

## **Attn: Parents, Coaches and Goalies**

Please allow me to introduce myself to you. My name is Tim Barker and I am the BCHL/Slingshots Goalie Coach. I will be working with the BCHL/Slingshots to develop and provide a Goaltending Development Program which will be accomplished through dedicated practice/clinics throughout the season and through regular goalie training sessions at Shoot the Puck (STP).

## **My Playing Background**

A little information about myself. I've been playing competitive hockey as a goaltender for the past 44 years and teaching goaltending skills for the past 20 years. Like most goaltenders I began playing in house league and worked my way up through the OMHA rep system which culminated with my free agent signing in 1987 with the NY Rangers of the NHL. Like most goaltenders I really didn't have any instruction in the position and basically learned everything from trial and error and watching other goalies. In fact, my only goalie instruction really came with the NY Rangers and their head goaltending instructor Ed Giacomini.

## **My Teaching Background and Hockey Canada Certifications**

Upon my retirement from professional hockey I worked with the GTHL, Toronto based Goalie Schools and Mississauga based Goalie Schools with my primary focus on developing and leading goaltending clinics that were aimed at goaltenders ranging from age Novice to OHL.

I've currently completed the following certifications:

**Hockey Canada Trainer Level I**

**Hockey Canada Activity Leader**

**St. John's Ambulance First Aid**

**Please also note I have my OPP Background check up to date and this is available upon request.**

I currently reside in Midhurst with my wife and son (my son Aidan is also a goaltender and will be joining the BCHL this season in the Atom age group).

I am currently the Head Goaltending Coach for the following organizations:

**BCHL / Slingshots**



**Alliston Hornets (PJHL)**



I also work with several OHL teams with respect to scouting for goaltending talent.

## **Current Instruction Available to Goaltenders**

Many parents with goaltenders simply either don't know where to go for additional instruction or can't afford the additional cost. As a result, in hockey associations of all levels (AAA, AA, A or House league/ LL Local League) goaltenders are often left to their own devices with respect to learning the position. It's not uncommon to see goaltenders in practice literally just sitting in their nets waiting for player drills.

Some hockey organizations do end up hiring companies that come in and run goalie clinics periodically. The problem with these clinics is

- A) the expense to the hockey organization (my teaching time is completely volunteer basis)
- B) the hockey associations really don't know the background of the instructors and their capability to teach a very complex and challenging position
- C) the clinics are not frequent enough and these companies generally don't keep track of an individual's progress or run routinely enough to get to know the goalies and their needs.

With respect to the above there are several key areas that goaltenders of all ages must be dedicated to developing. Some these are as follows:

### **Novice, Atom, Pee wee**

#### **Skating**

Goaltenders will not and should not be the fastest skaters on your teams but they must be the strongest skaters with respect to balance, recovery and crease movements. During practices and clinics at least 50% of your time should be devoted to strengthening these skills. The key skating techniques that must be introduced and strengthened are "C Cuts" (goalies use this technique to move vertically in the goal) and "T Pushes" goalies use this for lateral and horizontal movement in the crease. The third skating technique that must be taught is "Shuffle" which is where a goaltender shuffles his/her feet in a horizontal path along the goal crease to get from either post to post (when puck is behind net) or when they are at top of their crease and are adjusting position slightly to stay square to puck moving from one side of rink to the other.

#### **Positional Play**

Goaltenders (specifically younger ages) need to work on developing confidence and positional awareness. Basically, this is angle play (lining up to the puck not the player) and challenging shooters at the top of the crease. Young goaltenders generally stay back in their crease as they are afraid to venture out and cut down the angles as they tend to get lost or lose their angles. About 30% of time (after skating) should be devoted to this.

#### **Basic puck control/stick saves/glove saves**

For young goalies this is very important to introduce and should be introduced with about 20% of the practice / clinic time remaining. Basically, you're introducing save techniques such as butterfly, power pad slides and catcher blocker work. Rebound control and the use of the stick to direct pucks into the corner should be worked on as well.

## **Bantam, Midget, Juvenile (Junior Hockey)**

### **Skating**

Goaltenders at this age level generally have a basic understanding of the position and have some grasp on the required skating techniques. Generally, 10 – 15 minutes on skating and crease movements is enough.

### **Positional Play**

At the older levels the importance of being in proper position becomes critical as the game flow is much faster and the goaltender's ability to track the puck and ensure they are properly situated to handle shots from any angle / situation becomes critical. Generally, I would spend about 50% of my time on this area. In addition to tracking the puck movement and always being square to the shooter it's important at this age to develop goalies that can recognize "save situations" and react accordingly. My biggest pet peeve is that all goaltenders no matter what age group or genetic makeup (tall or short) are predominantly being taught to play from their knees (even when the puck is behind the goal!). When goalies are taught to drop to their knees even before a shot has been made they basically open up the entire top half of the net (this is especially hard on smaller stature goalies) and getting their catcher or blocker up to make a save becomes increasingly difficult. Also, this takes away a goalie's ability to effectively react to changing situations. It is much easier to T push or shuffle over to adjust to a changing puck direction or pass then it is to drop to your knees and then have to recover and adjust to new puck position. Obviously on low shots the butterfly (full or extended) plus stick placement is the appropriate save position but when shots are coming from further out and are going high standing up square to the shot will always be your best bet as you'll be taking away the corners with your gloves and shoulders.

### **Basic puck control/stick saves/glove saves**

With the older more developed goalies this is where games can be won or lost (coaches either lose their mind or stay sane). I devote about 40% of my time on the skills of puck control. Basically, it breaks down like this:

Low Shots – pucks either are stopped and held directly in front of goalie or pucks are directed out of danger area outwards towards the boards.

High Shots – If goalies have time to react then these shots should be taken standing up and catcher side high shots are controlled by "catching the puck" and blocker side shots are batted away with the puck being directed to the corner of rink. When shots are directly at the body then a combination catcher/blocker/body trapping technique can be used again though on high shots directly at the body we don't want goalies going down on their knees and no rebounds should be dropping at their feet.

At the end of the day I feel with my background and available volunteer time I could help your organization develop and produce strong goaltenders at all ages and competitive levels. As I'm willing to volunteer my time I believe a couple of hours a week can make a big difference.

## **A Quick Work About How I Teach**

In addition to following the above points I've already made I generally teach goaltenders (especially the younger ones) with my equipment on or have an older established goaltender (Midget/Junior) demonstrating move. I have found that kids specifically with goaltending are "visual learners" and respond and relate better to goaltending techniques when they see a goaltender in front of them actually be able to do the move that they're being asked to master. In other words, kids put a lot of weight into the idea of "Practicing What You Preach".

With respect to the older kids once we have an established routine and I see them understanding the concepts then I generally leave the pads off and focus more on getting them shots and game simulations.

Finally, when I teach goal schools I'm actually doing the teaching. I may ask for shooters to assist me but at the end of the day I'm teaching the concepts so I'm directly involved. I generally come off the ice just as tired as the kids (especially when I'm in gear).

Thank you for allowing me the privilege of working with your goaltenders at practice. I look forward to building a positive relationship with the goalies, parents and coaches for many seasons to come.

Yours Truly,

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