

Goaltender Development Stages

This manual was created to help you, the coach, provide a seasonal development plan for your goaltenders. This manual will not only address fundamental and advanced goaltender philosophies, but it will also help to integrate the goaltenders into a team practice. A good foundation of skills and ongoing support will help any goaltender find success.

We will start by creating a goaltender development ladder. Just like the ladder we climb to reach something that we would not otherwise be able to reach, this ladder will help your goalies reach new heights as well. To reach the top of the ladder we need to climb it one step at a time. It is imperative that each skill set is properly built as we climb the ladder. The skills learned at each step are a base of what is to be learned as the goaltender continues to climb the ladder.

Step 1 - Basic Skating Skills: On this step, the goalie will need to learn and practice simple skills such as balance and edge control. Elite goalies have supreme edge control and can start and stop very quickly with excellent balance. Adequate time must be given to develop these skills properly.

Step 2 - Position Specific Skating Movement Skills: Position specific movements are simply goalie specific skating skills that help the goalie maintain their position as they move around the crease in their stance. These skills will help the goalie remain in position as they establish and re-establish their angle to the puck.

Step 3 - Save Movement Skills: Save movements can be as simple as a glove or blocker save or as complex as a butterfly save. Save movement skills are a vital part of a goaltender's game; they must be built properly and practiced often.

Step 4 - Rebound Control and Recovery: Rebound control is the retention or direction of pucks to safe areas on the ice. Recovery is when the goaltender follows the initial save and re-positions to the puck. This skill can be practiced on almost every shot fired on the goalie, allowing the goalie to build good habits.

Step 5 - Tactics and Decision Making: This stage engages the goaltender in a situation where they must read the play and set themselves up accordingly. The game situation presented to the goaltender forces them to make decisions on the tactic being carried out.

Step 6 - Advanced Positioning and Game Play: In this stage, we can see that each goaltender is a little different than each other and that each one has developed their own approach or overall style. This stage allows the coach to work on the goalies weak points while continuing the overall development process.