

How To Help your goalie build confidence.

Instilling confidence in a youth hockey goalie is crucial for their performance and overall development and it starts with positive reinforcement. Make sure you find time to provide positive feedback during practice, but more importantly in between periods. The goalie is the one player on your team that does not get in-game coaching, so oftentimes the little positives you see in the middle of the period are not communicated to the goalie like say a player would get coming back to the bench. Take note, let them know you saw them do the right thing, even if it's small. If there was one specific action to always encourage and point out when you see it, it would be their compete level. Whenever you see your young goalie competing to make a save, whether it goes in or they save it, always let them know you are proud of them for it.

Take time in practice to help your goalies improve their game. This does not mean dump 50 pucks at the hash marks and say catch them all with your glove. Instead think of a game scenario that occurs often, a typical hockey pattern and create a drill. This will also help your players develop good habits and feel for the game but keep in mind its for your goalies development. For example a low to high pass from the corner to D, the player who passed the puck goes to the net to collect a rebound and try to get a garbage goal. This creates a situation where the goalie needs to skate to the top of their crease, battle through a screen, control a rebound, and play the in-tight battle. Very simple, very effective. With repetition the goalie gains more understanding and in turn confidence in these situations.

Lastly encourage communication, let your goalies know that you are there to support them, not to judge. A kid can go a long way if they feel like they are supported by the adults around them. So let them know that you believe in them, even if you don't at the time. Hearing that they have your support will help them find the strength to fight back even when they make mistakes. Ask them here and there how they felt about their game, help them rationalize their negative thoughts if they are hard on themselves and hold them accountable if they are not able to themselves. This will help build trust, and once the kid trusts you, the more likely they will feel confident around you.

Remember that building confidence is an ongoing process. By creating a supportive and encouraging environment, setting realistic goals, and focusing on skill development, you can help a young goalie develop the confidence needed to find their full potential.