



MIND THE NET GOALTENDING
www.mtngoaltending.com

Goaltenders: Don't Forget the Brain

For way too long MTN has seen a lot of goalies who were supposed to be the next hotshot/rising star. Many goalies who make it as high as the WHL are probably going to end their hockey career at the Junior level. Just because a goaltender is playing at a fairly high level does not mean that they should let their schooling and/or brainpower go to the way side.

Goaltending is said to be the toughest position mentally and physically in all of sports. A large portion of how a goaltender will play is in his/her head. Since so much of the game is mental why would any goalie not work hard at keeping a strong mind. The brain is very much like a muscle the more work you give it the stronger it becomes. No goaltender who considers themselves to be elite would ever let their butterfly wither away by not practicing it religiously, so why would they let their mental game go to pot. Pun intended.

What are some of the benefits of keeping mentally sharp? Decision making skills become quicker and more adept, an obvious plus for all goaltenders. Visual recognition is enhanced through reading, mind puzzles, etc. The more literate a person is the more likely they are to be able to reflect on the things they do. If there is one person that constantly needs self-evaluation it is a goaltender. When the goalie's game is not going well they should be asking a lot of questions. When the mind asks the right questions the right answers will be found.

Goalies can help themselves stay sharp through a number of ways. Working hard and doing as good as possible in school is one way. For those out of school, find stuff, other than hockey, to read about to stretch the mind. Steve Yzerman always worked on crosswords before games to calm nerves and to stay sharp. Basically, the brain needs a workout every day. The benefits will be felt in all areas of life, including hockey. Besides, what is a goaltender to do when hockey opportunities run dry.