



MIND THE NET GOALTENDING

www.mtngoaltending.com

Goaltending Quick Hit #8 – How to “Activate the Hands”

Rebound control and game management are keys to elite goaltending and one of the best ways to use the hands, and stick through extension of the hand, is to activate the hands to gain control of the puck or the pace of the game. Here are three keys to activating the hands and stick:

In order to ensure a goaltender is able to activate their hands and stick, for better rebound control and game management, the goalie must start with and maintain a strong basic stance where the hands and stick are **available** to be activated. Making the hands and stick available for activation is a matter of ensuring the hands and stick are held forward of the body, or more accurately forward of the pads. If the goalie has the cuffs of their trapper and blocker attached to the side of their pads they will be hindered by their equipment and their own lack of visual attachment because the goalie will now have to rely on their peripheral vision to make saves rather than keeping the puck in the central focus of the eyes. To keep the hands forward of the body and pads, not in front of the pads in a double coverage sense, the hands will be in a position where they will not be hindered by equipment and will be in the goalie's sightline as the puck comes towards the body. By keeping the hands available to be activated the goalie's gloves and stick will come into line with the goalie's central focus by making saves in front of the body. The equipment is now part of central focus at the point of impact; as opposed to having the gloves/stick only in the goalie's peripheral vision which is far less reliable than a person's central focus.



Keeping the puck in your central focus requires two simple, but effective, parts of a save sequence. First, the goalie must understand how important it is to turn the head with the trajectory of the puck and not just rely on eye movement. Turning the head with the puck allows the eyes to have a greater scan of the puck's true trajectory and allows the goaltender to better

follow rebounds off the body and to transition into a cover or recovery. Now there is an advanced way to keep the puck in the central focus of the eyes, which in tandem with turning the head/eyes with the puck makes the whole process more successful and efficient. The idea is to bring the head in line with/over top of the puck's trajectory (not in a heading the puck on every shot sense) which allows the puck to be closer to the eyes and helps the puck to stay in the central focus of the eyes. Not only will this central focus training of bringing the head in line with the puck as much as possible make the goalie's saves more effective and efficient, but the tracking of rebounds off the body is more effective. The tracking of the rebound is not only more effective, but the recovery is more efficient, as well, because the head and eyes, which starts any movement process, is already leaning/moving in the direction of travel.



Not only is it important for activating the hands that the goalie keeps the hands steady and available in front of the plane of the body pre-shot, but now it is important that the goalie is making the hands do more work by keeping the hands and stick away from the body while making saves. If the goalie pulls back their hands parallel with the body as the puck moves towards the goalie, which many goalies do, the puck breaks past the central focus and into the peripheral vision. Reliance on peripheral vision = goals against; it's that simple. So, now the goalie must keep the hands forward of the body while making the save with the hands and stick for better focus, to make the save movements shorter and take away the delay of bringing the hands back and then extending outwards to make the save. After keeping the hands and stick forward of the plane of the body while making the save they need to let the puck come to the gloves/stick, with no pull back towards the body. There should be no stabbing motion during the save, just allow the puck to come to the gloves and stick – let the stick do the work on saves so NO extra “flipping” of the stick, with the help of the pad is required. By keeping the hands available, keeping the puck in the central focus and making the saves in front of the plane of the body the goalie is now able to activate their hands to make more saves effectively and efficiently – which leads to greater consistency and success.