



15. GOALKEEPING

15. Goalkeeping

Good goalkeeping is essential to the success of your team. For individuals to be effective goalkeepers, they must develop skills in a number of areas. They must be able to maintain the proper basic stance, master skating skills, learn correct positional play and be able to stop both low and high shots. They also need to be able to effectively handle the stick and the puck.

Upon completion of this chapter, you will be better prepared to:

- *teach each of the elements of the basic stance,*
- *teach necessary skating skills,*
- *teach goalkeepers how to play the angles,*
- *identify puck stopping skills,*
- *identify puck handling techniques and stick skills,*
- *understand at what age it is best to teach which skills to teach to the goalkeeper,*
- *understand the importance of teaching off-ice balance and coordination drills to young goalkeepers.*

15.1 Basic Stance

The basic stance of a goalkeeper must allow for optimal balance, mobility, comfort, and speed of movement. Due to the importance of the basic stance to goalkeeping, emphasis should be placed on each of the elements of this skill.

There are a number of styles of goalkeeping, but all must have these common characteristics of the basic stance.



Figure 1: Basic Stance (Front View)

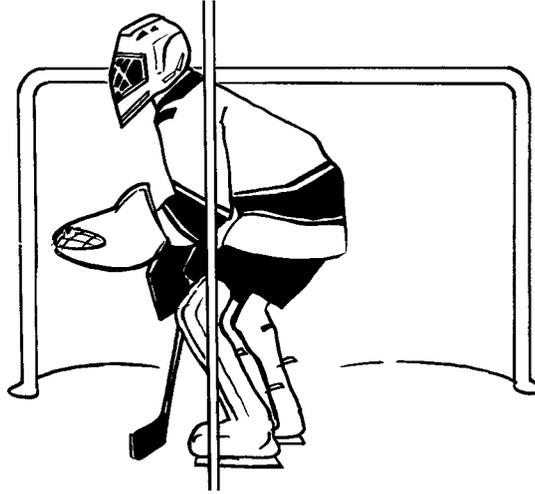


Figure 2: Basic Stance (Side Profile)

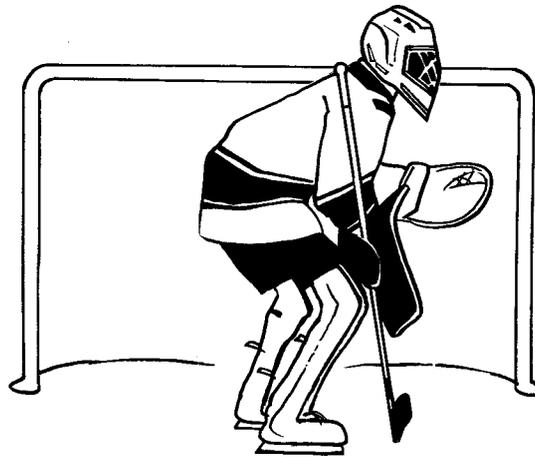


Figure 3: Basic Stance (Side Profile)

- Feet are spaced approximately shoulder width apart.
- Knees and trunk are flexed slightly forward with the weight of the body on the balls of the feet. Power required for lateral movement is readily available in this position. The shoulders, knees and front part of the feet can be joined by a vertical line (Figure 2).
- Head is up and watching the puck and/or play.
- Catching glove is held open at the side and slightly in front of the knee. The blocker and catching glove should both be held slightly in front of the body allowing the goalkeeper to see both by means of peripheral vision (Figure 3).
- The goalkeeper's stick should be held firmly with one hand at the top of the shank. (Thumb behind body of stick to prevent it from turning in your hand when blade is hit.)
- The blade of the stick is flat on the ice, approximately 25 to 30 cm in front of the skates in order to diminish rebounds created by the stick hitting the toes of the skates at the moment of impact.

15.2 Skating Skills

The importance of skating skills to the goalkeeper cannot be stressed enough. By mastering the necessary skating skills, a goalkeeper can execute movements with the speed and precision so important to this position. Due to the uniqueness of the goalkeeper's task, as well as the equipment, skating skills for goalkeepers are specific in nature.

Lateral (Side to Side) Movement

There are two basic methods a goalkeeper can use to move laterally while remaining on one's skates: the shuffle and the T-push.

The shuffle is the preferred technique since the goalkeeper is able to maintain the basic stance, be square with and on the centre line of the puck.

The T-push, despite having some disadvantages, is often used by young goalkeepers because it is a relatively easy method of moving from side to side. Also, advanced goalkeepers may employ a T-push technique while they react to the movement of the puck or play in situations where no shot is imminent.

The Shuffle

This technique is used when following the play as it moves laterally across the ice surface. The goalkeeper moving from left to right using the shuffle is illustrated in Figure 4. It is important to note that the basic stance should be maintained in all lateral movements.

- The right skate points forward and is unweighted slightly.
- The left leg (inside edge) pushes to initiate the left to right movement.
- In situations requiring minor lateral adjustments, goalkeepers should use short lateral shuffles of approximately 25 to 30 cm in length.
- In some situations, for example, the puck moving quickly from one corner to the other behind the net, the goalkeeper may be required to shuffle from post to post in one long move.

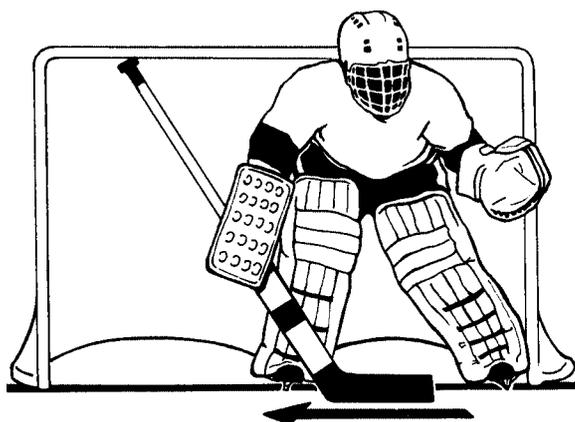


Figure 4: The Shuffle

T-Push

The T-push is a long and fast lateral movement. It is generally used when moving from one post across the crease to the other post when there is no chance of a shot, or when speed of movement is the main priority. A left to right example of a T-push is illustrated in Figure 5.

- The right leg is rotated outwards and parallel to the goal line.
- The left leg extends and pushes (inside edge) off the ball of the foot.
- The right leg (initially the gliding leg) rotates inward to initiate the stopping action (inside edge).

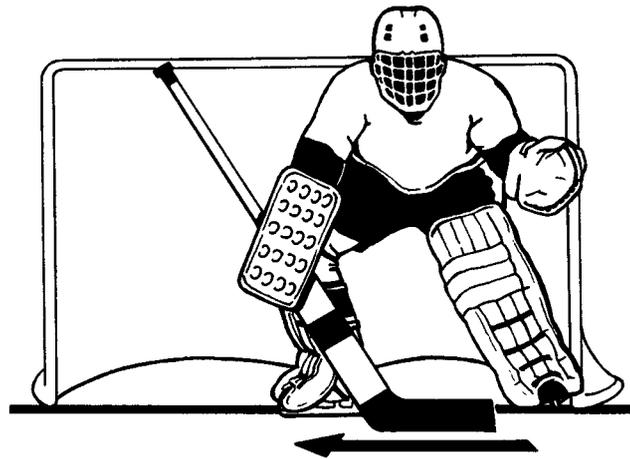


Figure 5: The T-Push

Forward and Backward Movement

Telescoping

The telescoping technique is effective in moving under control both out of and back into the net while maintaining the basic stance. The skates do not leave the ice during such short thrusts, thus providing a quick technique with which to challenge the shooter or assume proper positioning.

Sculling

Most goalkeepers have a preferred pushing foot, however, goalkeepers should develop the ability to scull with either foot depending on the game situation. For example, when the puck carrier is approaching from an angle, the goalkeeper should scull with the skate furthest from the puck and glide on the short side skate. This technique ensures the goalkeeper continues to protect the short side which is the most attractive area of the net for a shooter approaching from an angle. Goalkeepers should be capable of covering the required distance with one or two pushes, therefore, power and efficiency of movement are essential.

Forward

- Both knees are markedly bent.
- Toe is rotated slightly outward.
- A quick, forceful heel push is performed with the inside edge of the rotated skate (skate stays in contact with ice).
- The gliding leg is pointed in the desired direction.
- The basic stance is maintained throughout the push.

Backward

- Toe of one skate is rotated inward.
- The weight of the body is placed on the toe of the rotated foot and a forward thrust (e.g., toe push) occurs forcing a backward motion.
- The weight is then transferred to the gliding leg and the basic stance is re-assumed.

Down and Up Movement

Although it is ideal for goalkeepers to remain on their feet, occasionally situations arise which force them down onto the ice. It is therefore essential for goalkeepers to learn the most effective method of returning to their feet.

First, the goalkeepers must, whenever possible, avoid ending up on their back or in a sitting position. These predicaments force the goalkeeper to make several movements and use precious time in reassuming the basic stance position.

In this chapter, only down and up movement from the knees is covered, as this is the most frequent down position, and it is the intermediate stage of the up movement from other down positions.

In most instances, the goalkeeper falls on one or both knees. Even in this position, the goalkeeper must maintain a basic stance position with the upper body. To return to the standing position a goalkeeper must:

- Move the skates outwards thus fanning the legs and press the heels down against the ice.
- Lean the upper body back until the knees begin to lift off the ice.
- Continue lifting the knees while now vigorously leaning the upper body forward and placing the weight on the toe of the skate blade.
- Bring the feet closer together and assume the basic stance.

Another method of regaining the standing position is:

- Lean slightly forward with the upper body.
- Leave one knee on the ice while drawing the other knee up and subsequently placing the skate blade on the ice.
- Extend this leg to lift the opposite knee off the ice.
- Assume the basic stance position.

Edge Use

As should be evident by now, most goalkeeper skating skills are initiated by the inside edge of the skate blade. In the proper ready position, the goalkeeper's weight is on the inside portion of the feet and, thus, the forward position of the inside edge is used when the goalkeeper must thrust off in any direction. To be mobile, it is essential one edge remains on the ice.

15.3 Positioning

After learning the necessary skating skills, a goalkeeper is then ready to approach a very important aspect of the game: positional play.

Goalkeepers must position themselves in relation to the puck, the net, and the opposition. Proper positioning, often referred to as "playing the angles", is essential at all times. The basis of positional play is to take away as much of the net as possible in relation to the puck.

When learning proper positioning, the goalkeeper must understand the following theories:

- Centre Line
- Horizontal Angle
- Vertical Angle
- Short Side

Centre Line Theory

The centre line theory is an excellent method of teaching positional play. This theory is illustrated in Figure 6.

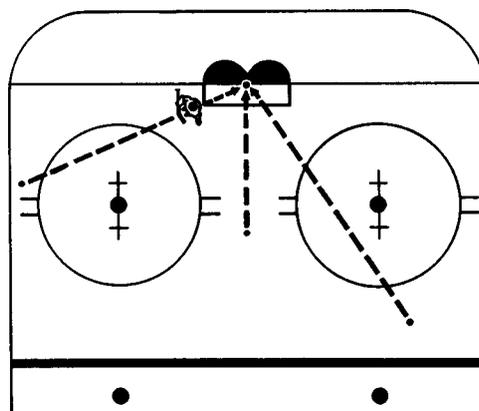


Figure 6: Centre Line Theory

When positioned properly, an imaginary line can be drawn from the puck to the mid-point of the goal line. At all times, the goalkeeper must assume a position on this line in order for this principle to be effective.

Horizontal Angle Theory

When the puck is directly in front of the net, the shooting angle is at its maximum. The available shooting spaces, when the goalkeeper is back in the goal crease, are illustrated in Figure 7a. These spaces decrease as the goalkeeper telescopes towards the puck (Figure 7b).

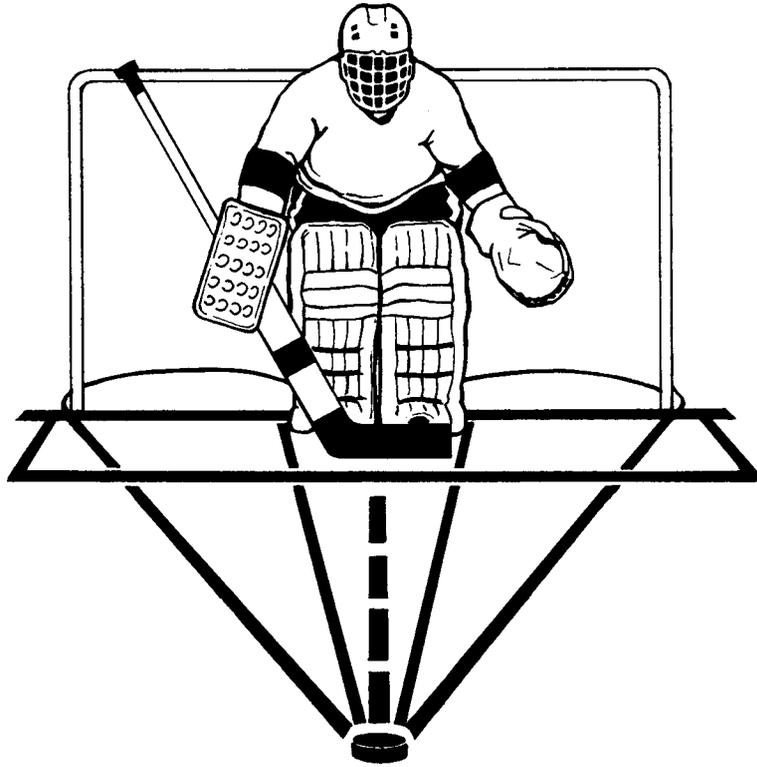


Figure 7a: Shooting Options (Goalkeeper Deep)



Figure 7b: Decrease in Shooting Space as the Goalkeeper Telescopes Towards the Puck

It would appear that the farther out of the net the goalkeeper comes, the better is the goalkeeper's position. However, this is not always the case. A goalkeeper should not come out so far that a quick return to the net cannot occur should the play move closer or should the point of attack be changed.

The distance a goalkeeper comes out of the net to play the angles is determined by the options of the puck carrier, the position of other opponents, and the goalkeeper's skating quickness and mobility.

Vertical Angle Theory

The vertical angle becomes a significant factor as the puck moves closer to the net. As moving toward the puck decreases horizontal angles, so too does it decrease vertical angles, as is illustrated in Figures 8a and 8b.

In Figure 8a, a puck shot above glove level could enter the net. However, in Figure 8b, a puck shot above the glove would travel over the net.

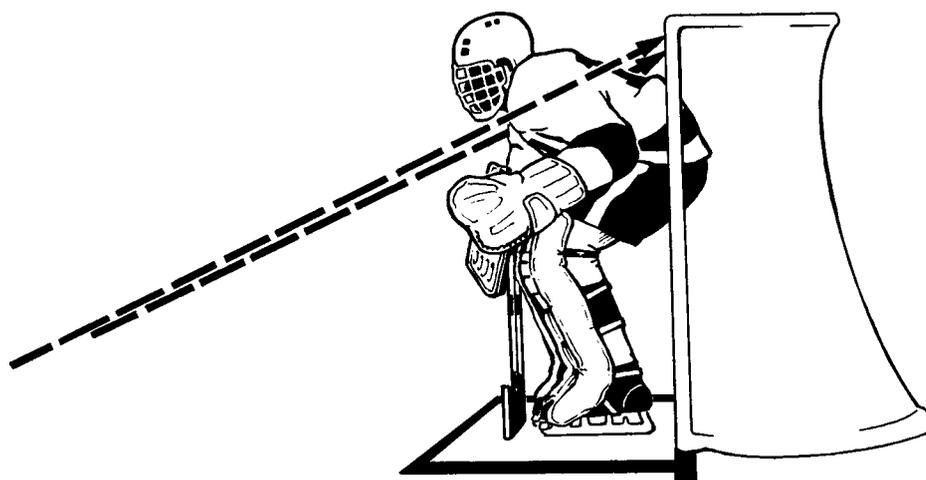


Figure 8a: Vertical Angle Theory (Inside Crease)

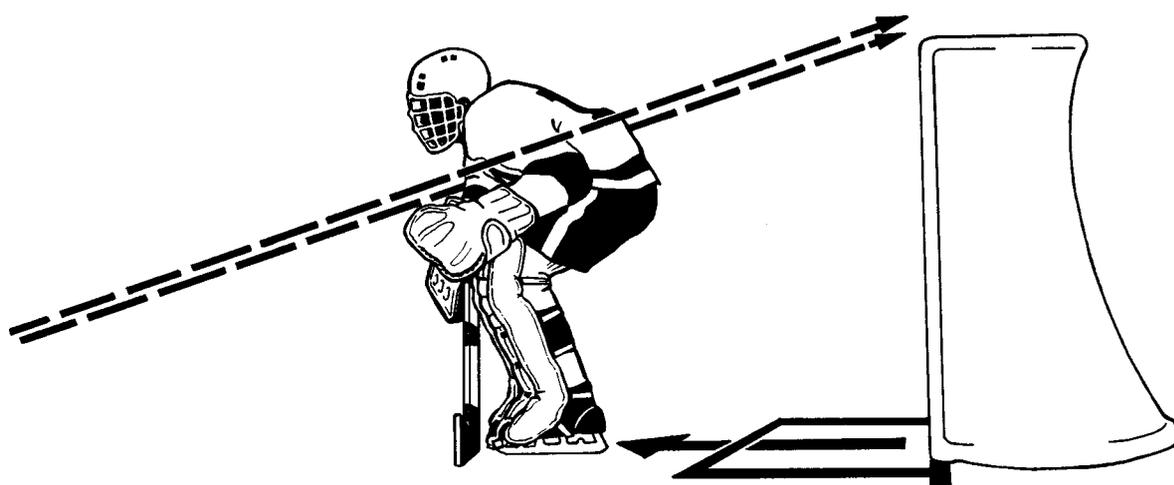


Figure 8b: Vertical Angle Theory (Outside Crease)

Short Side Theory

The short side theory is an exception to the centre line theory and is an advanced technique.

When a shot is coming from a sharp angle, (e.g., outside the face-off spots) the short side technique is very effective.

- The goalkeeper covers the short side (the side closest to the puck carrier).
- This forces the puck carrier to shoot across the goalkeeper's body to the far side of the net.
- By cutting off the short side, all indecision is removed. The shot or deke must go to one side, therefore, the goalkeeper is required to move in only one direction. The decision making process is simplified.
- The goalkeeper's body must always be square to the puck.



Figure 9: Short Side Theory

15.4 Puck Stopping Skills

If goalkeepers are able to remain in the proper position, then most shots taken will be directly at them. However, because of the speed at which the game is played, this ideal situation does not always occur.

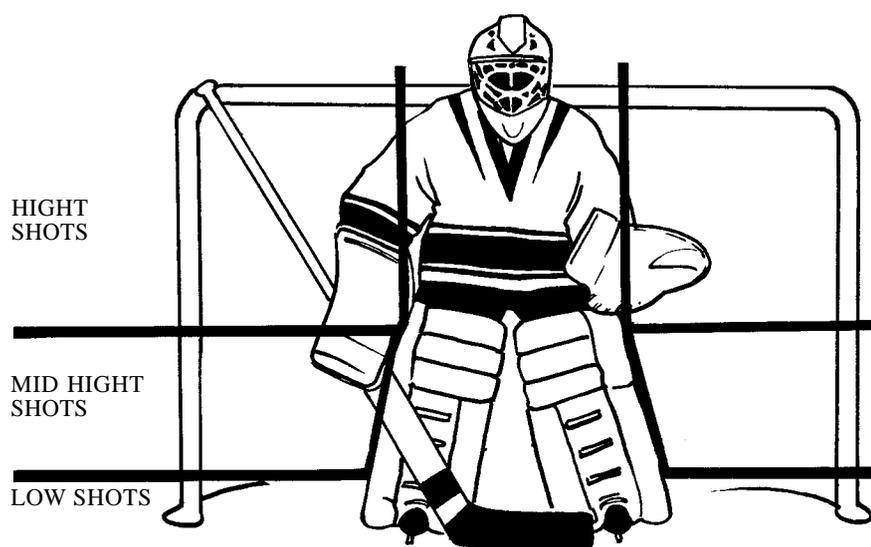


Figure 10: Save Areas

The saves that can be used in each of the three save areas shown in Figure 10 are outlined below:

Low Shots

- stick save
- skate save
- butterfly save
- half butterfly save
- half split save
- double leg jam
- sliding pad save

Mid Height Shots

- standing pad save
- Tretiak block
- stick save
- butterfly save
- half butterfly save
- blocker save
- catching glove save
- sliding pad save
- double leg jam

High Shots

- blocker save
- catching glove save
- body save

15.4.1 Low Shots

- Remember that the stick should be 25 to 30 cm in front of the toes of the skates to absorb the impact of the puck, thereby reducing rebounds.
- When the puck is not shot directly at the goalkeeper, the blade of the stick must be slanted in order that it remain flat on the ice and be placed in the path of the oncoming puck.
- Basic stance is modified very little during a stick save.

Standing Stick Save

- The movement of the stick is initiated by the shoulder.
- The stick is turned at a slight angle so that the puck is deflected into the corner and away from the front of the net.
- Key points:
 - stick flat on the ice during the entire movement,
 - keep your leg in a position behind the stick as security (Figure 11 and 12),
 - body weight changes to the save side leg.



**Figure 11: Standing Stick Save
(Catching Glove Side)**



**Figure 12: Standing Stick Save
(Blocker Side)**

Standing Skate Save

- Rotate the skate in an arc towards the oncoming puck. By rotating in an arc the entire blade (outside edge) remains on the ice.
- When the puck is shot to the catching glove side, the goalkeeper can often use the stick first with the skate arching behind it in a back-up fashion (Figure 13b).
- The supporting leg flexes more than usual to improve balance and extension.
- The puck is directed to the corner (Figure 13a and 13b).



Figure 13a: Standing Skate Save (Blocker Side)



Figure 13b: Standing Skate Save (Catching Glove Side)

Half Butterfly Save

This technique is used to cover one low side of the net. It is similar to the butterfly save except that only one leg is extended while the other acts as a support.

This save is used in situations similar to the half split save, however, pucks cannot be directed as easily to the corner with the half butterfly save, therefore, rebounds can occur (Figure 14a and 14b).



Figure 14a: Half Butterfly Save (Catching Glove Side)



Figure 14b: Half Butterfly Save (Blocker Side)

Butterfly Save

This technique is frequently used to cover both low corners at the same time. It is particularly effective in defending against low screen shots, possible deflections, and dekes, however, it is very difficult to do, physically.

- The feet are spread slightly wider than in the basic stance.
- The knees are on the ice behind the stick and the ankles are flat to the ice with toes extended out towards the sideboards.
- The face of the leg pad is vertical to the ice (in addition to ensuring no portion of the goalkeeper's leg is exposed to the puck, the vertical pad provides more stoppage area).
- The trapper is at waist height over the extended pad. The blocker is at the same height on the other side. The stick blade remains flat on the ice (Figure 15a and 15b).
- Maintain an upright body position with the weight slightly forward.

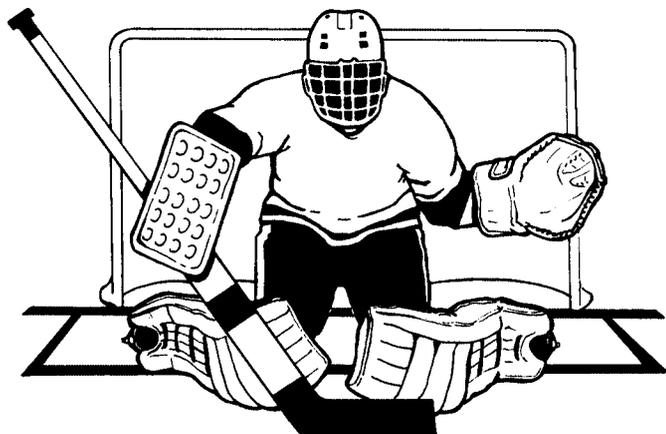


Figure 15a: Butterfly Save (Front View)



Figure 15b: Butterfly Save (Side View)

- Check how effective this style is for each goalkeeper. Excellent flexibility is required. Without sufficient flexibility the legs will extend backwards into the net instead of outwards to cover the low corner. If a goalkeeper cannot physically perform this manoeuvre no advantage will be gained and, therefore, this technique should not be used. Before encouraging use of this style, ensure that flexibility is established through repeated stretching exercises.

Half Split Save

This technique is used when the puck cannot be stopped from the standing position.

- The save leg is extended in an arc so that the skate blade (outside edge) remains on the ice.
- As this leg extends, the goalkeeper drops to the knee of the support leg which allows maximum extension of the save leg. This ensures the leg extends in the direction of the save and not vertically. This low centre of gravity position provides maximum extension.
- The shoulders/upper body are also moved in the direction of the save.
- The catching glove covers above the extended leg while the stick remains on the ice to cover the space between the goalkeeper's legs (Figure 16a).
- The puck is directed to the corner (Figure 16a and 16b).



Figure 16a: Half Split Save (Trapper Side)



Figure 16b: Half Split Save (Blocker Side)

Double Leg Jam

The double leg jam is an effective method of defending against a deke or jamming a shooter who receives a pass close to the net.

This technique is normally initiated while in motion, for example, for a goalkeeper moving from the left to the right.

- With a vigorous push from the left leg (inside edge), the left pad is tucked under the right pad as the slide is initiated.
- The feet are “thrown” toward the right, causing the goalkeeper to actually land on the left hip with both feet toward the right.
- The left leg is extended and the right leg is placed on top of it, both perpendicular to the puck or shooter.
- The blocker is raised slightly above the hip at approximately a 45 degree angle.
- The hip and armpit are as close to the ice as possible.
- The catching glove is extended on the ice to cover the remaining area.



Figure 17a: Double Leg Jam (Stacked Right) – Beginning



Figure 17b: Double Leg Jam (Stacked Right)

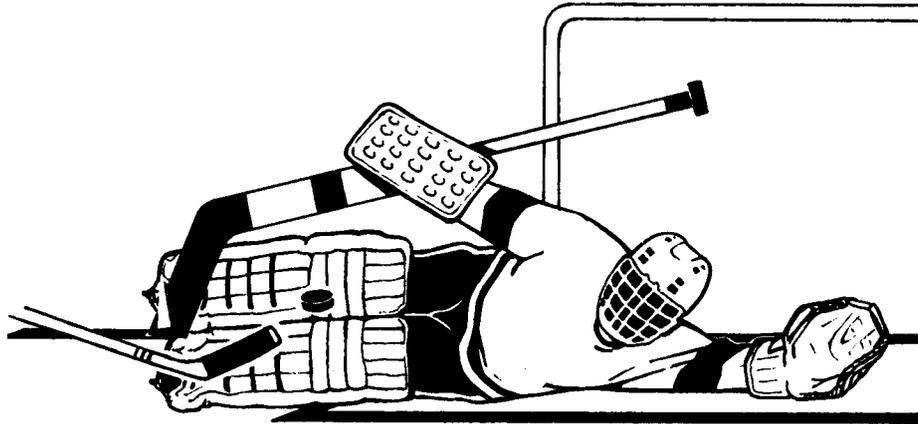


Figure 17c: Double Leg Jam (Stacked Right)

The move from the right to the left is similar with minor adjustments.

- The catching glove and blocking glove positions are reversed.
- The goalie “throws” feet and slides to left (cushion fall with right hand, slide on right side (hip)).
- The stick is extended on the ice, held slightly above the shank, and should be used to poke check the puck carrier whenever possible.

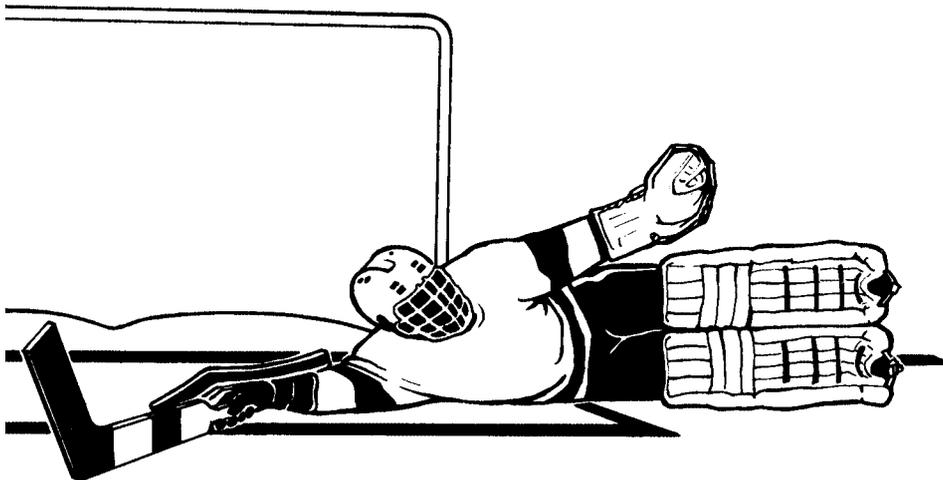


Figure 18: Double Leg Jam (Stacked Left)

When using this technique, it is important to place the pads as close to the puck or stick as possible, thus cutting the angle to the upper part of the net and reducing the puck carrier’s deking options (e.g., “jam” the shooter with pads.)

It is also important to make certain both pads are fully extended and stacked properly one on top of the other.

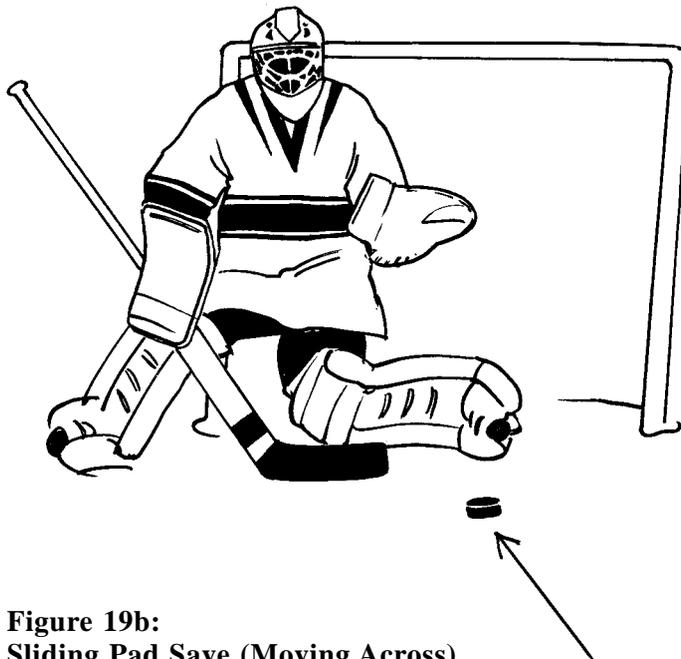
Sliding Pad Save

This save can be used in similar situations to the double leg jam. The difference is that, when using the sliding pad save, the angle and distance from the puck carrier to the shooter is less than in the double leg jam situation. From this sliding pad save, the goalie can get up easily and quickly to defend against any rebounds.



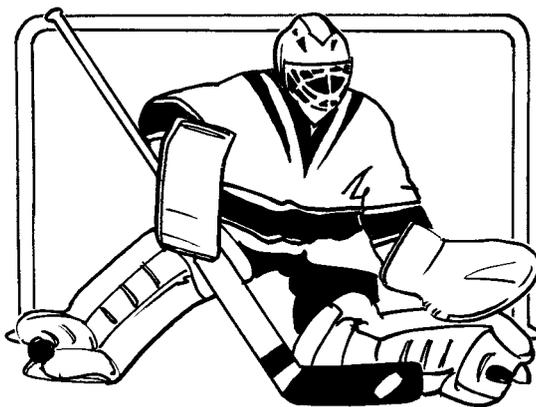
Figure 19a: Sliding Pad Save (Beginning)

- The movement of the goalkeeper begins with the pass.
- Sliding leg must remain square to the puck.
- Strong push from the edge of the skate of the support leg.



**Figure 19b:
Sliding Pad Save (Moving Across)**

- Knee of sliding leg is pushed firmly into the ice.
- The side of the pad must remain on the ice and the front is square to the puck.
- The stick is on the ice between the legs.
- Turn the upper body towards the puck.



**Figure 19c:
Challenging the Shooter**

- The body is square to the puck.
- Move as close as possible to the puck to cut down the shooting angle.
- Stick on the ice between the legs.
- Catching glove is above the pad.
- The arms are compact to the body.



Figure 19d: Returning to Basic Stance

- Quickly bring up the knee of the sliding leg.
- Push with the inside edge of the support leg.
- Move into the basic stance position.
- Move body weight to former sliding leg and be ready to push off of inside edge of this skate.

15.4.2 Mid Height Shots

This area of the net is the most difficult to defend as it requires a combination of saves from all three areas of the net. Following are three save techniques which are particularly effective in defending this mid height area of the net. The choice of save technique depends on each goalie's style and the tactical situation.

Standing Pad Saves

- Remain in the basic stance position.
- Position the pads perpendicular to the oncoming puck.
- Bend the knees forward slightly to direct the puck downward.
- Body weight is evenly distributed on the balls of both feet.
- When closing the open area between the legs, the body weight moves onto one leg and the other leg is pulled in.



Figure 20: Standing Pad Save

Stick Saves

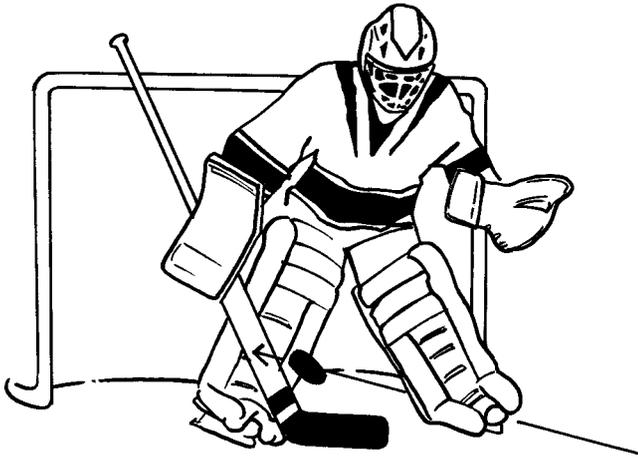


Figure 21a: Stick Save (Beginning)

- The move is initiated from the support leg.
- The stick moves together with the sliding leg.
- Keep the eyes on the puck.
- Keep the paddle of the stick square to the puck.



Figure 21b: Stick Save

- Keep the eyes on the puck.
- Deflect the puck away from the danger area of the net.
- Body weight is on the leg of the save side.

Tretiak Block

This save is the trademark of the famous Russian goalkeeper Vladislav Tretiak. It is similar to the half butterfly save technique with the main difference being that, in the Tretiak Block, the knee of the save leg is on the ice.

- Movement is initiated with the inside edge of the support leg skate.
- The body weight is over the knee which is on the ice.
- The stick is between the knee which is on the ice and the leg which is making the save.
- The upper body moves over top of the leg which is making the save.
- Maintain good body control during the save at all times.
- The catching glove must be on the top of the pad.



Figure 22a: Catching Glove Side Save



Figure 22b: Stick Side Save

- Use the stick, blocker or pad to make the save.
- Deflect the puck away from the danger area in front or the net.

15.4.3 High Shots

Stick Side

The blocker is used to stop high shots. As this glove is a valuable tool to the goalkeeper, it is important that this piece of equipment is not ignored. In fact, the blocker is most often used as a “deflector”.

- Place the blocker in the path of the oncoming puck (Figure 23 a).
- A slight rotation of the right wrist (e.g., slight rotation of hand in clockwise direction) changes the angle of the glove and the puck is deflected into the corner of the ice (Figure 23b).

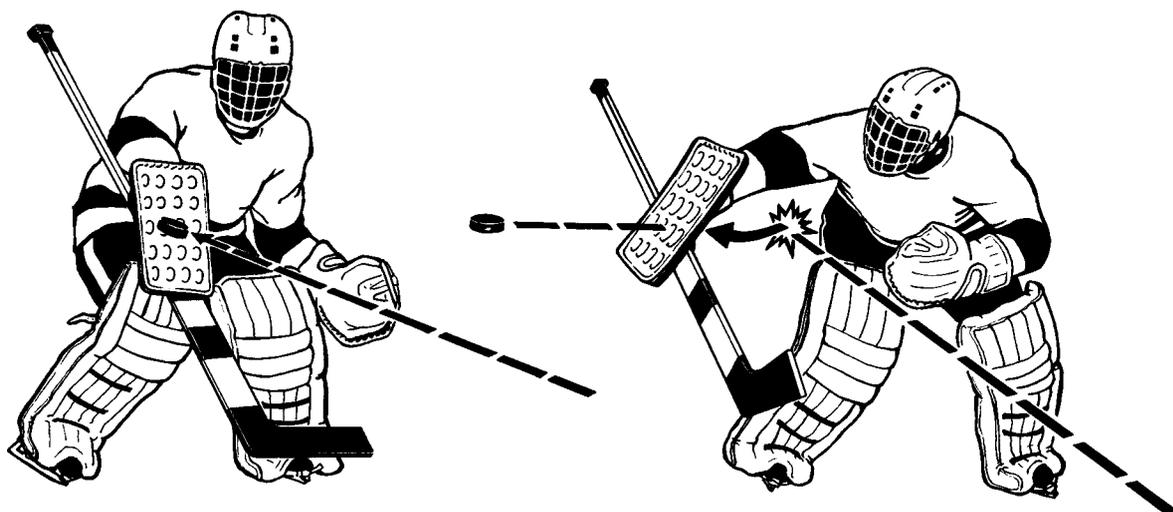


Figure 23a: Stick Side Getting Set for Shot

Figure 23b : Making Blocker Save

To avoid rebounds and inefficiency of movement, do not “punch” out at the oncoming puck. Also, avoid bringing the catching glove across the body, except in situations where a stoppage of play is desired. Such movement causes a lack of balance, inefficient use of the blocker, and decreases effective use of the catching glove.

Catching Glove Side

Catching shots with the catching glove is easier and safer than blocking with the blocker as the glove closes on the puck at the point of impact, thus nullifying rebounds.

- As with the blocker, let the puck come to the glove. Do not grab for the puck.
- Remember, keep the catching glove open at the side, slightly in front of and above the knee.
- Use the catching glove when the puck is on the body midline or catching glove side to avoid rebounds (Figure 24).

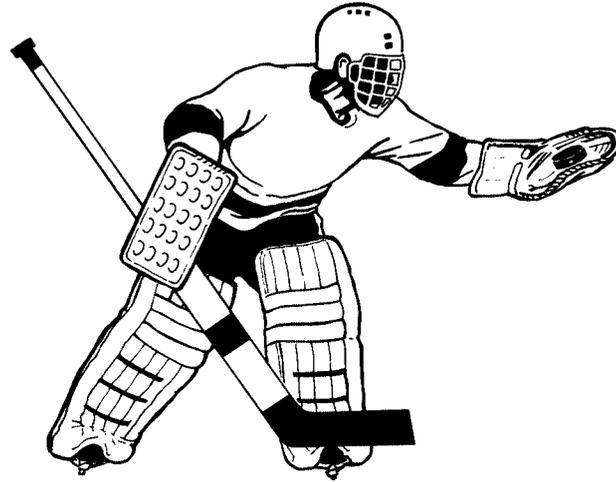


Figure 24: High Shot (Catching Glove Side)

Blocking with the Body

The goalkeeper must have confidence in the protective quality of the equipment and use the body to stop the puck whenever possible.

- Maintain an upright position and, when necessary, move laterally to meet the puck.
- Draw the arms close to the body.
- Bend the body slightly forward on impact and immediately smother the puck with the arms to avoid rebounds (Figure 25a and 25b).

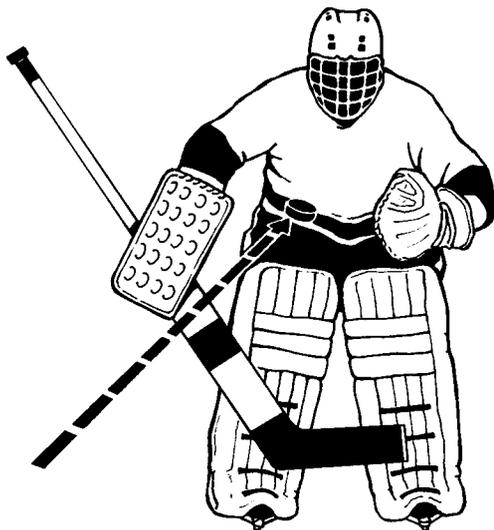


Figure 25a: Body Block

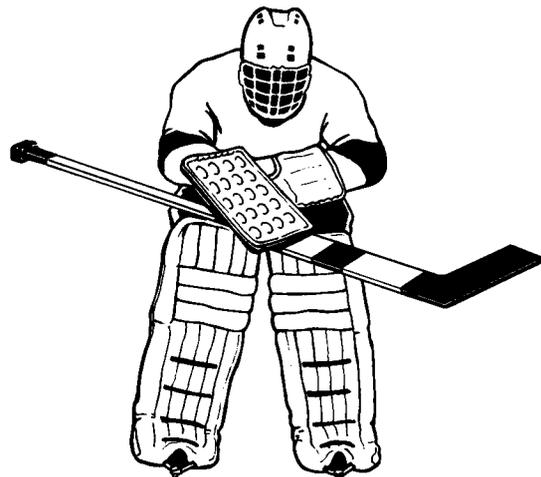


Figure 25b: Body Block (The Smother)

15.5 Stick Selection

Ensuring that your goalkeeper has the proper equipment is an important responsibility. The selection of a proper stick is no exception.



Figure 26: Lie of the Stick

As with all hockey sticks, those for goalkeepers are available in different lies. Perhaps the best method of selection is to observe your goalkeeper using a 14 lie. If the toe of the stick is up, try a lower lie; if the heel is up, try a higher lie (Figure 26).

The height of the shank is also important. If the shank is too high, the goalkeeper will stand upright, and if it is too low, the goalkeeper will bend too far forward.

Remember, select a stick that corresponds with the size and strength of your player. It is better to select a stick that is too small than too big since the smaller stick is much easier for the goalkeeper to control. Never saw off the shaft, it destroys stick balance. Buy the proper size.

The “right handed” goalkeeper holds his stick with the right hand and wears the catching glove on the left hand. The “left handed” goalkeeper holds his stick with the left hand and wears the catching glove on the right hand.

15.6 Stick Skills and Puck Handling

Stick skills and puck handling are areas often ignored in goalkeeping. It is important that a goalkeeper be active and confident in handling the puck around the net. The goalkeeper can be a valuable player by initiating breakouts or clearing the puck from the zone.

Backhand

When possible, hold the stick with one hand when handling the puck (e.g., clearing the puck into a corner or pushing a short pass to a teammate). It is more natural to maintain the one hand grip and it provides the least deviation from the ready position.

- Place the shaft of the stick in the underarm of the stick arm.
- Grip shaft firmly with right arm.
- During the puck handling action, use a shift of body weight from the nearest leg to the stick to the other leg to facilitate the movement.

Forehand

To execute a forehand puck handling skill, the stick is usually held with both hands.

- The blocker glove hand secures the upper end of the shaft.
- The catching glove hand is placed on the lower part of the shaft and, perhaps, partially on the shank.
- Again, a shift of body weight similar to that used during the backhand pass will facilitate puck handling.

Reversing hands on the shaft of the stick to execute these same skills is not recommended because of the delay this action creates.

Occasionally, a one hand forehand action takes place in which the puck is pushed to a teammate or cleared from in front of the net. In this instance, the shaft of the stick can be pressed against the stick forearm for support.

Stopping the Puck Behind the Net

For a shot around the boards on the ice, the following steps should be followed:

- At the moment of the shot, the goalkeeper makes a strong leg push to move around the net to the same side from which the puck is travelling (Figure 27).
- The stick is held with one hand.
- The end of the blade, whether on the forehand or backhand, is placed firmly against the boards at an angle to trap the puck (Figures 28 and 29).
- Once the puck is stopped, the stick can be handled with two hands if necessary (Figure 30).
- Pull the puck out from the dasher to facilitate easy pick up by a teammate.

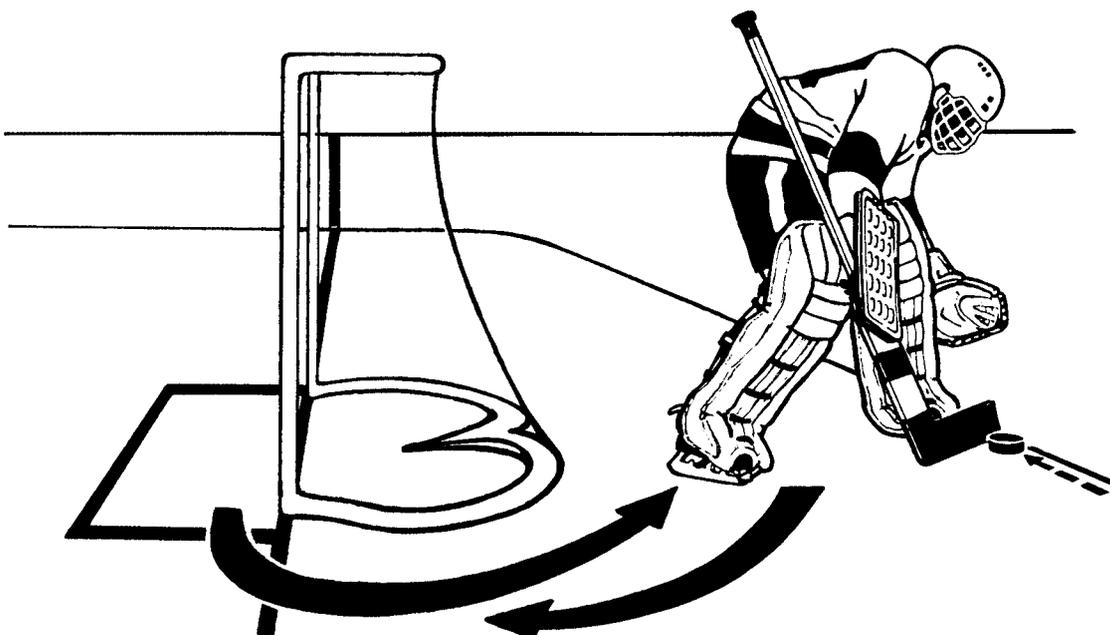


Figure 27: Moving Behind the Net



Figure 28: Stopping Puck Along Boards (Forehand)

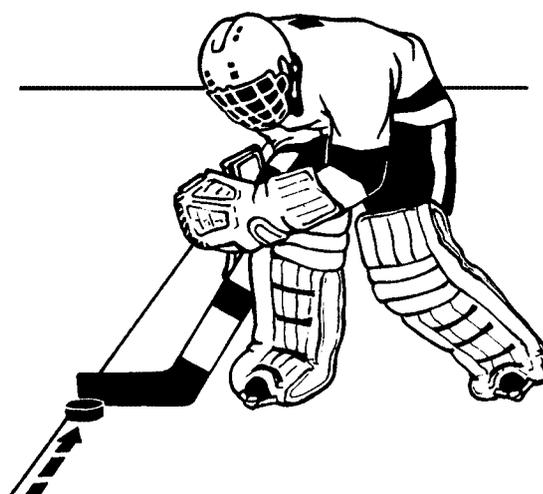


Figure 29: Stopping Puck Along Boards (Backhand)



Figure 30: Handling the Puck With Two Hands

For a shot off the ice, the following steps should be followed:

- At the moment of the shot, the goalkeeper makes a strong push to move around the net to the same side from which the puck is travelling.
- The body and stick are placed against the boards, facing the oncoming puck.
- The puck is stopped with the body or stick, then handled with either the one or two hand technique.

Whenever leaving the net to stop the puck behind the net, the goalkeeper should generally try to return as quickly as possible in the direction which faces the play. This will enable the goalkeeper to analyze the ensuing play and facilitates communication with teammates.

An exception to this would be a situation where the goalkeeper is unable to stop the puck until it has passed beyond the mid-point of the net. To return as quickly as possible, it may be necessary to continue around the net.

Also, if it appears it will be difficult to return to the front of the net in the direction from which the goalkeeper came because of oncoming traffic, or to avoid a teammate, the goalkeeper may continue to circle the net.

At all times, try to stop the puck when it is directly behind the net so that any misplayed pucks will not careen dangerously in front of the net.

After stopping the puck, the goalkeeper should place it away from the boards and set it in a convenient position for a teammate.

Poke Checking

This technique is an invaluable goalkeeping tool. It can be used in various situations around the net to prevent goal scoring opportunities. The basics of the poke check are:

- maintain the basic stance,
- when in poke checking range, the blade of the stick is thrust out quickly with the hand sliding towards the butt end of the shaft,
- action is with arm only and should not cause goalkeeper to lose balance,
- do not slide the hand up the shaft as the shooter approaches as this will telegraph the move,
- concentrate on the puck and its expected pathway.

It is important that the goalkeeper does not lean too far forward, thereby, losing balance. Various poke checking moves are illustrated in Figures 31, 32 and 33. Note that the blade is rotated to ensure maximum extension.

- It is important to be aware of the advantage to a player approaching from the off-wing. This is a very difficult poke checking situation as the puck carrier can guard the puck with the body.

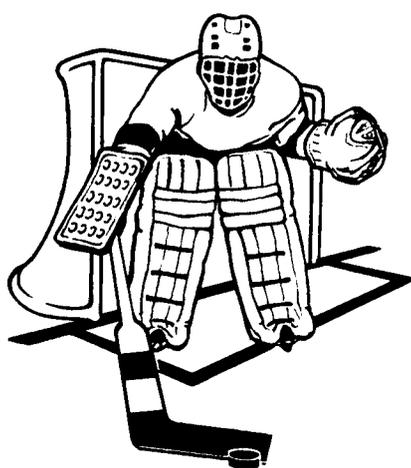


Figure 31: Poke Check (Right Side)

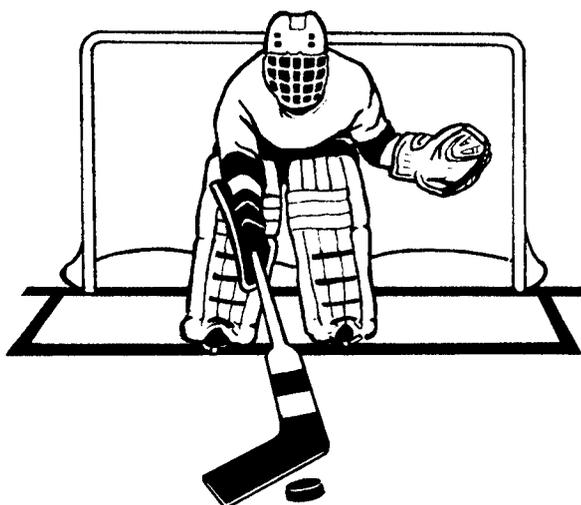


Figure 32: Poke Check (Front)

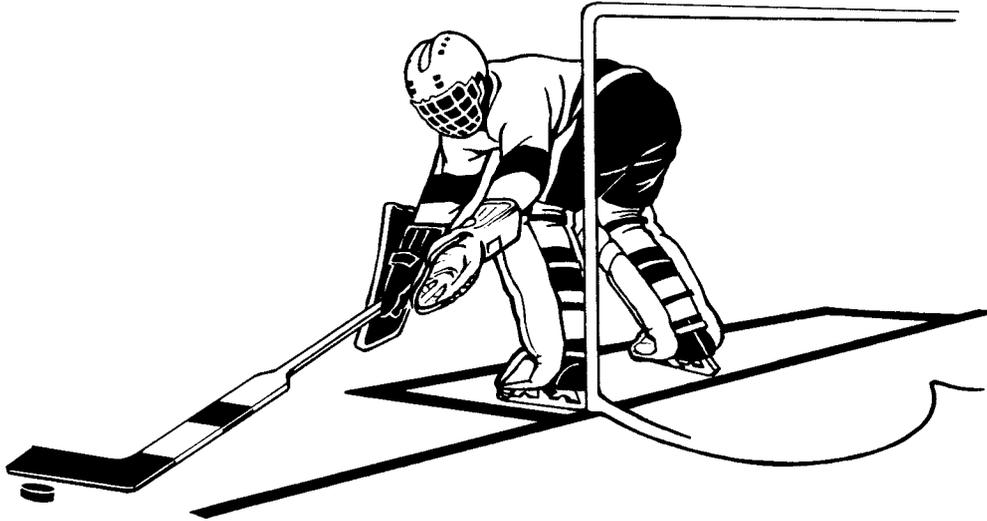


Figure 33: Poke Check (Left Side)

Clearing the Puck from the Goal Area

When the puck finds its way to the goalkeeper in the crease area, it is the goalkeeper's responsibility to handle the puck in response to the situation.

The goalkeeper may:

- clear the puck to the corner by a forehand or backhand shot,
- shoot the puck out of the defensive zone with a two handed clear,
- freeze the puck if the opponents pressure is heavy,
- pass the puck to a teammate, thus initiating a rush,
- set the puck for a teammate.

15.7 Age Categories in Developing Skills of the Goalkeeper

Age Categories

As outlined in Section 1.3, IIHF Classifications of Competition, the IIHF has identified five classifications of competition. Youth hockey is for players up to 16 years of age and junior hockey is for players up to 20 years of age, however, within these age groups each National Association further divides these classifications into categories (teams) to fit the requirements and demands within their country.

The following examples of age category breakdown may be used in developing your goalkeepers.

Category 1 = up to 11 years

Category 2 = 12-13 years

Category 3 = 14-15 years

Category 4 = 16-17 years

Category 5 = 17-20 years

Each category is outlined below listing the skills, techniques and tactics that should be practiced during the season in order to develop young goalkeepers.:

Category 1

- basic stance
- basic goalkeeping positioning
- active movement - principles of goalkeeper-specific skating
- learn basic techniques of goalkeeping and player skating
- principles of catching techniques
- proper execution of the two-pad slide and leg splits

Category 2

- perfecting the basic stance
- quick return to the basic stance
- technique of moving around the net while maintaining your basic stance
- technique of skating outside of the net
- perfecting techniques and tactics of catching
- catching the puck while executing the two-pad slide and leg splits
- blocking shots with the body
- blocking shots with the arms
- becoming familiar with the principles of cutting down the shooting angle
- basic use of the stick
- technique of challenging the shooter

Category 3

- perfecting the techniques outlined in categories 1 and 2
- blocked view (screen)
- play behind the goal
- refining the use of the stick
- communication with teammates

- activity in the game and joining the attack
- blocking shots by performing a butterfly and leg splits
- blocking shots in complex game situations (timing and precision of action)
- coordination of movement during personal physiological growth

Category 4

- perfecting the techniques outlined in categories 1, 2 and 3
- controlling rebounds and deflections
- blocked view (screens), cutting down the shooting angle
- passing the puck from the area behind the goal
- perfecting the use of the stick, faking a play, and forehand and backhand passes
- integrating the goalkeeper into the team tactics and system
- perfecting the blocking of shots by all methods and reducing puck deflection
- being pro-active in one-on-one situations
- exploiting the goalkeeper's positive attributes
- quick return to the basic stance without the use of the hands

Category 5

- perfecting all of the activities in categories 1, 2, 3 and 4
- creating an optimal personal stance
- adapting the style of catching and developing individual priorities to fit the goalkeeper's personal style
- have input into the development of practice plans
- become involved in team play (e.g., initiating the breakout)
- development of the ability to "read and react" (anticipation)
- speeding up movement and thought processes
- perfecting goalkeeper-specific skating

15.8 Off-Ice Balance and Coordination Drills for Young Goalkeepers

Perception and Concentration Exercises

- Throw and catch a tennis ball against a wall. Practice with one ball, and then with two.
- As an alternative to the above exercise, throw and catch the ball(s) while kneeling, crouching and turning.
- The trainer throws a ball at the wall in front of the goalkeeper and the goalkeeper reacts and catches the ball.
- A pair standing across from each other throw tennis balls at the bottom corner. They can change the distance from one another, perform crouches, turns, rolls, splits.
- Juggle three balls.
- Juggle two balls in one hand and then both hands. Perform the exercise while standing on a filled ball.
- The goalkeeper's eyes follow the trainer. Upon previously agreed signals, the goalkeeper performs various tasks: spread arms - leg split; raise arms - roll; left arm stretch - crouch; crouch - lie down on back; etc.
- Dribble a ball to the wall, bounce the ball on the ground so that it rebounds off of the wall, then spin and catch it with your back to the wall.

- Throw a ball above your and, while it is in the air, perform a roll, somersault, sit, lie down, leg split, etc., and then catch the ball.
- Throw a ball, turn, and catch it behind your back.
- Pass a ball quickly around the hips, head or between the legs.
- Roll forward and catch a ball thrown by the trainer.
- Hold a stick vertical to the ground at shoulder height and release it; then turn 360 degrees and try to catch the stick before it hits the ground.
- Jump over a stick held in both hands at knee level and then jump back again.
- Balance the knob-end of a stick on your nose, on your palm, and on the top of your head.
- Let go of the stick vertically behind oneself and catch it while turning.
- Let a stick roll down along your outstretched arms and catch it before it hits the ground.
- One player swings a stick under the feet of the other who jumps to avoid touching the stick.
- Basic goalkeeper stance: look directly ahead and then look as far right, left, up and down as possible.
- Basic goalkeeper stance: roll eyes left and then right (stretch your eyes to reach the largest field of vision possible).
- Find points in a field that are at varying distances from each other, both in depth as well as width. Slowly transfer attention from one object to another in various combinations, and in different orders. For each object wait until the vision has become completely focused before focusing on the next object.

Dexterity Exercises

- Forward roll from a walking position and then from a running position.
- Forward dive over a hurdle.
- Backward roll.
- Backward roll to a hand stand position.
- Forward roll from a hand stand position.
- Stand on elbows.
- Sideways roll (three rolls per set).
- Forward roll (three rolls per set).
- Hand stand with knees leaning on elbows and then pushing up to complete hand stand.
- Forward roll over a kneeling teammate.
- Backward roll over a kneeling teammate.
- From a hand stand position, kick your legs backwards and land in a bridge position.
- From lying on your back, spring your body upright into a basic stance with the use of your hands.
- Juggle three balls while kicking your legs (Cossack dance), and then add rolls, splits, etc.
- Lean back on your hands, then push up and clap hands behind back.
- Lean back on your hands, then push up and spin your body to end up leaning forward on your hands.

SUMMARY

- To be effective, goalkeepers must master skills in the following areas:
 - Basic stance,
 - Skating,
 - Playing the angles,
 - Stopping low, mid height and high shots,
 - Stick and puck handling.
- Ensure that your goalkeepers select sticks appropriate for their size and strength.
- Because good goalkeeping is critical to the success of your team, be sure to spend time developing the necessary skills in your goalkeepers.
- Develop the necessary balance and coordination skills in your young players so that they can enjoy playing goal.

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Jaromir Sindel of the Czech Ice Hockey Association provided input into this section.