

Tryout tips for goaltenders

By Bob Janosz

It's that time of year when coaches have the task of choosing their goaltenders for the up-and-coming travel season. Although most coaches have their own system for evaluating goalies there are common traits that all coaches look for. Below is a list of goaltending traits that the goaltender should strive to excel at, hence improving their chance of standing out and making the team.

Fundamentals

The goaltender should have good fundamentals. This includes proper positioning, stance, and good save techniques. Staying square to the puck, acquiring adequate depth, and playing a controlled game are all important fundamental skills to ensure consistent play.

Movement

Coaches want a goaltender with good movement and footwork from both a standing and down position. Quickness and lateral movement are important with the speed of today's game. Strive to be squared, prepared, and on-time for each shot.

Athletic Ability

Be an athlete. Although goalies strive to play a fundamentally sound game they still need the ability to make athletic saves in those unexpected moments. Be careful of making too many athletic saves, a telltale sign that you are out of position too often.

Puck Tracking

Track the puck as soon as it leaves the stick blade and follow it into and away from the body.



Reading the release of the stick blade will allow more time to react to the puck and ultimately to making more saves.

Patience

Coaches often complain about their goalies going down too early or too often. Be patient on the shot, especially when the puck is shot from farther away in the "reacting" zone. Avoid making the first move and "committing" too early.

Rebound Control

Controlling rebounds on low and high shots limit second chances. Coaches want a goalie with good rebound control. Involve the stick and use proper pad angle on low shots. Trap pucks shot at the midsection. Try to control every rebound on every shot.

Size

You can't teach size. If you're a big goalie, limit pucks through your body and utilize your size. If you're a smaller goalie you will need a greater emphasis on prop-

er positioning, puck tracking, and "playing big."

Competitiveness

This trait could out shadow all of the other traits. Compete on every shot and never give up on a puck. Be a "big game" goalie and rise to the occasion. Making key saves at key times is what every coach looks for.

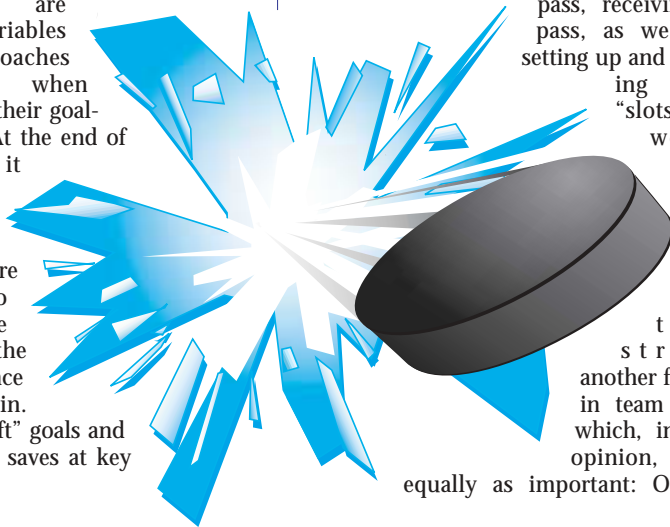
There are many variables that coaches consider when selecting their goaltenders. At the end of the day it comes down to who stops more pucks to give the team the best chance to win. Avoid "soft" goals and make key saves at key times.



Other aspects of team play

By Gary Reeves

As we all know, part of team play consists of giving a pass, receiving a pass, as well as setting up and skating the "slots." I would now



like to stress another factor in team play which, in my opinion, is equally as important: On-ice

companionship, or as the Great Russian coach Anatoly Tarasov would say "Comradeship, amongst teammates." In other words, you and your teammates are simply a collective effort of cooperation to create "team play."

Teammates should have a common bond of support, benevolence and sharing towards one another. Support your teammate, if he has the puck, help him by placing yourself in a position to receive a pass when he's being pressured by a checker. Support your teammate if he's being bodychecked by one or more of your opponents. He's your companion, be there for him and he'll be there for you.

Be benevolent; don't "hog" the puck. If your teammate is in a better position than you to make a play or score a goal be sure to pass him the puck. I'm sure he'll reciprocate.

One of the most benevolent gestures I've witnessed in hockey was when Wayne Gretzky played for the Edmonton Oilers. Glenn Anderson had two goals to his credit near the end of the game when Gretzky broke in all alone on an open net and dropped the puck back to Anderson so he could get the hat trick. No wonder they called him the Great One. Share the spoils, and the pain of the game with your teammates. If your teammate is in a scoring position and you have to take a body check in order to set him up, then so be it! It's only pain, you'll get over it. That's the nature of the game and part of the courage required to attain your goal. Talk strategies, anticipate each other's moves, and above all be vociferous. Aid your teammates, whether giving a pass, receiving a pass, or preventing a bodycheck. Put all these ingredients together and you will definitely reap the benefits of "team play!"

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Tigers target uncharted territory; Griffins try to fly

By Chris Colleluori

Wayne Wilson is no David Copperfield. But he's hoping the RIT Tigers can work some magic in the Atlantic Hockey Association championship tournament this month.

"As much as you want it, you can't just abracadabra — you're in the final game of the playoffs, and let's just play that one," Wilson, whose team ran away with the regular season conference title with 10 more points than second-place Sacred Heart, said. "There's so many other obstacles you have to face before getting there."

"We're not getting too far ahead of ourselves," Wilson continued. "You've got to take steps to achieving (our goal of winning a championship)."

With that championship would come the berth that has eluded the Tigers in their first four years as a Division-I program: a spot in the NCAA tournament. Each of the six conference champions receives an automatic bid to the playoffs; 10 more teams receive at-large bids to fill out the field.

So far, the Tigers have made all the right steps this season. They boast a 22-5-1 conference record after winning six straight to close out the season and take the No. 1 seed into the conference tournament. RIT will host No. 9 Connecticut — a team the Tigers beat in three

out of four games this year — for a three-game series beginning March 12. Semifinals begin Friday, March 19, at Blue Cross Arena, followed by the championship Saturday, March 20, at the same venue.

Even though the Tigers are the favorites to make it to the title game, Wilson knows the tournament provides each team with a clean slate.

"It's an advantage when you're looking at things on paper, but the league was very, very difficult this year," Wilson said. "The wins and losses look good for our record but nothing was really easy for us. We're No. 1, so it looks like a big advantage. But UConn, who was near the bottom, we split with them. That almost neutralizes everything and we're just going to have to be ready to go. It's a new season."

New season or not, Wilson has his Tigers up to the same old routine. With the No. 1 seed came a first-round bye, which gave the Tigers their first weekend without a game in the new year. Wilson said the team used the week off to skate hard, but not as often, and also kept lifting to keep the guys in their season-long routines.

"We just wanted to stay sharp," Wilson said. "It's a good time to heal and get rested and prepare for down the road."

What's been sharp for the



Photo courtesy RIT

Goalie Jared DeMichiel looks to lead the No.1 seeded RIT Tigers to an Atlantic Hockey Association championship and NCAA Frozen Four appearance.

Tigers all season is their defense. RIT allowed the fewest goals of any team in the conference — by a whopping 19 goals.

"Defense is the thing that made our team different than in the past. We've really clamped down," Wilson said. "I really can't put my finger on one particular thing. Our goalie is playing well, the defensemen are moving the puck exceptionally well out of the zone, and the forwards are helping out. It's a tribute to all three facets. It's comforting knowing you don't need four or five goals to win a game. One or two might be enough."

In fact, one goal would have been enough seven times this season. Reigning three-time AHA Goalie of the Week Jared DeMichiel — the conference leader in wins (21), goals-against average (1.78) and save percentage (.932) — accounted for five of those shutouts, but as Wilson pointed out, it was team defense that led the way. And leading the defense was Dan Ringwald, a candidate for the Hobey Baker Award as college hockey's top player. Tied for the league lead in points among defensemen with 27, the senior also boasted a plus-17 rating, good enough for second on the team.

"His leadership has been invaluable," Wilson said. "He's

like a coach out there. Very comforting when he's on the ice."

One of RIT's possible opponents in the second round is another Western New York squad: Canisius College. The fifth-seeded Golden Griffins play a three-game series at No. 4 Mercyhurst starting March 12. Canisius went 3-1 against the Lakers this year — including victories in both road games. All four games were decided by two goals or fewer.



Photo by Tom Wolf Imaging

Cory Conacher, of Canisius College, is the Atlantic Hockey Association's leading scorer with 49 points in 32 games.

The Griffins, led by the nation's leading scorer, Cory Conacher (20 goals, 29 assists through 32 games), went 13-11-4 in conference play — their highest conference win total in head coach Dave Smith's five years at the helm. But Canisius is far more than a one-man show. Forwards Vincent Scarsella and Josh

Heidinger netted 29 points apiece in AHA play to give the Griffins three of the top-10 scores in the conference.

The Tigers swept the Griffins during the final weekend of the season, but Canisius entered that weekend on a 4-2-2 run, and looks to carry momentum into the postseason.

Road to the Frozen Four

By Jeffrey Levine

College sports and the month of March usually mean one thing, but soon there will be plenty of non-basketball action being played close to home.

The Atlantic Hockey tournament began on March 5 with Holy Cross defeating American International and the University of Connecticut pulling the mild upset over Bentley the following day. While no Western New York teams saw action during these opening rounds, No. 1 seeded RIT will soon face the surprise Huskies during the three-game quarterfinals from March 12-14. Fourth-ranked Canisius will see No. 5 Mercyhurst for a middle of the pack series. If the Tigers


can hold on, they'll have hometown — but not home ice — advantage with the March 19 Semifinals and March 20 Championship at Blue Cross Arena.

At stake is not only the conference championship, but also a ticket to this year's Frozen Four in Detroit. Last year, Air Force made a huge splash in the tournament by blanking nationally ranked No. 4 Michigan before ultimately yielding to Vermont 3-2 in one of the most exciting double overtimes seen anywhere in collegiate athletics.

"I think that over the past previous four years we've stacked up very well," David Rourke, Director of Media Relations for Atlantic Hockey, explained. "We've had to play

No. 1 seeds. During my first year Holy Cross beat Minnesota in overtime and then last year Air Force shut out Michigan. We can play with anyone in the country and we're looking to get to that next level. We've won one game, let's win two and get to the Frozen Four, see what we can do."

Although there is still plenty of hockey left to be played this year, Atlantic Hockey will get even more competitive next season with the addition of Niagara University. The Purple Eagles last appeared at the Frozen Four Tournament in 2008 as representatives of College Hockey America.



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Let's play hockey

Community Sports Report

The 2010 Paul Grundtisch Hockey Schools Summer Programs is set for its 32nd year of teaching at various hockey schools throughout the U.S. and Canada.

This season will feature four specialized programs held at Holiday Twin Rinks in Cheektowaga or Leisure Rinks in Orchard Park. These include Checking Clinics, the Shooting & Stickhandling School, Power Skating & Skills School and the Defensemen School.

The Checking Clinic is for players age 10-13 and will meet June 28-30 at Leisure Rinks and July 20-22 at Holiday Twin Rinks. Each clinic will offer two class times to choose from, 10 a.m. or 12:45 p.m. The program has been specifically designed to educate the player in the proper techniques of giving and receiving a check. The staff will use a variety of drills, all aspects of the checking part of your game. These skills will be reinforced through 30 minutes of game-type situations during each session. Each day of the program will consist of three, one hour and 45 minutes of ice time and a 15-minute break. Cost is only \$105.



Stickhandling School will be held July 5-9 at Leisure Rinks and is for intermediate to advanced skaters aged 9-13 at a cost of \$150. The school will cover all the shots of the game with basic to advanced shooting drills to reinforce the many techniques and tricks you'll learn. A great deal of time will be devoted to different game type situations that require shots such as the "one timer," the off-wing shot, rebounds, point shots and many more. Two sessions will be offered, 10 a.m. or 12:45 p.m. and will consist of one hour and 45 minutes of ice time per session with a 15-minute break.

The Power Skating & Skills School will be offered three times this summer. Each session will be divided into two age groups of intermediate to advanced players ages 6-9 or 9-13. The first class will meet Aug. 2-6 at Leisure Rinks with ages 6-9 meeting 10 a.m. to noon and ages 9-13 from 12:45-2:45

The Shooting & p.m. The

second class is schedule for Aug 16-20 at Holiday Twin Rinks with players ages 6-9 meeting from 10 a.m. to noon and 9-13 from 12:45-2:45 p.m. And the third class will be held July 26-30 at Leisure for ages

6-9 at 1:00 p.m. The programs cost \$165 and will feature a curriculum designed to improve the player's total performance and will consist of power skating instruction with various high-paced drills to reinforce these techniques.

The Defensemen School will be held July 26-29 at Leisure Rinks from 10:00 to 12:15 p.m. for players 10-13 years old. This unique school has been developed to improve a player's total defensive skill and all aspects of the defenseman's role in today's game. Emphasis will be on skating techniques and puck control - shooting, stick-handling and passing - necessary to not only be a strong defenseman, but also as an offensive-minded defenseman. Cost is only \$155.

For more information on any of these programs please call the rink, 685-3660 or 675-8992, or visit us at www.holidayrinks.com to register on-line or request an application.

Sport specific training: Lacrosse

Christopher Koenig, PT, DPT, MBA

Lacrosse can be much like hockey; a great deal of contact with other players, but much more contact with the opposing player's stick. Also, much like hockey, to score a goal a small, heavy projectile must be thrown. The ball alone can be thrown fast enough to break bones. A full facemask must be worn, which differs from hockey. Padding along the entire arms is required down to the fingers. Despite this, however, no stomach, back, hip, or leg protection is necessary. Lacrosse is considered a collision sport, much like football or hockey. However, studies that compare incidence of injury per one thousand lacrosse players are less than that of other collision sports. Like other collision sports, many injuries occur from contact with opponents, their sticks, or the ball. Often precipitated by contact, lower body injuries of the knees, hips, or ankles can also occur as a result of field hazards - twisting of the knee, rolling of the ankle, etc. The ankles are the most commonly injured body part, followed by the upper leg, and then the knee. Most of these injuries are to the ligaments, the tissues that hold bone and joints together. Soft tissues, such as muscle sprains and tears, and contusions are also common.

Ankle sprains typically occur as a result of inversion injuries; where the player rolls over the top of their foot. This is typically a result of cutting-type movements, quick directional changes. The deltoid ligament of the ankle is commonly sprained, but rarely requires surgical repair. High ankle sprains are less common, but do occur.

To better prepare yourself on the field to avoid ankle injuries, you must increase the strength of stability muscles about the calf, foot, and ankle. Your ankle moves in a few different planes, so this means there are more directions that it can get caught in and injured. Everyone knows of the Achilles tendon, which combines two muscles that plantarflex your foot, or point it downward. These muscles can be

injured, but are not typically during lacrosse. They should be kept loose, and a simple way to do that is performing a "runner's stretch." To do



Photos by Chris Koenig

Diagonal pulley exercise for core strength.

this, stand with a wall or support surface in front of you, and lunge one leg forward, keeping the back foot flat on the ground the entire time. Lean onto the front leg and bend the knee, keeping the back foot flat and a stretch is felt in the calf. Hold this for at least 30 seconds three to five times on both legs.

Eversion and inversion are planes of ankle movement, turning the foot down and out, or up and in. Inversion ankle sprains are the most common, as I said earlier of the deltoid ligaments. To strengthen surrounding ankle muscles, I like to incorporate cutting drills such as grapevines and low quick ground/ball maneuvers for all positions. If possible, these drills are better suited outside. Grass is preferable since that is the

medium they will be playing on. A ground/ball maneuver I like to implement involves placing balls in a diagonal-ladder type position up the field, very close together. The player moves from one ball to the next as quick as possible, picking up one ball and placing it directly touching the next they will pick up. The player should stay low to the ground, and spring up quickly as they pick the ball up, and move toward their next, getting low again as they drop the ball and pick up the next.

Preparation is integral to avoiding injury. So how can a drill also work on shot power? A lacrosse shot uses a great amount of the body's muscles, and if you have the time to take a powerful shot, it will involve both upper and lower body. A diagonal axe-chop exercise with a cable or band mimics the muscles involved with a shot. Rather than using a large amount of weight, I like to perform this exercise in an explosive manner, and in a very full range. To do this, set an adjustable pulley at its highest position. If you are a right-handed thrower, stand facing away from the cable, and reach over

your right shoulder grasping the cable with two hands. Start with your torso rotated toward the cable, lung forward quickly with your left foot, and bring the cable across your body, and down toward the floor on your left side. Slower than the contraction, return the weight to its starting position. This exercise is also a great core maneuver, bringing in the rectus abdominus and the obliques at the same time. If you are a southpaw, just reverse the grip and finish of the exercise.

For more information on types of drills or questions about Sport Specific Training, you can e-mail me at ckoenig@mcguiregroup.com. Christopher Koenig is a doctor of physical training for the McGuire Group.

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