



The Importance of Varied Footwork

Time and time again goaltenders are instructed that they need many tools in their toolbox. In order to acquire these different tools they attend goalie schools, watch YouTube videos, scour websites and take part in online discussion boards. Through this search for more knowledge goaltenders need to realize the importance of varying their footwork, depending on the situation the goaltender faces. Goaltender must be sure not to rely on one type of footwork, while moving on one's feet. As with anything else with goaltending, over reliance or over use of any tactic can point to a weakness in a goaltender's game.

First, it is important that goaltenders understand that there are several types of footwork, each serving different game uses, that goaltenders must be able to do. Below is a list of some of the different types of goalie specific up movement/footwork that goaltenders may use and a brief description of when they would be used.

Sculls (c-cuts) – this movement is used to move forward and backwards and can be done for very short adjustments as well as larger adjustments. The scull allows the goaltender to make forward/backward adjustments without opening too many holes.

Shuffles – shuffles should be used when tracking a player that is carrying the puck, especially laterally. Also, shuffles can be used on short passes (up to 8-10'). The shuffle allows the goaltender to stay as square as possible while tracking the puck.

Modified T-push/Power push/Swoop – call it what you will the modified t-push should be used on longer passes both laterally and on vertical passing plays (from low to high in the zone or vice versa). The modified t-push provides the path of least resistance on longer passing plays and can allow goaltenders to arrive before or right as the puck arrives on the tape of the pass receiver.

Hop Step – although much maligned and not readily taught by MTN this movement can serve a similar purpose as the t-push on longer lateral feeds with similar benefits as the modified t-push. This is something that a goaltender may use when they are too far behind on lateral pass. We do not teach this footwork, but have seen it used and know of other goalie schools that do. Again, it is a tool some goalies may use.

It is important that goaltenders do not just use one type of movement all of the time. The movement that seems to be most overused by young and elite goalies is the shuffle. Goalies who only shuffle are often setting themselves up to get beaten on longer lateral feeds because they are not likely to be the first in position and may have to rely on extended or stretching saves that are not as reliable as body saves or saves where minimal limb movement is needed. Of course, if the save is made with an extended limb the goaltender is very unlikely to have made the save in a

controlled manner. A save that is made in an uncontrolled manner leads to sloppy and dangerous rebounds. In conclusion, goaltenders, if you have learned how to move properly on your feet make sure you also learn when to use each movement during different game situations.