



# Goaltending

**"Between the Pipes"**  
(by: Richard Robert)



*Many times, the goaltender is the forgotten player on the ice. Unlike the forwards who have the opportunity to talk with the coaches, the goalkeeper must be self-sufficient, self-motivated, and have the mental preparation in order to succeed. All too often the physical demands of this position are stressed, but it is our belief that **goaltending consists of 80% mental ability and 20% physical ability.***

*Goaltenders underestimate the potential of the mind! Do you think you could make more saves if you knew where a play was going to happen, how it was going to happen, and when it was going to happen? Could you make more saves if you knew what play was going to happen and had the most effective save already in mind?*

*The most successful goaltenders in ringette will tell you that goaltending is all about using **calculated reactions** to stop shots and that these "calculated reactions" come from a "**mental game**" that is being played in the goaltenders mind. This "mental" game is made up of two parts:*

## **1) Identifying a Situation**

- possible crease pass
- a breakaway
- a two-on-one

## **2) Reacting to the Situation (anticipation)**

- selecting the best choice of saves

\* This "mental game" incorporates the following concept:

**Good goaltenders move to where the ring is going,  
GREAT GOALTENDERS ARE ALREADY THERE!**

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# ***Mental Assets for Goaltenders***

*It is important for the goaltender to have some, if not all, of the following qualities because the position of goaltender requires a high degree of inner strength and ability.*

- 1. Attitude***
- 2. Effort***
- 3. Temperament***
- 4. Confidence***
- 5. Concentration***
- 6. Determination***
- 7. Ability to recognize situations***
- 8. Sportsmanship***

## ***1. ATTITUDE***

- To play well, you must **enjoy the game** and **have fun**.*
- your attitude and how you treat others will rub off on them.*

## ***2. EFFORT***

- give 100% at all times (games and practices).*
- have a good work ethic, lead by example.*
- you have to want to do better, challenge yourself!.*

## ***3. TEMPERMENT***

- remain cool/calm/collected at all times.*
- let others see a minimum of your emotions.*
- NEVER GET DOWN ON YOURSELF.*
- remain on target-focused on your goals for that game.*
- BE PATIENT! - Let the play come to YOU!*
- have faith in your teammates.*

- *IGNORE THE CROWD.*
- *NEVER GET MAD!*

*\* **patience** and **keeping your cool** will be 2 of your most useful weapons.*

#### **4. CONFIDENCE**

- *be confident in your abilities AT ALL TIMES!*
- *you have the ability, LET IT SHOW!*
- *people can see confidence, make them believe that they can't score on you!*

#### **5. CONCENTRATION**

- *set your goals, focus on what YOU have to do.*
- *do not lose your concentration - do not watch the crowd. (they are not playing)*  
*MORE PRESSURE = MORE CONCENTRATION*

#### **6. DETERMINATION**

- *give 100%.*
- *analyze each play and where you went wrong and RIGHT!*
- *NEVER GIVE UP!!!!*

#### **7. ABILITY TO RECOGNIZE SITUATIONS**

- *develop a feeling of when a shot will occur.*
- *look around your crease for attackers so that you know where everyone is. => NO SURPRISES.*
- *KNOW WHAT COULD HAPPEN, you will then know what you have to do.*

#### **8. SPORTSMANSHIP**

- *enjoy the game.*
- *RESPECT the players, coaches, referees, AND THE GAME.*
- \* HAVE FUN, ALWAYS!*

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## *Key Goaltending Tips*

- 1. Maintain a cool, even temperament.*
  - 2. Maintain your concentration.*
  - 3. Keep your body square to the ring at all times.*
  - 4. Keep your body between the ring and the net at all times.*
  - 5. Every movement must be made as fast and accurate as possible.*
  - 6. Save techniques must be practiced and perfected.*
  - 7. Keep stick on ice at all times.*
  - 8. Identify situations and anticipate the save.*
  - 9. Try to maintain a high level of conditioning.*
  - 10. Give 100% on and off the ice.*
  - 11. Love playing every second of the game.*
  - 12. Give back what the game gives to you.*
  - 13. To be a winner, you must think like a winner!*
  - 14. At all times, have fun!*
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## *A Goaltenders Attitude*

- 1. Cool*
  - 2. Calm*
  - 3. Patient*
  - 4. Shows minimum emotion*
  - 5. Confident*
  - 6. Thinks like a winner*
  - 7. Constantly learning*
  - 8. Intense and focused on goals*
  - 9. Has time for a smile*
  - 10. Gives 100%*
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# *Physical Assets for Goaltenders*

*As I stated earlier, I believe that 80% of goaltending involves mental abilities. However, mental abilities must be combined with the physical abilities because once a situation is identified, the goaltender must be able to make use of excellent TECHNICAL goaltending skills.*

*Knowing where to move and how to move on a given situation requires **TECHNIQUE**. A goaltender lacking speed for instance, can make up for this with a good ability to anticipate the play and by using the correct technique on the save.*

*The following are physical "musts" for goaltenders.*

## **1. TECHNIQUE**

- making sure each save (e.g. Butterfly, Skate Save) is done correctly.*
- (stick on ice, glove up, eyes on ring, etc.)*

## **2. QUICKNESS**

- fast, quick, and accurate movements are a goaltenders best friend.*
- quickness is the best defense against surprise.*

## **3. AGILITY/REFLEXES**

- movement is the most important part of the goaltenders technical game.*
- quick reflexes/movements will save goals.*

*Physical conditioning is a part of goaltending that is a must because it is this that allows the goaltender to make the big save in the big game even though she has had a great deal of work. Goaltending is exhausting because it requires high intensity activity for short periods of time. It is important to condition yourself up to game strength because high conditioning translates into good performance.*

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## *Pre-Game*

### *30 minutes before game-time*

*At this time, the goaltender should be arriving at the arena with a positive attitude and looking forward to playing in a fast, exciting game. This is a time to enjoy the company of your teammates, relax, and to joke around in order to relieve any pregame jitters or nervousness. Be social, even before the start of a big game. Never predict the outcome of the game but be confident in your abilities and those of your teammates. This is also a good time to think about your goals of the game such as playing your angles right or keeping focused during the course of the game.*

### *20 minutes before game-time*

*Start getting dressed and have a good time with your teammates. Try to stay loose and relax and do some light stretching in order that you do not become stiff before game-time. Talk to the other goaltender (if you have a partner) and discuss what kinds of shots that you were faced with last time you played this team.*

### *5 minutes before game-time*

*The coach is usually in the dressing room discussing game strategies for the forwards and defense. As a goaltender, if you don't have a goaltender coach, this is a time that you should be "coaching" yourself and getting prepared for the shots you will have to face in five minutes. This is a time to relieve your anxiety and nervousness by focusing on your body and mind.*

*The following methods of relaxation and visualization techniques are a good way of getting rid of nervousness and stress before the game and to get you comfortable and confident so you can have the best game possible. Try them and find what works best for you. Remember, you play your best when you have low levels of: tension, depression, anger, fatigue, and confusion. You are at your best when you feel high levels of vigor and determination (will to win).*

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# *Relaxation and Visualization Techniques*

## *1. Muscle Relaxation*

*Lie down or find a comfortable position on the bench where you can begin tensing many of your muscle groups. Tense your toes and your feet and hold for 5-7 seconds and then release. Remember to breath from your diaphragm during tensing. Feel the relaxation as you intense the muscles. After 10 seconds tense your ankles and lower legs for 5-7 seconds and release. Again, feel the relaxation as you intense the muscles. Gradually tense and intense the other muscle groups (calves, legs, thighs, buttocks, abdomen, chest, fingers, forearm, neck) until you feel totally relaxed. Keep your eyes open and stay alert while your coach is talking.*

## *2. Imagery Training*

*A. Close your eyes and imagine yourself playing goal and making a save. You must imagine yourself (in your own body) making the save as you would in a game. This is called the inner perspective. Remember to breath like you would in a game, from your diaphragm. You should be imagining a player shooting at you from the slot and you: making a glove save, making a blocker save, making a save with your left pad, making a save with your right pad. Then imagine a breakaway save and then a stick save. Now imagine a teammate saying "Great save!" and smiling.*

*Now close your eyes and visualize looking at yourself from outside your body while you are making a stop. See what a perfect form you have. Imagine that all the technical elements of the save are perfectly executed. Your stick is on the ice, your glove is up, you are watching the ring and moving extremely fast. Now imagine a teammate giving you a tap on the helmet and saying "Great stop!"*

*You should now be loose, confident, and ready to play a great game. You are relaxed and feel that you will play well and have fun.*

*ENJOY THE GAME!*

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# *The Warm-Up*

*For the goaltender, the warm-up is perhaps the most important element in preparation for the game as it allows her the time to develop a "feel" for the ice and her surroundings, to work up to game speed in a gradual manner, and to develop the much needed confidence for the game.*

*The warm-up should start with a light skate and should be used to stretch the neck, head, arms, and back. From there, the goaltender should go to her goal crease, rough-up the ice, and start stretching the lower body including the groin, knee, back, abdomen, hamstrings, and ankles. Finally, the goaltender should be practicing her movements in the crease such as going from post-to-post, telescoping out and back, challenging the shooters and backing in. Practicing the motions of saves such as the 1/2 butterfly and skate-save, the 2-pad slide, and the butterfly will complete your own, personal warm-up. The goaltender should now be practicing her angles on the ice and get a feel for where the net is and where she must be standing in order to cover all the angles.*

*Now it is time for shots! Tell the shooters to start shooting slowly and **gradually** work the shots up to game speed. **Remember, the warm-up should give you confidence!** If players are shooting hard and into the corners right off the bat, it will not be a benefit to you or your team, so tell them to shoot slow at the start so you can get a "feel" for the ring. Also, if you want to begin with shots, **TELL** the players not to deak right away. This will allow you to control your warm-up and be better prepared for the game.*

*Before the game commences, it is a time to review the most important elements of your game:*

- S     Speed in the crease.*
  - A     Anticipate the plays.*
  - V     Vision in the crease.*
  - E     Effort and Energy.*
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# **Goaltending Techniques**

## **1) Playing High Shots:**

### ***The Glove/Blocker Save***

*Saving the ring with the glove hand requires the goaltender to remember only a few basic rules.*

#### **A. Let the ring come to you**

*Do not try and "bat" the ring out or move your catching or blocking hand forwards. Stay in a comfortable, "ready" position with your glove hand near your waist area as this arm position will allow the best up and down movement for a shot.*

#### **B. Concentrate/Focus on the ring**

*Do not take your eye off the ring as it comes towards you because it may be redirected. Stay calm and ready as this is the best temperament for a goaltender.*

#### **C. Make one quick movement for the save then recover**

*Try not to catch the ring because closing your hand will not allow you to cover as much space. Keep your glove "open" and block the shot when it comes in. The same goes for a blocker save. Simply make one quick, accurate movement for the save. You must then recover to the "ready" position for another shot.*

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## **2. Playing Low Shots:**

### ***The Skate Save***

*This is one of the most important techniques that a goaltender MUST master. It is used on low, corner shots where the butterfly save will not reach. For a shot to the goaltenders right, the inner (or left) leg will drop to the ice while the goaltenders right skate will move outwards in a semi-circle motion in order to stop the low shot with the skate blade. The stick must remain on the ice to cover the "5-hole" when making the skate save. The recovery to the "ready" position for this save is extremely important.*

### ***The Butterfly Save***

*The butterfly save requires the goaltender to "drop" to her knees with her pads directed outwards to block shots while still maintaining her glove hand in a comfortable catching position and her stick on the ice. The butterfly save can be used on low shots coming towards the goaltenders sides, however, it is recommended that for low, corner shots, the goaltender use the skate save. It is the most effective save when the goaltender is "screened" and doesnt know where the shot is coming from because it covers a greater area of net in comparison to the "ready" position. The butterfly save can be used on crease-passes because it is fast and covers a lot of net area.*

### ***The Two-Pad Slide***

*There are three phases in the two-pad slide. The first phase is the T-push where the goaltender pushes off towards the side she will be sliding to. The second phase is the actual sliding phase where the leg that initially pushed off, is dropped to the ice under the goaltenders body. This is followed by the goaltender sliding on her side towards the shot with both of her pads "stacked" one on top of the other in order to cover the greatest area of net. This is the most difficult movement for a goaltender to master. It is used in an emergency when there the shooter is too far away for a skate save such as when there is a crease pass that the goaltender has not seen develop. When done correctly, it is one of the most effective and spectacular saves for a goaltender.*

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# *Playing The Ring*

## *1. Throwing*

*When the goaltender throws the ring into play, she must follow a few simple, yet important steps. Firstly, the concept of throwing a ring is similar to throwing a frisbee. When starting the throwing motion, the goaltender must turn her body so as to be in-line with her target. The ring should be held across the body and almost under the opposite armpit. This allows for a longer throwing motion which gives the throw greater speed to the target. The goaltender must then get low to the ice and release the ring close to the ice causing the ring to stay flat and not bounce. There must be a good follow through on the throw to make the throwing motion more accurate.*

## *2. Shooting*

*The goaltender must be able to effectively shoot the ring to her teammates, to the corners, or up the ice in order to start a play or clear the ring from the net area. The shooting motion must be smooth and easy and be made with the blade of the stick flat on the ice and the blocker hand held on the top of the stick. A goaltender must not be afraid of coming out of her net to shoot or play the ring when she needs to. The problem is to know when to come out and play the ring.*

*A good rule of thumb is the following: when you see that an opponent is going to pick up a free ring near the net, and the goaltender has time to play the ring into the corner or to a teammate, she should:*

- 1) know where she wants to play the ring before she plays it.*
- 2) **DO NOT HESITATE!** Skate out and shoot the ring in the desired place.*

***Shooting the ring takes practice.** Do not skate very far out of your net at first. Work your way to a level where you feel comfortable and work from there. Remember, playing the ring is an important part of the goaltender's game because it can get you out of trouble and help your team.*

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## ***Playing the Breakaway***

*The breakaway can be one of the most terrifying moments for the goaltender because in a matter of moments, the goaltender will either make the big save or let in the goal. However, when the goaltender has learned what to do on a breakaway and when to do it, the breakaway can be challenging and give you a high degree of confidence. First of all, the goaltender must have it in her mind that she CAN stop the breakaway because she knows what to do..*

*She must come out and challenge the shooter and then back into her net at a slightly slower speed than the shooter is approaching her at. The goaltenders weight must be on the flat of her blades allowing her to move quickly to either side of the net as the player approaches. The next thing to do is to let the shooter make the first move.*

*Because it is so easy to fake a shot in ringette, the goaltender must not fall for these fakes and **MUST NOT GO DOWN**. It is better to back a little further into the net because the shooter will find it harder to deak the goaltender and may just shoot. If the shooter decides to deak and commits to one side of the net, a sliding skate save or two-pad slide are the best alternatives for a save. However, the goaltender must be prepared for a shot and be in the "ready" position and not fall for the fakes of the shooter.*

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## ***Playing the Two-On-One***

*When a goaltender finds herself in the situation of defending the two-on-one, she must know her responsibilities.*

*The goaltender must always play the shooter on the two-on-one and leave the other player, who might get the pass, to her defenceman. The goaltender must play the shooter similar to the breakaway in that she must move out and cover the angles and then back into the net at just a little slower speed than the player is approaching the goaltender at. The goaltender must always be aware that a pass could be made and think of what she will do if it is. Thinking ahead of time will allow you to know the save you will make in advance and the pass will not take you by surprise.*

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## *Angles*

*The most important part of a goaltenders technical game is her angles because if the goaltender is out of position and leaves the shooter too much net to shoot at, there will be goal for sure! Therefore, the goaltender must practice her angles before the game in order to get used to the ice surface allowing her to better know her angles during the game.*

*The best way to do this is in the warm-up. Take two minutes before the warm-up starts and move in and out of your crease and pretend that there is a shooter approaching you. Back into your crease and do a two-pad-slide, a skate save, or a stick save just like you would in a game. This angle drill will certainly help you in the game. Try it, you'll see!*

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## *A Bad Goal*

*When you, as the goaltender, let in a bad goal it is very important not to think about it. I know it is very difficult and you might feel bad or that you've let down the team but in order to play well in the rest of the game, you must forget about it. Concentrate on your next save and ignore the goal that just happened. Remember, it takes more than one mistake for a goal to be scored. The blame must be passed throughout the team. It is important that you turn each and every goal into a learning experience so you know what you did wrong on the play. Also, when you make a really good save, you must feel great about yourself, but know what you did right on the play so you know for the next time.*

*After a bad goal, who is always looking at you from the bench? The coach - right? The coach will be evaluating you and wondering if he should talk to you or pull you. If he pulls you, it is important to accept that and be ready on the bench. However, after a bad goal, you must give the coach some positive reassurance or a feeling that you are still confident and ready to play. Don't hang your head, bang your stick, or look angry because the coach may not have confidence in you. To give the coach confidence in you, you must look confident! Skate out of your net and get ready for the next shot.*

*Remember, the goaltender must always be looking forward to the next shot. You must want another shot!*

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## ***Boredom and Falling "Asleep"***

*Every goaltender gets bored now and then during a game but it is important that you fight to maintain concentration. This can be done by having a water bottle on your net and using it, taking a quick skate out of your net and reviewing your angles, watching the other goaltender and what she is doing right and wrong, talking (not yelling) to your teammates, and directing the breakout.*

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## ***Confidence***

*Have you ever been faced with a breakaway and felt like you were going to stop it and did? Have you ever felt like you would not save a shot and then did not? And then there were times when you felt less certain about how you would perform and surprised yourself? It is understood that the more confident you felt of succeeding, the better you play.*

*Confidence is incredibly important to performance. If you do not believe that you can stop the ring you will not. If you think that you can stop it, you will. Expect to win and believe in yourself. Think like a winner and you will be a winner.*

*In other words, when you feel confident and you know you can stop the ring, you will stop the ring. You must know what to do on the shots and believe you can stop them. This will make you a better goaltender. Your confidence will show!*

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# *Goal Setting*

*It is important to set goals for yourself in order for you to succeed. A goaltender should set goals for her game such as covering all of the angles as well as possible during the game or make all of your saves with the stick on the ice, etc. Each goaltender must set her own goals that are important to her. Set your goals and make them happen. The goaltender must be committed to these goals and work as hard as she can towards them.. This means that she must give 100% every practice and every game.*

*Above all, however, the game is there to enjoy and the primary goal for any player is to have fun.*

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