



## Goaltender practice and warm up

Most practices and pre game warm-ups involve too much stationary puck stopping by the goaltender. While shots are nice, it is paramount to the coach and goaltender that they understand how the goaltender gets into the position to face the shot. This is actually a very important aspect of goaltending. Very seldom in a game does the goaltender not have to move to get into the proper position to face the shot?

The goaltender and coach that restricts goaltender movement before the shot will also restrict the goaltender's development and performance.

Sure it is nice to have great flowing drills, all players seem to be in motion, the puck moves about rapidly, shots are coming from all directions and at a great pace. From the stands it looks lovely. It is very impressive that the players are in motion. All that is but the goaltender!

In order to face the rapid shots and make saves the goaltender is often compelled to feel that he must stop all the pucks shot their way. This puts them in a stationary position for the first shot then in a constant state of desperation for all the other shots that follow. Never learning to make a proper controlled save, let alone use proper movement mechanics to get into the FSP (fundamental save position). If they try and use game like movement during the drills this will result in some shots going into the net uncontested by the goaltender. They then may seem lazy or lacking fitness to the coach or their team mates because they are not there to face the shot. A no win situation for the poor goaltender.

Pre shot movement preparation is non existent. So now when the game comes the goaltender is once again put into situations they have never faced in practice.

When at all possible the goaltender's starting position should dictate the start of the drill. An example would be if the puck starts from the corner behind the goal line the goaltender should be on the proper post with a visual attachment to the puck. Once the goaltender is in position the drill starts, the goaltender then can track the puck and learn to get into the proper position to reinforce the three components of the:

### **Save Sequence**

1. getting to the proper save position.
2. preparing for the shot
3. reacting to the rebound

After reacting to the rebound the goaltender should quickly get back to the starting position for the drill and the next sequence can happen. While this may slow the drill down slightly it benefits both the goaltender and their team in the long run.

Next time you go to a game watch the pre game shooting rituals. Watch to see if the goaltender gets to follow the:

### **Vision sequence**

- 1: the release of the puck off the stick blade
- 2: watch the puck as it approaches or hits their body
- 3: follow the puck off their body.

Most pre game drills the goaltender's head and eyes often do not track the puck and they just move aimlessly left or right to the next shot.

Now the game starts and oops, an early goal is scored! Could this be because the goaltender did nothing to prepare their eyes or body for the game situations they now face?

Take an example from baseball. During batting practice the batters never face 80 to 90 mph. game speed pitches. They see about 60 to 70 mph pitches. This enables them to focus on the release point of the pitch from the hand, track the ball to the plate and try and watch the ball make contact with the bat. Often hitters will practice placement of the hit ball into certain areas of the field. Left field, Center, Right. Proper PREGAME preparation.

Now watch the goaltenders warm-up, see what the goalie is allowed to see and react to. Constant shots coming rapidly and at full speed. Very little time preparing the three vision or save sequences.

The goaltender and or coach that do not adjust their practice and pre game drills to the above may not only hinder the goaltender's success, but the team's success as well.