



MIND THE NET GOALTENDING

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What is the Goalie's Job?

How many times have you heard a coach say, “all I expect out of my goalie, is for him to stop the puck”?

Is this an accurate statement regarding the goaltender's role or does it indicate a lack of understanding towards the goaltender position? Making a statement suggesting that the goaltender's job is just to stop the puck is similar to saying that all a defenceman has to do is have the ability to skate backwards.

It is **not** the job of the goaltender to stop the puck. It is the goaltender's job to “**Keep the puck out of the net!**” To many this may seem like the same thing, however, on closer examination “stopping the puck “ is just one method by which the Goaltender can accomplish this “keep the puck out of the net” objective.

To help prove this “keep the puck out of the net” objective, let's examine a recent period from a junior hockey game. In this period the Goaltender faced only three shots on net. People were heard to say “the Goalie didn't have much to do”. With this statement in mind let's look at how the goaltender dictated, to a degree, how many shots he faced.

Over the course of the twenty-minute period, the Goaltender stopped four rims behind the net. This not only prevented these pucks from falling into the hands of the opposition, but also in doing so was instrumental on four transitions out of the defensive zone. Stopping these four dump-ins took away four potential shots and placed puck control in the hands of his team.

Three passes from behind the net towards slot attackers were deflected out of danger by the Goaltender's stick. This took away three more potential shots. One poke check on an outside drive eliminated a key scoring opportunity, and one less shot. The Goaltender skated out towards the blue line, beating the forechecker to the puck and cleared it out of the defensive zone. The fore checker was trapped and the goaltender's team counter attacked. Another shot, taken away.



Of the three shots the goaltender faced there were no rebounds. By controlling the initial shot the goaltender had the option to transition the puck or stop the play. In two instances the Goaltender froze the puck for a face off. This allowed his coach to put key players on the ice in

the defensive zone. On the third, the goaltender made a pass to a forward up ice. By controlling his rebounds the goaltender eliminated the potential of facing more shots.

By having a strong positional game, the opposition shot the puck over or wide of the net five times. This does not take into account any shots that were not taken because the shooter saw nothing to shoot at. Strong positioning forced these players to grind the puck on the wall or in the corner and attempt to reset the offensive thrust.



In review, this Goaltender faced three shots during the period. Yet, because of strong positioning, good skating, excellent stick work and rebound control, the goaltender took away seventeen more potential shots. Seventeen times the goaltender was not required to make a save against the three saves he made. Seventeen times the Goaltender was directly involved in the playing and handling of the puck. Proving, at least to MTN, that the goaltender's main job is to **KEEP THE PUCK OUT OF THE NET** and **not just to stop the puck!**