



## MIND THE NET GOALTENDING

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### The Most Underrated Save

Often goalies are heard saying that a game was either easy to get into, or found it hard to focus in a game based on how many shots that goaltender faced. The idea, of course, is that goalies gain confidence and composure from facing more shots. This implies a way of easing into a game and gaining a flow or feel for the game that allows the goalie to play near optimum level. Conversely, supposedly, the goalie that faces few shots in a period or a game has a harder time gaining confidence and feel for a game.

Now, getting involved in the transition part of a hockey game is something highly recommended by Mind The Net as a way to get a feel for the puck, and game in general. But, there is another way a goaltender may bolster their own confidence by understanding “the most underrated save” a goaltender can make...

#### *When a goalie forces a shot to miss the net!*

That’s right, “the most underrated save” is the save the goalie does not have to make! An interesting thought since, in our experience, most goalies do not think of the positives that come out of a shot attempt, against the goalie, that misses the net. When analyzing a shot attempt that misses the net there are factors, not related to the goalie, that can effect if a shot misses the net. Factors such as: defensive pressure, time and space, game situation, shot blocking attempts, the score and how much external pressure (e.g. championship final or losing 2-1, etc.) a team is facing when attempting to score.

Even though there are many team factors contributing to shot attempts wide, let’s focus on why shot attempts that miss the net should be seen in the same light as an actual save. First, in most cases the goaltender’s positioning has left the shooter with very few shooting options. Essentially, the goalie has forced the shooter to miss the net wide or high of the net. Strong positioning is dependent on strong mobility leading to being on line with the puck and the centre of the goalline, being square to the puck and proper depth for a situation (finding the “Fundamental Save Position”). In every shot attempt wide or high of the net the goaltender was required to move into position for the shot attempt which activates the body in a way that the goaltender can get physically into the game. Also, on many shot attempts wide the goalie may have made a save movement for a shot that just misses the net. In some cases a shot attempt that misses the net is caused by a goaltender using proximity to their advantage, by bringing something closer to the puck taking away the puck’s possible path into the net. In other cases a goaltender can force a shot to miss the net through a working understanding of what the puck sees, in a given situation, versus what the shooter sees as well. Even a goalie with strong communication skills can put psychological pressure on an attacker to shoot from an undesirable position on the ice. When a shot attempt misses the net the goalie has helped to facilitate a quicker breakout or, at the very least, a brief turnover of puck possession.

This mental switch over to understanding that a shot that misses the net is as good as a save can bolster a goaltender's confidence regardless of age and level of play and make a low shot game easier to deal with, among other tricks of the trade. Many shots missing the net is a great sign that the goaltender and his/her team is on their game causing the opposition to attempt to pinpoint shots as they feel just shooting will be a poor tactic. Conclusively, the biggest positive for feeling good about shots that miss the net is...

***The opposition can NOT score if they don't hit the net!***

Which is way better than a puck going into the net.