

Practice how the game is played

Incorporating traffic into your practice

If you break down a hockey game at any level you'd be surprised at how many goals are scored through traffic. Not only is it harder for a goalie to track the puck through bodies, but hands down the hardest shot for a goalie to stop is a deflection. Deflections do not need to be intentional, if a puck hits a shin pad or a skate blade in front the whole attempt on net shifts to an in tight battle or back door play. It's no secret, when the unpredictable happens, goals go in the net.

As far as practice goes, on average 70-80 percent of shots faced by a goalie are straight on shots. On the other hand, a game consists of about 70-80 percent of shots through traffic or at least with some loss of vision for the goalie. Whether that's a player skating across the goal mouth or a player intentionally taking eyes away, there's a moment in time where the goalie loses sight of the puck for a split second or longer on most shot attempts in a game.

This all being said, as coaches it's in our best interest to create situations in practice where **1.** The goalie needs to lose sight of the puck or battle to see the release of the shot **2.** Where players are reading situations and getting in good position to hammer home a loose puck off a broken play. Garbage goals SHOULD BE the goal of practice, because that's how the game is ultimately won.

Here is are some easy yet, effective drills to incorporate into your practice: