



MIND THE NET GOALTENDING

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Keys to Early or Late Game Success

Many times throughout the season a game can be won or lost in the first few minutes of a period or the last few minutes of a period. Although, a goaltender wants a pre-game and in-game routine that is sound there are some tendencies within the game that the goalie must be aware of. First, we will examine the early period/game tendencies to be aware of then we will look at the late period/game tendencies. Once the tendencies of the game are discussed we will look at some tips for success in those crucial game situations.

Things to be aware of at the beginning of the period:

- On the road, your team will have bus legs. Be aware that the other team will come out hard, you must weather the storm. Sometimes a big save in the first couple of minutes can determine the outcome of the game. In order to weather the early storm make sure that you are warm and ready to move aggressively on passouts, odd man rushes, etc.
- Early in the game your own team will make mistakes. Be ready even when your own team has the puck. Unfortunately, a goalie cannot always trust that simple plays will be made.
- If you do not get a shot within the first few minutes stay sharp. If you need to handle the puck a lot to stay, mentally and physically, in the game be sure to communicate well with your defensemen. Usually, **THE LONGER YOU GO WITHOUT A SHOT THE MORE LIKELY THE FIRST SHOT WILL BE A GOOD ONE.** This is a key thing to remember. If your team has kept the other team from getting shots they are most likely going to give up a shot on a breakdown.
- When playing at home make sure to, mentally, stay on an even keel. Once again a solid pre and in-game routine will keep a goalie mentally and physically consistent. No matter how much you want the fans to be on your side stick to a solid game plan; showboating can get you into trouble.

Late in the period or game is when the pressure builds. Often a game saving play is made in the last few minutes of a period. Here are some tendencies to be aware of late in the game.

- The opposition is more likely to get traffic in front. Traffic will increase in aggressiveness and will be more likely to interfere with you late in the game.
- With increased traffic comes the increased chance that the opposition is going to shoot from anywhere. Teams will take the advice of Don Cherry by putting the puck on the net. Even from behind the net, some players will look for a bank shot off of the goalie.
- If a team is down by a goal, late in the game, they are going to do everything needed to swing the momentum. The opposition is going to crash the net.
- Often penalties are called late in the game. A penalty kill is not always bad because your team will be able to ice the puck every time they gain control.
- The other team will look to put the puck on net right off of the face-off. Look for the player set up for the one timer, especially if the center man turns his bottom hand over. If the high player is

not set up and the center man has not flipped his hand over beware of a shot straight from the center.

- Your teammates are going to need guidance as to what they need to do to protect the lead.



Now that we know some tendencies of the game we must look at some tricks of the trade which help a goalie become the hero rather than growing goats horns.

- Make sure that you are ready to go from the start of each period. Make sure that the body is ready to move quickly right off the bat. Don't get caught moving slowly on pass outs.
- Keep an active stick. If you can stop or deflect passes that come through your crease you will be more likely to avoid a challenging shot as your first shot.
- It is good to control the pace of the game in the crucial minutes of a period. If you can control rebounds at the body, early on, that can take the wind out of the opposition's sails quickly.
- Do not be afraid of taking as many whistles as possible until you feel comfortable with your situation. Good rebound control allows for you to control the flow of the game. Late in the game a whistle is a good thing. It is your game, everybody else is just playing in it.
- Do not get caught up with the extra traffic late in the game. If the player is in your crease or interfering with you, while the play is going on, let your defenseman and the ref know about it without losing focus on the puck or taking a penalty.
- Get into position as the puck crosses your side of the red line.
- Be ready until your team has gotten the puck outside of your blue line. Continue tracking the puck even when your teammates have the puck.
- Communication is key. You need to let your teammates know when they are in the way, need an icing or a whistle, or where to put the puck to get out of trouble.
- Keep your concentration high. It will not be long until you get a break.
- No matter what happens you need to **STAY CALM**. These are the times when you need to show your mental strength the most.
- This is the time of the game where you can make the biggest difference look forward to these moments; they make the win that much sweeter.
- Do everything possible to keep your eye on the puck. Battle for the puck. **HAVE FUN AND BE A WARRIOR!**