



## MIND THE NET GOALTENDING

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### Body Language: Non-verbal Communication Speaks Loudly

Have you ever seen Martin Brodeur smile during the national anthem? Have you seen Mikka Kiprusoff calmly take a drink of water after a goal against? Have you seen Ed Belfour take a short skate after he made a difficult play look easy? What do you think these gestures, this body language, does for team confidence or opposition frustration? If you answered something about increased team confidence and increased opposition frustration, you are correct.

How a goaltender carries himself/herself on and off the ice has a lot bigger impact than one would normally guess. The first thing a goaltender needs to realize is their importance to the team. Hockey people know that a season can go good or bad depending on the type of goaltending a team has. A team will be much more confident if they are confident in their goalies. Since teammates need to be confident in their goaltenders they are always watching a goalie for reasons to be confident. Players and coaches, often, do not realize the affect their goaltender's body language has on their confidence, but it is undeniable how much they are affected by a confident goalie.

It is important to realize what confidence looks like. Confidence is shown in a head up, shoulders back kind of posture. Smiling when you are having fun during a game is a sure sign of a confident goalie. How about the goalie who shows no emotion after being scored on? If the goalie flies off the handle it is hard to expect teammates to stay calm in the heat of the moment. Make sure that you do not lay on the ice, as though you have been shot, after a goal against. Make sure not to come into the dressing room and bury your head into a towel. Keep that head up no matter how bleak the situation looks. Show your teammates your confidence in yourself and their abilities. Even after a loss, try to keep your composure as much as possible. This will demonstrate that what happened in the loss will not happen again. True confidence is not shown through showboating or shooting off at the mouth. Confident goaltenders speak through actions and carefully chosen words.

One of the tricks to help a goaltender feel confident, when confidence is a little low, is to be aware of the body language you are displaying. Once you have identified when you are giving off vibes that are less than confident you can begin to remedy the problem at hand. One of the best ways to return self-confidence is to be confident with your body language. At the very least this will keep your teammates ready to play hard in front of you. Maybe your team will give you a chance to get your flow early in the game. All of this from understanding confident body language.

While great goaltenders use body language to instill confidence in their teammates they also use non-verbal communication on-ice to control different situations. These non-verbal signals combined with verbal commands will help to make your job a lot easier:

- Raising the arm to indicate icing. Keep your head on a swivel so you can keep an eye on the linesman who is calling the icing. Watch the puck and the linesman in case the icing is waved off or the puck takes a funny bounce. By raising the arm on an icing you have let your teammate know how fast they must attempt to retrieve the puck.

- Pointing towards an open attacker. This combined with a verbal command will let your teammates know of a possible threat as well as helping you keep your head on a swivel and being ready for the possible threat as well.
- Using an arm to indicate the direction a rim-around has gone. This stops your teammates from chasing the puck but lets them know where they will be able to intercept the puck.
- Using the glove to start a regroup. By using the trapper to indicate a need to regroup in your own zone you have helped to control the pace of the game. Sometimes the forwards and defensemen do not recognize a need to slow down or retry. *\*\*Remember: You have the best perspective of everyone on the ice.\*\**
- Using a point to indicate which way you will set up a puck for a defender. If you do not have time to set the puck up without pressure then you need to let your defense know where they must go to avoid pressure. *\*\*Remember: You can use placement of the puck as a way to communicate what you want your team to do.\*\**



*Where a goaltender sets up a play is non-verbal communication.*

In essence, all goaltenders need to understand the importance of non-verbal communication. Non-verbal communication can be used in combination with all other skills to help a goaltender be consistently “in the ZONE”. The easier you make your job the more enjoyable and successful your hockey career will become.