



Goalie Equipment

Goalie equipment is a hot topic right now and it seems bigger is better. The shoulder and arm pads are huge, the catching gloves are like butterfly nets, the blockers are like sheets of plywood, the leg pads are enormous and even the jerseys are XXXXXL. Goaltenders now look like refrigerators guarding the net. If you have a chance to look at some old footage of great goaltenders of the past like Ken Dryden and Bernie Parent, you almost have to laugh at the difference.

While using as much equipment as you can within the rules to cover the net is certainly reasonable, you have to make sure that the goaltenders are able to “use” that equipment effectively. Make sure that your goaltender has the proper length stick so he can handle the puck and use it effectively to stop shots. Make sure that he can move in the net, that his leg pads are the correct size for him and that his blocker and catching glove can be moved quickly.

Some things to keep in mind for your goaltenders in using their equipment to their advantage are:

Blocker and Catching Glove

The hands are the easiest thing to move for the goaltenders and therefore are the quickest. When in his stance, make sure your goaltender has the glove and blocker up and they are not resting on his leg pads. Eliminate “double coverage.” Shots to the blocker should be trapped with the catching glove to maintain control and eliminate rebounds or should be directed to the corner by rolling the wrist outward. Shots to the catching glove should be followed all the way into the glove by the goaltender. Then the puck should be frozen or quickly moved to a teammate. When down on the ice, goaltenders need to keep their gloves up to provide coverage of the upper portion of the net.

Leg Pads

They cover a lot of net but can make it difficult to move. Plenty of attention should be given to lateral and up-and-back movement to work on balance and control. Goaltenders should always work to

keep their pads square to the shooter so they are using the largest area – the front of the pads – to make the save. When there is time, shots handled with the pads need to be cushioned to eliminate long rebounds going onto the stick of an opposition goal scorer.

Stick

The bottom of the stick blade should be flat on the ice between the skates and should be careful to be perpendicular to the ice – not angled up where a shot would hit the blade and deflect up into the net. Goaltenders should hold the stick firmly with the blocker hand at the top of the paddle – but loose enough where they can quickly slide their hand up the shaft to the top to poke check or to be able to handle the puck. Many goaltenders utilize the stick by laying it on the ice to guard the lower portion of the net when they are on their knees. If your goaltender uses this style, make sure that they do all they can to cover the net at all times.