

# Goalies and the blame game

By Robb Stauber

My 30 years of experience propels me to write this article regarding goaltenders and "the blame game." Goaltending is perhaps the most stressful position in sports. There is immense responsibility and pressure placed on goalies to perform. When adversity arises, too many goalies relieve themselves of that pressure by placing the blame on others. Everyone knows goalies need to have a positive outlook, but playing the blame game is entirely negative. The blame game is not the solution to the problem.

All of us involved in hockey also play "The Blame Game." The first is the goaltender himself. How many times have you witnessed a goalie throwing his or her arms up in the air after a goal is scored through traffic, tips, or screens? When I see this happen, my first reaction is that the goalie wants everyone in the stands to know that he or she is not at fault: or "Don't blame me, I couldn't have done anything different to prevent that goal." This type of reaction prevents a goalie's growth. Every difficult or impossible play

must be viewed as an opportunity to become a better goaltender. Just because it was difficult to locate the puck, does not mean it could not have been stopped. Throwing one's hands up insinuates that nothing else could be done to prevent the goal, is not reflective of a champion or a leader. Pointing the finger at your teammates destroys team spirit and isolates you at a time when unity is key.

Parents are also expert players of the blame game. How many times do parents support their goaltender by casting blame on their goalie's teammates by telling him or her that the defense played terrible, the defense did not clear the rebounds, or games will not be won when only one goal is scored? Such attempts to make your goalie feel better after losing does not promote growth.

Trying to soothe your goalie's pain after each loss by blaming his or her teammates does not solve the current problems that caused the outcome. In cases such as this, just being Mom or Dad is good enough.

As a parent, you don't have to take the pain away. Instead, being positive and offering hope, by saying "Tomorrow is a new day"

or "The sun will come up tomorrow" is far more effective than blaming. It's very easy to blame someone else as a parent. For most, saying maybe my son or daughter needs to get better is much harder.

Finally, coaches excel at the blame game. How many times after losses have you as a coach critiqued the preparation of your team? I suspect not nearly as often declaring "We need better goaltending."

In my 30 years as either a goaltender or goaltender coach, usually it is assumed the goalie is at fault. And perhaps you are correct with all your coaching expertise: your goaltender may not be very good. If so, however, then one must ask, what have you as a coach done to make your goalie better? If your answer is little, then don't be so quick to point your finger at the goalie; there are three pointing back at you.

Granted, blaming your goalie makes a coach feel better. And doing this has the added benefit of deflecting criticism from you as a coach because you can hide behind the fact that you never played goalie and you do not have the expertise to help them. The truth is that

blaming the goalie does not solve the coach's and team's problem.

Why does a 12-year-old, who has played goalie for two years deserve to be blamed for lack of experience and inadequate training? We must realize that young goalies simply are just not that good yet. Let's we forget, as a coach it is your responsibility, and honor, to see that your goalie gets the specialized training necessary to make him or her successful.

Here is my challenge to goalies, parents, and coaches alike: Let's leave the blaming to all those who need to make themselves feel better at somebody else's expense. Let's take a better approach and assume there are no problems, just solutions.

In today's world there is plenty of blaming but not nearly enough working respectfully together to make things better. Let's do our part to keep hockey special and unique.

Let's stop "The Blame Game" and help our goalies and all of our athletes become better — not only in hockey, but as citizens better prepared for all of life's adversities.

# Goalies and the blame game

By Robb Stauber

My 30 years of experience propels me to write this article regarding goaltenders and "the blame game." Goaltending is perhaps the most stressful position in sports. There is immense responsibility and pressure placed on goalies to perform. When adversity arises, too many goalies relieve themselves of that pressure by placing the blame on others. Everyone knows goalies need to have a positive outlook, but playing the blame game is entirely negative. The blame game is not the solution to the problem.

All of us involved in hockey also play "The Blame Game." The first is the goaltender himself. How many times have you witnessed a goalie throwing his or her arms up in the air after a goal is scored through traffic, tips, or screens? When I see this happen, my first reaction is that the goalie wants everyone in the stands to know that he or she is not at fault: or "Don't blame me, I couldn't have done anything different to prevent that goal."

This type of reaction prevents a goalie's growth. Every difficult or impossible play

must be viewed as an opportunity to become a better goaltender. Just because it was difficult to locate the puck, does not mean it could not have been stopped. Throwing one's hands up insinuates that nothing else could be done to prevent the goal, is not reflective of a champion or a leader. Pointing the finger at your teammates destroys team spirit and isolates you at a time when unity is key.

Parents are also expert players of the blame game. How many times do parents support their goaltender by casting blame on their goalie's teammates by telling him or her that the defense played terrible, the defense did not clear the rebounds, or games will not be won when only one goal is scored? Such attempts to make your goalie feel better after losing does not promote growth.

Trying to soothe your goalie's pain after each loss by blaming his or her teammates does not solve the current problems that caused the outcome. In cases such as this, just being Mom or Dad is good enough.

As a parent, you don't have to take the pain away. Instead, being positive and offering hope, by saying "Tomorrow is a new day"

or "The sun will come up tomorrow" is far more effective than blaming. It's very easy to blame someone else as a parent. For most, saying maybe my son or daughter needs to get better is much harder.

Finally, coaches excel at the blame game. How many times after losses have you as a coach critiqued the preparation of your team? I suspect not nearly as often declaring "We need better goaltending."

In my 30 years as either a goaltender or goaltender coach, usually it is assumed the goalie is at fault. And perhaps you are correct with all your coaching expertise: your goaltender may not be very good. If so, however, then one must ask, what have you as a coach done to make your goalie better? If your answer is little, then don't be so quick to point your finger at the goalie; there are three pointing back at you.

Granted, blaming your goalie makes a coach feel better. And doing this has the added benefit of deflecting criticism from you as a coach because you can hide behind the fact that you never played goalie and you do not have the expertise to help them. The truth is that

blaming the goalie does not solve the coach's and team's problem.

Why does a 12-year-old, who has played goalie for two years deserve to be blamed for lack of experience and inadequate training? We must realize that young goalies simply are just not that good yet. Let's we forget, as a coach it is your responsibility, and honor, to see that your goalie gets the specialized training necessary to make him or her successful.

Here is my challenge to goalies, parents, and coaches alike: Let's leave the blaming to all those who need to make themselves feel better at somebody else's expense. Let's take a better approach and assume there are no problems, just solutions.

In today's world there is plenty of blaming but not nearly enough working respectfully together to make things better. Let's do our part to keep hockey special and unique.

Let's stop "The Blame Game" and help our goalies and all of our athletes become better — not only in hockey, but as citizens better prepared for all of life's adversities.

# Goalies and the blame game

By Robb Stauber

My 30 years of experience propels me to write this article regarding goaltenders and "the blame game." Goaltending is perhaps the most stressful position in sports. There is immense responsibility and pressure placed on goalies to perform. When adversity arises, too many goalies relieve themselves of that pressure by placing the blame on others. Everyone knows goalies need to have a positive outlook, but playing the blame game is entirely negative. The blame game is not the solution to the problem.

All of us involved in hockey also play "The Blame Game." The first is the goaltender himself. How many times have you witnessed a goalie throwing his or her arms up in the air after a goal is scored through traffic, tips, or screens? When I see this happen, my first reaction is that the goalie wants everyone in the stands to know that he or she is not at fault: or "Don't blame me, I couldn't have done anything different to prevent that goal." This type of reaction prevents a goalie's growth. Every difficult or impossible play

must be viewed as an opportunity to become a better goaltender. Just because it was difficult to locate the puck, does not mean it could not have been stopped. Throwing one's hands up insinuates that nothing else could be done to prevent the goal, is not reflective of a champion or a leader. Pointing the finger at your teammates destroys team spirit and isolates you at a time when unity is key.

Parents are also expert players of the blame game. How many times do parents support their goaltender by casting blame on their goalie's teammates by telling him or her that the defense played terrible, the defense did not clear the rebounds, or games will not be won when only one goal is scored? Such attempts to make your goalie feel better after losing does not promote growth.

Trying to soothe your goalie's pain after each loss by blaming his or her teammates does not solve the current problems that caused the outcome. In cases such as this, just being Mom or Dad is good enough.

As a parent, you don't have to take the pain away. Instead, being positive and offering hope, by saying "Tomorrow is a new day"

or "The sun will still come up tomorrow" is far more effective than blaming. It's very easy to blame someone else as a parent. For most, saying maybe my son or daughter needs to get better is much harder.

Finally, coaches excel at the blame game. How many times after losses have you as a coach critiqued the preparation of your team? I suspect not nearly as often declaring "We need better goaltending."

In my 30 years as either a goaltender or goaltender coach, usually it is assumed the goalie is at fault. And perhaps you are correct with all your coaching expertise; your goaltender may not be very good. If so, however, then one must ask, what have you as a coach done to make your goalie better? If your answer is little, then don't be so quick to point your finger at the goalie; there are three pointing back at you.

Granted, blaming your goalie makes a coach feel better. And doing this has the added benefit of deflecting criticism from you as a coach because you can hide behind the fact that you never played goalie and you do not have the expertise to help them. The truth is that

blaming the goalie does not solve the coach's and team's problem.

Why does a 12-year-old, who has played goalie for two years deserve to be blamed for lack of experience and inadequate training? We must realize that young goalies simply are just not that good yet. Lest we forget, as a coach it is your responsibility, and honor, to see that your goalie gets the specialized training necessary to make him or her successful.

Here is my challenge to goalies, parents, and coaches alike: Let's leave the blaming to all those who need to make themselves feel better at somebody else's expense. Let's take a better approach and assume there are no problems, just solutions.

In today's world there is plenty of blaming but not nearly enough working respectfully together to make things better. Let's do our part to keep hockey special and unique.

Let's stop "The Blame Game" and help our goalies and all of our athletes become better — not only in hockey, but as citizens better prepared for all of life's adversities.