



Goaltending - Butterfly Mechanics

Like the stance, the butterfly is a position that goaltenders' are frequently going into and getting out of, and is a position that is continually evolving.

In goaltending, the butterfly is also known as the “down-stance”. This is because the butterfly has similar components and foundations to the stance – except, the stance is on the feet, and butterfly is on the knees. A butterfly is executed generally when a shot is low (below the belly button of the goaltender) and the purpose is to seal the ice to ensure pucks do not go in the lower part of the net.

There are two different types of butterfly that are used in various instances throughout a game.

1. Reaction Butterfly

- The most basic form of the butterfly and this is used when the puck is being shot and the goaltender is able to react to the puck. Generally, the puck is 1-2 stick lengths away from the goaltender which gives them time to react to where the shot is going.
- Knees are together, legs are flared with toes out
- Hips are up, off heels, with slight hinge to have shoulders square and slightly forward towards puck
- Hands out in front, stick on ice
- Relaxed upper body
- Weight on knees stay forward



Coaching tip:

An effective way to make sure a goaltender's butterfly is sound, have them start in their stance and then execute a butterfly and hold it.

What you should see or emphasize is that the gloves and stick do not move drastically and that the upper body is the same as when they are in the stance.

2. Blocking Butterfly

- This butterfly is used when the puck is in close proximity or when a “quick and tight” attempt is being made
- In this instance, the goaltender makes sure they are square to the puck, sealing the ice with their pads, keeping their stick square and flat on the ice, and closing up any holes where the puck could go through the body
- Instead of having hands in front and relaxed, with holes under the arms, in this butterfly, elbows are in tight to body, hands are low and resting on top of pads to not allow any pucks to go through the body
- All other foundational elements to the butterfly are the same in this variation



Coaching Tip:

Young goaltenders have a tendency to default to a blocking style butterfly in all situations in a game. This results in poor tracking and therefore, poor reaction skills. Additionally, pucks will be scored to the sides of the goaltender's body outside of their narrow hands

As a rule of thumb, if the puck is greater than two stick lengths away from the goaltender, they should be using their reaction butterfly. If the puck is closer than two stick lengths, they should be using a blocking butterfly.

Be sure to explain and practice the value of using both types of butterflies given the various situations in a game or practice setting.