



MIND THE NET GOALTENDING

www.mtngoaltending.com

Playing Home vs. Away Games

One of the best and worst parts about playing elite hockey is the different ways that a team will approach home and away games. As much as a coach will try to prepare consistently for all games there are some things that a goaltender needs to understand and overcome when playing at home or in a barn far away.

Home, Home On The Range...

- Your team will try to be more entertaining at home. If the team does not win then the fans will not come out. The more fans at home the more exciting the games will become. Because your team wants to perform well they will come out hard and possibly take more chances. Don't let the pressure to perform get to you.
- If your team is flying right away then you may not be getting a shot for a while. Be ready at all times, even when your team has the puck.
- Try not to get too pumped to make the big save or after a big save. Keep on an even keel to show everyone that anything you do is routine (except getting scored on, of course). Keeping calm and focused helps to eliminate "softies".
- Do not be discouraged by hometown fans that expect you to be exceptional all of the time. It may be frustrating to get booed at home, but it is better than an empty rink. High expectations are good for any goalie.
- Game preparation is usually comfortable. It can be easier to get proper rest, nutrition and appropriate preparation time at home.
- Your transportation is usually comfortable and the drive to the rink is short. No bus legs.
- There may be more distractions for home games. Girls, fans, family, a late night movie, etc. may be a distraction. Stay focused on your goals and objectives for the season.

On The Road Again...

- The most prominent concern on the road is... bus legs. When your team has traveled a long distance on a bus there is a good chance that some players will not be ready to play due to physical fatigue. Goaltenders need to be aware that the opposition will come out hard, so be ready to weather the onslaught that may come your way.
- Your team may play a more passive/patient game on the road. There is usually more pressure on the goalie to keep the score at three or less.
- There are distractions on the road as well. Distractions such as girls, night life, tourist sights may also take away from team preparedness. Although it is important to enjoy the sights and sounds of a different town/city it is also important to make sure that you are ready and well rested.

- Make sure that you are not over rested. Sometimes there is an urge to only sleep on the bus. Being over rested can be just as harmful as not being rested enough. Make sure to listen to your body.
- The food on the road may not always be the best. Again, know your body and what you need to do to be ready. Meals on the road are usually generic; eat as much or as little as you need.
- There is a chance that the travel has taken longer than expected. Be prepared on the road to go through your pre-game routine in a hurry. You may need to get dressed without doing your routine at all. Be as ready as possible.
- Do not let opposing fans get under your skin. Opposing fans can be brutal with verbal assaults. If the fans are really on your case there is a good chance that you are playing well.

Being on the road can be a lot of fun, as long as you prepare properly and understand what the obstacles to good performance may be. Whether you are at home or on the road make sure that you are always ready to go no matter what your teammates are doing. You are the one that usually makes or breaks a good game.