

## Goaltender Evaluations

This guide has been put together to assist the coach in evaluating goaltenders during tryouts. It is intended to give you some ideas on how to evaluate the players and to help you identify skills and traits you should watch for in your goaltender. Also included is some practical advice and drills.

First, some housekeeping advice for running your goalie tryout.

- 1.) Dedicate some time each practice to watching the goalies. With all the other players you have to evaluate this is difficult to do. Keep notes. Ask someone to focus specifically on goaltenders.
- 2.) When evaluating goalies use drills that simulate games as much as possible. For example, why evaluate your goalie based on breakaway performance? How many do you expect to see in a game. Rapid fire drills are pointless for evaluating goalies. Keep in mind that typical “flow” drills (2-on-1; 2-on-0) used to evaluate players wear goalies out quickly, and there is often not enough time for the goalie to get ready and set before the next line is on him.

You may have to modify a drill to make it useful for evaluating goalies. For example put a pylon in the slot to indicate where a shot should be taken from eliminating dekes. Power play situations are very good for evaluating goalies. 5-on-4 and 5-on-3 situations make the goalies move in the net.

- 3.) Keep statistics. Have someone track the goalies progress in games and scrimmages. Track the shots and chart how and where they went in (“low shot, blocker side, point shot” or “breakaway, deke”.) Make note if the goals were “good” or “bad”. This will provide you with data to help make or support your decision.
- 4.) Nobody likes to make cuts – but give yourself as much time as possible to see the real contenders. Cut down to 3 or 4 goalies as fast as you can. This gives your contenders more time in the net – and you more time to evaluate them.
- 5.) Play Games. Get your goalies as much time as possible in game situations.

Some skills and attributes to look for in a goalie:

- 1) Style. All age groups use the same size net. 75% of all goals are scored in the bottom part of the net. The butterfly style is the predominant style in use today for a reason. It is the style taught by the Cobras goalie consultants. The goalie should be comfortable in the butterfly and display the ability to save and recover using the butterfly.

- 2) Movement. Your goaltender should be a good skater – not necessarily the fastest skater on the team but a solid skater. He should be well balanced and agile. Look for separation between his upper body and legs. Strong, precise lower body movements, and no/little upper body movement.

Note: There is limited value in having goalies participate in the endurance building skating drills. Instead have them do goalie specific skating drills. Keep in mind the type of skating goalies normally do – short, quick movements. Side to side, in and out. Try to plan some drills that force the goalies to use these skills. Many of these can be done in the crease or even with two cones set along the boards 6 feet apart.

- 3) Balance. Does the goalie lose balance when making a save? Does he fall over on his belly or back side. Is he a “starfish” on close plays and breakaways.
- 4) Note the positioning of the goalie in the net. He should be “square” (as wide as possible) to the shooter at all times. If he is well positioned most pucks should hit the goalie straight on. Beware of the goalie making big flourishing and spectacular saves. This often is an indicator that the goalie is out of position and has to scramble to make the save. Watch how he is situated for potential follow up shots after one of these saves. Look for an upright body unit with no holes – a “wall” not “swiss chesse” with holes between his arms and chest and between his knees.
- 5) Angles and depth. Does he get beat short side often? Is he aggressive or passive? Passive goalies tend to stay deep. If a goalie is too deep he will get beat on shots AND find it impossible to react to quick plays like a pass from one side of the net to the slot.
- 6) Watch for rebounds, especially wide ones and back door (a shot off the left wing producing rebounds up the slot or to the off wing is not a good thing). Does he direct shots into the corner with his stick or blocker. How often do routine shots turn into second chances because of a rebound? Do shots off his chest “stick” or do they bounce out into play?
- 7) How does he read situations? Does he poke check often? Some goalies use the poke check too often against oncoming attackers taking themselves out of the play. Does he read the play or “cheat”, guessing if the play will be a shot or pass. He should always be playing the shot, and reacting to the pass. Does he stay up too long, getting beat along the ice while on his skates, or go down too early?
- 8) Fear. Watch how the goalie reacts to shots. If a goalie is scared he will flinch – lifting the shoulders and head. A goalie who is scared of the puck will not fare well.

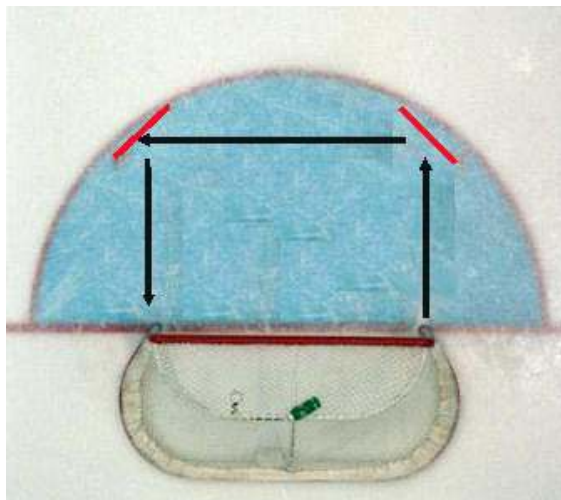
- 9) **Mental.** What does he do when not in the net during tryout. Is he paying attention or “zoned out”. Does he work on skills independently? In game situations if you stop the play can he tell you who is on the ice in front of him, what the score is or how much time left in the period? How does he react after a goal is scored? Is he confident or nervous? A nervous goalie will have the tendency to back up too quickly or drop into his butterfly too early.
- 10) **Size.** A small quick goalie will cover the same ground as a larger slower goalie. Bigger has its advantages but should not be the determining factor. Size is dynamic. A small goalie can “play big” by being aggressive, challenging shooters controlling rebounds and recovering quickly. A large goalie can be limited by mobility issues. A large slow goalie that gives up rebounds won't have much fun in AA.

## Drills

Much of the skill involved in goaltending is to be in the right place, in the right position, at the right time. The following drills should give you an idea of how your goalie carries himself in the crease and how he reacts to different situations. They will provide a good base to making your selections. You can work through these drills multiple times, first with just the goalie, then add a shooter and pucks.

### 1.) Square.

- a) Without the puck. Have the goalie start at one post, step out to the top of the crease as if facing a shot from the point, push over to the opposite side of the crease then move back to the post. Repeat in the opposite direction.
- b) Same drill with two shooters; each shot from mid-point (i.e top of circles, wide)
- c) Same drill with two shooters; each shot from blue line.
- d) Same drill with two shooters; one high, the second much closer in the high slot.



**Watch for:** Solid push out from post with outside leg, stop with opposite leg and set for shot from point. Look for good positioning – stick, hands in position. Body should be square to shooter. Push with outside leg across top of crease; stop with opposite leg. “Glide” backward to post.

**Progression:** Butterfly at each corner. Watch feet! When recovering, they MUST use the outside leg to get up and push in one motion. Look for good butterfly position. Hands forward, elbows in tight to chest, shoulders up and slightly forward; head up.

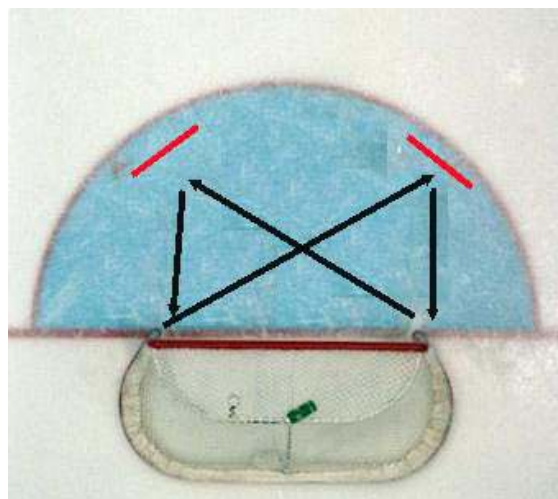
**Progression 2:** Butterfly at first point for simulated save (no real shot) recover up and over to second point for long shot from blue line

**Progression 3:** 2 Shooters. P1 shoots from Zone 5 with instructions to try to create a wide rebound. P2 is off the top of the crease between zones 6 & 7 to try to score off rebounds.

**Watch for:** Are shots absorbed? Are rebounds controlled or dangerous?

2.) **Criss-Cross.** Simulates a puck being passed from a corner to the opposite point, then to the other D, then dumped into the corner. Goalie starts on one post, looking into the corner. Push out and across crease to the other side. Stop and set for shot from point. Glide back to post and look into the corner. Push out and across to the other side.

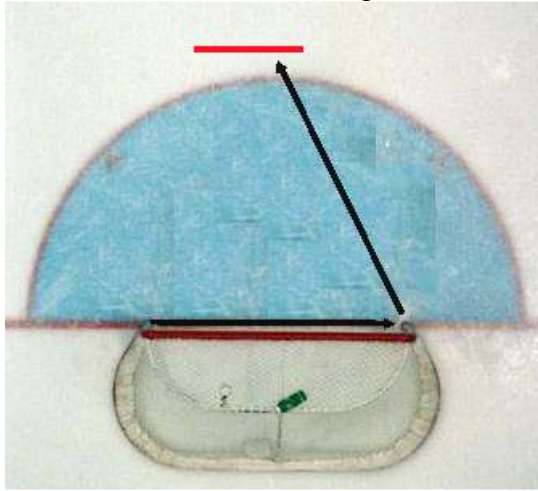
- a) Without puck.
- b) With puck long point shot (top circle).
- c) With puck, two shooters, 1 is at the goal line and pass to shooter 2 back door closed to the crease.



**Progression:** Butterfly at each corner. Look for good butterfly position. Hands forward, elbows in tight to chest, shoulders up and slightly forward; head up.

### 3.) Post-to-Post and out.

1. As the name suggests, goalie starts on one post, drives across to the other post, sets, then drives out to top of crease.



2. See drill #6 “Behind the Net”. Goalie uses the “window” to check for a puck behind the net (zones (4,3,2,1 or 1,2,3,4) as he moves across, then powers out for a shot.
3. **Atom:** P1 skate behind the net slow speed, then pass in zone 7 to high stationary P2 in high slot.
4. **Pee-wee:** P1 from 10 to 20 feet, sharp angle, close to the goal line, bad angle shot and play the rebound if possible and then pick an other puck to skate mid-speed behind the net to pass to high (top circle) P2 in zone 7 (one timer) or P1 do a wrap-around.
5. **Bantam:** Same as pee-wee, but P2 is moving in front of the net (moving vertically and horizontally).
6. **Midget:** P1 can shoot far or close from a sharp angle and play his rebound if possible, then with second puck can wrap-around on a stuff play against the post or cut in front of net THROUGH the crease. Must shoot before entering zone 7 because in a game situation the defense should stop him).

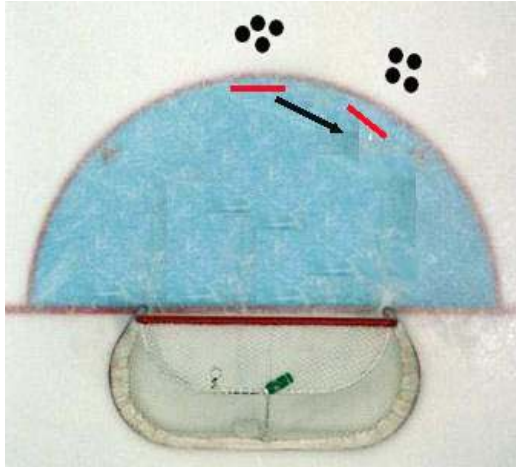
**Progression:** Work from both sides. Later add a passer

**Watch for:** Good form while moving across the goal line. Drive skate against post. Goalie should not lean on post. No Holes between goalie and post. Good shuffle across net and good power when moving to top of crease. Proper position of down knee and paddle down to defend against wrap-around.. Goalie should be aggressively moving out toward and beyond the top of the crease. Is he compact and in control when arriving to top of crease?

**Shooting:** When using pucks, set up your shooter in high slot. Goalie should not be going down automatically. Shoot some shots into his pads and chest. Check rebounds

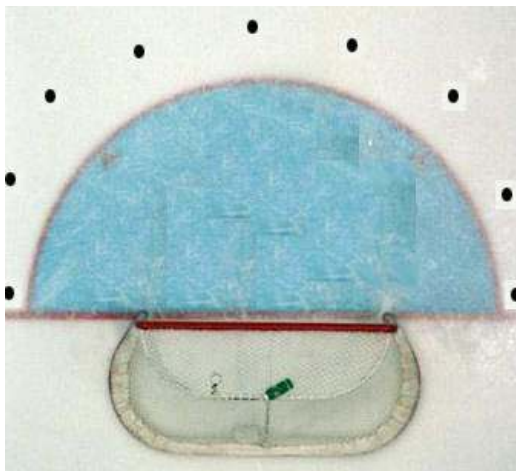
– does he control them? Does he deflect low shots away from net toward corners?  
Does he follow rebounds for a second save?

- 4.) **Low Ice Coverage:** This drill will help you see how the goalie moves after making the initial save. Pucks are just off the crease. Goalie goes down in butterfly at the top of the crease. Shot. Goalie quickly moves along the ice to second pile of pucks. Simulates a rebound.



**Watch for:** Speed. Good form while moving. Younger goalies will have problems moving on their pads, but older goalies should be able to push off from the down position and keep a good butterfly.

- 5.) **Puck Arc.** Start on one post and shuffle out to each puck in order. Set properly. Once set, drive to next puck in order.



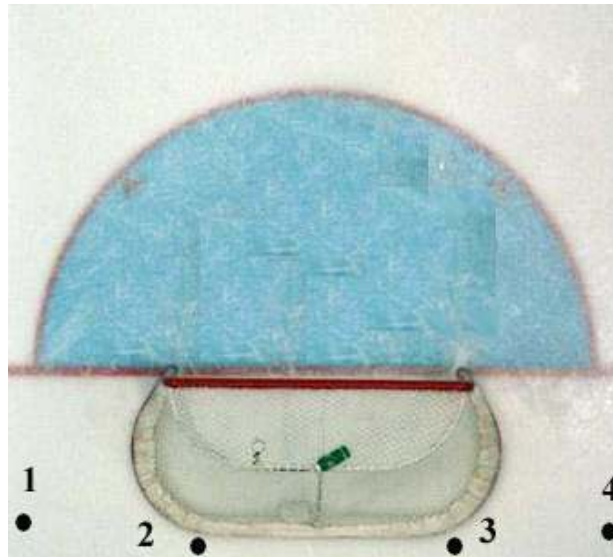
**Progression:**

- a) Work from both sides.
- b) Have a skater to move from the post and skate the arc of the crease to the other post with the goalie following the puck.
- c) Same as c) but with a shot at any time.

**Watch for:** Good form while moving. Use shuffle to move between pucks. Keep hands in front, stick in front of skates.

When using shooters, have shooter move randomly between pucks. First time through, goalie must follow and set before the shot. Second time through speed up.

- 6.) **Behind the Net.** Set up 4 pucks behind the net. Give them each a number. Goalie starts on the post. As coach calls a number, the goalie moves to position himself to play the puck with that number. For example, 1-2-3-2-3-4-3-4



**Watch for:** Good balance, and feet movement. Goalie should not turn around in the net. Head should only turn across body when going from puck 2 to 3. On pucks 1 and 4 skates should be tight against the post. Watch the shaft of the stick is not getting caught inside the net when moving across to puck 4. Proper use of elbow on post. No holes between body and post. Glide from zone 1 to zone 4 (and opposite). Proper use of “the window” to look behind.

**Progression 1:** Use one puck and a shooter. Shooter moves behind the net and tries to walkout to score.

**Progression 2:** Combine with Drill 3. Have a player skate behind the net, varying the speed, sometimes stopping, and see how goalie reacts and follows the puck. When skater crosses into Zone 1 or Zone 4 he can pass to another shooter in the slot per the following guidelines:

**Atom:** Player 1 slowly skates behind the net then passes to Player 2, standing in slot, mid-circle high for low shot.

**Pee-Wee:** Player 1 starts above goal line, takes a sharp angle shot, then takes second puck around net, mid-speed, for wrap around or pass to Player 2, standing in slot. If wrap around in front, Player 1 must cut to blue paint, not in slot.

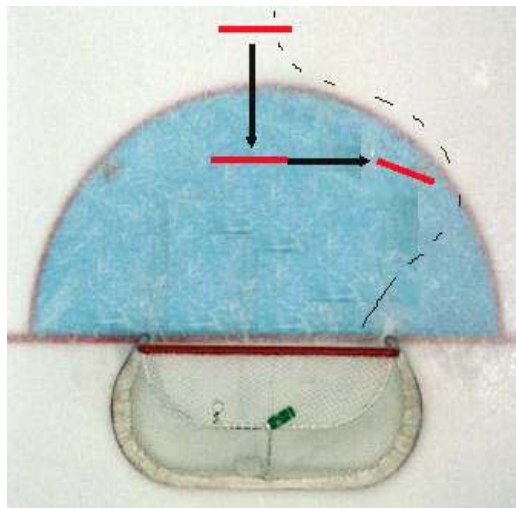
**Bantam:** Same as Pee-Wee, but Player 2 is moving across the slot.

**Midget:** Player 1 starts above goal line and has two options. Either:

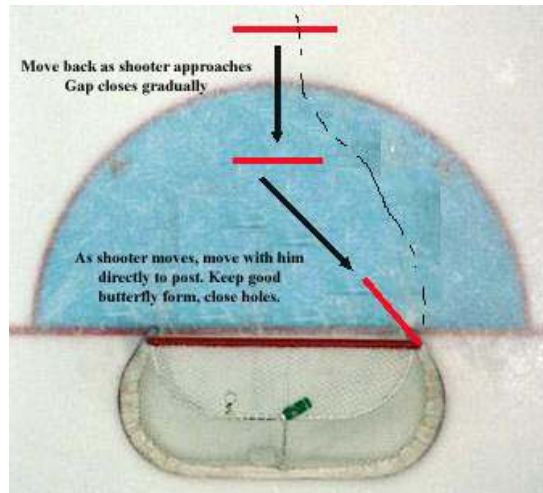
- takes a sharp angle shot OR cuts in front, through blue paint to stuff on long side
- cuts behind net for wrap around or pass to Player 2 who is free to move

7.) **Deke.** To properly defend against a skater maneuvering in close, the goalie must be able to convert backward motion into a slide to the post. A classic example is a shooter on a breakaway trying to deke. The goalie must move backward as the shooter approaches, then slide with the shooter as he executes his deke. The goalie should try to stay with the shooter and eliminate as many holes as possible (i.e. close the 5-hole by putting the paddle down).

**IMPORTANT:** The goalie should slide toward the post, not laterally across the top of the crease. Moving across the top of the crease creates a situation whereby the shooter can simply skate around the goalie. See the following two diagrams for examples.



**Figure 1: Wrong. Lateral movement leaves net open to shooter**



**Figure 2: Correct. Slide to post**

Put pucks in the slot. Have a player skate slowly toward the goalie. Goalie should move back. Shooter simply drives either left or right (no fakes) and tries to score along the ice. Goalie should stay with the shooter.

**Watch for:** Good initial depth (aggressive positioning - to top of, or even out of crease), movement toward post, not across top of crease; 5-hole closed with stick and pads flat on the ice.

- 8.) Reaction:** This is a good drill to test the reaction time of your goalies. It will also give you a good indication of how comfortable a goalie is with his stance. Set up pucks in the slot. Have the goalie stand in the net facing the back of the net (i.e. looking into the net). When the goalie is ready he spins in place, and the shooter releases a shot.

**IMPORTANT: The goalie initiates the start of the drill; not the shooter.**

**Watch for:** Good foot speed when turning to face the shot. Good form – stick on the ice; hands up and out. Note any difference in how the goalie makes a save when moving (i.e. this drill) versus the same save when they have time to set. At this level hockey they have to be able to make the stop without having time to be set.

- 9.) Recovery:** This simple drill will show how quickly a goalie can recover from down and out to their ready stance. Have the goalie lie face-down in the crease. When they are ready, they scramble as fast as they can to get up and into a proper ready stance. Shoot only when they are set.

**10.) Deflections.**

P1 is in zone 7 (slot, high, top circle) and deflected shot by P2 on the side of the crease (both sides).

**11.) Pass across, short game**

P1 is in zone 5 or 6, mid. Distance and pass across to P2 back door closed to the crease for a one time/deflection type.

You may wish to use a score sheet similar to the one on the next page to evaluate your goalies.

**Goaltender Evaluation Form**

Goalie Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Evaluator: \_\_\_\_\_

		<b>Score</b>	<b>Weight</b>	<b>Rating</b>
<b>Physical</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Courage, no fear of puck</li> <li>• Physical strength, stamina, and reflexes</li> <li>• Gets-up quickly, has flexibility, and agility</li> </ul>		<b>15%</b>	
<b>Emotional &amp; Mental</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maturity, composure &amp; “coachable”</li> <li>• Leadership, work ethic &amp; quarterbacking</li> <li>• Focus, concentration, and consistency</li> <li>• Has fun playing - likes to stop pucks</li> <li>• Anticipation, knowledge of game</li> <li>• Other kids like him</li> </ul>		<b>15%</b>	
<b>Skating</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Balance, quickness and mobility</li> <li>• Forward, backward and lateral movement</li> <li>• Shuffles, T-glides and skate saves</li> </ul>		<b>20%</b>	
<b>Technical</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Style definition and development</li> <li>• Stance and readiness</li> <li>• Save selection and strength</li> </ul>		<b>25%</b>	
<b>Positioning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Angles, positioning and playmaking</li> <li>• Controls rebounds, tips and protects crease</li> <li>• Keeps body square to puck</li> </ul>		<b>25%</b>	

**Comments:**