



MIND THE NET GOALTENDING

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Butterfly Basics

One of the most important additions to the evolution of goaltending has been the introduction and widespread development of the butterfly save/block. The butterfly is one of the most dynamic save selections/tactics that is used by goaltenders today. It is because the butterfly has become such an important part of goaltending development that MTN will look at how a butterfly save is made, what a strong butterfly looks like, when to use the butterfly, and the benefits of the butterfly block.

How to make a butterfly save:

1. From a balanced and comfortable ready stance the goaltender will drive both knees simultaneously to the ground while letting the inside edges of the pads flare out to the sides. The pads must rotate on the goaltender's leg to ensure the entire face of the pads stays upright to cover the most net possible. ** The skates should have a partially horizontal angle.**
2. Thighs and knees should be squeezed tight to ensure closure of the five hole. The top of the pads should be touching or if possible overlap. ** A pad with extra thigh rise should overlap while in the butterfly to ensure compactness of the thighs.**
3. The gloves will stay forward, drop down and forward to cover the space above the top of the goal pad. If the hands are kept forward of the thighs the goaltender will automatically become compact while creating a stick with angle save selection. Also, if the hands are kept forward the stick will not hit the edge of the goal pads while transitioning to the ice thus keeping the stick forward and sealed to the ice.
4. The goaltender's stick will slide forward, while covering the five hole, with the top of the blade of the goal stick at a 20-30 degree angle. ** A low angle of the stick will deflect shots high to the corners or into the torso of the down goaltender making rebound control more efficient.** This is called the stick with angle approach.
5. Keep the upper body and thighs high to cover the top portions of the net. **Remember a high shot favours the down goaltender.**
6. Be ready to react with the shoulders and elbows as they will be easiest and most efficient body parts to move when facing a high shot while down. With this said make sure the hands are able to react as well.

What a strong butterfly block should look like:



Front (Puck's) View



Blocker Side View



Glove Side View

Butterfly Checklist: The pictures above show good butterfly form

- ✓ Pads out with face of pads upright
- ✓ Skates partially horizontal
- ✓ Tight thighs
- ✓ Stick with angle covering five hole
- ✓ Hands forward with no holes through body or above pad
- ✓ Thighs and chest high
- ✓ Elbows, shoulders and hands ready to react

When should goaltenders use a butterfly block/save?

The butterfly block does exactly that, block. The butterfly save is used to create a compact body unit that covers the most net possible. A butterfly save is an excellent selection on shots that are in the bottom 1/3 of the net especially for shots on or close to the five hole. Mid height shots will provide a good reason to use a butterfly to maximize rebound control. If a play is in tight to the net a butterfly block can be used or if there is a lot of traffic. Quick passing plays around the net often do not allow the goaltender enough time to react with a limb save so a blocking position is needed once angle and depth on the new puck position is gained. *** The butterfly block can be an important tool in the goaltender's tool kit but should not be the only tool available to the goaltender. ***

Benefits of the butterfly block:

- Covers the lower 1/3 of the net. *** 75% of all goals are scored in the bottom 1/3 of the net.***
- Creates a compact body unit that pucks should not go through.
- Is a better way to control rebounds that would be going towards a goaltenders knees or thighs while in the ready position.
- More likely to keep the rebound at or in front of the body.
- Many other dynamic goaltending tactics develop out of the butterfly.
- Quickest way to cover the five hole completely.
- Covers a large portion of the top part of the net.
- All limbs are available for the save.
- A great save selection for controlling the pace of a game.

As you can see the butterfly block provides a strong weapon in any goaltender's arsenal. Just like any other part of goaltending the butterfly can provide maximum benefits when used in combination with strong situational awareness and reading of a shot. Stay tuned for further analysis of the more advanced applications of the butterfly save.