



**Summer of 2009**

**Objectives and Guidelines  
for Coaching Staff**

**Prepared by Joe Bertagna  
July of 2009**



# 2009 Bertagna Goaltending: Summer Teaching Objectives



## General Philosophy

Throughout our 36 years of teaching, we have embraced certain goals and objectives. Equipment and techniques have changed but our basic philosophy has not. The following concepts/goals remain relevant:

- The key to successful goaltending is **positioning**. This becomes even more essential as levels of play improve.
- Positioning means being in the right place at the right time, under control.
- Further defined, positioning factors in all the elements of solid angle play (centering, depth, and squaring) with what we call “**situational positioning**”; that is, understanding how a given situation affects the precision of positioning. At its simplest, this means that the situation you read will affect how you position yourself (aggressive or conservative). Among the factors to be taken into consideration: how many opponents, position of opponents, location of puck, available help from teammates, *which teammates*, etc.
- Positioning can not be mastered without attention to **movement**. We will cover all types of movement: on feet (forward/back, lateral, shuffle, “T,” stopping), leaving feet (butterfly and all variations), movement while down (butterfly push), recovering to feet. This involves attention to detail: how stance affects movement, consistency of hand/stick position, “pinching” to eliminate holes (5-hole and “6-holes”), which foot to stop on, which foot comes up first in recovery, etc.
- Our sequence, and we believe in teaching in a **rational sequence**, remains: stance, movement, positioning, save technique, strategies/techniques for situations, mental skills, competing, effects of “the person” on “the goalie.”
- We acknowledge new or **newer techniques** and will work to understand them and pass them along to our pupils.
- We acknowledge that **the rise of the private goalie coach** has changed the landscape. We will never disparage another coach.
- While accepting the phenomenon above, we also know that goalies will still be left to themselves to a degree. Part of our mission is to make them a competent coach, with **the job of being their own goalie coach**.
- We look at each goalie and try to make them better. We do this by **providing structure and a variety of “tools”** for their own “toolbox” and by addressing their individual weaknesses and flaws. **We do not strive to create clones**. There are a variety of ways to be successful...while respecting basic and universal concepts.
- Finally, we do all of this in an environment that is **safe, supportive, and**, given that this is the summer, **enjoyable**.

## Age Specific Guidelines: 12 and Younger

- Even more important to keep this level fun.
- Stance/skating/movement should play a bigger role in this curriculum. Attempt to encourage gloves at same height; i.e., discourage high glove position. Stress consistency of stick position.
- Angle play still important. Encourage play at top of crease.
- Rather than discourage dropping, stress the “why” and “when” and “where.” Get them to think about why they drop, when they drop, and where they drop.
- Work on balance and upper body control as they leave their feet.
- Spend time on “centering” and “squaring” and “rotation” and why this is important. Whether on feet or down.
- Discuss setting goals. In this vein, have them want to eliminate short-side goals and goals through them (5-hole and between arms and body.)
- Teach the three parts to every save situation: before, during, after, and why the “before” is really the key.
- Limit “paddle down.”
- Encourage looking off the puck.
- Introduce “aggressive” vs. “patient.”
- Give them safe strategies for specific situations.
- Briefly touch upon mental skills: controlling nerves, it’s alright to be nervous, stay in the present tense, body language counts, etc.

## Age Specific: 13 and Older

- Stance/skating/movement still a key part of curriculum. Attempt to encourage gloves at same height; i.e., discourage high glove position. Stress consistency of stick position. Stress the desire to have a distinct start and stop to movements.
- Angle play is the key. Stress situational positioning. Discuss not just where to be and how to get there but, a) the importance of being set, and, b) the importance of having a sense of timing as to when the trouble will come and where it will come from.
- Teach butterfly push and post load techniques.
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## 2009 Bertagna Goaltending: Summer Teaching Objectives (Page Two)

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- Discuss setting goals. In this vein, have them want to eliminate short-side goals and goals through them (5-hole and between arms and body.)
- Teach the three parts to every save situation: before, during, after, and why the “before” is really the key. Also have them understand the difference between “making a save” and “blocking the puck.”
- As with younger goalies, limit “paddle down” and encourage looking off the puck.
- More time on puck handling.
- More time on detailed technique: proper rotation, butterfly push, pinching to eliminate interior holes, “loading up” before movement, more physically challenging drills.
- Stress need to distinguish “aggressive” vs. “patient” positioning and the importance of patience at higher levels.
- Give them a variety of strategies for specific situations.
- Emphasize the importance of mental skills and how the person affects the goalie.

### Age Specific: Adult

- All of the above and this reality: just as entry level players are learning and aggressive play sometimes succeeds because the opponent isn't yet skilled enough to respond, there is an element of this at the end of the spectrum. As older players lose hand speed and quickness, there is a place for selected aggressiveness.
- There is often a significant gap between best and worst player on the ice in adult hockey. This changing pace and timing can pose a unique challenge to an adult goalie.
- Almost all of them can shoot, so the slower pace still contains that challenge.
- Don't get tempted by new techniques if you don't have a chance to perfect them. Go with what works...for you....now.

### Suggested Outline of 5-Day Curriculum\*

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Stance/Movement/ Positioning	Techniques: Stick & Pad Video Here	Techniques: Hands Review Video Here	Strategies for Situations	Mental Skills & Competing

### Outline of 4-Day Curriculum (Marlboro)\*#

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
Stance/Movement/ Positioning	Save Techniques: All Video Here	Strategies for Situations Review Video Here	Mental Skills & Competing

### Outline of 3-Day Curriculum (Portland and Conway)\*

Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
Stance/Movement/ Positioning Video Here	Techniques: All Review Video Here	Strategies for Situations and Competing

\* These are the suggested sequences. Try to review something each day from the day before. Video in a way that if there are technical issues or absences, you have allowed for a make-up day. I like to end the week with some sort of competition. However the shorter sessions (3 or 4 days) probably don't allow the last day to be a total day of competition like the five-day sessions.

# I defer to Bink and Gera for the Marlboro curriculum.

### North Andover Wednesday Curriculum (Four Sessions Each, July and August)

1st Week	2nd Week	3rd Week	4th Week
Stance/Movement/ Positioning	Low Situations (Shots/Tips/Dekes/ in-close passes)	Use of Hands (Catching, blocking, smothering, puck- handling, tying up pucks)	TBD (w/goalie input)

# THE PYRAMID FOR TEACHING GOALTENDERS



## TOP PRIORITY SITUATIONAL POSITIONING

Knowing Where To Be  
Knowing How/When To Get There Under Control  
Having The Physical Ability To Get There

## KEYS TO SUCCESS CONTROL & BALANCE

Pack Control — Emotional Control — Physical Balance — Mental Balance

## TOOLS: STRATEGIC STRATEGIES FOR SITUATIONS

How To Use Individual Mental & Physical Skills to Succeed in Specific Game Situations

## TOOLS: TECHNICAL MASTERING INDIVIDUAL TECHNICAL SKILLS

Learning and Mastering Techniques — Coordinated and Complete Use of Feet, Pads, Gloves, Stick, Body  
Key to Technique: *"Practice doesn't make perfect. Practice makes permanent. Perfect practice makes perfect."*

## TOOLS: ATHLETIC THE FOUNDATION OF GOALTENDING: STANCE & MOVEMENT & ANGLES

Basic Stance — Alternate Stances — Skating/Movement in and out of All Stances  
Forward and Backward Skating — Lateral Movement ("Shuffle") — "T" Push or "T" Glide — Stopping  
Movement on Feet — Movement from Feet to Ice ("Butterfly" & Variations) — Movement While on Ice  
Understanding Angles Play — Visualizing Angles — Being Centered, Squared, with Proper Depth for Situation  
Strength from Leg Drive — "Loading Up" On Proper Skate — Rotation to Attain Proper Squared Positioning

## ***MAKING SAVES vs. BLOCKING SHOTS***

By Joe Bertagna

One of the topics *du jour* among current goalie coaches is the observation that these days, there are many goalies who don't *execute saves* as much as they *block shots*. What?

Another way to couch this is to start by acknowledging that there are "reaction saves" and "blocking saves." Here's the difference:

A "reaction save" would be one that is deliberately executed on a shot that the goalie sees come directly off the shooter's stick. The goaltender has time to use a preferred technique, allowing the puck to be stopped and controlled efficiently. This would include such saves as catching a puck, trapping or smothering a puck against or into equipment, or directing a low shot to a safe area.

By contrast, a "blocking save" would be one where a goaltender reacts to puck movement and an anticipated shot from in close by moving his entire body into an unoccupied space, dropping (usually) and centering on the puck, close to the puck, so that no matter where the shot goes, it has to hit the goaltender or go wide. In this instance, it could be said that the goaltender *reacts to the play* (as opposed to reacting to a shot) so that when the puck is eventually shot, he does not have to react to the new path of the shot as the entire angle is filled.

In the course of a typical game, a goaltender will employ both of the above techniques. What goalie coaches observe these days, with significant frequency, is the phenomenon of goalies using blocking techniques on shots from outside. That is, the goalies drop and let pucks hit them where there seems to be time to efficiently act on the puck and actually execute a save.

The fallout from failing to execute an efficient save can be rebounds into immediate traffic or to distant spots in the vicinity of enemy attackers. The goalie, down on his knees from the original move, has to scramble to deal with a decent scoring opportunity.

It is easy to understand how this can happen. The number of scoring opportunities that take place down low is significant and goaltenders frequently get into a rhythm of moving low and staying low. In the midst of all of this puck movement down low comes a shot from the point and some goalies fail to distinguish between the two situations, dropping and, in effect, letting the puck play them, rather than them acting deliberately on the puck.

This phenomenon is reminiscent of an earlier time, when goalies might move out on a shooter and freeze, somewhat upright, expecting the puck to either hit them or go wide. On the occasion that a shooter was able to catch a corner with a well-placed shot, the goalie had to be reminded that positioning alone isn't always enough. There still must be the ability to react to the shot. The same message can be issued in response to the misplaced blocking technique. Don't give up — mentally — the ability to execute a save.

It is the more complete goaltender who can recognize that he has time to play that long shot in such a manner that he can control or limit the rebound and thus the second (and often better) scoring opportunity.

What is required to do this regularly would be the following:

- The ability to anticipate where the next action will come from.
- The ability to have feet set so the proper technique can begin efficiently.
- Knowing before each scoring situation where trouble lurks and where it would be safe to direct shots.
- Consistent precision in the goalie's positioning.
- Proper practice of basic save techniques, combining the gloves, pads, stick and body.

Part of the reason that this has become an issue is the successful use of blocking techniques. Like anything else, when something works, there is a tendency to over-use it. (See: paddle down.) Still, it is the goalie's job to differentiate between one situation and another and use that technique a given situation calls for.

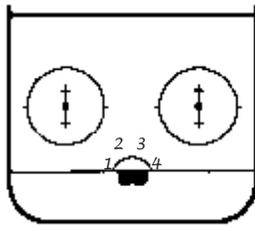
*JOE BERTAGNA has been coaching goalies for nearly 40 years. A former Boston Bruins and U.S. Olympic goalie coach, Bertagna currently serves hockey as the Commissioner of the Hockey East Association and Executive Director of the American Hockey Coaches Association.*



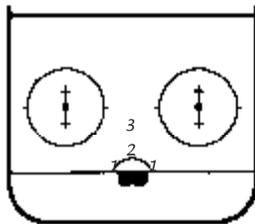
## GOALIE MOVEMENT DRILLS



Have your goalies choose one or two of the drills below at the start of practice while forwards and defensemen are doing skating/puck handling activities at the other end of the ice.



Place four objects (or lay down numbers 1-4 with spray paint as shown). Goalie moves from number to number, leading with hands and stick. It's not a race. It's simple repetition of proper movement and positioning (centering/squaring) to each target. After a while, reverse order (4-3-2-1). Stress the importance of a good push to start and a full stop at each number.

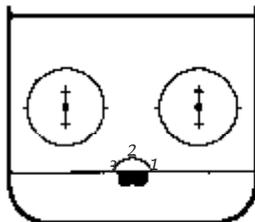


Start at "1"; Post-to-post two times; then T-push out to top of crease and come to a full stop ("2"); then power out with another good push to "3"; skate backwards and butterfly to one of the posts. Repeat and alternate which post you butterfly to. Again, it is not a race or speed drill. Goalies should work on proper balance, staying in stance, dropping under control. Place an object they can center on when they drop.

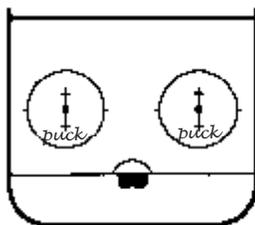
X



This one will bore the goalies to death...but...it is a good reminder of how much of a goalie's job is to do very simple things...precisely...over and over again. The four larger dots to the left represent pucks placed strategically. The "X" represents an open spot. Goalies have to stay low, in their stance, and "shuttle" a puck from the column of two to the open space. There will always be an open space. They always drag one of the two to the open space and leave it precisely. Left "column" should be about 6 feet from right column.



Three distinct movements here: from post to top of crease (1 to 2) on feet; from top of crease to far post down in a butterfly move (2 to 3); from post to post along goal line in a "butterfly push" (3 to 1). This last move is difficult for younger goalies. You can have them recover to their feet before going "3 to 1." Repeat in reverse (starting from other post.)



Post-to-Post three times and then T-push hard to puck near face-off dot. Repeat in reverse. Emphasize both leading with hands and squaring to that puck.

Provided by Bertagna Goaltending

Check us out at [www.bertagnagoaltending.com](http://www.bertagnagoaltending.com) or contact Joe Bertagna at [jbertagna@comcast.net](mailto:jbertagna@comcast.net).