

Box Lacrosse Goaltending

Level 1

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Level I Goaltending Stick and Body Positioning

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How to be a Goalie

All the information I pass out to goalies is **not** meant to change a goalies “**style**”. It is meant to make the goalie think and analyze how they play their position, while considering what “**style or technique**” works for them. Goalies need to decide which techniques need to be improved or changed. The key is to **think**. The goalie is the most important player on the floor and with this role, comes the responsibility to be the smartest.

The Three Rules of Goaltending

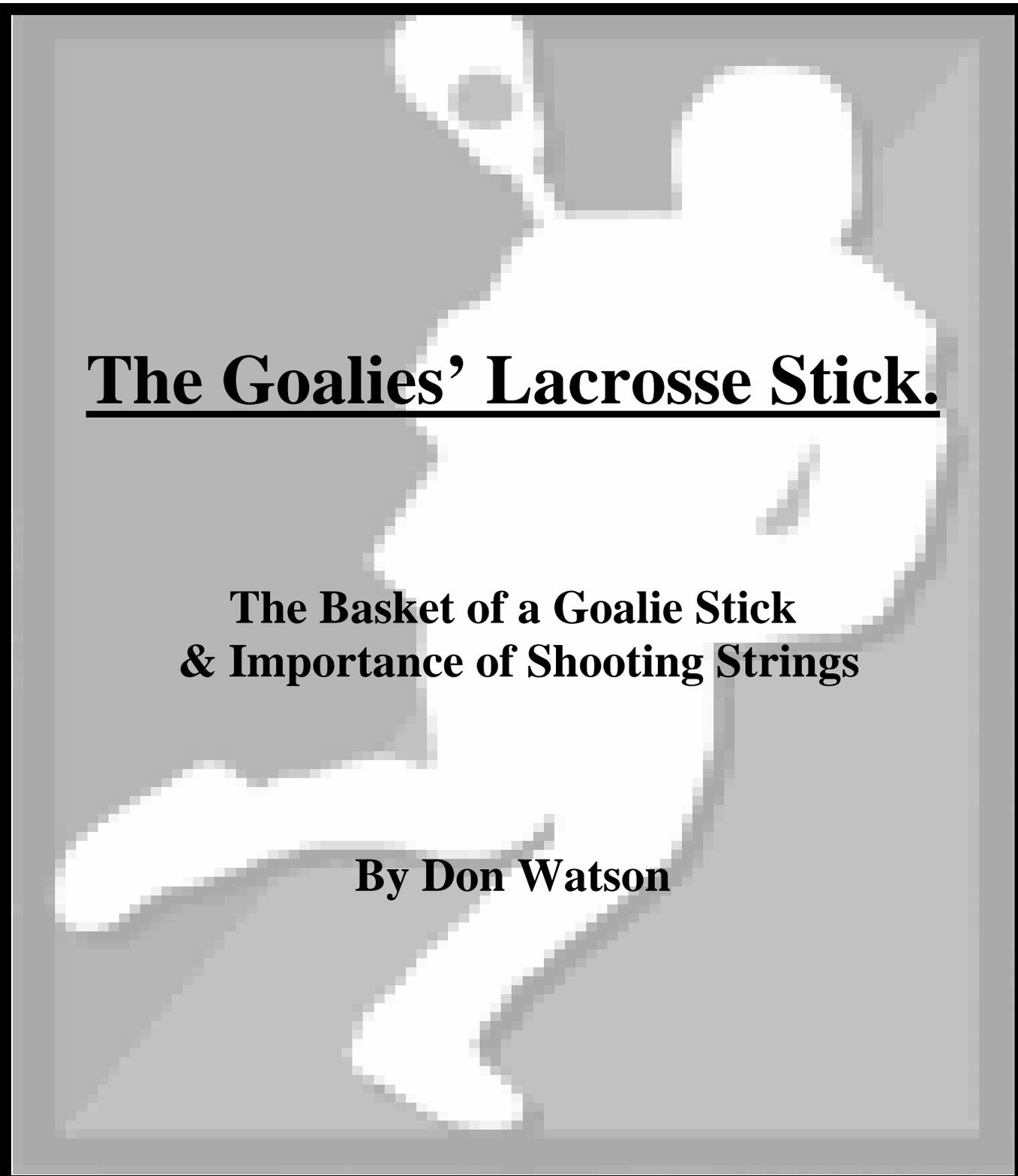
Rule 1- Practice as hard as you play in a game; while taking great pride in each improvement no matter how small.

Rule 2- Attack the ball and make the shooters work for every goal.

Rule 3- Never give up on any shot.

Goalie Pride.

Don “Hoss” Watson
Goalie



The Goalies' Lacrosse Stick.

**The Basket of a Goalie Stick
& Importance of Shooting Strings**

By Don Watson

The Goalie Stick:

The Goalies ability to pass the ball is the most important skill on the floor. The pass can initiate the transition game, create scoring chances and reduce the oppositions scoring chances. The goalie stick is the single most important piece of equipment for a goalie. The goalie must work with his stick to become a great stick handler and passer. Knowing every string, curve and mark on the stick will help the goalie to understand the dynamics or reasons why the stick does what it does during games or practices. Work on your stick and know your stick.

There are two types of goalie sticks currently being used.

- 1-The wooden stick with all leather basket or leather nylon string combination.
- 2-The plastic stick with the nylon mesh basket.

The Basket:

- 1- The basket of the leather stick is usually connected to the stick frame with either leather/ Cat Gut or nylon. This allows there to be some **“GIVE”** in the basket when the goalie is catching the ball or stopping a shot.
- 2- The basket in a plastic stick is connected at the top with leather and with strong non- stretch twine down the sides. The twine causes the ball to **“Sling Shot”** out of the basket.

Most goalies make the basket **too deep** to prevent this rebounds. The deep pocket causes the goalie to produce a “hook” when they pass the ball.

The **“Hook”** is easy to detect in a stick. Have the goalie stand in his throwing stance, left leg facing the target with the right leg back behind the left adding support and power. This position is for players who throw from their right side and should be reversed for those who throw from the left side. The stick should be held back at a 70 - 90 degree angle in a throwing position. Have the goalie throw the ball with a full **follow through**. The ball should exit the stick at the top of the arc during the throwing motion and float smoothly on an arc or elliptical path. If the ball moves on a downward path from the stick it has a **“Hook”**. Hooks can vary in severity and can be corrected doing the following work on the stick.

Solutions to the Hook:

1- Basket Strings:

A goalie can replace the stings holding the basket with skate laces which have some “**GIVE**” to them.



When removing the non-stretch strings you should be replacing or stringing the skate lace at the same time. This will allow you to easily follow the **path** of the strings you are replacing properly.

The Goal:

By replacing the strings that hold the basket with laces that have “**GIVE**” we create a basket that does not have to be too deep in order to prevent the ball from producing the **rebounds**.

Note: By loosening or tightening the basket support strings down the side of the basket you can move the pocket of the stick right or left if your throwing style is improved by doing this. Sometimes the goalie gear is cumbersome or bulky and this is a way to get the ball leaving your stick at the proper angle to produce the best pass. You will have to test your throwing over and over to detect your individual pattern.

2-The Shooting String:

The shooting strings are used to help lift the pocket of the basket to allow the ball to leave the stick without hitting the lip or plastic edging of the stick. The stick comes with two manufacturers shooting strings, you may have to retie them in order to make sure they are secured to the outer plastic shell which will support the basket.

Putting a shooting string in your stick.

To put a shooting string in your stick; first take a skate lace (it gives better support and "Give" when used in the basket). Then pick a spot $\frac{1}{2}$ - 1 cm down from the manufacturers shooting strings. Now weave the lace over and under the basket weave, in a straight line from one side of the stick to the other, pulling enough lace through to tie around the plastic shell later.

The next step is to take the remainder of the skate lace and go over the plastic shell and now weave the lace "around" the existing string. Weave the string around and through the holes until you reach the other side of the basket. Now secure the string with the other loose end. **Do not cut** the remainder of the skate lace since you will need time to adjust the pocket over the next few practices. Tie the loose ends so they do not fly around. Then take the stick and test the basket for a "HOOK".

If you have a deep pocket you may need additional shooting strings. Try putting a shooting string at the bottom of the pocket to help support the shape of your pocket.

Continually adjust your stick because the skate laces stretch and loosen.

Usually the goalies place one or two strings across the basket. The key here is to remember to have the shooting strings loop over the plastic shell. By doing this you will be able to adjust the shooting strings to either lower or tighten up the pocket. Another method to assist in creating a perfect throwing pocket is to use, what I call the passing guide runners.



This can really give the pocket support from top to bottom which means the ball will be guided out of the stick without a hook.

Remember to take your stick and practice throwing the ball at a mark on a wall to figure out if your pocket is correct. Watch the angle the ball as it leaves the stick. This will tell you if you have or are developing a hook.

Also raise your pocket at the bottom of the basket next to the handle by putting tight shooting strings in the bottom of the basket. This will move the pocket more to the top of the stick which will eliminate any hook and help the ball leave the stick cleaner.

NOTE: I have put a shooting string in the bottom of my stick in order to help lift the pocket so it is not too deep for my passing.



Now weave a support lace down the length of the passing guide. This will help support the pocket and eliminate any hooks.

You have to constantly adjust your stick. That means every time you pick it up to goof around, practice or play a game.

By learning how to make adjustments you will be able to make these corrections during a game if your stick needs it.

Remember to try things with your stick, make it fit your style.

NOTE: Now look at how I have weaved another skate lace down the complete length of the passing pocket. This will help maintain the shape of the pocket as well as eliminate hooks, while creating a smooth surface so the ball exits from the front of the pocket easily.



Depth of Pocket: The depth of a pocket can be measure by using a lacrosse ball. In some cases half a ball deep is good while some goalies like to have it three balls deep. The key is to make sure your shooting strings and weave make the ball come out without hooking.



1- The Red Hand Hold allows the goalie to always know how far they must bend their knees or squat down to get their stick on the floor for a bounce shot or low shot.

2- The Red Hand Hold helps to move the balance point of a stick from the basket down the shaft of the lacrosse stick.

The Red Hand Hold or “Knob” on a goalie stick is used to create balance, help in throwing, & provide better grip. The knob should be placed on the shaft; in front of the hand they hold the stick with, on the basket side. To figure exactly where to place the knob, have the goalie get in the ready position, with them standing on the balls of their feet. Now have them bend their knees slightly; just as they would in a game, as if they were ready to move from side to side. Next make sure the **shoulders** are perfectly **parallel** to the floor. This will make shoulder movement easier and quicker. This location will be different for each goalie due to body size. This makes the goalie stance square not slouched or leaning to one side. It also gives them a perfect “ready position” when the stick is in the down position.

Page 8

NOTE: Some goalies may like to wrap tape back up the shaft from the **Red Hand Hold**; this helps the goalie better grip the stick when it gets slippery. This also helps in moving the balance point back up the shaft of the stick.

The Second “Knob” is found at the end of the goalie stick. It is usually a rubber end or tape wrapped around the end of the stick so the hand of the goalie does not slip off. This “Knob” can also be used to help create a **balance** in the stick. If the head or basket area is heavy, the stick will dip open when held. It can also cause an imbalance when throwing which prevents the goalie from throwing properly. By placing tape or weight on the end; we can move the balance point of the stick from the head or basket end of the stick down the shaft .This creates a better balance for throwing.

But before we start wrapping tape around the end of the stick lets have a look at the other place we find a Knob on a goalie stick.



Box Lacrosse Goaltenders



Body & Stick Positioning

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I would Like to thank the *New Westminster Minor Lacrosse Association* and in Particular the players and Fathers of the group below who were so kind as to assist me in being able to show all other goaltenders and coaches the finer points of playing goal.--- Don Watson



Left Wing Goaltender Right Wing
Liam G. Rocky B. Drew M.

Thanks Guys - Hoss Watson

Overview:

How the position of goalie constantly evolves.

The position of **Goalie** in lacrosse has changed dramatically over the past 30 years. Goalies used to wear old hockey goalies shoulder pads, a pair of hockey gloves and played with their stick at the side not between their legs. In the late 1970's early 1980's goalie gear started to bulk up. The shoulder pads started to get taller and the arm pads wider. The sticks remained about the same until the economics of playing with a wood stick versus a plastic stick, became a concern for associations and players. With goalies wearing bigger pads up top, the game started to move away from the traditional shooting at the top corners.

Goalies over this period were taught; by keeping the stick stuck down on the floor between their legs the shooter would have a very poor opportunity to score between their legs.

Goalies have to remember that whatever shot you take away; you always leave another area that the shooter can exploit. When you are all bent over with the stick between your legs you allow two areas to become vulnerable. First the shot over the goalies shoulder is easier, since the shooter can move up and over the goalie faster than the goalie can move to cover the shot. Second the goalie sacrifices their lateral movement (Side to Side) because the stick hampers proper foot movement. Shooters were diving across the crease for awhile, until the goalies and defense adjusted to prevent this type of shot.

The shooters today are beginning to move the shots to the mid-lower half (OFF THE KNEE) of the goaltender in order to counteract the oversized Goalie arm pads and stick. The legs are thin and narrow, compared to the bulky upper body. Goalies must adjust their style by getting what I call a ***Quick Stick***. The following pages will try and explain the basics of the ***Quick Stick*** and allow you to understand how to incorporate this into your style if you so desire.

The Red Hand Hold or “Knob” on a goalie stick is used to create balance, help in throwing, & provide better grip. The knob should be placed on the shaft; in front of the hand they hold the stick with, on the basket side. To figure exactly where to place the knob, have the goalie get in the ready position, with them standing on the balls of their feet. Now have them bend their knees slightly; just as they would in a game, as if they were ready to move from side to side. Next make sure the **shoulders** are perfectly **parallel** to the floor. This will make shoulder movement easier and quicker. This location will be different for each goalie due to body size. This makes the goalie stance square not slouched or leaning to one side. It also gives them a perfect “ready position” when the stick is in the down position.

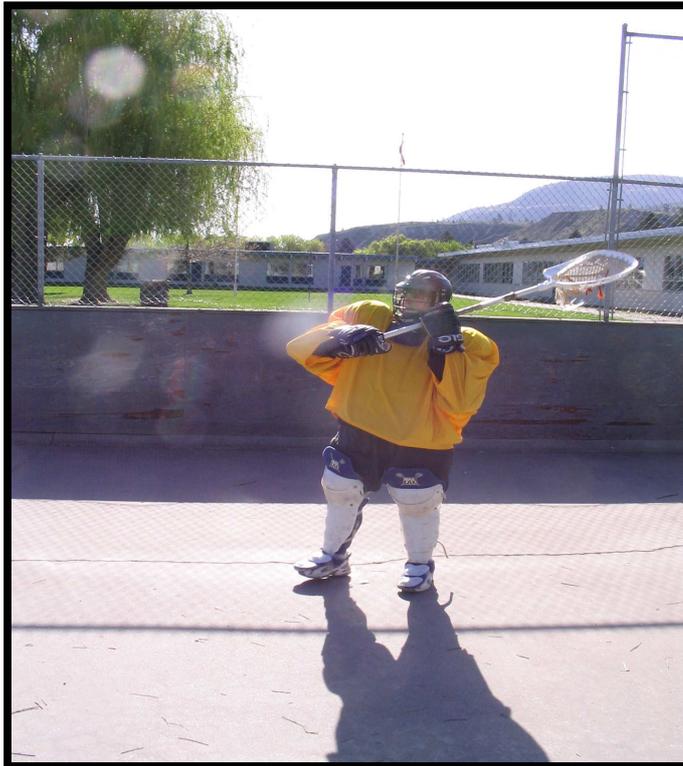
NOTE: Some goalies may like to wrap tape back up the shaft from the **Red Hand Hold**; this helps the goalie better grip the stick when it gets slippery. This also helps in moving the balance point back up the shaft of the stick.



Goaltenders Passing Stance or Set Up

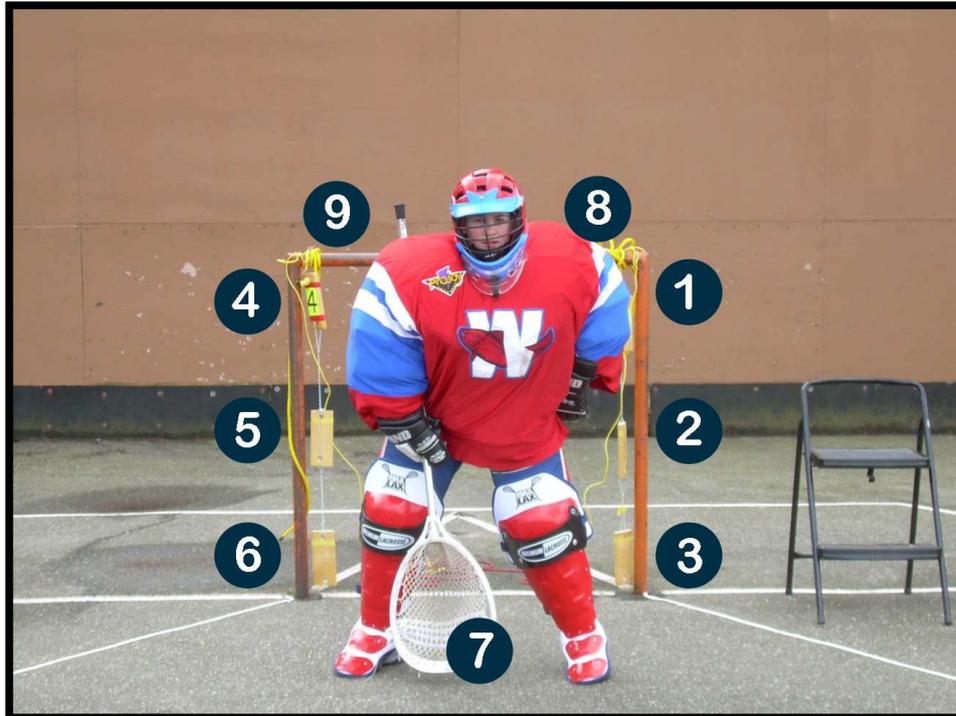
Passing:

1- **The Back Foot:** The back foot of the goalie should be perpendicular to the target they are passing to. If a goalie goes from a **goalie ready position** to the passing position; you will want the goalie to pivot the back foot to a perpendicular position. This creates a good base to push from.



Good Front Foot Positioning.

The Feet & Hand Position: The front foot of the goalie should be pointed at the player receiving the pass. By having a good base with the back foot and then striding forward with the front foot pointed at the pass receiver; the goalie will not be able to twist their hips. The top hand should be at the knob, (closest to the head) then slide the top hand to the middle of the stick when throwing. The bottom hand should always be at the bottom of the stick during the throw. This will allow the stick to be held off the body of the goalie and make the pass powerful and straighter.



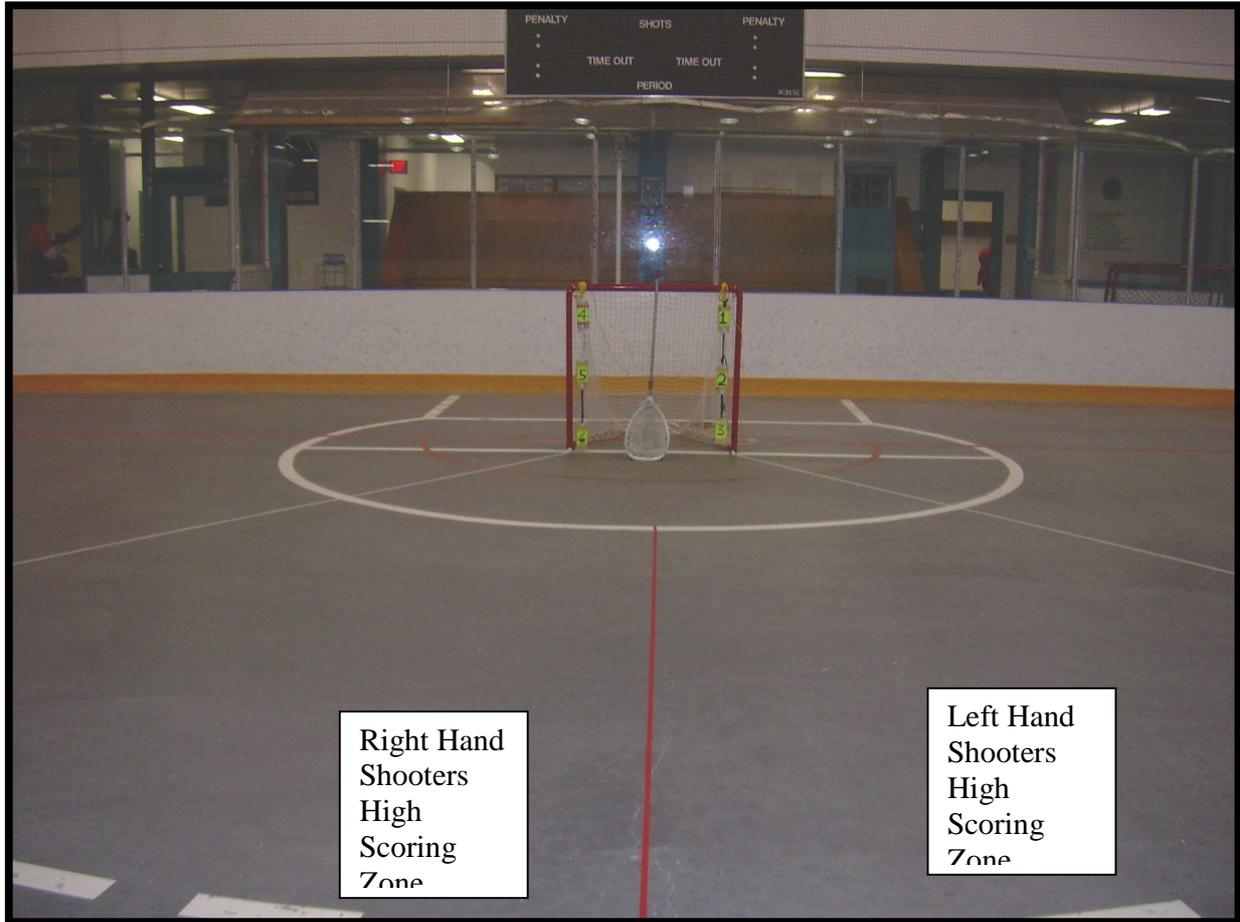
The Game of Elimination.

All shooters have their favorite places to shoot. A **right** handed shooter prefers to shoot down the right hand side of the net, show above by the numbers 1-2-3. 1 being his best shot. The numbers 4-5-6 show how the shots become more difficult for a **right** handed shooter who has to cross his body to make these shots..

The 7 hole between the goalies legs disappears if the goalie plays his stick slightly off the floor out in front of his feet..

The Number 8 Shot is over the shoulder. If a goalie is bent over too much covering the bottom of the net this will give the shooter a good shoulder shot.

The Number 9 Shot for a right handed shooter is a behind the back shot. It is usually done when a shooter is on the wrong side of the floor.



The Best Scoring Zones

Note: I have laid out the high scoring zones for right and left hand shooters



Goalie Set Up Analysis

Situation: The goalie is in the standard position to stop a shot from a right handed shooter. The Goalie should be on his toes or balls of his feet so he can move easier.

Note: The goalie is too far back in the net allowing shooters to shot to the right side of the net. The goalie is too far to **his** right, in order to stop a right handed shooter. The goalies stick shoulder is rounded which will allow for a shot over the shoulder.

The Goalie has his free hand on his hip; notice how his shoulder turns his upper body ,opening a **top right** corner shot.

The goalies weight is on his right foot and his foot is out in front. This will make movement to his left difficult .

The poor foot position **turns the hips** to the goalies left which opens up his left side for shots at his left knee and left foot.



Goalie Set Up Analysis

Situation: The goalie is in the standard position to stop a shot from a right handed shooter. The Goalie Should be on his toes or balls of his feet so he can move easier.

Note: The goalie has taken a step out towards the shooter to cut his shooting angle.

The goalie has moved to his left to better protect the left side of the net from the **right handed shooter**.

The goalie is better balanced on his feet and can move laterally very easy. The Goalie should be **pointing his toes** at the shooter. This will make the goalies body square to the shooter.



Situation: Goalie is in position to stop right handed shooter. The goalie is on his toes in this picture.

Note: The goalie has taken a step out towards the shooter to cut his shooting angle.

The goalie has moved to his left to better protect the left side of the net from **the right handed shooter**.

The goalie is better balanced on his feet and can move laterally very easy. The Goalies **free hand** should be placed on his upper thigh, this will allow the goalie move his left arm (**Chicken Wing**) quickly to cover the shooters top right corner.



Situation: The goalie now takes the “**Quick Stick**” position.

Note :The goalie actually moves the stick off the floor at a 45 degree angle. The goalies stick actually covers the same space (as if it were on the floor). The Shooters eyes see the space under the stick but if the shooter has his stick above his shoulders he will have a low percentage shot or chance of scoring due to the angel. The shooter will have to drop the stick below his shoulders in order to score under the stick.

If he drops his stick he will not be able to score over the goalies shoulder. If you have a short Goalie or like to play take away this is a great way to show something that is not really there. Shooters will look for the easy goal.



The RULE

Situation: The goalie now takes the “Quick Stick” position.

Note :The goalie actually moves the stick off the floor at a 45 degree angle. The goalies stick actually covers the same space (as if it were on the floor) The shooter sees a space under the stick but his shooting angle WILL NOT ALLOW the ball to go under the stick unless he drops the stick below his shoulder level.

The Goalie is now more upright no rounded shoulder and his feet are in position to move.

The Rule: If the shooter’s stick is up (above their shoulders) then the goalie is up (Quick Stick Position) stick off the floor. If the shooters stick is below their shoulders then the goalies stick is barely touching the floor 6-12 inches in front of their feet.



The Pass Across the Net

Situation: In “**Quick Stick**” position the goalie must practice moving across the net to cover the pass to the far shooter.

Note: The goalie actually moves the stick off the floor at a 45 degree angle. The goalies stick actually covers the same space (as if it were on the floor) The Goalie knows the pass can move to the other side of the net. Goalie movements must be practiced. Goalies must rehearse exactly what they will do.

Remember: Most shooters when they receive the pass will shoot to the top corner in this situation;
Smart shooters will bounce the ball into the net.
Your move across the net should be to first cover the top **HALF** of the net.

Remember: Most times the shooter will score because your defense has left him alone at the edge of the crease. DO not consider this a weak goal. If you stop the shooter this is a **BIG SAVE**. Yell to your defense tell them to cover the “**BACK DOOR MAN**” this will help you cover shots like this.



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Remember: Most shooters when they receive the pass will shoot to the top corner in this situation;
Smart shooters will bounce the ball into the net. Your move across the net should be to first cover the top **HALF** of the net. If you cover the top half of the net the shooter will likely pull the shot back and try and bounce the ball on the floor. This will give you time to move your body over and cover the low shot with your stick as he goes to bounce the ball in.



The Pass Across the Net

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Goalie movements must be practiced.
Goalies must rehearse exactly what they will do.

Remember: Most shooters will shoot to the top corner in this situation; Smart shooters will bounce the ball into the net.
Your move across the net should be to first cover the top HALF of the net. The shooter will not take the shot if you beat him to the top HALF. The shooter will pull the shot back and now try and shoot down between your legs.
Now that you have moved your body over you can drop your stick down to cover the low shot.

Remember: Most times the shooter will score because your defense has left him alone at the edge of the crease. DO not consider this a weak goal. If you stop the shooter this is a **BIG SAVE**.
YELL to your defense tell them to cover the “**BACK DOOR MAN**” this will help you cover shots like this



The Pass Across the Net Stick Side

Situation: In “Quick Stick” position the goalie must practice moving across the net to cover the pass to the far shooter. This Move is more difficult due to the angle required to cover the top corner.

Note: The Goalie knows the pass can move to the other side of the net.
Goalie movements must be practiced.
Goalies must rehearse exactly what they will do.

Remember: Most shooters will shoot to the top corner in this situation;
Smart shooters will bounce the ball into the net.
Your move across the net should be to first cover the top HALF of the net.

Attack the Shooter's Stick With Your Stick : This will allow you to follow up with your lower body to make the bounce shot save.



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REPOSITIONING

OR

“Repo”

**When A Goalie Can Reposition
move or re-set ;when the opposition
has the ball in the offensive zone.**

Repositioning:

Repositioning, moving or resetting your position, which I call “**REPO**”; is an important aspect of playing Goal. Some coaches may say that you should be ready at all times for a shot and this is true; but it is important to know that you can “**REPO**” when players are close or in the scoring zone. Through discussions with goalies across Canada I have been able to analyze when the best times to “**REPO**” happens.

The following are examples of when you **should** or **can** move.

- 1- When a shooter is making a pass.
- 2- The shooter is changing his position on the floor.
- 3- When the shooters stick is not in a shooting position.
- 4- When the shooter makes a “**FAKE**” he has usually completed a shooting motion and has to draw the stick back to prepare for another shot or as we call it “he has to reload”.
- 5- During a shot you can move since not all shots are at the net.
- 6- When the shooter shows indecision with the ball.
- 7- When your defense man engages or checks the shooter you can **REPO**.
- 8- When a shot is taken and there is a loose rebound.
- 9- When the shooter switches hands.
- 10-When the shooter drops the ball.
- 11-When your defense moves the ball out of the crease area.



Analyzing A Goalie.

This is an analysis of how this goalie plays a straight on right hand shooter.

- 1- Good Position in the net takes away the right handed shooters favorite **1-2-3** side.
- 2- The right hand shoulder is dipped low which would allow a # 4 shoulder shot.
- 3- The goalie has his right leg planted slightly behind the left which causes the right shoulder to dip. The goalie should have his feet pointed towards the shooter, side by side and shoulder width wide for good balance and good lateral movement.
- 4- The goalie should have his stick about 6-12 inches in front of his feet.

This will allow the goalie to square his body to the shooter.

NOTE: The goalie stick is too far to the right side of his stance.

Holding the stick out in front will correct this problem.

The goalie should put a knob on the stick about 12-16 inches from the pocket to allow the goalie to “set” each time correctly.

The goalies right hand should be placed loosely on the front thigh in order to protect shots under the arm and to allow a quick “**throw**” or “**chicken wing**” move to the top left corner. This will also square the Goalie to the shooter



Note: Notice how the stick off the floor squares the shoulder compared to the previous picture.

The feet still need to be corrected.

The free hand is still too far back which twists the **hips** and **turns** the goalie opening up the # 1-2-3 shot.



NOTE : Now look at the stance The feet are shoulder width apart (Almost)
The toes are pointed at the shooter which squares the hips.
The stick is out in front and covering the entire # 7 Hole.
The free hand is loosely on the thigh which squares the goalie to the shooter.
The goalie is using the KNOB on the stick to square his shoulders.
The goalies eyes are looking directly at the ball in the stick.

This is a great set up.



NOW Analyze what is wrong or right with this set up on the shooter.



NOW: How About This?

Remember to analyze yourself when and where a shooter scores in practice. This will help you get a “set” which is the same each time for a right handed shooter and then for a left handed shooter.



What do you think about this set up against the shooter and for a potential move across the crease?

You know where the shooter can score **Maybe 2 or 3**, but as long as his stick is above his shoulders he cannot shoot under your stick.(# 7)

Remember:

When the shooter is up (his stick) you are up.

When the shooter is down (his stick below his shoulders) you are down.

Note: Good free hand and stick position.

Goaltenders Evaluation Sheet

This form should only be given to the goalies after the coach has done an extensive 3 or 4 practice evaluation. Make sure each area is well reviewed then discuss the evaluation with the goalie in private.

Use a rating system of (0-10) 0 Being very poor & 10 being excellent

Stance:

Knees Bent- _____ Stick Hand Position- _____

Square Shoulders- _____ Feet position- _____

Head Up- _____ Free Hand Position- _____

Passing:

Does the stick have a hook in the shooting pocket? (Y-N) _____

Is the stick too long or short? (L-S) _____

Outlet Pass to Right- _____ Outlet Pass to Left- _____

Can the Goalie pass to Blue line? (Y-N) _____

Movement:

Crease Positioning- is the goalie aware of their position in the net during live fire? Comment

Angles - _____ Movement In Crease- _____

Strength- Does the Goalie move with control in their Equipment?

Shots:

Bounce Shots- _____ Shots from the top- _____

Shots from Left Side- _____ Shots from Right Side- _____

Comments Overall