



MIND THE NET GOALTENDING

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Active Stick Skills

As we look at the idea of "keeping the puck out of the net" it is very apparent that the goalie's stick is probably the most multi-purpose piece of equipment a goaltender will ever use. The stick is integral to many different aspects of goaltending as long as it is used "actively". Again, MTN would like to stress that using the stick to stop pucks is only a small sampling of the ways in which it can be used.

Active stick skills can be categorized into four different types of applications:

Save Selection

Of course, the first use of the goal stick that comes to mind is the use of the stick for making saves on shots along the ice. As discussed in other threads it is extremely important to use the stick for as many shots along the ice as possible in order to make the puck do what is desired by the goaltender, depending on the situation. We also see the stick being an integral part of the paddle down move and can be used on shots off the ice on the blocker side as well. Goalies in the old days were quite adept at using the paddle of the stick to make saves. Although a full blocker save on shots just above the blocker side pad is preferred it is still important that goalies have the stick paddle save selection in their toolbox.



Rebound Control

Again, we can break down stick usage for rebound control into two different sections. First, is the use of the stick for directing rebounds to the areas desired according to rebound priorities in a given situation. Initial shots can be deflected into the body, over the glass, to the corners, back to the shooter, or to create long rebounds. The other way goalie sticks are used for rebound control is to pull the puck in for the goalie to smother. It is very important that goalies are able to pull any pucks, that are within reach of a goaltender holding their stick properly at the top of the paddle, in to be covered for a faceoff. Using the stick to corral rebounds is a game saving skill.



Crease Control

Controlling the blue paint is one of the ways to "keep the puck out of the net". Often by controlling the paint like a shark in your own ocean a save is not going to be required. Goalies can control the paint by getting a stick on any passes that are made within reach that is going through the crease. Goalies need to make sure that no passes are allowed through the paint either from behind the net to the slot or across the crease. A well placed stick will breakup passes that, if received, will become an excellent scoring chance.



Poke and sweep checks are tools that often do not even count as a save but are excellent for controlling the paint. A well timed and well placed poke/sweep check can prevent a play from developing or may catch an attacker off guard while they try to decide what they are trying to do. Again, MTN needs to emphasize the fact that a save is often not required.

Puckhandling/Transition Skills

A goalie that develops strong puckhandling skills can discourage or breakup the opposing forecheck and setup. Hockey is about puck possession and a strong puckhandling goaltender can help make sure their team has possession of the puck more than the other team. ***Goaltenders, anything you expect your d-men to be able to do, they should expect you to do as well.*** Again, handling the puck does not involve making saves. Any coach who claims that all they want is for their goalie is to stop the puck is actually lying! Imagine their reaction if their goaltender only sat back and waited for shots to come

their way. How would the coach feel if the d-men were getting pounded relentlessly and the transition required a regroup every time? Chances are the coach will be ticked if all a goalie does is wait to stop the puck.

