

INCORPORATING GOALIES IN PRACTICES

THE ONE DRILL RULE

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I get asked by concerned coaches all the time, what should I do with my goalies in practice? This is not an easy question to answer as it is important to try to pay attention to all of your players to get the most of them. To simplify it, your goalie needs a minimum of 10 minutes per practice for them, and this will amount to 1 drill per practice. I do believe a coach can make time for one drill per practice, and the rest can be about the team. Let's not forget that the most important thing for a goaltender is the team, and vice versa with the players. If the team is not good, it is not good for anybody. Your goalie will improve doing team drills, but if you make time for one drill per practice, you will be able to give them the attention they deserve. It will make them feel as though they are an important part of the team, not to mention the fact that they will improve dramatically.



Practice tips:

1. Set aside 10 minutes (1 drill) for your goalies per practice:

This amounts to one drill, and this is all they need. They do not need anymore, but cannot have any less. When you are part of a team you need to work on all aspects of the team, and goaltenders are a part of it. If you have a 1 hour practice, 10 minutes is not much to ask as 50 minutes can be devoted to your players. I believe this is a fair and ample amount of time to devote to your goaltenders.

2. Goalies should participate in all skating drills:

I cannot emphasize enough that your goaltenders should be doing all skating drills, the only difference being that if at all possible, get them to do the drills using their goaltending stance. It is so important for them to be strong skaters. You can also opt to take them aside when doing skating drills with players at the beginning of practice and do crease work drills. There is a whole list of goaltending crease letter drills that are skating orientated and easy to do. These can all be found on the Hockey Canada website in some of my previous goaltending articles.

3. Goalies should participate in all passing drills:

In this day and age you cannot be a complete goaltender if you cannot play the puck, so if your team is practicing a passing drill you should try to incorporate your goaltenders in all passing drills

4. Space out your shooters:

There is a strange belief out there that by giving your goalies shot after shot after shot will somehow improve them. This could not be more wrong. When doing goaltending drills with your goaltender, you should ask yourself if this a game like situation. The more drills you can do with your goalie that are game like, the better they will become. Goaltending is about patience and control, not flopping and swimming. So one shooter, and one rebound shot should be the limit in all drills, then move to the next shooter. They need time to learn to recover and get set for the next shot.

5. Communication with players and goalies:

Always let your players know when a drill is for the goalies and not for them. It works the same way in the opposite direction as to let your goalie know when a drill is for the players.....keep open lines of communication

6. Game type situation drills:

I always found that the drills I improved the most with were game type situation drills. I would much rather do a drill that involved my defenseman than just an open shot after shot drill. I practiced so I would be better in a game, this to me is why game type situations with odd man rush drills were the best way to improve. It usually guaranteed I would get a shot and also allowed for me to practice a game type situation. So 2on1's, 3on2's, etc. are a great way for your goaltender to improve.

7. What to teach them:

If you know nothing about goaltending, the most important thing you can teach your goaltenders is to outwait the shooter. Wait for them to make the play and don't commit early. A guessing goalie is not a good goalie. Goaltending is about patience and control. Let the shooter make the first move.

8. Try to always have 2 coaches at practice:

Whenever your goalies have some idle time, a second coach can be a great deal of help. Even if he just shoots stationary on the goalies for 5 minutes it is better than having them stand around. Do breakaways with them, anything just keep them active. If a second coach is not present, and you have 2 goalies, designate one goalie to lead the other goalie in skating drills or ups and downs, or mirror drills. Get them to coach each other.

9. Finally, do not lose sight in the fact it is important for your team to score:

This may be a contradictory statement to some earlier tips, but remember, not all drills are for goalies, and vice versa. I remember I used to complain a lot about some of the drills in practice. If they were too offensively orientated, or if I was getting scored on too much I would be upset. One day it finally dawned on me that, if my team doesn't practice scoring goals, how will they score in a game? It does a goaltender absolutely no good if his team does not score. I have never seen a goalie win a 0-0 hockey game. So implement scoring drills, but communicate with your goalie that the drill is for scoring, not for them.

Ideas of how to incorporate your goalies into practice in 10 minutes

1. Have your assistant coach take them aside to do skating drills at the start of practice while you are working with the team at the other end
2. Do dump ins and passes to your goaltenders at one end while the players do passing drills at the other end
3. Make your warm-up drill a goalie specific drill
4. Last ten minutes of practice set aside for coach controlled goaltending drills (I emphasize the words coach controlled)
5. When doing breakout drills, dump to the goalie and have them make the outlet pass to the winger
6. Do end zone drills for example 3 on2's out of the corner with point shot.
7. Have a second coach present to run goalie through drills when they are idle
8. Have them coach each other through skating drills and mirror drills when they are idle in practice.

Sample everyday goalie practice plans:**60 Minute Practice:**

1. 0-10 min: skating warm-up or passing drills
10-20 min: goalie drill
20-60 min: team drills
2. 0-10 min: Warm up
10-50 min: Team drills
50-60 min: Goalie drills
3. 0-10 min: warm-up
10-30 min: team drills
30-40 min: goalie drill
40-60 min: team drills

Summary

The whole point being is that it doesn't matter where, or how difficult the drill is in practice. Designate ten minutes per practice with your goalies, and above all, teach them to outwait the shooter.