



THE GOALIE STANCE

All goalies love to make the “SportsCenter Save” – the acrobatic glove save, robbing the shooter on a shot that was labeled for the top corner. In reality, if your goaltender doesn’t have to make any “SportsCenter highlight tape saves,” the better of he/she is and the better your team is. The goaltenders that make it look easy are those that are always in proper position and in essence, they block the puck rather than making a save. Patrick Roy, Ed Belfour and Chris Osgood are currently three of the best in the game at playing their position, as opposed to the position playing for them.

The key ingredients in playing the position properly are knowing the angles and playing them properly and the ability to move from side to side and up and back while in good balance and under control. Goaltenders at every age and skill level should be working every day on their movement. The faster they can get from proper position to proper position as the puck moves, the greater chance they will have of making the save. Getting into proper position is one thing, but what you look like when you get there is another. A goaltender’s stance should enable them to be in good balance and control, square to the puck, and get maximum net coverage.

Balance

No matter what style a goaltender plays – stand-up, butterfly or flopper – good knee bend is essential for balance in the stance with weight on the balls of the feet. This is the starting point from which goaltenders should be able to make a save on a shot or move to another position to face a shot, all the while being in good balance and control.

Square to the puck

To cover net, goaltenders must strive to be square to the puck (with their chest always facing the puck). This is easy to do when the puck is in one spot, but when it is carried laterally across the ice in front of the net by a player or passed from player to player it becomes more difficult. The shuffle and t-push are essential skills that goaltenders must master to move laterally, while remaining square to the puck.

Net coverage

While in the stance, it is important for goaltenders to cover as much net as possible. This is made possible by not only playing the proper angle, but in how the goaltender presents his equipment in his stance. There should be no double coverage – meaning the catching glove or blocker should not be in front of the body or pads. Goaltenders should review their stance in the mirror to make sure that they are covering as much net as possible to take away the scoring area.

As simplistic as these three points sound, it takes plenty of practice to develop the basic stance. It is the starting point from which all other skills are developed and a goaltender must be very comfortable with his stance before progressing to other skills relative to the position.