



MIND THE NET GOALTENDING

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Goalie Equipment Maintenance Checklist

One of the best parts of being a goaltender is the ridiculously cool gear we get to wear. If a goaltender has pride in themselves, their game and their gear they will be aware of the importance of constant care and maintenance needed to keep gear working at optimal levels. If a goaltender does not properly maintain their gear they will have one more part of hockey that will work against them.

Since we understand the importance of our gear, as goaltenders, here is a list of some things every goaltender needs to carry around in their hockey bag, at all times, to help keep goalie equipment in proper working order.

Equipment Repair and Maintenance Kit:

- heavy duty sewing needles and dental floss (strong, reliable replacement for thread)
- extra helmet/mask buckles, screws and other mask hardware
- extra laces (short and long)
- screw driver set (a multi-head screw driver that can tighten toe caps, masks, and skates)
- extra mask sweatband(s)
- hockey tape and sock tape
- pocket knife (a Swiss army knife can be very handy)
- skate stone and/or a Sweet Stick (a sweet stick is highly recommended)
- small towel for wiping off skates
- skate guards (or something that can be used to protect the skate blades when in the bag)

Once the equipment repair and maintenance kit is ready it is important to understand what needs to be examined before packing the hockey bag, after or before practices, prior to each game and at other times during the season. Although there is not always time to complete every check needed every time goalie equipment is to be used, it is important check for a large percentage of the things below. Be sure to check and maintain the following...

Hockey Under wear:

- Is the underwear clean and dry? (For comfort and health reasons)
- Are there any holes in high wear areas or vulnerable areas (e.g. back of the legs)?
- Is there an extra set of hockey underwear for emergency purposes?
- If wearing socks is there an extra pair available?

****Before buying your hockey underwear and socks be sure the material and fit is what works best for your comfort, body type and how much you sweat.****

Jock Strap and Protective Cup(s):

- Is the jock strap and protective cup dry? (Again, for comfort and health reasons)
- Are all straps intact and still elastic?
- Are all seams together?
- After taking a direct impact, is the cup(s) still undamaged? (If there is any cracking, replace immediately. If there is no direct impact to the cup check the structure of the cup monthly)
- Once on, are the genitals contained inside the jock strap (if worn separately) and cup?
- Is all supporting and pelvis padding structurally sound and in place?

Skates:

- Are the skates sharpened to your liking?
- Do you know what hollow depth you need to move your body size and support how you move?
- Are all edges straight with no knicks?
- Is the length of the blade of each skate straight?
- Are the edges of the skate even? (If the edges are lopsided this may cause edge control problems)
- Is there rust on the bottom of the blades, or even on the side of the blades? (If there is rusting, get them sharpened immediately)
- Is the cowling intact and crack free? (If the cowling is cracked replace the skate immediately)
- Are all screws tightened?
- Are all rivets complete?
- Is the insole for each skate still in the skate?
- Have you allowed the space under the insole to dry? (This can stop molding from occurring)
- Is there any cracks in the skate boot, especially under the insole?
- Are all seams and lace eyelets intact?
- Are there any holes in the skate liner that could cause loss of support or blistering?

Pads:

- Are all straps in place and in proper working order?
- Are all buckles complete and in proper working order?
- Are all seams closed?
- Is there any fraying of the toe strings that could result in a breakage during practice or in-game?
- Are there any tears or cuts deep enough to see the interior of the pad? (If there is a large/deep enough hole in which the interior padding can be seen the hole must be patched immediately)
- Do all Velcro straps secure properly?
- Are all toe cap/toe bridge screws tightened properly?
- If using a sliding toe bridge, are the plastic washers in one piece?
- Does the sliding toe bridge move easily and without impediment?
- If the thigh guards/knee pads whether attached or unattached to pads or pants are all straps attaching properly?

****Examine all high wear spots for any repairs that may need to be completed.****

Body Armour:

- If your body armour laces at the shoulders are all laces tight and knotted at the ends?
- Do all buckles close correctly?

- Are all elastic straps still tight, but still stretchy?
- Are all elastic straps secured through plastic holders on the back protection and back of the arms?
- Does all Velcro secure properly?
- Are both elbow caps and the rest of the padding properly in place?
- Are all flaps secured properly?
- Are all seams strong and complete?

Pants:

- Does the waistline belt run completely through the belt loop/holder?
- Are all buttons for suspenders attached to the pants?
- Are the eyelets on the suspenders and lace holes broken?
- Do you see any tears or cuts in the outside material or protection?
- Is the stretchy crotch area torn or cut?
- Can you detect any cracks in the plastics or foams?
- Is there any missing or shifted padding/foam or plastics?
- Does the glute protection stay in place properly?

Trapper:

- Is there any tears, especially along the edge of the thumbs or finger protection?
- Are all eyelets complete?
- Are all straps and connectors properly secured and working?
- Do all Velcro straps properly secure and connect?
- Are all loose ends of string knotted to stop strings/cords from unravelling?
- Are the thumb and pinky loops tied/knotted to prevent pull out? (If the loops pull out that can have an adverse effect on closure and security of the trapper)
- Are there any frayed laces in the pocket or anywhere else on the glove?
- Do all seams appear to be intact?
- Is all plastic in the glove undamaged?
- Does the top of the "T" retain its shape when open?
- Is the finger protection curved too much? (Too much curvature of the finger protection can lead to injuries, lost net coverage and trouble covering the puck)
- Has the pocket of the "T" been squished or flattened? (Flat or squished pockets = popouts)
- If there is any extra attachments (e.g. sweat pads) are they secure and placed properly?

Blocker:

- Is any hard foam or plastics, in prime blocking areas, cracked or damaged?
- Is the board of the blocker maintaining its original shape? (Injuries can occur from warping)
- Is all finger protection attached properly to the blocker and at elastic attachments?
- Is any of the finger protection warped in a way as to compromise protection?
- Are all Velcro straps securing properly and still sewn properly to the strap(s)?
- Does the palm have any holes due to wear or seams giving way?
- Are there any cuts or tears deep enough to see into the interior of the blocker?
- Are any pads or flaps out of place?

Mask:

- Are there any cracks, hairline or otherwise, or chips that may compromise protection? (If you find cracks or major chips in the shell the mask must be replaced ASAP to ensure it does not cause head trauma)
- Is the cage severely dented (especially in front of the eyes or nose?)
- Are all buckles whole and attaching properly?
- Is there any loose or missing screws?
- Are all straps properly placed, maintaining strength, yet still stretchy?
- Is there any missing or loose foam? Does the foam appear to be breaking down?
- Is the chin cup or sling properly attached?
- Are all dangler strings knotted properly with the loose ends singed to prevent fraying?
- Is the dangler cracked? (If so, be sure to replace)

Jersey (if bringing your own):

- Is there any tears or cuts that need closing?
- Are all seams closed?
- Are there any loose strings to be cut or tied?

Sticks:

- Is the tape job the way you like it?
- Is there any chipping of the actual stick (not cosmetic paint chips)?
- Are there any cracks anywhere in the stick?
- Is the stick maintaining its original rigidity (in the blade, paddle and shaft)?
- Does there appear to be any weaknesses to the integrity of the stick inside or out?
- Is there any possibility of getting splinters from the shaft of the stick?
- Is the stick able to help you perform to the best of your abilities?

Once a goalie's season is done equipment maintenance, cleaning and storage is just as important as in-season, day-to-day maintenance because many goalies need to use the same equipment next season or may need to sell the old equipment in order to help pay for the next set. Here are some things to consider for the cleaning and proper off-season storage of goalie equipment.

Cleaning and Proper Off-season Storage:

- Dry everything completely to help avoid mold and mildew growth.
- Store equipment in a dry room, preferably away from pets
- Store sticks, if wood or foam core, in a cool damp place such as a cellar or cold room to offset the drying of the wood which can make sticks more brittle.
- To get rid of the funkiness of goalie equipment freeze drying for a couple of weeks in a garbage bag in a freezer is effective. Sanisport or other equipment cleaning services is a great option. Spraying, repeatedly, with Febreze or other scent killers is an option as well.
- Body armour, pants and jock can be cleaned by filling a bath tub with hot water, dump in an entire box of baking soda. Stir in the baking soda, then swish the equipment around in the mixture and leave soaking overnight. Leave the bathroom fan on for night or else the stench that is released will be overpowering. Be sure to let the gear dry for 2-3 days to ensure complete drying?

- Wash and dry all jerseys, hockey underwear, socks and towels before replacing in the hockey bag for the summer.

As you can tell there is a lot of care and maintenance required for keeping goalie equipment protective and in working order. If a goaltender takes pride in their gear then they are probably taking pride in their game as well and being responsible for the privilege of being a goaltender. Treat that gear like it can cost \$2000-\$4000 dollars...oh wait, it does.