



MIND THE NET GOALTENDING

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Pre-game Preparation

“Having a routine that you can just slip into at the rink can create a stress free bubble.”-Ed Belfour, second greatest goalie of all time.

Game day preparation is all about getting the body and mind ready to perform. Most young goaltenders will do all they can to train and hone their physical skills to play goal but pay little attention to pre-game preparation.

Goalies will rely on the pre-game skate for their game preparation not understanding that the pre-game skate is just that—a pre-game skate. Most pre-game skates do not properly prepare the goalie for the game. Often rapid fire drills are used in warm-ups leaving no time to read the release and finish the save. Therefore, the goalie must take matters into their own hands.

Developing routines is an effective way to prepare for the game. Pre-game routines will take the body through a series of stages that lead up to the game. It takes time to develop a routine that works for the individual goalie, so be patient, because routines are worth establishing.

We will assume the goalie is getting proper rest and nutrition. Preparation starts before leaving for the rink.

Dressing for the Rink

Most higher level teams will have a dress code. Dressing for the rink is the start of the mental preparation for the game. While thoughts may sway to and from the game throughout the day this is where you start focusing on the game.

At the Rink and Getting Ready

The most important part of the game day preparation is done at the rink. What is done before getting to the rink is important but what the goalie does and how he/she prepares mentally and physically from this point on will have a bigger impact on performance than most other things.

In the Locker Room

- Lay out and check all equipment. Is everything accounted for? Are adjustments needed?
 - Make sure sticks are taped and skates are sharp.
 - Nutritional considerations. Does the goalie need liquids? Is an energy bar preferred?
 - Warm-up and stretching. Most pre-game warm-ups do not properly prepare the goalie for the game.
- The responsibility to be physically and mentally ready lies with the goalie. Things to consider are drills that work on: hand/eye co-ordination, foot speed, flexibility, and any drills that help the goalie to feel loose and ready.

- Decide on what drills and skills the goalie needs to work on when on the ice. Plan the on-ice warm-ups with coaches and teammates.
- Set or review the goals set by shift, every five minutes, by period, by game.

On the Ice

Implement the on-ice drills and skills (i.e. net orientation), set a time line and move from one to the next without confusion. Have a plan ahead of time.

Developing a plan for the goalie:

1. Identify what the goalie is already doing.
2. What are the most important things the goalie needs to work on in order to be ready. Add or subtract based on effectiveness.
3. Put drills in a logical order.

General Guidelines

- Start slow—get loose before getting on the ice.
- Get warm by working on skating and movement drills before taking shots.
- Work on angles in every warm-up. Angles are different in different rinks; get to know them.
- Work on being quick.
- Assign the time it will take so that warm-up time is not too long.
- Implement the plan with consistency.
- Fine tune the routine over time.

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