



MIND THE NET GOALTENDING

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The Importance of Confidence

The mental side of goaltending can be one of the most complicated areas of a goaltender's game to develop and manage. There are many different variables that go into a goaltender's mental makeup with confidence arguably being the most important element. **Goaltenders need confidence in their:**

- **Overall skill level.** The goaltender who has prepared and refined their game with strong fundamentals and continues to learn will be the goaltender who will excel from game to game and from level to level.

- **Overall mental toughness.** If the goalie is aware of how to be mentally strong they are ready to succeed. If a goalie leaves their mental game to chance, depending on their mood, how their day went, how they physically feel, if their pre-game routine was broken or a whole host of any other issues then that goaltender will fall victim to a lack of mental toughness.

- **Ability to deal with distractions.** Does the goaltender know how to block out the numerous distractions that come with being... well... a person? This is a skill all goalies must work on daily.

- **Ability to deal with obstacles/challenges.** Goaltenders need to be able to work through disappointment. As a goaltender disappointment can take the form of goals against, unfulfilled expectations, being cut from teams, becoming a backup, losing early or missing playoffs and so on. Goaltenders need to develop a plan to deal with disappointments in a positive and productive manner so that even a disappointment turns into a chance to learn.

- **Ability to learn from mistakes.** Unfortunately, making mistakes is still one of the most effective ways to learn about oneself. Goaltenders need to know that they are going to stop the same mistakes from happening again and again; at least within the same game.

- **General fitness level** - is the goaltender confident that their fitness level is high enough to make it through an entire game without losing focus or elements of the game that are taxing such as power and athleticism.

- **Goalie equipment.** If a goalie feels that their equipment does not provide adequate protection then the goaltender will always be thinking about the possibility of injury. Although the possibility of injury is always present it should be the last thing on a goaltender's mind. Another way a goaltender may lack confidence in their equipment is if they are uncomfortable. If the equipment has adequate protection but just doesn't feel right, the goalie may feel they need to alter their game to match their expensive investment.

- **Team in front of them.** If the goalie feels confidently that their teammates know the what's and how's of their jobs and have strong chemistry this goalie will be more easily ready to focus on their own job rather than every one else's. As soon as a goaltender is thinking about how their team must prepare will likely not be completely focused on their own preparation. If the goalie is unprepared then they are at greater risk of failure.

Confidence is the key component to a strong mental game. The goalies we all love and idolize are usually the ones who are brimming with confidence which translates into consistently strong performances. Every year we witness goalies at all levels who get "hot" and steal the show. This getting "hot" is a sign of a truly confident goalie. When goaltenders become "hot" or see a "hot" goalie they need to learn to pay attention to what has led to the increased confidence. Goaltenders need to always be learning and need to recognize what it takes daily to be a confident goalie.