

Ice Hockey Systems Question

What do you think most youth hockey coaches lack when they work on developing their goalies?

Justin Goldman Answer

Patience. First and foremost. It is extremely difficult, because every single goalie out there learns differently, they all have a different learning curve, and there are going to be some skills that translate well with their athletic ability and some skills that may take much, much longer for them to fully grasp.

So first and foremost, if you are going to be coaching goalies and maybe you don't have a goalie coaching background, you have to have patience.

That's a pretty straightforward answer, the next thing as a coach, you have to know that you have to be continually to be willing to learn. Don't be afraid to talk to your goalie about certain techniques that you may not understand. This is a way to reinforce the goalie to learn for them self.

If the goalie is teaching you one or two things, he or she has to reinforce the same things that they are trying to learn themselves. So it kind of works backwards. This is a great opportunity to reinforce the relationship that I spoke about earlier (Justin speaks about this in "If you could give one piece of advice to every single youth hockey coach out there, about coaching goalies, what would it be?")

You build that relationship because the student understands that you don't have all of the answers. If you don't come from a goalie coaching background, you are not expected to have all of the answers.

So it is kind of a learn by trial process and you guys learn together and you evolve together, and that's a great cohesive relationship because every time a goalie goes on the ice they are going to learn something new.

Whether he feels it a certain way, or he faces a different type of shot in practice, from a different type of a player, that learning process is continually happening. The evolution of his positioning, how he tracks pucks, how he moves into shooting lanes, everything is constantly evolving.

The process is a very long one, that is why goalies don't evolve or reach their full potential until their late 20s. The coach has to understand that, it's not going to be one season, it's not going to be one week where this advanced skill is going to be mastered. It takes months, it takes years and it takes that body awareness most importantly.

So patience is definitely the most important skill for a hockey coach to have when working with young goalies.