

# S&DMHA

## Player Development Program

### Book Four - Goaltending

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# S&DMHA Development Program

## Goaltending

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Good goaltending is essential to the success of your team. For individuals to be effective goaltenders, they must develop skills in a number of areas. The players 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. The players also need to be able to effectively handle the stick and the puck.

### Basic Stance

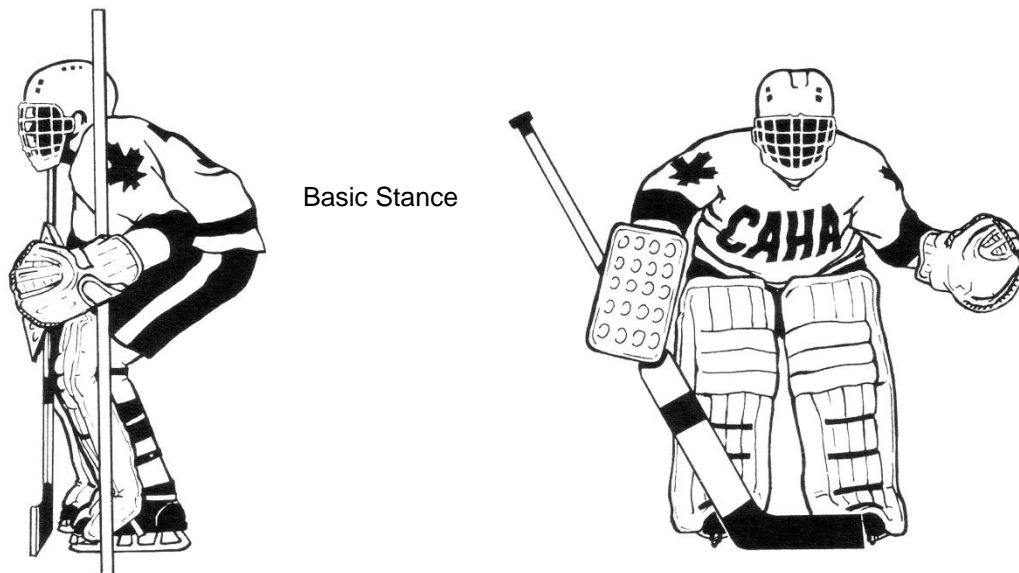
The basic stance of a goaltender must allow for optimal balance, mobility, comfort, and speed of movement. Due to the importance of the basic stance to goaltending, emphasis should be placed on each of the elements of this skill.

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

- 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 1 a).
- 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 goaltender to see both by means of peripheral vision.
- The goaltender'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

### Skating Skills

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



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### **Lateral (Side to Side) Movement**

There are two basic methods a goaltender 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 goaltender is able to maintain the basic stance, be square with and on the centre line of the puck.

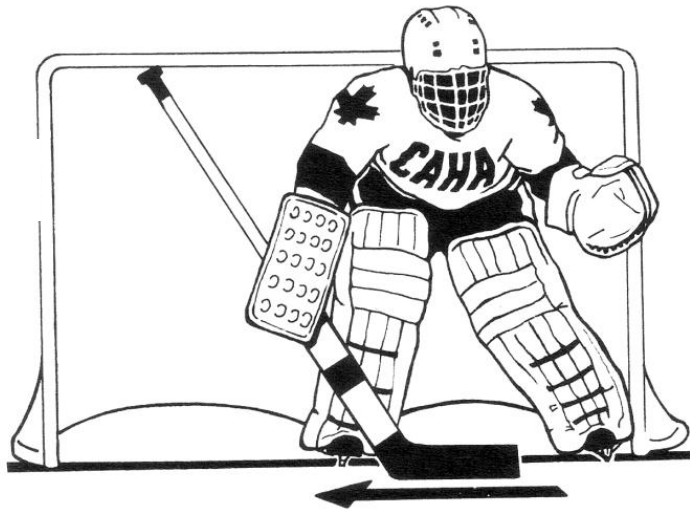
The T-push, despite having some disadvantages, is often used by young goaltenders because it is a relatively easy method of moving from side to side. Also, advanced goaltenders may employ a T-push technique while they react to the movement of the puck or play in situations where no shot is imminent.

### ***The Shuffle***

This technique is used when following the play as it moves laterally across the ice surface. The goaltender moving from left to right using the shuffle is illustrated. 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, goaltenders should use short lateral shuffles of approximately 25-30 cm in length.
- In some situations, for example, the puck moving quickly from one corner to the other behind the net, the goaltender may be required to shuffle from post to post in one long move.

***The Shuffle***



### ***T-Push***

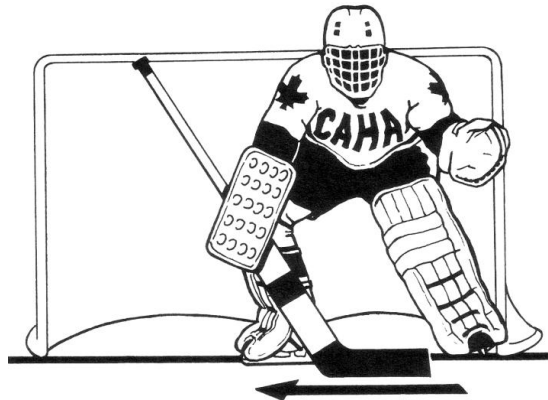
The T-push is a long and fast lateral movement. It is generally used when moving from one post across the crease to the other post when there is no chance of a shot or when speed of movement is the main priority. A left to right example of a T-push is illustrated in Figure 3.

- 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).

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*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 goaltenders have a preferred pushing foot, however, goaltenders 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 goaltender should scull with the skate furthest from the puck and glide on the short side skate. This technique ensures the goaltender continues to protect the short side which is the most attractive area of the net for a shooter approaching from an angle. Goaltenders 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 (i.e. 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 the goaltenders to remain on their feet, occasionally situations arise which force them down onto the ice. It is, therefore, essential for goaltenders to learn the most effective method of returning to their feet.

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First the goaltenders must, whenever possible, avoid ending up on their back or in a sitting position. These predicaments force the goaltender to make several movements and use precious time in re-assuming 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 goaltender falls on one or both knees. Even in this position, the goaltender must maintain a basic stance position with the upper body. To return to the standing position a goaltender 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 goaltender skating skills are initiated by the inside edge of the skate blade. In the proper ready position, the goaltender's weight is on the inside portion of the feet and, thus, the forward position of the inside edge is used when the goaltender must thrust off in any direction. To be mobile, it is essential one edge remains on the ice.

### Positioning

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

Goaltenders 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.

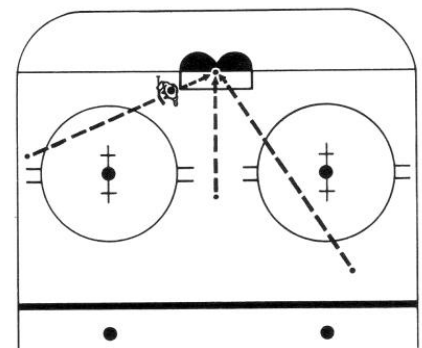
When learning proper positioning, the goaltender must understand the following theories:

- 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.

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



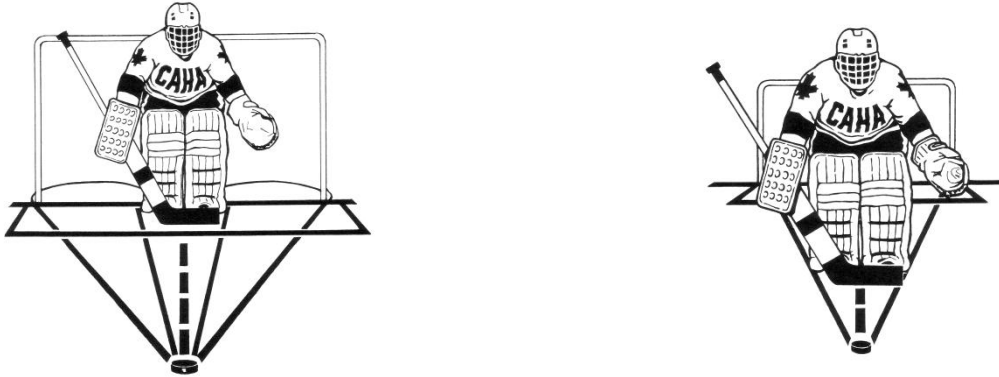
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### *Horizontal Angle Theory*

When the puck is directly in front of the net, the shooting angle is at its maximum. The available shooting spaces, when the goaltender is back in the goal crease, are illustrated in Figure 5(a). These spaces decrease as the goaltender telescopes towards the puck (Figure 5 b).

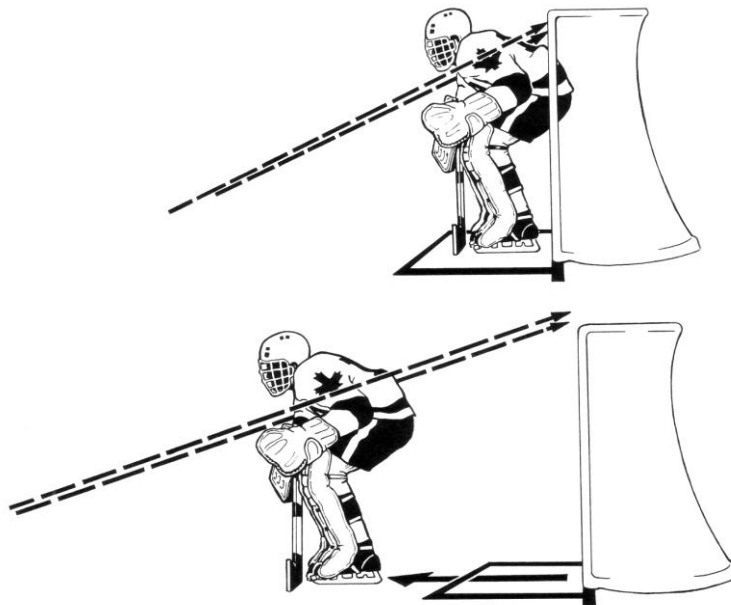


It would appear that the farther out of the net the goaltender comes, the better is the goaltender's position. However, this is not always the case. A goaltender should not come out so far that a quick return to the net cannot occur should the play move closer or should the point of attack be changed.

The distance a goaltender 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 goaltender'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.



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### ***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, (i.e. outside the face-off dots) the short side technique is very effective.

- The goaltender covers the short side (the side closest to the puck carrier).
- This forces the puck carrier to shoot across the goaltender'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 goaltender is required to move in only one direction. The decision making process is simplified.



### **Stopping Skills**

If goaltenders 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.

To examine stopping skills, they will be identified according to the two basic categories of shots: low and high.

#### ***Low Shots***

Remember that the stick should be 25 - 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 goaltender, 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.

Two basic skate saves are the standing skate save and the half split.

#### ***Standing Skate Save***

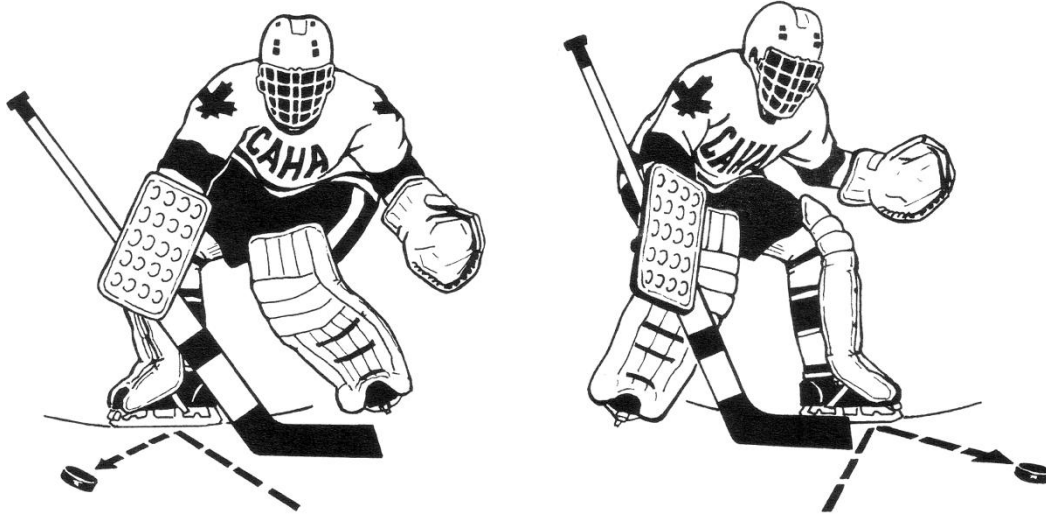
- Rotate the skate in an arc towards the oncoming puck. By rotating in an arc the entire blade (outside edge) remains on the ice.
- When the puck is shot to the catching glove side, the goaltender can often use the stick first with the skate arching behind it in a back-up fashion.

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- The supporting leg flexes more than usual to improve balance and extension.
- The puck is directed to the corner



### ***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 goaltender 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 goaltender's legs.
- The puck is directed to the corner



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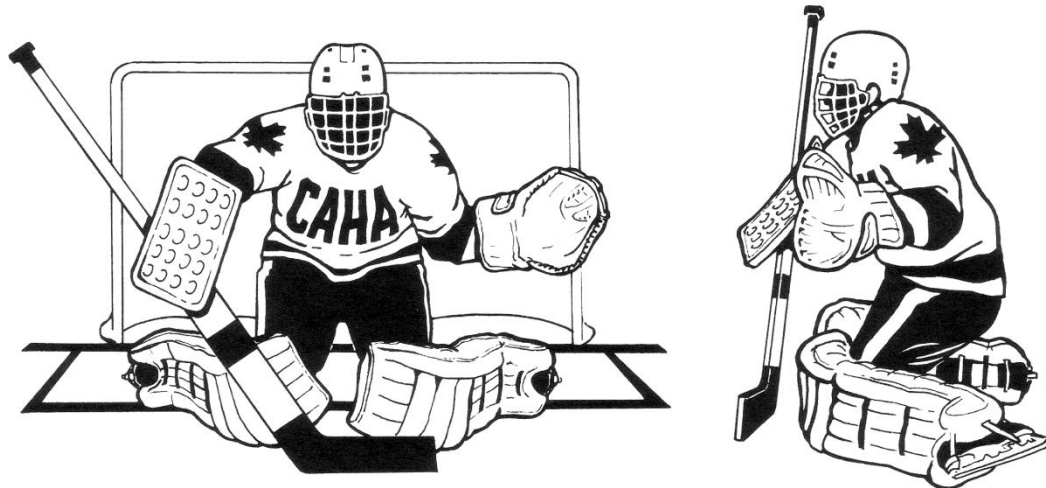
### ***Standing Pad Save***

- Remain in a basic stance position.
- Position the pads perpendicular to the oncoming puck.
- Bend the knees forward slightly to direct the puck downward.

### ***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 goaltender'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.
- Maintain an upright body position with the weight slightly forward.



- Check how effective this style is for each goaltender. 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 goaltender 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.

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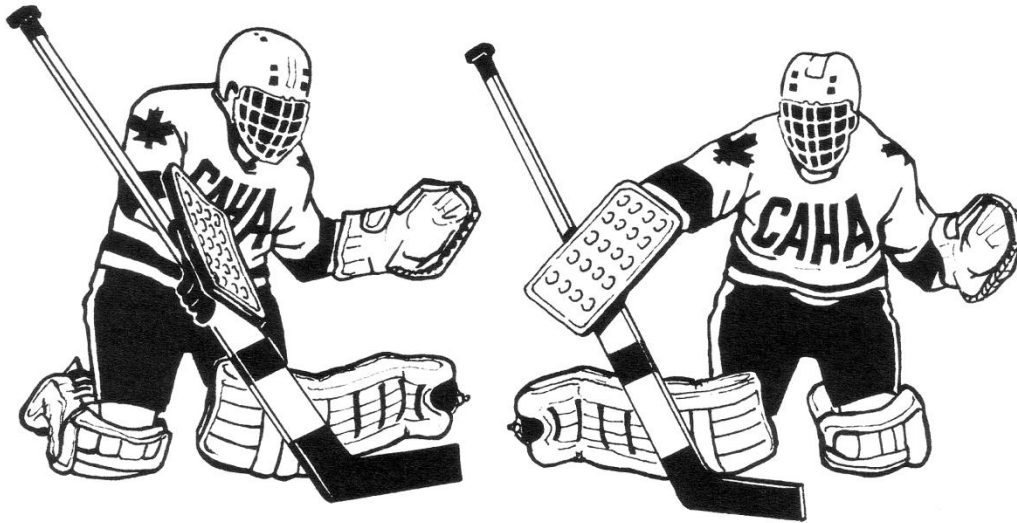
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### *Half Butterfly Save*

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.

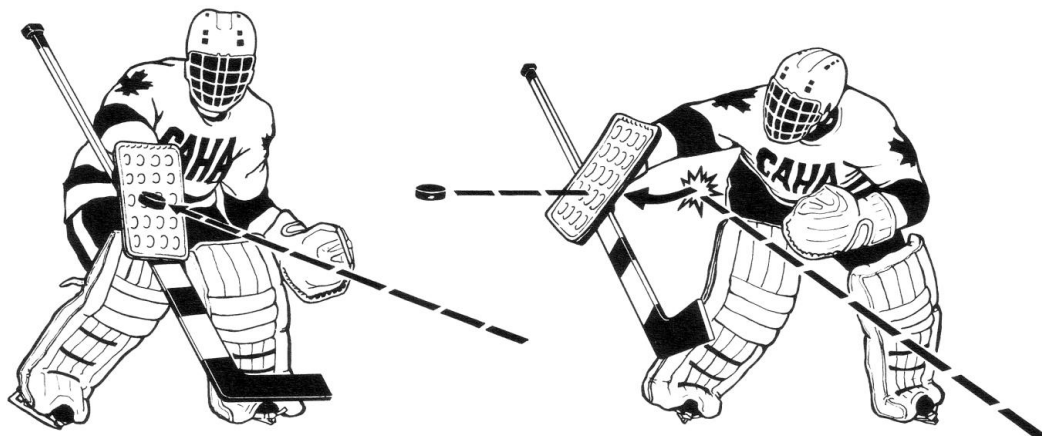


### **High Shots**

#### *Stick Side*

The blocker is used to stop high shots. As this glove is a valuable tool to the goaltender it is important 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.
- A slight rotation of the right wrist (i.e. slight rotation of hand in clockwise direction) changes the angle of the glove and the puck is deflected into the corner of the ice.



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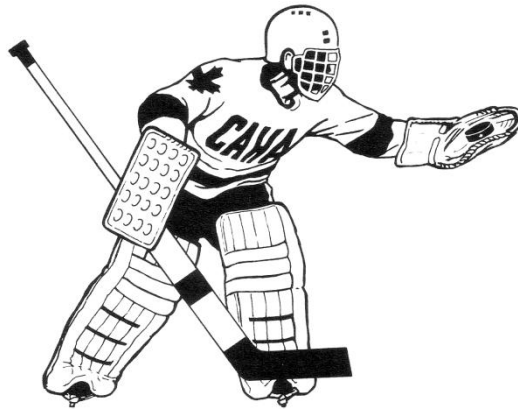
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To avoid rebounds and inefficiency of movement do not "punch" out at the oncoming puck. Also, avoid bringing the catching glove across the body except in situations where a stoppage of play is desired. Such movement causes a lack of balance, inefficient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



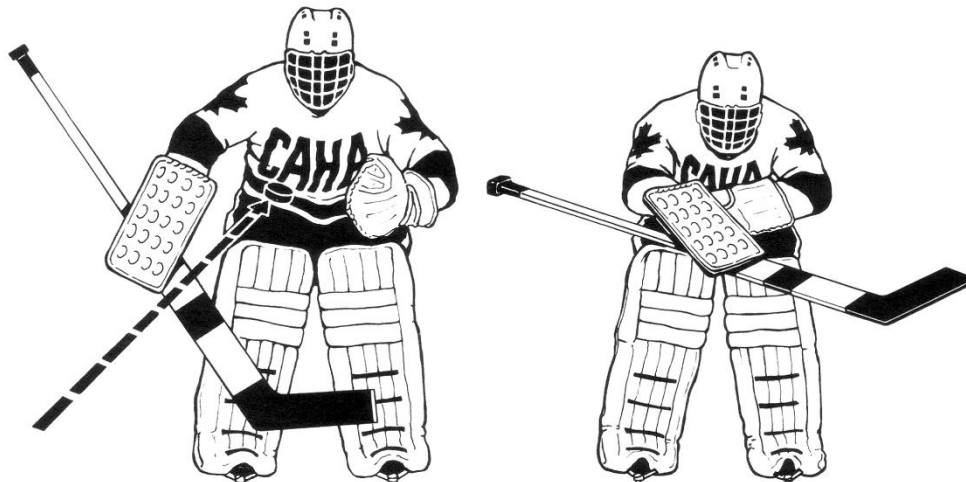
### ***Blocking with the body***

The goaltender 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.



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### ***Double Leg Jam***

The standing pad save, which was covered earlier in the module, is used in certain situations. Other situations require a different use of the pads.

The double legjam 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 goaltender 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 goaltender 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° 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.



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

- The catching glove and blocking glove positions are reversed.
- The goaltender "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.



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. (i.e. "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.

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### Stick Selection

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



As with all hockey sticks, those for goaltenders are available in different lies. Perhaps the best method of selection is to observe your goaltender using a lie 13. If the toe of the stick is up, try a lower lie; if the heel is up, try a higher lie.

The height of the shank is also important. If the shank is too high, the goaltender will stand upright and if it is too low, the goaltender 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 goaltender to control. Never saw off the shaft, it destroys stick balance. Buy the proper size.

### Stick Skills and Puck Handling

Stick skills and puck handling are areas often ignored in goaltending. It is important that a goaltender be active and confident in handling the puck around the net. The goaltender 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.

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### ***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.

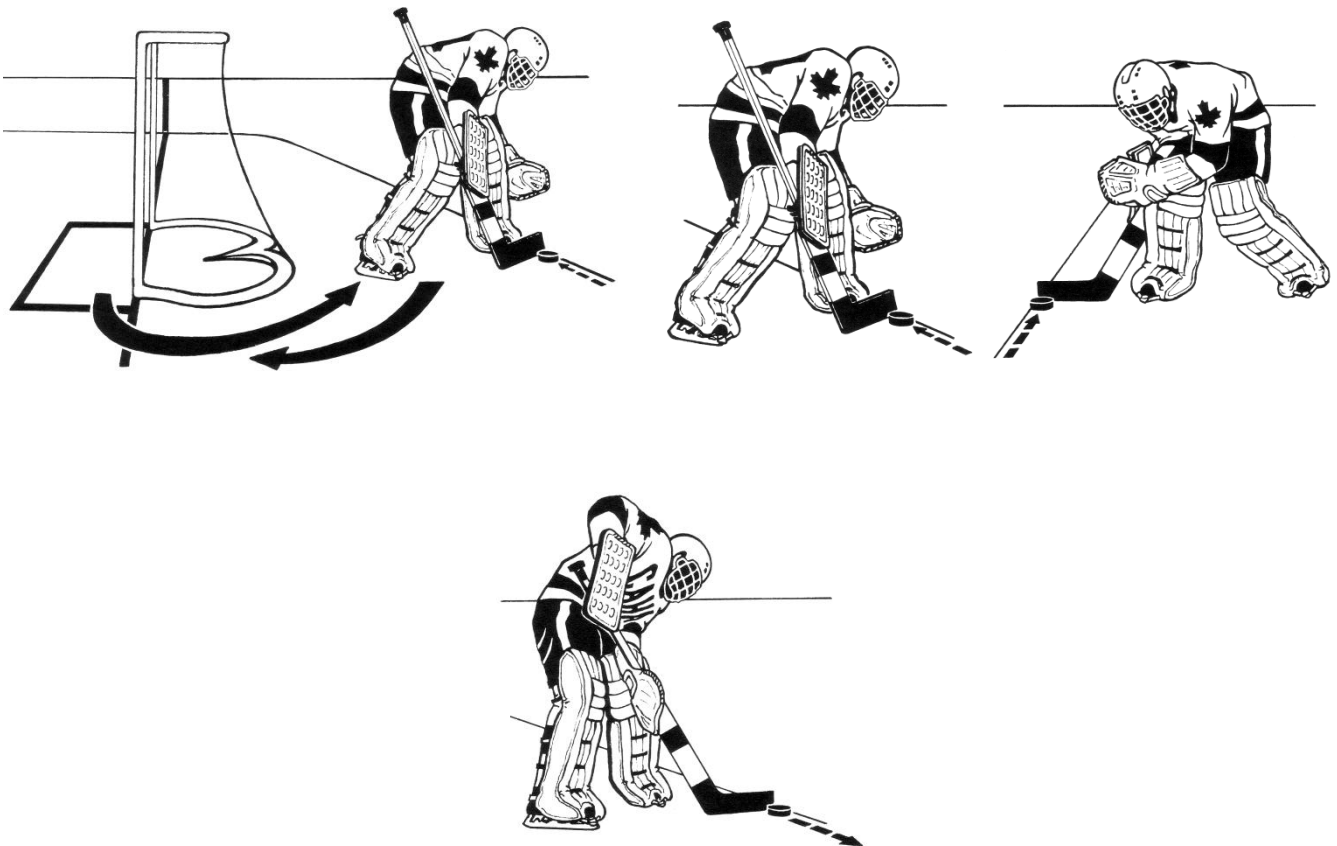
Reversing hands on the shaft of the stick to execute these same skills is not recommended because of the delay this action creates.

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 goaltender makes a strong leg push to move around the net to the same side from which the puck is travelling.
- 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.
- Once the puck is stopped, the stick can be handled with two hands if necessary
- Puck pulled out from the dasher to facilitate easy pick up by teammate.



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

- At the moment of the shot, the goaltender 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, and then handled with either the one or two hand technique.

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

An exception to this would be a situation where the goaltender 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.

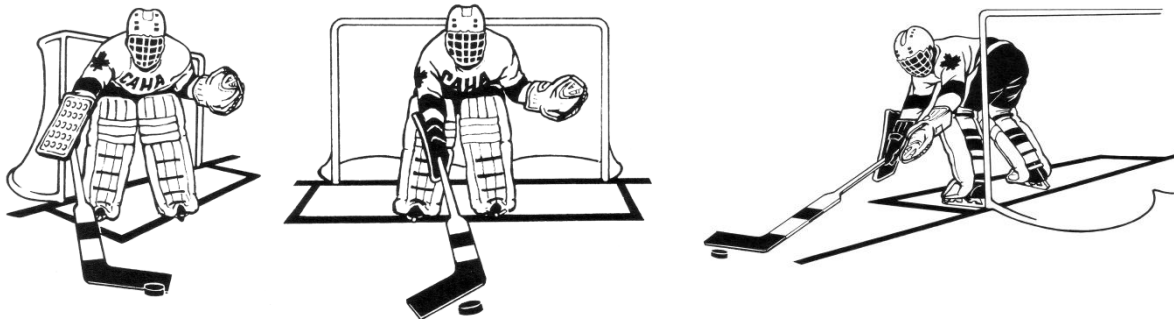
Also, if it appears it will be difficult to return to the front of the net in the direction from which the goaltender came because of oncoming traffic, or to avoid a teammate, the goaltender may continue to circle the net.

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

### **Poke Checking**

This technique is an invaluable goaltending 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 pokechecking 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 goaltender 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 goaltender does not lean too far forward, thereby, losing balance. Various pokechecking moves are illustrated. 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 offwing. This is a very difficult pokechecking situation as the puck carrier can guard the puck with the body.



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### **Clearing the Puck from the Goal Area**

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

### **SUMMARY**

To be effective, goaltenders must master skills in the following areas:

- Basic Stance
- Skating
- Playing the Angles
- Stopping low and high shots
- Stick and puck handling.

Ensure that your goaltenders select sticks appropriate for their size and strength.

Because good goaltending is critical to the success of your team, be sure to spend time developing the necessary skills in your goaltenders.