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A Breakdown of Butterfly Recoveries

As we continue to embark on this analysis of the tactic/save selection that is the butterfly it makes sense to discuss the proper ways to recover from the butterfly position. Throughout this analysis we will discuss how a goaltender can recover to their feet or stay down and use the knee crawl or the backside activation/butterfly slide recovery. Each analysis will examine, as well, the when and why for each type of recovery.

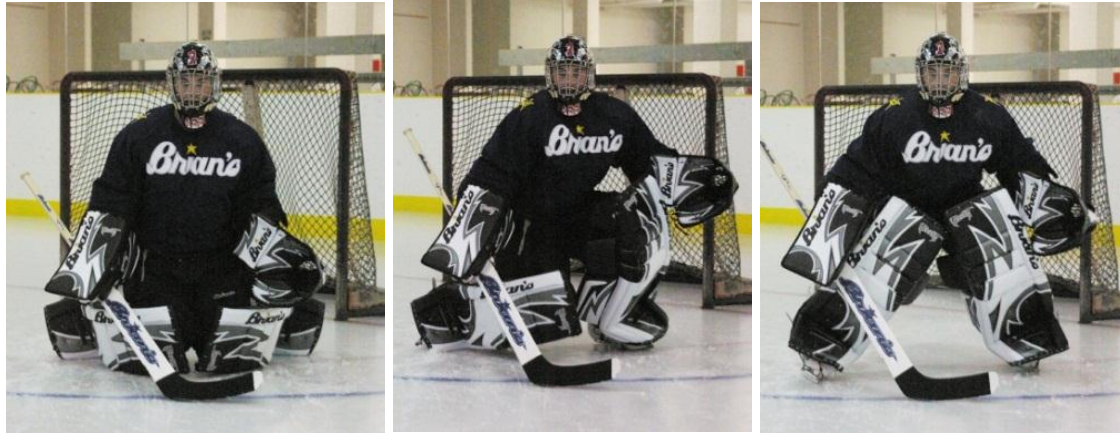
The first thing the goaltender must recognize is that a save was made from the butterfly position, as outlined in “Butterfly Basics”, and that a rebound is present. Strong visual tracking of the puck and immediate post-save response is a must. A post save response is the recognition of the need to reposition once a rebound has occurred. ****To eliminate delay in a post-save response a goaltender should work to start moving into a new position within the time it takes for the puck to bounce 12-15 inches away from the body.**** As a goaltender recognizes what sort of post-save response is needed they will most likely attempt a recovery in one of the following ways.

There are a number of recoveries that depend on a number of factors, depending on the play, but a goaltender will either recover to their feet/ready stance or stay down and move into the new position required.

RECOVERIES INTO THE READY STANCE

The Backside Recovery (a basic recovery)

Once a goaltender has recognized that a rebound has occurred, and the direction the puck has traveled, it is time to recover into a new position. A backside recovery is one of the basic recoveries from the butterfly position. A breakdown of a backside recovery shows that a goaltender will work in opposites. If a save is made and the rebound has gone to the goaltender’s right the goaltender will begin by lifting the left leg first and then the right leg; all the while maintaining strong body control. By recovering with the backside leg first the goaltender will make the recovery to the feet more efficient. The use of the backside recovery will also benefit the goaltender who may need to reposition from a down position, as will be examined later. The following is an illustration of a backside recovery.



*The backside recovery for a rebound that has moved to the goaltender's right.
The left leg is brought up first.*



*The backside recovery for a rebound that has moved to the goaltender's left.
The right leg is brought up first.*

In both examples, the goaltender has maintained strong body, stick and hand position while moving up into the ready stance. ****When the backside leg recovering is with the glove side leg it is a good idea for the goaltender to pull the glove back of the pad, while maintaining coverage, rather than lift the glove above the pad causing extra movement and throwing off the balance of the goaltender.**** ****Notice the goaltender, when recovering with the right leg, has kept the hands forward and stick in proper position.**** Once the goaltender has recovered to their feet they are now ready to move into the new position. Remember, backside recoveries work in opposites for greater efficiency.

The Pop-up Recovery (more advanced)

The pop-up recovery provides the most versatility to a goalie recovering to the ready stance. The pop-up recovery is, basically, bringing both knees up at the same time. The pop-up is the most versatile of recoveries into the ready stance because the goaltender has only made one movement onto the feet and the goaltender can then move in either direction if required. A pop-up is a great recovery if the goaltender

has sent a square rebound directly back into the play or has plenty of time to reposition. Let's take a look at a pop-up sequence for further analysis.



*A square rebound is sent out. The goaltender now pops up with both legs.
Notice the stick, hands and body control.*

In the case of the pop-up it is important to maintain control, otherwise efficiency is lost. ***The more movement (less control) a goaltender uses the more chances something will go wrong.*** The goaltender must make sure not to spring the body up by collapsing the torso and then trying to use the momentum of the body to pull them upwards. A pop-up requires strong core and lower body strength. Once a pop-up is finished the goaltender should be back into their basic stance without any extra adjustments.

When should a goaltender recover to their feet/ready stance?

The goaltender should look to recover to their feet if a rebound has moved further than 8-10 feet away from the goaltender. If the rebound stays within the 8-10 foot range the goaltender should consider the use of a down recovery. If the rebound has moved outside the 8-10 foot range the goaltender will have time to recover to the feet or will possibly have to reposition a greater distance. A goaltender can move more powerfully from their feet thus being more efficient on a longer rebound situation. As in most cases the goaltender must find what works best for them but use this as a general guideline and the goaltender will find success.

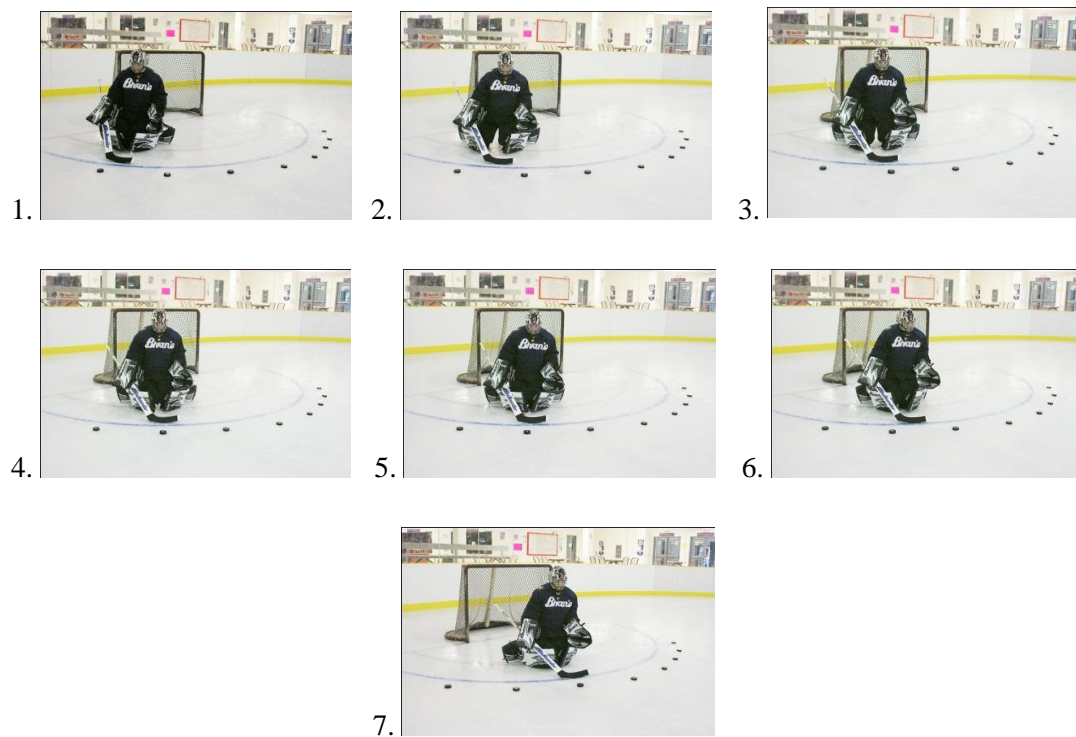
RECOVERIES WHILE STAYING DOWN

One of the biggest adjustments in goaltending has been the introduction of the down recovery. The down recovery is based on the principles that if a rebound is a short distance away from the goaltender it is more efficient, and covers greater amount of net, for the goaltender to knee crawl or use a backside activation/butterfly slide to move into the new position. A down recovery will build coverage from the bottom-up. Since the number of shots are directed to the bottom 1/3 of the net most rebounds will occur low; a down recovery only makes sense.

The Knee Crawl (a basic down recovery)

Even a beginner goaltender can learn the basic down recovery of the knee crawl. A knee crawl recovery is based on the idea that the goaltender has presented a short rebound where the puck cannot be controlled by an active stick but still requires a short repositioning. Rather than recover to the feet or use a backside activation that opens up numerous holes a knee crawl should be very compact and easy to execute.

In order to execute a strong knee crawl the goaltender must maintain the strengths of the butterfly as outlined in “Butterfly Basics”. With the hands forward, stick with angle, thighs tight, torso high and pads square the goalie will shuffle on their knees to the desired position. The shuffling of the knees should be very quick and short. The goaltender does not want to open the knees any wider than 6 inches at a time while keeping the body unit in control and square to the puck. Again, let’s examine a knee crawl.



*Knee crawl for shot that has moved 2 feet to the goalie’s left.
Notice the goaltender has not opened any major holes while staying square.*

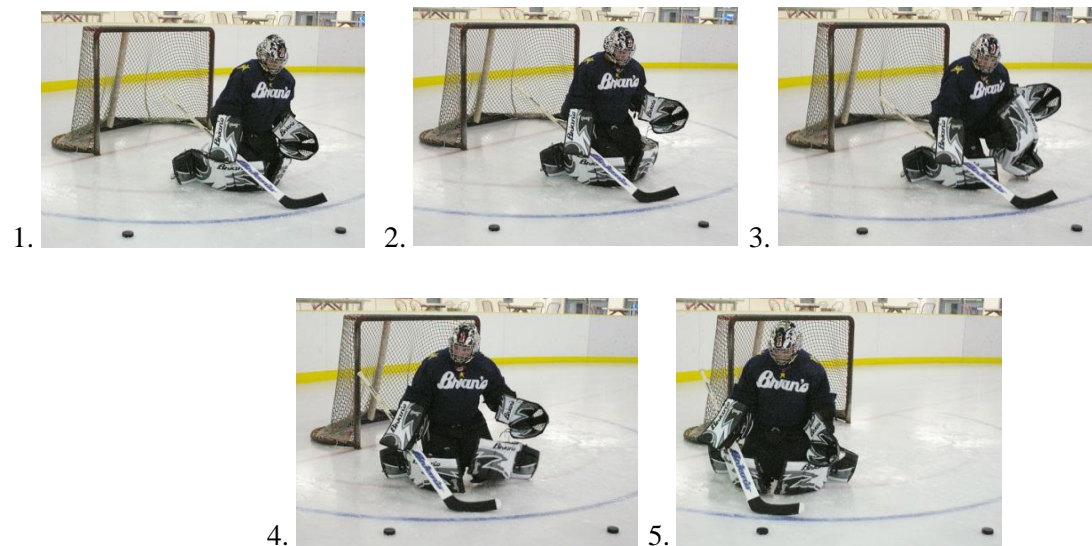
The knee crawl is great tool that goaltenders can use on plays that occur close to the net. If the rebound is sent 2-4 feet to either side a goaltender is more likely to make the second save with control. The key to the knee crawl is keeping as many holes closed, as possible, and having a very minimal post-save delay. Patrick Roy was a master of the knee crawl.

Backside Activation/ Butterfly Slide Recoveries (more advanced and dynamic)

The backside activation is the most impressive and dynamic recovery of the down position recoveries. Backside activation involves the goaltender working with opposites, again, just like the

backside recoveries. In order to execute a backside activation the goaltender must begin by driving the backside leg up until the entire skate blade is on the inside edge. ***A goaltender can drive with more power with the use of a full skate blade than an Overdrive blade. Full skate blade = sharper, longer, more contact with ice to dig in, more leg angle for more power. Overdrive blade = unsharpened, 3 inches of round blade, less contact with ice = less power generated. See "Overdrives are Overrated".*** Once the backside leg has been drawn under the body and hips the goaltender will push laterally or forward driving the goaltender in the desired direction. The leg that is not used for pushing/thrust will stay completely flush with the ice in a flared position. The lead leg should have "lead flare" to increase coverage and make sliding easier. Once the push has been executed the backside leg must be driven quickly together with the lead leg to seal all holes and create a natural rotation that helps with rebound control. Edmonton Oilers goaltender Dwayne Roloson has mastered the butterfly slide rotation.

As with all goaltending movement/save selections the body, hands and stick must maintain control. A stick that drags, sloppy gloves or a lazy backside leg return will take away the effectiveness of the backside activation. Observe the series below.



*The goaltender is using backside activation on a rebound to the right.
Notice the control and save rotation.*



*While not completely strong, this PeeWee goaltender shows a backside activation on a rebound to the left.
Notice the excellent lead flare.*

The backside activation is an important tool in a goaltender's movement arsenal. While some goaltenders will not use a backside activation as much as others it is still important that all goaltenders are able to perform this recovery effectively and efficiently. Some keys to remember: Keep strong butterfly basics, use lead flare, drive the backside leg back with tight thighs, quickly make sure the push keeps the goalie on angle. An overzealous or powerless backside activation will create more work for the goaltender. The more a goaltender does the more there is to mess up.

When should a goaltender recover while down?

A goaltender needs to keep in mind the two different types of down recoveries and decide on which will be more effective and efficient. If a rebound is within the 2-4 foot range a knee crawl is probably the best recovery option. If a rebound is within the 4-10 foot distance from the goaltender a backside activation is the quickest and most efficient choice for rebound recovery. Of course, if a rebound is sent directly in the same path as the initial shot the goaltender should stay down and hold their ground as they are already in position. These are general guidelines that each goaltender should consider on whether to stay down and what type of recovery they use.

In conclusion, the goaltender who uses a strong butterfly or half butterfly technique should be strong with all types of recoveries without having one side of the body more dominant than the other. The goaltender must have a balanced approach to recoveries with no evidence of a specific weakness. Once again, the goaltender can use this information to load the toolbox increasing chances for success.