



# MIND THE NET GOALTENDING

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## Taking On Star Players

At every level and on almost every team there is a star player, or four, that can give a goaltender nightmares. As a goaltender advances throughout the various levels of hockey the number of star players a goaltender faces increases. In the case of the NHL some of the star players such as Sidney Crosby, Jaromir Jagr, Joe Sakic, and Joe Thornton are known for doing extraordinary things with the puck to produce goals. It is because MTN wants to work with elite goaltenders that we present an analysis of the types of things to watch for with the star players from the various teams you play against:

1. The goaltender must always know where the star players are. It is not a good idea to focus entirely on the star players, but it is a good idea to be aware of where a star player is located in the attack or within the defensive zone. Know when the star players are off the ice, as well, so there is some idea as to when the star players will return to the ice.
2. Star players should be expected to get their shots on net and then follow up for their own rebound. Great players like to shoot the puck and will drive to capitalize on poor rebound control and/or defensive zone coverage.
3. The goalie must always expect the star players to be very patient. Star players see and feel the game differently and it is because of this that the goalie must be ready to stay patient and stay with the player until a play is committed. The star players will victimize a goalie who goes down early or falls for a fake. It may be tiring to stay with a patient player but the goaltender will have a greater chance of making the play simple.
4. The goalie must always expect star players to do something totally unexpected and must adjust. Star players will send six foot tall saucer passes right on the tape, swat pucks out of mid-air, shoot from their knees, or shoot without looking at the net with little windup. Expect the unexpected.
5. Star players will turn a controlled situation into a real scoring threat. If the goalie thinks the d-man has the star contained, think again. Stay focused. Again, expect the unexpected.
6. The goalie must expect star players to make a path to the net. How many times have you seen a star player drive wide or split the defense to score? Probably, too many times to count, which is why a goaltender must be ready for a sudden breakdown or mini-break away. Be ready for a star player to use all of their tools.
7. A star player will use the short pass as often as the long pass. Whatever a star player can do to throw off the timing of the defense and goalie; it will be done. Any pass attempt is done to get the goalie off angle. *\*\*The goaltender must work in practice to adjust on all attempts by a player to get the goalie off angle.\*\**
8. The goalie must expect the star players to make harder passes than other players will make. A harder pass means more work for the goalie because a positional adjustment must be powerful and quick. Star players will let the puck do the work making the goaltender's job harder.
9. The goalie must expect the give and go play. If a star player makes a hard pass they will usually drive the net for a return pass or a rebound. The goaltender must be ready to move with power, control the rebound, recover quicker and be ready to sacrifice the body if the player tries to drive through the net/goalie.

When playing at all levels of hockey these are considerations that can be used to ensure that a star player looks more ordinary, when they play a certain goaltender, rather than creating nightmares for the star goaltender.

#### Reference

Moffet, G. (2005). *9 things to expect when playing goal against a player with a great mind like Sidney Crosby*. Goalies World No. 52. Goalies' World Magazine Inc.: Quebec.