



MIND THE NET GOALTENDING

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You're the Man: Embracing No.1 Status

So, you have trained like a crazy person, attended goalie schools, paid your dues and are now ready to take on the status of number one goaltender. The go to guy. Numero uno. The goalie that will lead and carry the team to glory, hopefully. It is important that you understand what it is like to be a number one goalie, the responsibilities and some of the challenges you will face as "the man".

- You will get to play most of the games regardless of how you played last game. If your last game was a stinker chances are, as a number one goalie, you will get a chance to redeem yourself. If you are in an extended slump there is a chance that you could lose your spot so you are never home free. You must still perform.

- You will be counted on to be consistent with your performance, practices and approach. All coaches expect their number one to perform consistently. You must give your team a chance to win on a nightly basis.

- You will be expected to be a leader worthy of being a captain. You are the general who leads the army out to battle. Depending on your personality type you may be a leader through your actions or you might combine your actions with some verbal leadership as well. There may be times to employ both kinds of leadership. It is your responsibility to push the other goalie, in a positive manner, and to help develop the younger players. Treat all teammates with respect.

- You are expected to play through bumps, bruises and fatigue. As the number one you will play when you are not physically feeling at your best. This is where you will use your mental training to push you to perform well. ***Remember – a hockey game is usually just 60 minutes. You can stay focused for an hour, relax later.***

- If the team does not play well you will receive more than your share of criticism, even if you are playing well. If you are the most visible player on the team you will receive outside and possibly inside criticism from media, fans, teammates or coaches. You must stay focused on what you need to do to perform, keep things positive, and don't take anything to heart. All it takes to turn around nay-sayers is a couple of great performances.

- You will receive more credit for the team playing on than may be deserved. Enjoy, the limelight, be grateful. Not everyone gets media attention or is a public role model but you will be. ***Caution – Don't believe the hype. You must continue to work even harder and smarter to stay on top of your game. Do not let outside distractions such as sex, alcohol/drugs, and partying get in your way.***

- Once at the top people will always try to knock you down. Since you teams are always looking for the best players you need to maintain position at the top of the food chain. Any self-respecting backup will push you to be better and try to take your spot. Embrace the challenge while being a good teammate.
- You will get a chance to take your team to glory. All a goalie ever wants to do is make a difference and you will get that chance on a daily basis.

Becoming and maintaining a position as a number one goaltender is a challenging job but will produce some of the best memories of your career. Keep striving to be number one. Be patient and stay committed for when your time comes; then hold on for as long as you can.