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THE
GOALIE
ISSUE

IN THE

LINE OF

GOALTENDERS DESCRIBE THEIR PASSION FOR THE POSITION

FIRE

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NHL Gives Goalie Gear A Makeover

» Coming soon to an NHL arena near you, a remake of the 1989 hit movie, *Honey, I Shrunk the Goalie*.

NHL general managers agreed that goaltending equipment needs to become smaller for next season.

At their annual meetings in March, the league's GMs heard how the NHL will be "cutting away all the fat, the parts that extend out past the body and don't wrap" in the chest, pants and upper body area. It was stressed at the meeting that goaltenders' safety will not be compromised by changing equipment.

The NHL Players' Association is on board with the changes, including some of the league's top goaltenders such as New Jersey Devils netminder Cory Schneider.

"Safety is paramount but I think we have the materials now where we can create smaller, lighter and faster pads and guys can still be protected," Schneider said.

The plan is to have the equipment ready for goaltenders during the summer so they can prepare for the upcoming season with the new pads.

Some general managers said the change could pave the way for smaller, more athletic goaltenders to have a chance to be successful NHL players again. In the last several years, there's been a move to taller netminders because they take up more of the net.

"I think if it makes the game better then I'm all for it. Obviously, we have to see what's going to happen. I don't know if it's going to be a big change in the amount of goals scored," said Ben Bishop, the 6-foot-7 goaltender with the Tampa Bay Lightning. "I think the game is good the way it is, but they want to get some more goals and this might help do it."

Goaltending 3.0

Digital Resources Provide A High Tech Assist To Puck Stoppers

For as long as goaltenders have been stepping in front of flying pucks, the men and women between the pipes have been committed to improving their game.

Like a branch of the evolutionary tree, the art of goaltending has advanced in phases over the years. Thanks to countless equipment additions and improvements, the goaltenders of today look nothing like those bare-faced brave men who first stood in the crease, and neither do the technology tools at the modern netminder's disposal.

In 2012, USA Hockey launched the Mobile Coach App on iOS and Android devices. Since its debut, Mobile Coach has been dedicated to constant improvement, much like goalies themselves. Recent advancements, including a practice plan designer, activity tracker and a newsfeed of coaching articles, helped the app become a finalist for the 2016 Sports Technology Awards App of the Year for Coaches and Managers.

The app, which is available for download at USAHockey.com/mobilecoach, is stocked with an ever-expanding library

of goaltending drills, videos and resources. The list will continue to grow this year when the next revolutionary goaltending tool is unveiled.

Beyond the app, USA Hockey also launched usahockeygoaltending.com, complete with a design overhaul. The new mobile-optimized website features a full library of resources and goaltending-specific training, including the USA Hockey Goaltending Skill Video of the Month playlist. This new series of videos covers a wide range of training tips for goaltenders and their coaches. Subscribers will receive an alert whenever a new video is posted so they never miss out on any of the newest exciting tools.

With these advancements, USA Hockey hopes to take the lead on ushering in a new wave of digitally enhanced goaltending resources.

Digital Goaltending Tools

- USAHockeyGoaltending.com
- USA Hockey Mobile Coach App (for iOS and Android)
- YouTube Goaltending Skill of the Month Series

With The Past Behind Her, Katie Burt Looks Toward The Future

By SIAN WILKERSON



Plenty of pressure comes with the weight of being perfect. That's something that Boston College goaltender Katie Burt knows all too well.

After going on a stunning 40-0 run, the Boston College women's team fell just short of a perfect season with a loss to the University of Minnesota Golden Gophers in the national championship game. While it was a disappointing end to an otherwise spectacular season, Burt knows that one game does not define a season.

"It's tough to look back on so soon, but overall, I think our

season was tremendous. Even though we fell short of our goal, we were able to push the program forward," said the sophomore goalie.

The team had one rule during its undefeated regular season: take it day by day. Under the direction of Boston College Head Coach Katie King Crowley, the Eagles strove to quickly put each game behind them after the final buzzer sounded, wiping the slate clean for the next one.

"We learned from each game, of course," Burt said. "But we didn't dwell on them."

Practicing against talented teammates like Alex Carpenter,

who won a silver medal with the 2014 U.S. Women's Olympic Team and received the Patty Kazmaier Award in 2015, has helped Burt grow as a goaltender.

"It gives me a ton of confidence. As a goaltender, knowing that my team will probably score early on, usually within the first five or 10 minutes, enables me to take a breath and just worry about doing my job," she said. "At this level, all of the goalies are pretty similar in skill, so the most important thing is to have confidence. This position is very mental."

The Lynn, Mass., native is no stranger to the international stage. As a member of the U.S. Women's National Under-18 Team, she back stopped her squad to a gold-medal win over Canada, an experience that prepared her for the pressures of so much attention.

"Katie had a great year for us. She is the backbone of our defensive core and did a great job using what she learned last year to put her team in a spot to win a national championship this year," said King Crowley, herself a three-time Olympian.

"I'm proud of all she has accomplished and I know it's only going to continue getting better through her career."

For all of her success, Burt knows that the key to maintaining her edge is to never get complacent.



KATIE BURT #33

POSITION: Goaltender

CATCHES: Left

HEIGHT: 5-foot-6

WEIGHT: 140 pounds

BIRTH DATE: Jan. 26, 1997

HOMETOWN: Lynn, Mass.

COLLEGE: Boston College

USA HOCKEY HISTORY:

Attended USA Hockey's National Development Camp on three separate occasions (2012, 2013 and 2014) and won a silver medal with the U.S. Under-18 Team at the 2014 IIHF U18 World Championship and gold in 2015.

"There's always something that every player needs to work on," Burt said. "The goalie position is changing constantly, so I try to look at what other players are doing and I do my best to incorporate some of those things into my own game."

With the Frozen Four behind her, Burt has her sights set on whatever the future holds.

"Anything can happen, which any hockey player knows," she said. "A few years ago, I didn't make [the U.S. Women's National Festival], and then I ended up on the U18 team. So anything can happen. Anything is possible."

YOUTH STAR



AUDREY WHEELER

AGE: 9

South Bend, Ind.

For Audrey Wheeler, hockey has always been a family affair. When her older brother took up the sport, watching him play sparked Audrey's interest, and she soon followed. In 2012, Audrey began attending Learn to Skate programs and graduated from Mites to Squirts.

Early on, she got a taste for the goaltender position, influenced by her team's policy to have each player try standing in the crease for a game or two. For Audrey, the pads fit perfectly.

"I like playing goalie because when you make a great save, everyone on the team cheers for you," said the fourth grader who is the only girl on the Irish Rovers Squirt A travel team.

Even in her free time, it's hard to tear Audrey away from the rink. When she's not on the ice, you can find her sitting in the stands, cheering for her brother. The South Bend, Ind., native has been to almost too many Notre Dame hockey games to count, and loves watching the Chicago Blackhawks.

In the rare moments that she's not playing or watching hockey, Audrey enjoys softball and archery. But for Audrey, life is really all about playing hockey.

"I just love it because it's fun."

THE GOALIE ISSUE

IN THE LINE OF FIRE

More High-Level
Athletes Are
Being Drawn To
The Crease

AS THE GREAT JACQUES PLANTE ONCE SAID, “How would you like a job where when you made a mistake a big red light goes on and 18,000 people boo?”

Judging from the popularity of the position at the grass-roots level, kids of all ages are lining up for a chance to stand in the way of flying rubber. Whether it's the cool equipment or the thought of being a team's last line of defense, more top athletes are drawn to standing between the pipes. And who can blame them?

Perhaps no position in any team sport has more of a direct impact on the final outcome of a game or a season than a goaltender. It is also one of the most scrutinized. Even though hockey is the ultimate team game, a goalie tends to receive the lion's share of the blame when a goal is scored.

While equipment and techniques have changed over the years, the basic premise behind the position is still the same as it was when Frank Brimsek and Jack McCartan patrolled the crease. Stop the puck.



WHAT WERE YOU THINKING?

Some Of The Top Goaltenders In The Game Explain Their Passion For The Position



YOU'VE PROBABLY NEVER HEARD OF BRANDON JOHNSON or Nick Stalock, and

you're definitely not aware of the vital roles they played in launching the promising careers of two of the most talented American goaltenders. But if not for the efforts of these older brothers, two well-known netminders who provide their teams with a last line of defense under a bright spotlight might still be anonymous.

Cam Johnson, the star goalie who backstopped the University of North Dakota's NCAA title in April, got his start between the pipes as a way to play hockey with his older brother, Brandon, in their suburban Detroit neighborhood. Ditto for Alex Stalock, the Toronto Maple Leafs' puck-stopper, whose first forays into a crease with pads on were done as a way to play with his brother, Nick, and the older kids in their South St. Paul, Minn., neighborhood.

Anyone who has ever watched a college or pro goaltender stand in front of a rocketing slap shot that most fans can barely see, let alone stop, has probably wondered, "What were they thinking?"

Talking with some of those goalies reveals some great stories about what inspired them to don the big pads in the first place, and proves that they may be crazy enough to play the position. But they had good reasons for giving it a try, and sticking with it.

While some 5-year-olds would protest if you told them they'd have to let their teammates shoot pucks in their direc-

tion, Ottawa Senators goalie Craig Anderson recalls crying to his coaches because they said he couldn't do just that.

"We were rotating goalies when I was a Mite for the Northbrook Bluehawks. We had three goalies and I was playing defense," Anderson said, recalling his youth hockey days in suburban Chicago. "I remember the game. We were getting beat by Winnetka. We were down, 6-0, after the first period and I sat on the bench crying, saying 'I wanted to play goalie.'"

One problem – Anderson's goalie pads weren't in the arena at the time. A quick-thinking adult found a solution.

"The coach ran across the ice between periods to ask my parents if I could play goalie," Anderson said. "The stuff was in the car, so my parents ran to the car and brought the gear in. Halfway through the second period I was in the nets and never really left."

While some people would worry about the impact of the puck hurting too much for them to enjoy stopping shots, Anderson found the body contact he encountered when playing other positions made him feel safer in goal.

"I did play forward in summer hockey," Anderson recalled. "I think my last year of that I was a Peewee and I got hit into the boards in the neutral zone and said, 'This isn't for me.'"

While Johnson and Stalock started playing goalie to play with their brothers, Anthony Stolarz took up the position to be like his older brother. Now one of the top goalies in the Philadelphia Flyers' system, Stolarz grew up in Jackson Township, N.J., wanting to be just like his elder sibling.

"My older brother actually played goalie, so when I was growing up, I just tried to follow him to the rinks and be his biggest fan, which kind of led me to the position," Stolarz said. "All of my gear growing up was hand-me-downs from him, and I just always kind of looked up to him. I just liked to always be on the ice. When I was younger, I tried playing forward, but I just didn't have as much fun playing out there as I did goalie."



Ben Bishop of the Tampa Bay Lightning is among a growing cadre of talented American puckstoppers who are taking the NHL by storm.

THE GOALIE ISSUE

That may sound crazy to an outsider, but to those who truly love playing goalie, and thrive on the pressure and the occasional pain, it's what they love to do.

"I just fell in love with the thinking part of the game and I always liked being involved in the game and being on the ice for the full 60 minutes," said New Jersey Devils goalie Cory Schneider, recalling his youth and high school hockey days in suburban Boston.

"I didn't like sitting on the bench in between shifts, so maybe that was part of it, too. I wasn't the best skater when I became a goalie, but I learned how to skate as a goalie. It's a very important part of having good footwork."

But when an arena is full, the crowd is excited and a game is on the line, the weight on a goalie's feet is nothing compared to the weight on his or her shoulders. By the time opposing players get to your net with the puck, they have probably already eluded a pair of defensemen and a forward or two, but if their shot goes in the net, everyone looks upon the goalie as the last one with an opportunity to stop the puck. That's not necessarily fair in a team game, but it's a part of hockey that goalies enjoy.

"I love the amount of pressure we face," Johnson said, not long after getting a taste of that pressure on college hockey's biggest stage, helping the Fighting Hawks to a Frozen Four crown before a crowd of better than 19,000 in Tampa.

"When you're in goal, more often than not you're either going to be the hero or you're going to cost your team the game. I love having that on my shoulders."

When all that emotional weight is on you, losses can be devastating, but winning feels even better. Stalock was also a baseball and football player as a kid, and sees a natural comparison between the person between the pipes on a hockey rink, the person manning the mound on a diamond and the person under center on the gridiron.

"You win a game and you kind of get hooked on the feeling," Stalock said. "Like a pitcher in baseball or a quarterback in football, there's only one of you, so you're the difference maker. Of course it goes both ways, if the game doesn't go well. But you learn to thrive on having that on your shoulders, and having the chance to be the hero."

Cam Johnson
backstopped the
University of North Dakota
to the 2016 NCAA title.



Of course, the guy scoring a hat trick can be the hero as well. That was a lesson Ryan Miller taught his father. Miller's size and skills helped him star at Michigan State. That was before his stellar NHL career, first with the Buffalo Sabres and now with the Vancouver Canucks, and before he helped Team USA to within an overtime goal of an Olympic gold medal in 2010. But had he not gotten a hat trick during a youth hockey game in Michigan many years ago, none of that may have come to pass. To this day, Miller vividly recalls a day where he played forward, and via some on-ice work and a hardline stance, earned the right to play goalie.

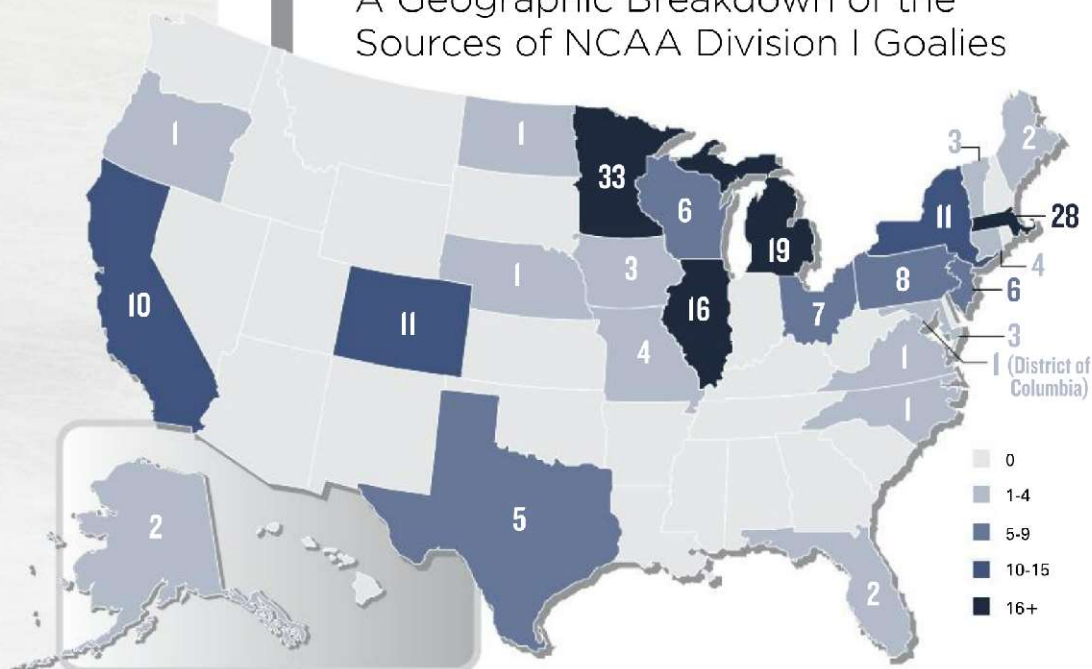
"WHEN YOU'RE IN GOAL, MORE OFTEN THAN NOT YOU'RE EITHER GOING TO BE THE HERO OR YOU'RE GOING TO COST YOUR TEAM THE GAME. I LOVE HAVING THAT ON MY SHOULDERS."

—CAM JOHNSON, University of North Dakota goalie



WHERE ARE GOALIES FROM?

A Geographic Breakdown of the Sources of NCAA Division I Goalies



"I already had an assist and I took a seat on the bench. My dad was our coach and I said 'I really want to play goalie. I want to try it. I'm not going to play another minute until I get a chance to play goalie.' He thought it was pretty funny," Miller recalled.

"I think I was 8 years old and when you're 8 your dad is probably cracking up inside. He said, 'You can do it, just go score three goals and get that Playmaker patch. Go out and do that this game and you can try goalie.' So I went out and took him up on it. I scored the goals, got the assist and he was just shaking his head. From that point on I never really turned back and it's been a lot of fun."

To some, standing in front of pucks will never seem like fun. But to those who came to the position through a variety of circumstances, it's an endeavor they love. And based on their on-ice results, teammates and fans love watching their work in the crease. ★

Jess Myers is a freelance writer and youth hockey volunteer in Inver Grove Heights, Minn.



STATES (26)	MEN	WOMEN	TOTAL
Alaska	1	1	2
California	8	2	10
Colorado	9	2	11
Connecticut	3	1	4
District of Columbia	1	0	1
Florida	1	1	2
Illinois	10	6	16
Iowa	2	1	3
Maine	0	2	2
Maryland	3	0	3
Massachusetts	16	12	28
Michigan	13	6	19
Minnesota	19	14	33
Missouri	4	0	4
Nebraska	1	0	1
New Jersey	6	0	6
New York	7	4	11
North Carolina	2	0	2
North Dakota	1	0	1
Ohio	5	2	7
Oregon	0	1	1
Pennsylvania	7	1	8
Texas	4	1	5
Vermont	0	3	3
Virginia	1	0	1
Wisconsin	4	2	6
TOTAL	128	62	190



PROVINCES (8)	MEN	WOMEN	TOTAL
Alberta	9	4	13
British Columbia	11	3	14
Manitoba	2	3	5
New Brunswick	0	2	2
Nova Scotia	1	3	4
Ontario	14	27	41
Quebec	7	1	8
Saskatchewan	3	1	4
TOTAL	47	44	91



NATIONS (4)	MEN	WOMEN	TOTAL
Finland	5	1	6
New Zealand	0	1	1
Slovakia	1	0	1
Sweden	2	1	3
TOTAL	8	3	11

PRESTO CHANGE



Quick Change Pads Make It Easier
For Aspiring Goalies To Give The
Position A Try

By SIAN WILKERSON

BUY QUICK CHANGE PADS

Total Hockey will take preorders for their Quick Change Goalie Pads in early June, with deliveries slated for the Fall. Each set will come in one size (youth large) and includes a padded jersey, 24-inch leg pads and hockey bag. To learn more go to

QuickChange.TotalGoalie.com.



IF YOU BUILD IT, THEY WILL COME.

That's the philosophy behind the new Quick Change goalie pads that USA Hockey and Total Hockey have teamed up to create.

For years, wannabe goalies have been restricted by the inherent challenges of dressing for the position. After all, there's a lot of gear to put on, and for younger players, getting properly outfitted takes time and a team effort.

With Total Hockey's new Quick Change pads, it's never been easier to put kids between the pipes. The equipment is built to fit comfortably over regular protective gear, allowing for less bulk and less drama. The jersey, which has foam sewn inside to protect the chest and arms, is outfitted with a neck hole large enough to fit over a helmet, and the leg pads



feature a redesigned channel that makes it easier to move.

Where it might typically take a young skater several minutes, and a few pairs of helping hands, to put traditional goalie gear on, the Quick Change pads are optimized to take less than 60 seconds to take on and off, giving youngsters more time to enjoy playing the position.

ADM Regional Manager for Goaltending Phil Osaer came up with the idea in the fall of 2015, after experienc-

ing an "aha moment" while watching Squirt hockey as kids jumped in and out of net, passing around a pair of goalie gloves and attempting to block shots.

"Back when we used to play street hockey, everyone used to take a turn at goalie," said the Livonia, Mich., native. "My thought was, what if we could replicate that on the ice?"

One of the goals of the project is to see these pads used by associations across the country. So far, the reac-

tion from players, coaches and parents has been overwhelmingly positive.

"The coaches love the flexibility these pads create," said Total Hockey's John Luetkemeyer. "And it really benefits the whole team, including the kids taking shots on goal."

With more kids trying out the position, the hope is that more will stick with it to expand the ranks of potential puckstoppers at higher levels of the game.

"I think this will get more of our best athletes to become goalies," Osaer said. "In the past, bulky, complicated goalie gear deterred young athletes from trying out the position, but with more availability, we'll have stronger numbers and more elite goalies will emerge." ★



NET GAIN

By HARRY
THOMPSON

The American Goalie Assembly Line Is Producing More Top Level Goalies Than Ever Before

SOMEWHERE DAVE PETERSON is looking down and smiling a big bear cat grin.

Few grasped the importance of the position of goaltender more than the long-time USA Hockey coach, who once said the sport should be called “goalie” because of its importance to a team’s success.

When asked about the secret to international success, the head coach of two U.S. Olympic Teams and three National Teams matter-of-factly said, “Get off the bus with the best goalie.”

These days that bus includes more home-grown goaltenders who aren’t content to take a back seat to anyone.

Nowhere was that more evident than at the 2016 NHL All-Star Game in Nashville,



John Gibson, left, and Jonathan Quick, right, seen here with fellow All-Star goalie Pekka Rinne, are products of the American goaltender development system.

"THERE'S SO MANY GOOD GOALIES IN THE WORLD TODAY BUT TO HAVE SO MANY OF THEM FROM THE U.S. IS A MATTER OF PRIDE FOR US."

—CORY SCHNEIDER, N.J. Devils goalie

that there are plenty of locally-produced talent waiting for their shot in the big leagues.

The AHL boasted a whopping 34 American goalies while the ECHL had 47 Americans start at least one game this season.

But it's not just quantity where the U.S. has struck goalie gold. It's in the quality of those who are strapping on the pads. Quick and Bishop finished in the top five of every major statistical category for goaltenders during the regular season, including wins, goals-against average, save percentage and shutouts.

"Goaltending in the United States is in a good spot. There are a lot of guys who have excelled at the NHL level and continue to have guys coming up through the system. It's great to see," said Jimmy Howard, who has been a cornerstone between the pipes for the Detroit Red Wings over the past seven seasons.

"With guys like Cory Schneider, Jonathan Quick, John Gibson, Ben Bishop, those guys are putting U.S. on the map when it comes to being one of the better countries when it comes to developing goalies."

So where did all this success come from? It certainly didn't just pop up out of nowhere. In fact, it may have been over 20 years in the making thanks to the trail blazed by American goaltenders like Tom Barrasso, John Vanbiesbrouck and Mike Richter, whose accomplishments helped create a generation of U.S.-born players that wanted to be goaltenders.

Kevin Reiter, USA Hockey's national goaltending coach, knows just how important their success has been.

"I think it's great because you have somebody to put a face with in regards to the younger kids," he said. "Now they have

a chance to watch these [American NHL goalies] in action and learn from them, and I think that's an important piece to it."

Not ready to rest on its laurels, USA Hockey is introducing several new initiatives to keep that pipeline flowing. USA Hockey has placed a greater emphasis on goaltender development thanks in large part to the efforts of Reiter and Phil Osaer, who was hired as an American Development Model manager for goaltending. Working with USA Hockey's Co-Chairman of the Board Ron DeGregorio, Vanbiesbrouck and others, the plan is to provide a consistent nationwide program to recruit, develop and produce elite goaltenders well into the future.

"Right now, it's a great opportunity for us where we need to capitalize on the success of the guys being in the NHL," Reiter said. "I think [their success] will help tie some comparisons to younger kids to try to incorporate some of the abilities of the older guys into their own game and enhance it."

And that pleases those who have already made their mark between the pipes.

"I think coaching over the last 10 or 20 years has been getting better," said Ottawa Senators goaltender Craig Anderson, who at 34 is among the elder statesmen of American netminders.

"I know when I was growing up playing youth hockey a lot of teams just stuck the least talented, least athletic player in the net and said, 'have fun.'"

"That's changed and coaches have found that goaltenders are usually one of your top athletes. You need to coach them and help them to continue to get better."

And that's something that would make Dave Peterson smile. ★

where half of the roster spots at the league's mid-winter showcase were occupied by goalies with American passports. Ben Bishop (Tampa Bay Lightning) and Cory Schneider (N.J. Devils) represented the Eastern Conference while California standouts Jonathan Quick (L.A. Kings) and John Gibson (Anaheim Ducks) suited up for the Western Conference.

"There's so many good goalies in the world today, but to have so many of them from the U.S. is a matter of pride for us," Schneider said during the All-Star festivities.

And those players are pinnacle of the player development pyramid. A quick search of AHL and ECHL rosters show

STICKING THEIR NECKS OUT

By
DANIEL
BERGELS

Father And Son's Passion For Protection Helping Make The Game Safer For Goalies

WHEN AN ICE HOCKEY PLAYER'S PROTECTIVE GEAR BREAKS FROM A FLYING PUCK, there is often a nervous moment for parents sitting in the bleachers.

When that happened to the throat protector worn by 14-year-old A.J. Ostrander for the fourth time—and it shattered into several pieces on the ice—his father Jerry said, “Something’s not right here.”

Jerry started asking around and other parents, players and coaches all told him a version of the same story: Yes, the throat protectors that are attached to the bottom of the goalie’s mask would sometimes break. And each time that piece was broken, games would have to be delayed to find a replacement.

But at a relatively low replacement cost—and with no reports of serious injuries from the breakages—no one had made a concerted effort to fix the problem.

Jerry was particularly concerned because he suspected that some goalies in his son’s league or elsewhere might simply continue to play with broken throat protection, or without protection altogether. Without that piece of protective equipment, the larynx, trachea, esophagus, cartilage, vocal cords and more would be exposed.

“I spent 25 years protecting people, but I didn’t feel like our kids were being protected,” said the retired police officer.

He started writing letters to a number of organizations and federal agencies that deal with health and safety. When someone pointed him to ASTM International, a global standards organization, he went online and saw that ASTM was the home for several ice hockey equipment standards.

“Aha! I finally landed in the right spot,” he thought.

However, Jerry quickly realized that there was no safety standard at ASTM International—or any other body—for throat protectors.

THE PROCESS BEGINS

Undeterred, Jerry contacted Mark Granger, the chairman of ASTM’s ice hockey subcommittee.

Granger was a little surprised – but pleased – to hear directly from a consumer about a potential new standard in this area. But remembering ASTM’s commitment to openness to anyone interested in developing standards, he advised Jerry to submit a letter that he could share with members of his subcommittee.

It was clear that Jerry had done his homework. He sent a detailed letter to Mark in January 2010, requesting that the group draft a consensus standard for “polycarbonate hanging goalie throat protectors.” The letter told how A.J. had been playing goalie since age 7 in a local hockey league and had just started playing in high school.

“There’s something breaking, and your committee can fix it!” he summarized at the end of the letter.

Mark put the topic on the agenda for the next meeting in St. Louis that May.

“I’ll be there,” Jerry said. “And I’m bringing A.J.”

TASK GROUP GETS TO WORK

When someone goes to ASTM and proposes a new standard, a task group is often formed to explore the idea.

David Rudd, the senior development manager at Bauer Hockey, volunteered to lead the effort. Granger also decided to be part of it. And, of course, Jerry and A.J. joined the group.

“Our initial observations were that we didn’t have reports of injuries, but we did see some reports of breakages of throat guards,” Rudd said. “We knew we could do even more to protect the throat and address this concern, so our task group got to work.”

The manufacturers started determining key requirements that should be in the standard, including how the protectors were constructed, how they were attached to the mask, product markings for consumers and more.



A.J. Ostrander was instrumental in creating an international standard for neck protectors that will help future generations of goaltenders.

Then the group developed a testing process, which involved shooting high velocity hockey pucks from an air cannon at a head form mounted with a mask and throat protector. This test method also became part of the standard itself.

CROSSING THE FINISH LINE

The data came together, and the new standard started taking shape, complete with descriptions and drawings.

In May 2015, Jerry and A.J. went to another ASTM meeting, this time in Anaheim, Calif. Toward the end of the meeting, it became clear to the subcommittee that the standard could soon cross the finish line.

Granger asked Jerry and A.J. to stand up. At 19 years old, it was clear to the crowd that A.J. had grown up a bit. The room full of ASTM members applauded.

"In essence, what A.J. did was create an international standard for this piece of gear at the youngest age I've ever seen," said Granger, an ASTM member since 1994.

The standard, which was given final approval on March 15, is now on the books: F3165, Standard Specification for Throat Protective Equipment for Hockey Goaltenders.

Now a junior at Coastal Carolina University, A.J. still plays hockey, even though the nearest rink is a few hours away. Although he has been instrumental in the development of the new standard, he's still impressed with how it all came to be.

"I think it's pretty cool how it started with my dad and I," he said. He's thrilled that the throat protector standard is "something so small, but it can make a big impact."

Granger expects the Hockey Equipment Certification Council to use the new standard, and that other organizations could follow suit, helping further ensure safety for millions of youth and adults who play ice hockey. ★

Daniel Bergels is a public relations manager with ASTM International.

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HOMEGROWN GOALIES

USA Hockey Looks To Develop More Top Athletes To Excel Between The Pipes

By SCOTT POWERS



WHEN THE CANADIAN HOCKEY LEAGUE made the bold decision to ban import goalies in 2013, the ripple effect could be felt on both sides of the border, and beyond.

"The goaltender position is the most important in our game," CHL president David Branch said at the time. "In partnership with Hockey Canada, the CHL has identified the need to further develop Canadian goaltenders by providing increased opportunities for them to compete in our league and succeed at the next level."

Now two seasons into the CHL's goalie import rule, the goaltending community continues to monitor the situation as it tries to understand the impact it has on the player development system in the United States and around the world.

Opinions differ among the top Junior leagues in the U.S., but the one constant belief is that everyone's top priority needs to be focused on what is best for the future of the American goalie.

"It's going to get to the forefront and we're going to find whatever that happy medium is and that next step," said Phil Osaer, whose focus is on goaltending in his role with the American Development Model. "I think we have to continue to learn from what's going on in Canada and see if this is working for the Canadian goalie."

"We have to do our due diligence and pay attention to how this is affecting

everyone and make an educated move in the next direction, not just a knee-jerk one just because Canada has decided this is the option and that, 'Well, we have to do it as well.'"

USA Hockey addressed this topic at its winter meetings in January and created a goaltending committee, which includes Osaer, USA Hockey's National Goalie coach Kevin Reiter and USA Hockey Junior Council Vice President and John Vanbiesbrouck, a Hall of Fame goaltender who serves on USA Hockey's executive committee.

Some of the data the committee will look at is the number of import goalies in the top U.S. Junior leagues, and how many U.S. goalies are playing in the CHL, which does not count United States' players as imports.

The top two Junior leagues in the United States are the USHL, the country's only Tier 1 league, and the North American Hockey League, which is a Tier 2 circuit. Of the USHL's 16 teams, there were five import goalies in the 2012-13 season, six in the 2013-14 season, nine in the 2014-15 season and nine this season. The NAHL has eight import goalies currently playing on its 22 teams and had seven import goalies play at least 20 games last season.

Commissioners in both leagues have described the number of goalie imports in their leagues as negligible.

"On average, there's seven," USHL Commissioner Bob Fallen said of the trend over the past four years. "Does that look like a huge impact and is the import rule in Canada the only impact? I would argue that

Peter Thome,
Aberdeen Wings

there's other factors in play here as well, including the fact that the USHL is proving itself as a path to the pros and college, which is really now starting to get the attention of people outside the United States."

According to Fallen, the USHL is committed to providing American players of every position with the best opportunities to move up the ladder of development and into the college ranks.

"What's interesting, though, is we have not wavered in the amount of imports allowed in our league. We established many years ago the notion that we have a maximum of four imports per team regardless of position. That hasn't changed," Fallen said.

"We recognize that our primary role in the amateur hockey player development landscape is to develop American players. That's what we do. That's what we're here for. So, the vast majority of players in our league are American."

NAHL Commissioner Mark Frankenfeld has a similar response.

"I would say [our import goalie] percentage has probably been pretty consistent," he said. "I would say that's another reason why it's not been on our radar because it hasn't really affected us as much. We've had a lot of success in gaining momentum with goalies, for sure, but the numbers haven't changed that much for us. We've always been a pretty much on good path to the NCAA."

The USHL and NAHL do have a four import quota, which includes Canadians, and that is a number some have suggested should be reduced. Osaer floated the idea that an import goalie should equate to two roster spots.

USHL senior director of hockey operations Adam Micheletti doesn't think that reducing the import goalie spots would automatically benefit U.S. goalies as much as some might think. His concern is that too many younger U.S. goaltenders who weren't ready for the USHL level would be rushed into those spots.

"I don't think by changing our import rules it's going to improve the goaltending in the United States," Micheletti said. "I think we need to look at them in a much larger picture at what we can do at a younger age with goaltenders to make sure

they are prepared by the time they reach 17, 18, 19 to play in the USHL and beyond."

Vanbiesbrouck has a unique perspective on the debate because he's involved with USA Hockey and the USHL. He is also a Hall of Fame goaltender who played 19 seasons in the NHL. He thinks it's important to recognize the distinction between competition and development.

"When you start talking USHL, college and things like that, you're talking about a real high level. The USHL only has 32 goalies in the league, college hockey has 120 total goalies," he said. "That's not a lot when you look at the total numbers."

Another piece of the puzzle is U.S. goalies continue to find opportunities north of the border. The Ontario Hockey League alone has 10 American goalies.

As a former standout at Ferris State University, Osaer personally believes that college hockey provides a better path to the pros. Reiter said USA Hockey wouldn't negatively recruit against U.S. goalies playing in the CHL or NCAA. His concern is simply whether those players receive the proper coaching to fulfill their potential.

"Like anything else, the route you choose will impact your development in one way or another," Reiter said. "The CHL route has proven to be beneficial for many American-born goalies over the years. In turn, when goalies choose to play in the NCAA, they know that they will have four years of development. This is significant because the average age of an NHL goalie this season is over 27."

Cal Peterson,
Waterloo
Blackhawks



"WE HAVE TO DO OUR DUE DILIGENCE AND PAY ATTENTION TO HOW THIS IS AFFECTING EVERYONE AND MAKE AN EDUCATED MOVE IN THE NEXT DIRECTION..." —PHIL OSAER

“THERE NEEDS TO BE MORE COACHING SUPPORT FOR THESE GOALIES WHILE IN THEIR PRIME STAGE OF DEVELOPMENT.”

—KEVIN REITER, USA Hockey National Goaltending Coach

Both Reiter and Osaer feel that the biggest impact on the development of young goaltenders is coaching. When players reach a critical stage in their development it is important that they have access to full-time goalie coaches. That is often not the case.

“Most teams only have a part-time goalie coach who is not with the team that often, and some don’t have one at all,” Reiter said. “There needs to be more coaching support for these goalies while in their prime stage of development. This is a major difference compared to our European counterparts who receive goalie-specific coaching numerous times per week at this age.”

Aside from taking a look at Canada’s import rule, USA Hockey is also approaching goalie development in other ways. USA Hockey’s development committee is working to spread universal goalie philosophies and

teachings to youth coaches nationwide.

Reiter is hopeful that will provide more quality goalie coaching outside of just private lessons. USA Hockey is also attempting to promote the position through a variety of programs in hopes of attracting more kids to become goalies.

“I believe we have made great progress and are seeing growth in quantity and quality. But we could always do more,” Reiter said. “Our Warren Strelow Program has seen tremendous success over the past few years.”

The proof is in the number of U.S. goalies who have risen through the ranks and are now considered among the elite players in the game.

“It was great to see that four out of the eight goalies in the 2016 NHL All-Star Game were U.S. goalies,” Reiter said. “Ryan Miller, [Jonathan] Quick, Craig Anderson, Jimmy Howard, Cory Schneider, Al Montoya and Bishop are now active household names. But it’s great to see some ‘new blood’—John Gibson, Mike Condon, Jeff Zatkoff, Keith Kinkaid, Alex Stalock, Scott Darling and Connor Hellebuyck—show that they are more than capable of playing in the NHL.”

“In saying all this, we still need to continue developing NHL-caliber goalies.” ★

Scott Powers is a freelance writer based in Chicago.



Casey Nelson
2010-13, NAHL
2013-16, NCAA
Today, Buffalo Sabres

PROVEN PATHWAY





Nic Dowd
2008-09, NAHL
2010-14, NCAA
Today, LA Kings



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THE MAN BEHIND THE MASK

Custom, Painted Goalie Masks: The Perfect Mix Of Art And Hockey For Michigan's Ray Bishop

By PHILIP COLVIN



BEFORE Ray Bishop can begin working on one of his custom-designed and painted goalie masks, he has to do a little digging.

"I call it 'personal archeology,'" said the Michigan-based artist who for the last 20 years has produced masks for goalies of all ages and levels, including current NHLers Ryan Miller, Jimmy Howard and Al Montoya.

"Goalies all have their own unique personalities. I try to find out what they like, what their interests are and if they have any hobbies. I want to create something original that reflects their personality."

The design process includes working closely with each goalie to come up with the unique look and feel of the mask.

"I want it to be a hands-on, personal experience," Bishop said. "People usually have good ideas and a direction they'd like to go. I help them put it all together and come up with a one-of-a-kind design."

Miller and Bishop have worked together on masks since the 13-year NHL veteran was a freshman at Michigan State University. Miller likes to draw and has come up with ideas for his masks, and "he let me run with them," Bishop said.

"Ray has outstanding artistic talents, and his willingness to listen has helped develop my ideas into great masks," Miller said.

A Bishop custom paint job is an individual piece of artwork—and it's not done on an assembly line. All of his designs are hand-drawn, hand-painted, and take on average 50 hours to complete. Costs range from \$600 to \$2,000, depending on how intricate the design and the time it takes to complete.

Bishop and his clients work out a schedule, and the goalies send their mask to him when he is ready to work on it so it "doesn't sit in the shop." Still, he admits that the whole process isn't always quick.

"Custom paint work takes time," he said. "But I am up front and honest about how long it will take. And I will do a great job—no matter if you are an NHL goalie or a house league goalie."

Bishop approaches each blank, usually all-white slate with the goal of creating a bold, memorable design that makes the mask—and the goalie wearing it—stand out.

"You can't see a goalie's face so their mask is their identity," said Bishop. "Guys like Felix Potvin, Eddie Belfour, Martin Brodeur and Cujo [Curtis



"I JUST KEPT WORKING ON IT AND TRIED TO GET BETTER. I THINK THAT IS THE SECRET: NEVER STOP LEARNING."



"GOALIES ALL HAVE THEIR OWN UNIQUE PERSONALITIES... I WANT TO CREATE SOMETHING ORIGINAL THAT REFLECTS THEIR PERSONALITY."



Joseph]—you remember those paint jobs. You knew who they were the second you turned on the TV and saw their mask.

"I want it to look good in your hands and look good in the stands. It's cool to have a lot of detail and things that you notice up close, but you also need the pop so you can see it on TV and in the rink."

Bishop's love of hockey and painting started early. Growing up in suburban Detroit, he watched the Red Wings, played pond hockey and worked on custom paint

jobs for his model cars and Hot Wheels using markers, white out and even his mom's nail polish.

"If I wasn't skating with my buddies, I was putting stripes and flames on all of my cars," he said. "I'd use anything I could get my hands on. I have been customizing things for as long as I can remember."

Bishop Designs was born when he bought an airbrush in his early 20s and painted two street hockey masks with a skull design. He hung flyers in ice rinks advertising his services and

the manager of a local pro shop put one of his masks in a display case. The street-level marketing generated a couple of jobs for local youth goaltenders.

"That's where I started. I still have one of those first masks and I'm surprised anyone let me paint anything after that," laughed Bishop. "But I just kept working on it and tried to get better. I think that is the secret: never stop learning."

Bishop painted his first professional mask for the Detroit Vipers' Jeff Reese in 1997. A year later the Dallas Stars' Roman Turek became Bishop's first NHL client.

"Those really gave me a sense of accomplishment," Bishop recalled. "It's a pretty great feeling to see your work on a big stage. That's when people really started to look at what I'd done and it just grew from there."

Since then Bishop has painted masks for more than 20 NHL goalies, and has

All of Ray Bishop's original designs are hand-drawn, hand-painted and take an average of 50 hours to complete.

branched out to guitars, cars, drum kits, motorcycles and, most recently, a surfboard.

Still, it's the Olympic masks he's done for Team USA's Miller (Uncle Sam holding the Sochi torch), Howard (Stars and Stripes) and Brianne McLaughlin (the USA Hockey shield) that really make him proud.

"I am very patriotic," Bishop said, "and I am honored to have the opportunity to work with USA Hockey." ★

Philip Colvin is a freelance writer based out of Walled Lake, Mich.





OF COURSE HE'S A GOALIE

In an instance of serendipity, Ray Bishop's 10-year-old son, Nathan, who just finished his first season of youth hockey with the Flint Jr. Firebirds, is a goalie.


"After 20 years doing this, I never would have thought that I'd be a goalie dad," Bishop admitted. "I was so excited for him and proud of him. He just loves it. Hockey is such a great sport and it was great to see him having so much fun playing."

Bishop earned his Level 1 USA Hockey coaching certification so he could serve as an assistant coach. He calls himself a "B-C level adult player" and enjoyed getting the opportunity to shape youngsters' hockey experience.

"To see all the smiles and be able to talk to boys on the ice and on the bench was great," he said. "I just tried to make it fun and instill in them a little bit of the respect for the game and for the coaches, and hope that is carries over to their regular life."


Bishop's son wears a replica of the mask his father designed for the Red Wings Jimmy Howard, complete with the stylized D on the top, wings on the sides and the number 35 on the chin.

"One of the parents watching us play said that was the coolest mask of any 10-year-old he'd ever seen," laughed Bishop. "That was nice to hear."



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By SIAN WILKERSON

THE EVOLUTION OF THE GOALIE MASK

1968

Gerry Cheevers of the Boston Bruins was the first goalie to present artwork on his mask. His came in the form of black, Sharpie stitch marks, which denoted each spot a puck had struck him in the face.

1930

1950

1940



1936

At the 1936 Olympic Winter Games in Garmisch-

Partenkirchen, Germany, Japanese goalie **Teiji Honma** wore a leather goalie mask with a wired cage to protect his eyeglasses, making him the first to sport a mask on the international stage.

1959

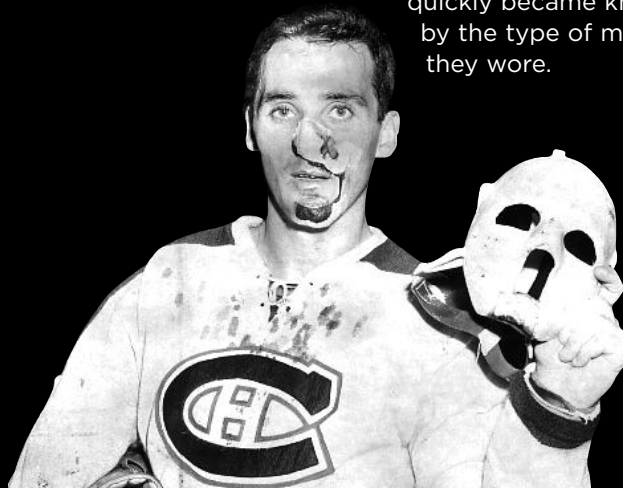
Montreal Canadiens goaltender **Jacques Plante** debuted his rudimentary mask in a game against the New York Rangers. His subsequent 10-0-1 run while wearing the mask put face protection, which had been previously considered to be cowardly, into the mainstream, and goalies quickly became known by the type of masks they wore.

1930



The *Montreal Gazette* reported that "someday, the league will authorize masks for netminders as baseball does for its catchers" after **Clint Benedict** of the Montreal Maroons

suffered a broken nose after being struck by an airborne puck. After sitting out 14 games, Benedict returned, this time sporting an enormous mask over his face. However, it obscured his vision and after just five games, he discarded the new piece of equipment.



1970



1974

Andy Brown of the Pittsburgh Penguins was the last North American professional goalie to play without a mask.



1980

1980s

As European goalies began making their way across the Atlantic to play in North America, birdcage masks began to take over as the new popular style when goalies realized how much more protection the masks offered in comparison to the traditional all-fiberglass, form-fitting mask.

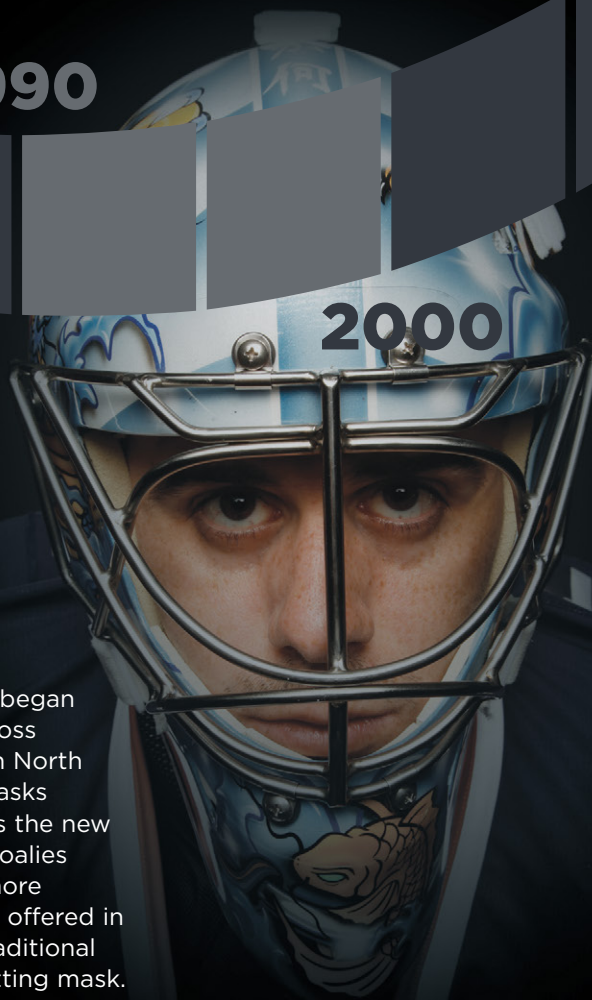
1990

1990s

The modern goalie mask, a hybrid fiberglass-cage style, made its debut and still reigns to this day.



2000



UP THE CREEK

WITH THE WRONG PADDLE

By KEVIN REITER

A Properly Sized Stick Can Help Any Goalie Unlock His Or Her Potential

WHEN IT COMES TO GOALTENDING, one of the toughest decisions to make is what type and size of gear to purchase. The goalie stick is no exception.

The goaltender's preference on curve alone provides a number of options. However, one of the most improperly-sized pieces of goaltending equipment is often the stick due to the paddle length. This problem occurs with youth goalies using adult sticks, but it is also a problem with older goalies using sticks that don't suit their height or body type.

Last year, coaches at USA Hockey's National Team Development Program looked at a sample of sticks that were being used by the goalies that we worked with during training sessions, clinics and a weeklong summer camp. These goalies ranged from beginner to professional goaltenders.

The purpose of this exercise was to find the right paddle height for youth and adult ice hockey goaltenders.

From a our sampling of 200 goaltenders three common factors emerged. First, age is not an issue as much as height and limb length. Second, blocker performance suffers when the paddle height is too short or too tall. Third, proper paddle length can greatly improve stance, butterfly, blocker and stick usage mechanics.

Inaccurate paddle height affects three main areas of a goaltender's game. These areas are stance, butterfly, and blocker mechanics. By knowing what the goaltender should look like in these three areas, the player, coach or parent can help with corrections if the paddle height is wrong.

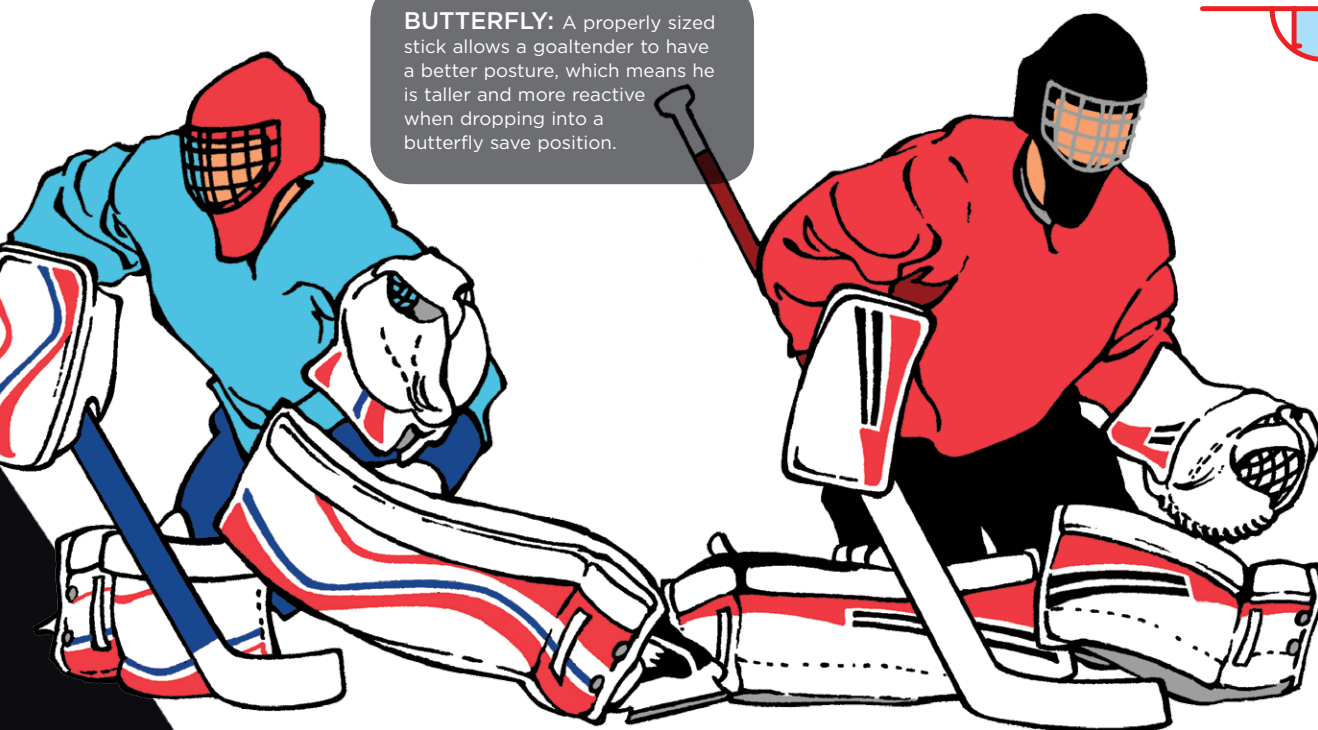
When sized with the proper paddle, the chest, hip and knees are in an athletic position. The goaltender is balanced and ready



BLOCKER: A properly sized paddle height allows a goaltender to make a save in front of his body instead of on the side or behind him. It also provides him with greater speed and accuracy to make the save.

to react when the play dictates that he responds. The structure of the upper arm and forearm resemble the letter "L." The arm hangs from the shoulder, slightly bent at the elbow and wrist. The blocker rests in a plane just in front of the goaltender's body, enabling the goaltender to make saves in front of his body instead of next to or behind his body.

BUTTERFLY: A properly sized stick allows a goaltender to have a better posture, which means he is taller and more reactive when dropping into a butterfly save position.



Using the proper paddle height also provides a goaltender with greater speed and accuracy when using his blocker. While standing, the wrist rotated well and the arm was able to extend towards the puck's trajectory.

When sized with the proper paddle height, the goaltender has a tall but reactive butterfly. He is able to stay low and laterally drive toward

the puck's intended path. The torso can rotate properly allowing the stick to have range and meet pucks at the knees or out toward the limits of the goaltender's butterfly.

Through this study we gained a better understanding of how paddle height:

- Is related to height and age
- Affects stance
- Affects butterfly mechanics
- Affects blocker performance

The data from the study clearly indicates that goaltenders below the height of 5 feet 5 inches were most likely to use intermediate or youth sticks. The weight and paddle length of adult sticks was too much for youth goaltenders to effectively execute stick usage or quick and accurate blocker mechanics.

Second, after reaching a certain height many taller goaltenders opted to stay with a 27-inch paddle.

We found that the stance tended to be deep and athletic, the butterfly was tall yet reactive, stick usage had accurate range and the blocker suffered little to no delay when making saves. The study provided strong evidence for sizing a goaltender with a proper paddle height, regardless of age. ★

Kevin Reiter is USA Hockey's National Goaltending Coach.

STANCE: When sized with the proper paddle, the chest, hip and knees are in a more athletic position, which allows the goaltender to be balanced and ready to react to the shot.

