



Coaches Corner

Today we are going to discuss the art of goaltending. Goaltending is often the difference between winning and losing in lacrosse; probably more so than in any other sport.

Every tender has their own, unique style as no two goalies play in exactly the same manner. People like to classify goalies as one of two styles: a blocker or a reactionary goalie. Blockers or angle goalies, as they are also known, tend to play their angles well and use their positioning to fill up a large part of net forcing the shooter to beat them with a well placed shot. Former Shamrock and current San Jose net-minder, Anthony Cosmo, is a good example of a goalie who most people would describe as a blocker. A reaction or reflex goaltender, on the other hand, rely on their quick reflexes to react to where the ball is shot; often giving the shooter a spot in the net to shoot at then taking it away. A good example of a reaction goaltender in the WLA and NLL is Dallas Eliuk. Both styles are equally effective and, in reality, most goalies need to employ the basics of both styles in order to be effective.

The Intermediate Shamrocks are blessed with two goaltenders that play quite different styles. This gives us the opportunity to throw off our opponents by using either goalie depending on who our opponent is and what their offensive strengths may be. Using the standard classifications described above, Rob (Robo) McAllan would be seen as more of a blocker style whereas Scott Bannister would be called a reaction goalie. While goalies tend to lean toward one style over the other, at a competitive level, they are much more likely to combine the two styles into a hybrid style. A good example of a goalie with strong angle positioning combined with lightning quick reflexes is Victoria's own Nick Patterson, the current goalie for the Shamrocks and the Minnesota Swarm.

So, what makes a goalie good? Average? Or great?

Quite often, success in this position comes from the ability to mentally prepare for and react to the game (situation). Experienced goalies learn to prepare themselves mentally for the specific team they are playing against: studying the offensive positioning of the opponent, the shooting tendencies of their players and the types of plays the opponent tends to run on power play situations, five on five, etc. Former Shamrocks and

Vancouver Ravens goaltender, Dwight Maetche, spent hours preparing for each game by studying game films and discussing the opposing players with coaches and fellow players. Dealing with pressure situations and adverse conditions during a game are other equally important parts of the mental aspect of the position. As the last line of defense, the goaltender has to be mentally strong and confidently relaxed. He cannot get too down if the opponent gets a 3 goal run or if he lets in a "soft" goal. Bouncing back to regain his focus is critical during a game for a goalie to be successful.

In big games, good goalies play well, great goalies stand on their head! Making the big stop, at a critical time of the game when the team needs it, can often be as or even more important than the 20 previous stops and can be the difference between winning and losing a game for a team.

Advice for younger goaltenders: study as many of the junior, WLA and NLL goalies that you can and learn from their play, listen to the tips and advice from as many goalies or former goalies and coaches that you can, take what you learn from all of these sources and try it out in practice. If it works for you, incorporate it into your own, unique style. If not, store it in your memory bank as it may come in handy down the road or when facing that breakaway in the last minute of a tied game!

Yours in lacrosse,

Rod Banister, Assistant Coach

Weekend Recap



Last weekend actually turned into three games in four days as the Baby Rocks were in action Saturday, Sunday and Tuesday (of this week). The Saturday game saw the New Westminster Salmonbellies, reigning Provincial Champion, visit Bear Mountain arena in a rematch of last year's gold medal game. The Baby Rocks had revenge on their minds and were well prepared for the opposing Bellies. They jumped to a quick lead after only 36 seconds and never looked back. The Baby Rocks held a 4-2 lead after one period and a 9-3 lead after two periods. New West came out strong in the third period to bring the score to 10-6 but that was as close as they would get as the Baby Rocks scored the last two goals of the game for a well-deserved 12-6 victory.

Brandon McLean was the leading point getter on the day with 2 goals and 4 assists, Steve Higgs had a great game with 4 goals, Mitch McLaren and Karsen Leung each had 2 goals and 2 assists, Casey Jackson and Jordan Wong with 1 goal and 3 assists each rounded out the scoring. Robert McAllan played a strong game in the Victoria goal and added two assists on the day.

New Westminster's scoring was spread across six different players. Their game was hampered by early penalty trouble during the first period.

On Sunday, the Rocks traveled to Tsawwassen to meet the Delta Islanders. As in their previous meeting with this team, the Babyrocks hit a mental wall, or perhaps the wall wearing the black jersey in the Delta net: goaltender Jeff Nikula. Whichever, the result was a 5 to 2 victory for Delta and current bragging rights in the race for first place in the Intermediate "A" league.

The first period saw 9 minor penalties called making the period a heavy one for the special teams. When the dust had cleared, Delta had scored an even strength goal, a power play goal, and a short-handed goal. Victoria responded with a single marker on the power play, scored by Steve Higgs. Delta 3 Victoria 1.

The Babyrocks buckled down on D for the second period but so did Delta. Neither team found the range in a free flowing period. Each team was assessed just a single minor penalty. The score at the end of the second period remained 3 to 1 for the host team.

In the third period, Delta cashed in on two opportunities while the Babyrocks had a single goal: Shea Wakefield stole an outlet pass and hustled to the crease to find the twine behind the Delta goal line late in the game. That was as close as Victoria got.

The final score was 5 to 2 for Delta. There were 39 shots on the Delta goal, 40 shots at the Victoria goal. The Babyrocks just never seemed to get any momentum and had trouble finding their way to the crease. Shots were mainly from the outside and gave little trouble to the Delta goalie. The team will have to find a way to get inside if they hope to beat this team later this season.

On Tuesday, the Babyrocks hosted the Nanaimo Timbermen for the second time this season. The last outing was a 19-2 blow-out in favour of the Rocks. Nanaimo definitely came out with guns blaring this time and it seemed like Nanaimo was a different team than the one the Shamrocks played only a couple of weeks ago.

At the end of the first period the Shamrocks were leading by only one goal 4-3 and were actually down 6-5 after two periods. Goals came from Casey Jackson and Steve Higgs with two each, and a single from Jordon Wong.

No one is sure what was said in the dressing room but the Rocks were a different team in the third period. Ben Stebbins tied the game four minutes into the period. Less than three minutes later, Kyle Hofer went on a scoring spree with his first of four goals in the period, with Jordan Wong getting his third assist. Hofer scored his second from Wakefield, then a pretty goal coming from defensive player, Tyler Matheson, on a breakaway pass from Jason Gregg. Next to score was Higgs with his second of the night from Mitch McLaren. The next three goals were from Asahel Beaudet (unassisted), then Hofer (from Wong and Pinnock), ending with Hofer (from Higgs and McLaren) all scored in less than two minutes. The final two goals were scored during the last minute of the game: Gregg from Matheson and Bannister then Steve Axford from Curtis McKinnon. The ten unanswered goals left the final score 15-6 in favour of the Babyrocks. Goaltender Scott Bannister turned back 37 shots during the game, several brilliant ones from tight range.

Major contributions to this article by Frank Greenlay and Deb Anderson.

Meet the Players



Mitch Bancroft

Welcome to the Intermediate Shamrocks team, has training camp and the early season unfolded as expected?

Yes, I have really been enjoying the season so far and am looking forward to the playoffs.

What do you hope to achieve with the Baby Rocks this season?

To win the championship at the Provincials.

Where did you play your minor lacrosse and who were your biggest influences?

I played for the Peninsula Warriors and my biggest influences were the players on my team like Steve Higgs and Greg Simpson, as well as my coach Bob Brown.

Tell us about your past accomplishments in the sport.

I started playing lacrosse as a second year in Bantam A. I feel like I have improved every year since.

As a minor lacrosse player, was there one particular player you looked up to who you wanted to emulate and why?

I would have to say Matt Yager who is now with the Junior Rocks. He is a good player and a hard worker. I think everyone could learn a few things from him.

Do you have future plans/goals that you hope to pursue in lacrosse?

I would like to play Junior A next year beyond that I am not sure.

What about school and/or career goals?

I want to get a degree in education from the University of Victoria and either be a teacher or possibly a fireman if teaching does not become a reality.

If you were a script writer, what would the perfect ending to a lacrosse movie be?

Scoring a break away goal off of the short man to win the final game.

Thank you for sharing your thoughts with us today.

Thank you, it has been fun doing this.

Alumni Corner

Lewis Ratcliff



Tell us about your time with the Intermediate Shamrocks team: Years, Players, Coaches, Accomplishments, etc?

I was a member of the Intermediate Shamrocks for the 1998 and 1999 seasons. My first year I was coached by Brian Spaven. We had quite a good team that year with Ryan Ward, Curtis Smith, Chris Mckay, Tyler Heavenor and many more but we couldn't get by Poco in the finals of the BC Championships. My 2nd year was not as successful for the team, since we graduated the majority of our previous team, but we did manage to make it to the bronze medal game where we lost to New west.

What was the most memorable experience that you had with the Baby Rocks?

What I remember most is from when I was a call up. I was still a first year Midget and I remember being amazed with the speed and skill. It's quite a big jump from minor lacrosse to intermediate.

Which team or teams are you currently playing with in the Summer and Winter?

Right now I play for the Toronto Rock of the NLL during the winter and the Victoria Shamrocks of the WLA and the San Francisco Dragons of the MLL, during the summer.

Do you feel your years with the Intermediate Shamrocks helped you advance your lacrosse career? Why?

Absolutely! It was my introduction to what real lacrosse is all about. That's when I realized that if I wanted to take my game to the next level, I was going to have to put in the work.

What advice do you have for younger lacrosse players hoping to make it to either the WLA or NLL?

My best piece of advice is just practice and train off of the floor. You need to be as prepared as you possibility can when you get to the rink. So hit the box, the gym, whatever you need.

Is there one lacrosse accomplishment that stands out from all the others? Why?

My two Mann Cups and my NLL Championship. They are just so hard to win!!

What are your future goals in the sport?

Continue to grow as a player every year and to add a bunch more rings to my collection!

What are you doing these days outside of lacrosse?

I run Ratcliff Peak Performance Training at the Eagle Ridge Community Center as well as numerous lax camps. Other than that, I spend all my free time with my wife Kim and my new baby boy, Carter.

Thank you for taking the time to share your thoughts with us.

Thank you and good luck to the boys the rest of the way.

**Next Home Game Saturday, June
14, 1:30 PM versus Burnaby**

**To see more game articles, statistics, and team updates
please visit www.babyrocks.net**