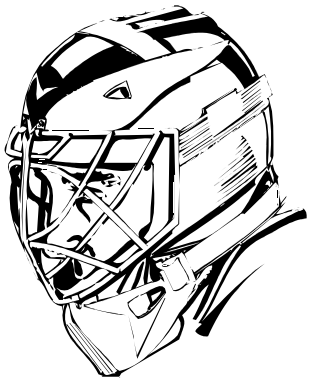
T ending to Goalies

EVALUATING & SELECTING GOALTENDERS



Choosing your goaltender might very well be the most important coaching decision that you will make all year long. The goaltender is the one position that has the greatest influence on the outcome of a game. In effect, your goaltender can "make or break" you and your team.

Not only is your goaltender the only player who plays the entire game, he is your last line of defense, the person relied on to atone for mistakes made by your forwards and defensemen. He has no margin for error, as his mistakes end up in the net, with the red light flashing and the total attention focused on him.

For this reason, your goaltender must not only have the physical skills necessary for the position, but the mental attributes as well. Often times, this is the area you should spend most of your time evaluating when picking goaltenders, as the physical skills are more easily recognized. Some areas to keep in mind when evaluating goalies are:

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Balance & Agility	Mental Toughness
Mobility	Intensity
Quickness	Self-confidence
Puckhandling Skills	Ice Awareness
Rebound Control	Decision-making
Strength	Work Habits
Flexibility	Discipline

When planning your evaluation skates and tryouts, be sure to work in some drills where you can get a look at the "mental " side of the goalies. Most shooting drills will give you a good grasp of their physical skills, but it takes "competition" to really get a true feel for the intangibles.

Scrimmages

Scrimmages will give you an idea of their physical skills, in addition to ice awareness, intensity, decision-making and mental toughness.

Breakaways

Look for aggressiveness/self-confidence, decision-making, work habits and discipline.

Conditioning Drills

Have your goaltenders go at the same time to get a look at their work habits, competitiveness, mental toughness and discipline.

The bottom line on goaltenders, "does he consistently stop the puck?" Make sure that you consider the "total package", not just the physical skills when picking your goaltenders.