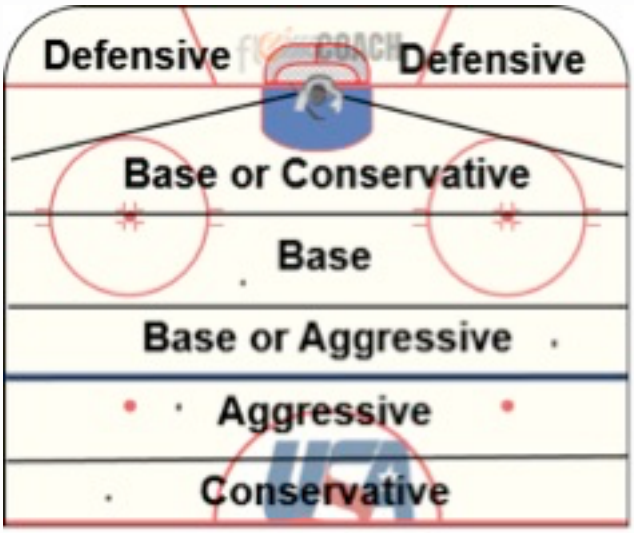
<u>HEAD</u>
Moving head and eyes to ALWAYS follow the puck.

<u>HANDS</u>
Hands follow the head and fill the space of the net and move with the head – much like a steering wheel where the hands follow the head/eyes.

<u>HIPS</u>
Activate the core so you connect your upper body to your lower body and push with power and accuracy.

ABCs of Depth

The depth portion goaltender positioning is derived from the Buckley Positioning System (BPS) and focuses on the goaltender finding optimal depth. Mike Buckley, is a former collegiate and professional goalie and current Development Goalie Coach for the Stanley Cup Champion Pittsburgh Penguins.



- Defensive Depth: When the puck is in this area the goaltender is either on the post or is tracking the puck behind the net.
- Conservative Depth: When the puck is in this area the goaltender is aware of a potential lateral play or is recovering to be set on a rebound. Also, while the puck is in the opposite end of the ice rink or near the center red line, the goaltender should be in the center of the crease between defensive and conservative depth, ready to move to aggressive depth as the play nears the defensive zone.
- Base Depth: When the puck is in this area the goaltender will have his or her skate blades on the top of the crease (red outline of the crease). This is the depth is where goaltenders should be prior to most shot attempts against them.
- Aggressive Depth: When the puck is in this area the goalie reaches the aggressive depth to address the play as the puck enters the defensive zone. Aggressive depth is also used when the goaltender reads the play and anticipates a shot. If the goaltender has time, a quick push to aggressive depth prior to the shot will cut down the angle the puck has to the net.

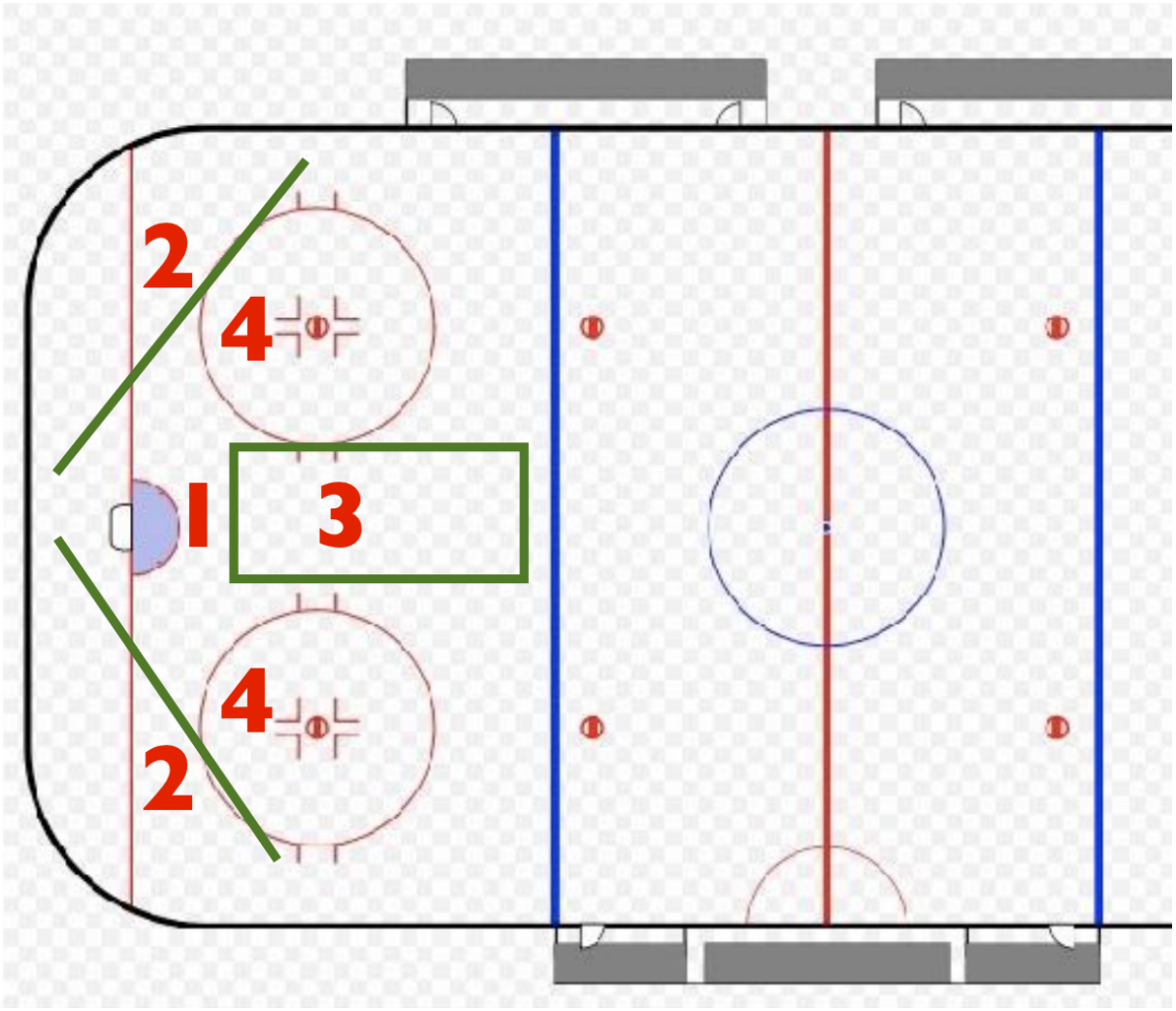
Example: https://youtu.be/X3-ivJ7ZMrI

Defining Rebound Control

Rating System
1 = Possession
2 = Corners (elevation)
3 = Square directly in front of the goalie
4 = Kill zone, weak side of goalie
5 = Goal

A rebound directly in front of a goalie is better than to the side since the goalie doesn't have to readjust their lateral position.

Each shot is given a number, the numbers are added up and then divided by the number of shots. The lower the number, the better the rebound control



GOALTENDING SKILL DEVELOPMENT

SKILL LEVEL	Movement & Positional Skills	Save Movement Skills	Tactics & Transition	Advanced Positioning & Post-Save Consequences
BEGINNER	75%	20%	5%	
INTERMEDIATE	50%	20%	30%	
ADVANCED	35%	10%	40%	25%

BEGINNER				
BALANCE AND AGILITY	**MOVING SKILLS**	**POSITIONING**	**SAVE SELECTION**	**BASIC PUCK CONTROL**
• Basic Stance • Butterfly stance	• Shuffles • C-cuts • T-push • Pivot • Slides	• Angles • Squareness • Depth • Tracking the puck	• Stick Saves • Glove Saves • Blocker Saves • Body Saves • Breakaways	• Basic Rebound Control • Freezing Pucks • Stickhandling
INTERMEDIATE				
ADVANCED SKATING	**EYE SKILLS**	**ADVANCED HANDS**	**ADVANCED PUCK HANDLING**	**10 SCORING SITUATIONS**
• Advanced C-cuts • Advanced Pivots into T-push / shuffles / butterfly / powerslide / recovery	• Tracking the Puck	• Moving fwd / bwd • Moving east / west	• Setting Pucks • Outlet Passes • Rims	• Clear shots / Entries / Net drives / Breakaways / Rebounds / Low to high / East – west / Below goal line / Deflections / Screens
ADVANCED				
DEFENSIVE TEAM PLAY	**OFFENSIVE TEAM PLAY**	**HOCKEY SENSE**		
• D Zone • PK • Odd Man Situations	• Breakouts • Rims	• Communication • Developing Individual Plans		

Age level expectations

8U/Mite:

- Players with an interest in playing goalie are encouraged to play both goalie and another position so they will develop skills that will help improve their long-term skating and athleticism

10U/Squirt:

- Skating and Edgework [**Majority of the focus**]
- Drills should be multi-movement into a single shot (2+ movements into 1 shot)
- Movements: shuffle, t-push, butterfly slide, powerslide.
- Stance and positioning of hands, basic save selections (butterfly, stick save, etc)
- Learning the language of goalie (terms and their definitions, guided through completion of individual development plan)

12U/PeeWee:

- Have basic fundamentals from 10U/Squirt.
- Skating and Edgework [**Still a main focus**]
- Drills would be multi-movement into a single shot (2+ movements into 1 shot)
- Movements: shuffle, t-push, butterfly slide, power push. and combine in sequence
- Being square, angle, and depth.
- Movements around environmental tasks (e.g., figure 8 pattern).
- Butterfly push and integrate into post position.
- Ability to move and pivot from one move to the next
- Introduction to stopping the puck behind the net; puck retention; cradling; rebound control
- Ability to speak the language of goalie (define terms, fill out post game journals and majority of development plan)

15U/Bantam:

- Have foundational skills from 12U/PeeWee.
- Advanced skating. basic patterns at higher speed, quicker transitions and change of directions
- Ability to process the play. Processing of the shots, projecting shots around screens, multi-object tracking, and movement.
- Post-play specifics. and transition plays from the post. Low post (net drives) and post transitions. (Entry and exit)
- Clear constraint-based movement (skate around pucks on the ice on feet or knees)
- Explain and adjust how they play to different situations (powerplay, 3-2 vs. 2-1, in-zone pressure, different zone entries). Ability to explain and communicate what you see and why you are doing it (Advancement of the language of hockey).
- Knowing when to do what saves, and communication with teammates on and off the ice
- Ownership of post-game journaling and development plans

FOR GOALIES - KEYS TO MAKING YOU AND YOUR TEAM BETTER

- Accept the two rules of goaltending. Rule number one is that you are going to get beat. Rule number two is you can't change rule number 1.
- Never get beat twice. When you get scored on in practice be determined not to let the next shot in. This will train your mind so that, if you get scored on in a game, you will quickly put it behind you and get ready for the next one.
- Know your own skating drills so when you have time you can do your goalie-specific skating drills. Goaltender skating drills are different from player skating drills, so goalies need this time to get their work in. When there are dead periods in practice goalies should work at their movement drills.
  Ideally, goaltenders should skate 10+ minutes at the beginning of practice.
- Don't expect different treatment than any other player. The old approach of "just leave the goalies alone" has long passed. A goalie is a member of the team just like anybody else. They should be encouraged, instructed, and accountable just like any other player on the team.
- Take care of yourself away from the rink. Stretch, watch your nutrition and stay hydrated. Watch as much hockey on television as you can. Learn about technique, strategy and equipment and prepare yourself for practices and games.
- Goalies need to have a performance statement derived by what they do well when they are in the zone. (ex. Be aggressive and control my rebounds)
- Have fun. The key to being successful at anything is to have passion when you do it. Embrace the position and enjoy it every time you are on the ice. If you do your coaches and teammates will see it and feed of your passion.

GOALIES – YOUR DEVELOPMENT IN PRACTICE

- Goalies need to work hard, track the puck and maximize their practice time. Goalies should be accountable if they are not physically or mentally putting forth the effort to challenge the other players and themselves to improve.
- Compete at a high level.
- Controlling rebounds and cover/clear loose pucks.
- Stay visually attached to pucks. Following the puck into your body and away from your body.
- Be vocal during situational drills and interact with teammates.
- When the players are participating in on-ice warm-up drills do 5 to 10 minutes of your goalie specific skating drills at the beginning of the ice session.

GOALIES – YOUR DEVELOPMENT IN GAMES

- Make sure you know the expectations of playing time. Goalies and parents should all understand the coach's philosophy in order to eliminate any issues throughout the season.
- Goalies should arrive at the game in plenty of time. Time varies per level. You should prepare for the game physically (ex. Dynamic warm up/ball drills) and mentally (Focused and prepared to start the game)
- Goalies should be supportive of teammates including the other goalie, play with passion, and be respectful of coaches, officials and the facilities.
- Work on controlling rebounds, smothering and directing pucks.
- Be patient, don't go down early.
- Learn how to manage a game. ex when the team really needs a whistle.
- Identify the flow of a game and when there are key moments be ready to make the big save.
- Play the puck - the only way to get better is to make mistakes.
- Learn how to have a short memory. Don't get rattled by a bad goal. We all make mistakes, and you have to learn to move on.
- After the game you can be disappointed but after you have analyzed the game and journaled it is time to move forward and don't look in the rearview mirror.

FOR COACHES - KEYS TO MAKING YOU AND YOUR TEAM BETTER

- Have a goalie coach. The goalie coach's responsibility is to ensure that the team's goalies are preparing for games, maximizing their time in practice and there is a clear line of communication.
- Learn to communicate with your goalies. Be clear for the onset what the expectation are how playing time will be allocated. Most issues do not become issues if the lines of communication are established, and the message is consistent.
- (Notification) Goalies and the family should know who is playing in the game. Ideally the time to let your goalie know who is playing with 20 minutes left in the last practice before the game. Pre-game anxiety is one of the toughest challenges for goalies.
- (How to notify) Notify your goalie one on one and through the same voice whether it's the head coach, assistant coach, goalie coach or assistant coach responsible for goalies.
- Goalies need to work hard, track the puck and maximize their practice time. Goalies should receive positive reinforcement when they are practicing hard and create accountability if they are not physically or mentally putting forth the effort to challenge the other players and themselves to improve.
- Demand a high compete level

- Demand goalies are controlling rebounds and covering or clearing loose pucks
- Goalies must stay visually attached to pucks. Following the puck into their body and away from their body
- The head coach can adopt the five-second rule to your teams practice drills or start and stop drills on the whistle. After a shot is taken in drills, the players often go directly to the next line, and neither the shooter nor the goaltender follows the rebound. To create a game like situation tell the players that after each shot is taken to imagine five seconds left in the third period of a tie game. This will prompt the goaltender and attackers to play the rebound, allowing for scrambles, walkouts, passouts, wraparounds, and so on. These drills will make not only the goalies better but the shooters as well. It will also add tremendously to the goaltenders' conditioning and not affect the tempo of practice. When utilizing the five-second rule in practice, have one coach at each end responsible for making sure the effort is at 100 percent. To make it fun, the coach can yell a countdown of 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1 to create a sense of urgency.
- If there is going to be downtime for goalies in practice, prepare accordingly. If a head coach is going to work just one end of the ice and leave the other goalie standing around at the far end, the goalie coach or coach responsible for the goalies should be prepared to work on skating drills, reaction drills or dump pucks in to work on passing and clearing skills. If practice is split sheet and only utilizing one net, find an area of the ice that the goaltender not in net can do skating drills, reaction drills or passing and clearing drills
- Let the goalies know they are part of practice. Many times coaches are consumed with practice and do not take time to recognize the goalies. This will create more accountability and add to goalie and coach relations.
- Communicate with your goalies. The number one problem in any relationship is communication. The more you communicate with your goalies, the better they will be able to play. By keeping them guessing or playing head games, a lot of negative energy can be created. Try to create an environment where there is open communication.
- Make a point of once a month taking a few minutes to sit with the goalies before or after practice to review their practice and game performance level, get feedback and review or reassess goals. A goalie is only as good as his confidence level. Be aware of that fact and remember to build confidence throughout the season.

Goaltender Development Plan

Goalie Name:_____
Head Coach:_____
Team Goalie Coach:_____

History

Number of Hockey Seasons:
Number of Goalie Seasons:
Hours of Ice this summer:
Last Year's Team:
Last Year's Record (W-L-T):
Briefly Describe your goaltending style:

Skills Inventory

Rate yourself in each skill as Proficient (P) Good (G) or Fair (F)

Skating

T-Glides	_____
Shuffles & Lateral Backward	_____
Agility	_____
Speed	_____

Positioning/Tactics

Stance	_____
Angles	_____
Break Aways	_____
Tip-ins	_____
Odd Man Rushes	_____
50/50 Opportunities	_____
Focus & Anticipation	_____

Stick Work

Stick Handling	_____
Passing	_____
Clearing Passes	_____

Saves

Catching Hand	_____
Stick Glove	_____
Skate Saves	_____
Stick Saves	_____
Five Hole Coverage	_____
Half Splits (Left / Right)	_____
Rebound Control	_____
Paddle-down	_____
Butterfly	_____

What are your goaltending strengths?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Skill Development Areas

Rank each as a priority for you to improve this year High (H), Medium (M) or Low (L)

Skating

T-Glides	_____
Shuffles & Lateral Backward	_____
Agility	_____
Speed	_____

Positioning/Tactics

Stance	_____
Angles	_____
Break Aways	_____
Tip-ins	_____
Odd Man Rushes	_____
50/50 Opportunities	_____
Focus & Anticipation	_____

Stick Work

Stick Handling	_____
Passing	_____
Clearing Passes	_____

Saves

Catching Hand	_____
Stick Glove	_____
Skate Saves	_____
Stick Saves	_____
Five Hole Coverage	_____
Half Splits (Left / Right)	_____
Rebound Control	_____
Paddle-down	_____
Butterfly	_____

Season Objectives

What three things would you like to improve this season?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Development Plan

(To be completed after Coaches' review and discussion)

_____

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_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____