The Role of the Goalie Coach

As the goalie coach on a team, it sometimes gets a little confusing as to what your role is supposed to be. Sure, you will most likely get the helpful description, 'work with the goalies' and as if to say so is to give full understanding. But what does that really mean – work with the goalies? Here are a few thoughts from my days working as a goalie coach and from my days as a player working with a goalie coach.

Get to know the kids…

To be effective, you have to understand the type of youngsters you are teaching. How does he or she react to instruction and constructive criticism? Does he or she respond better to information that is presented as suggestions, or as directives. The better you understand the make-up of your teams' goaltenders, the more effective you will be in helping them improve.

Gain their confidence…

Establish a rapport with the goaltenders by demonstrating that you have their interests in mind. The best way to accomplish this is to explain everything from the goaltender's perspective. After all, that is how your young netminders see everything.

Impact practice with Input…

Want to be of value to the team and goaltenders? Then utilize them in each practice drill. That means working with the head coach to design drills that keep the goalies involved at all times. You should also have a portion of practice set aside for goalie specific work that focuses on skill development. That is your one-on-one opportunity to work on fundamentals and strengthen flaws.

Help without hovering…

Keep things in perspective. Don't analyze every shot that goes in during practice and don't feel the need to constantly point things out on every play. Let the kids participate in the drills and have fun during practice. If you adhere to points 1, 2 & 3, you won't feel the need to incessantly be in the ear of your goaltenders. Believe me, it will be a more rewarding experience for all involved.

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