The Other "D" Word

The value of the goaltender in today's game has sky rocketed in importance to a team's success and a nation's success on the world stage. Goaltenders with a save percentage of less than .915 - .920 are considered subpar. This level of excellence has become the norm due to the amount of development goaltenders are receiving and their willingness to adapt and change. Within the ever changing dynamic between goaltenders and goaltending coaches, there are an endless number of drills, theories, uses of video, and compliments and criticism to help a goaltender develop. However, there is one underlying aspect of development that is unequivocally important to all goalies and transcends the latest drills and video technology: **decisiveness**.

Making conscious decisions during games and throughout training will allow goaltenders to learn what works for their physical make-up and specific skill set. During play, goaltenders must balance awareness of their decisions while still being engaged in the scenarios they are facing. An NCAA goaltender is going to have a more comprehensive understanding of a specific scenario than a Bantam level goaltender. As comprehension increases, so can the purpose of the decisions being made.

Development occurs when a goaltender not only experiences a positive result from a decision but applies the same logic and process to subsequent scenarios. However, when a goaltender's decision fails to yield the desired outcome, he or she will know to use a different strategy in future similar scenarios. Regardless of a positive or negative outcome, development and learning has occurred.

Decisiveness is a mindset that can be applied to all aspects of goaltending on and off the ice. Making decisions regarding activities such as pre-game warm up or pre-game meals contribute to a goaltender's accountability and growth. A goaltender must be decisive to continually grow his or her game.

"Be decisive. A wrong decision is generally less disastrous than indecision."

- Bernhard Langer, PGA professional and two-time Masters Champion