



MIND THE NET GOALTENDING
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Quality versus Quantity: Game Management at Work

MTN has always believed that it is not the goalie's job to just stop the puck. The goalie's job is to "Keep the puck out of the net!"

However, when a goalie stops the puck there must be an efficient quality to that save that will assist the goaltender in overall game management. The better the goaltender can manage a game the more impact they can have in controlling their team's overall play, and to an extent the play of their opponent.

The goaltender, evaluator and coach must understand the importance of the **quality of a save** in the overall play and pace of the game.

Let's take a look at just one period that happened at a recent elite hockey team evaluation tournament. Each of the two goalies in the same period allowed no goals and both had ten saves.

Of the following two goalies, which one would better suit elite hockey?

Goaltender #1

-10 saves

- 7 rebounds were controlled at the body, resulting in a whistle

- 3 rebounds were directed into safe areas, either to a team mate where no puck battle had to occur, or if there was a puck battle it was at least far enough away from the net where if the opposition won the puck battle, there would be time for a controlled defensive team tactical response.

Goaltender #2

- 10 saves

- 0 rebounds were controlled at the body, resulting in no goaltender determined whistles

- 2 rebounds were directed into what would be considered a safe area

- 8 rebounds involved a dangerous puck placement and therefore a panicked quicker response by not only the goaltender, but their teammates as well. The goaltender's lack of a controlled save has now engaged their teammates in puck battles with the opposition in order to thwart a good scoring chance.

These puck battles, that Goaltender #2 created, not only create secondary scoring chances, but also caused their teammates to engage in physical battles where multiple events can occur.

Some events being:

1. A good to excellent scoring chance against.
2. A penalty to their team because of the resulted puck battle.
3. Mental and physical fatigue for their teammates because of these puck battles that the goalie has created over the course of the game.

4. Possible injury because of the physical confrontations created by these uncontrolled rebounds.

Hopefully, one can now see the importance in not just stopping the puck but making sure that when doing so, that these stops have an efficient quality to them.

Quality saves will make for better game management skills that will not only benefit the goaltender's individual game but the overall game of their teammates as well!