

Swedish Ice Hockey Association

Uffe's Development Tips ---26

Goalie's Athleticism

Hello!

When the modern playing goalies are described or when their play is commented on more and more often the phrases such as athletic and athleticism are mentioned. What does one really mean with these expressions and why do you hear them more and more. In order to sort this out, and to be able to give some tips on physical training for goalies I have again made use of Thomas Magnusson who is the person responsible for goalie development in the Swedish Ice Hockey Association.

PHOTO: Thomas Magnusson

The elements in the goalie's game/play which changed the most in the last decade are the position game, movement technique down on the ice and also the emphasis on the blocking play. The latter is something which was primarily made possible by the great improvements which were established on the equipment side, then the goalies themselves became more involved in the design of various parts of the material, both concerning the protection and the function. A development which led so much to the emphasis on the covering play that feeling and instinct were almost considered to be on the way to vanishing from the goalie's play/game.

In recent years however the understanding increased for the need for more combined play, which except for gathered and controlled saves with balance when it is possible also must contain fast movements and athletic and explosive saves when it is necessary to stop pucks in the outer/extreme positions.

Anyone who wants to know and learn more may find more tips and drills in our very competent educational material Road to Elite 1-4, The Drill Bank and Hockey's ABCs binder (goaltender part) as well as the Goalie's binder—talk with your club leaders about this material!

A lot of the materials both in print and video form are also available free at this website:

www.hockeyakademin.se

Good luck!

Uffe Lundberg

Goalie's Athleticism

Photo: Marcus Svensson while movement in his athletic deep sitting position, prepared to change direction, blocking or reacting and making the save with active hands.

A successful modern goalie's game is based on a foundation with a compact play and active variations to, from and between various athletic positions, while at the same time as fast and powerful movements should take place in order to find the best possible starting position in order to make the save. In order to achieve the maximum effect of a blocking goalie's play with large margins, it must also be combined with an aggressive action game based on explosiveness, feeling and instinct and a willingness to finish the play with each situation. A modern goalie's game requires a functional constitution (physical status) suited to the task and puts/places high demands on all the physical qualities with the goalie.

*** Coordination**

Forms an important cornerstone in today's goalie's play which contains so many complex techniques in the form of postures/positions, movements, and saves. The goalie should be able to orientate himself in the space, move with balance, with timing and precision in all directions, able to perceive the game situation, locate and follow the puck with his eyes, react instantly and make the well-coordinated save with great accuracy/precision regarding speed and power contribution and also be able to adjust his actions when the unexpected happens such as a deflection.

Training:

General coordination training in the form of gymnastics, acrobatics, juggling.

Special coordination similar to the sport (hockey) technique as possible. Movements in all directions and changes among the varied goalie positions. Catch and deflect for example tennis balls. Take everything in with the eyes.

*** Speed**

Consistently important quality in both movements, changes of positions and also saves. Movement speed in different positions in the form of the thrust and the controlled stop followed by the direction change and new thrust. Action speed in the form of saves with among other things gloves, leg pads and stick, but also isolated separate movements with maximum thrust.

Training:

General speed in the form of racquet sports such as squash, badminton and table tennis.

Goalie specific speed in the form of movements and saves in the goalie's stance/posture. Short maximum work periods – long rest/breaks – warmed up, but not tired – early in the practice.

*** Strength**

The quality that constitutes a prerequisite for all movements the goalie will make in the goal. Stability in the trunk to cope with all athletic positions, controlled stops, but also in order that all movements of the arms and legs start from the trunk. Stability in the muscles around the joints prevents injuries (especially the hip, knee, ankle and shoulder joints). Explosive power/strength in the muscles which rotate and bend the trunk sideways and in the muscle groups that will generate lightning fast movements and saves with all parts of the body.

Training:

In order to obtain strength/power in the goalie's specific movements strength training should focus more on the movement than on the individual muscle, ie., functional strength. Consider which muscle groups are important for the goalie and how these muscles should work. Nevertheless it is of the greatest importance to go from the basics to the general to the special when you set up the strength training, so that the body is well prepared and receptive when a more sport specific strength training should come in.

1. Basic strength with balanced (all round) muscle development, increased strength, better strength balance among different muscles and emphasis on correct technical execution of the strength exercises.
2. General strength with a balanced (comprehensive) strength development but special concentration on the goalie's play.
3. Sport specific strength more and more adjusted/adapted to the goalie's play demands after which the body is sufficiently prepared for this.

* **Mobility**

The effect of technique, as well as of each of the other physical qualities can be increased if the joint mobility is improved. With mobility training elasticity and the length of the muscles, connective tissue membranes and tendons are developed. The goalie's ability to work effectively in the deep positions and movements that are required and the opportunity to make saves in the extreme outer positions are directly affected by the range of motion of the joints.

Training:

Mobility should be a part of all warming-up and cooling down in order to prevent injuries and speed up recovery, but should also be carried out as a special goalie's mobility in order to expand mobility and improve technique and range of motion. A combination of active mobility in the form of dynamic stretches, traditional stretching and self-massage of the connective tissue using foam rollers or rubber balls, so called SMR (Self Myofascial Release), has been shown to be an effective way.

* **Endurance**

In the game, the demands on endurance can be high in situations where opponents get long attacks and especially in connection with penalty killing.

Training:

An important purpose of good basic endurance in terms of aerobic capacity is in addition to better recovery in these situations also to be able to train while maintaining a high quality. To have the stamina to train with good habits and a technical performance similar to what you want to accomplish in game situations. Quite simply in order to develop stamina to train with quality. More goalie specific (alactic acid) endurance training is performed most appropriately on the ice in the form of movements and change of positions with short intensive work at maximum tempo (3-4 sec.) and with long rest/breaks (12 – 45 sec.).

Top Photo: **Mobility** can be developed and rehabilitation and recovery accelerated by using the foam rollers or a hard rubber ball.

Middle Photo: **Jonas Gustavsson** demonstrates technique, strength, balance, mobility and covers with his reach and his athletic actions the whole lower part of the goal.

Bottom Photo: Henrik Lundqvist warms up and stretches before the game and prepares himself for saves in the extreme stretched out (outermost) position.

Graphics: Börje Nilsson

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