



Dropping to the Ice: When and Why?

Goalkeepers are frequently criticized by their coaches for leaving their feet and dropping in a “Butterfly” or other variation. Often the criticism is too broad: “Don’t go down” Or “You are going down too much.”

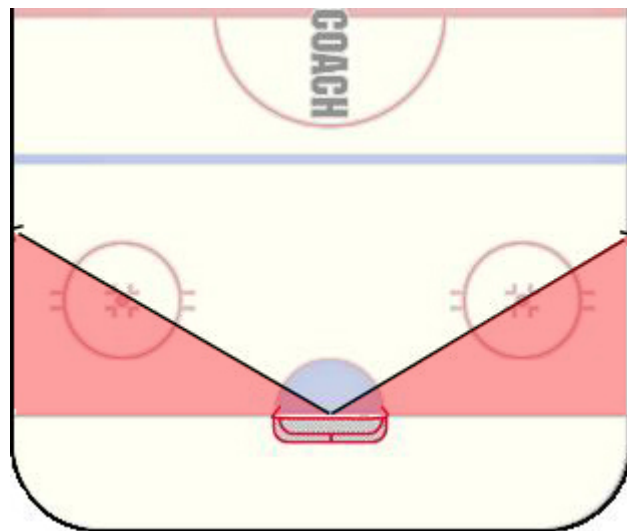
Such criticism is incomplete. Often, when the goalie drops to the ice, it is the “right move” or “right technique.” The problem is usually more specific than the fact that he / she is going down. Perhaps he / she is going down too soon? Or maybe he / she is going down in the wrong place (too deep in the net)?

Goalies drop for different reasons:

- The shot is low. They drop to make the save with their stick, backed up by their pad. In these situations, they see the puck and execute a “reaction save.”
- They are screened. Low shots have a better chance of getting through screens. They play the percentage by dropping behind the screen. (Preferably close to the screen). This way, they can stop shots they don’t actually see.
- A pass near the goal results in a scoring opportunity - so close to the goal that the best the goalie can do is drop and fill the open net and execute a “blocking save”.
- They may lack confidence. This sometimes manifests itself in goalies who drop on everything. Too Often. Too Soon. They lack the confidence to stay up and wait to see where the puck goes, fearing they won’t be quick enough to wait and react successfully. So they drop, insuring that at the least, they fill the lower half of the net. Goalies who fall into this habit can get beat a few ways: a) players wait and shoot high: b) players wait and deke; c) players wait and pass the puck. Better players will be more patient and they will give problems to goalies who drop too soon. (NOTE – Older goalies, whose habits are better known by opponents, are particularly vulnerable here).

- They mis-read the angle. If a goalie feels his best way to react to a shot is to spread his stance a little and drop in a Butterfly, then that is what they should do when challenged by a shooter. One exception to this: When the shooter has such a bad angle that the goalie needs to simply take a step out and fill the entire angle. When you fill the angle on your feet, why risk opening up holes above or through (five hole) by dropping? (This is particularly the case when there is no imminent lateral pass option)

A final note on the Butterfly technique and goalies who drop and this is to Coaches: Don't cling to memories of goalies who stayed up a lot. The game is different now and has been for a while. Goalies have to drop. Rather than try to get them to stop, give them help on when, where and why to drop. Ask your goalie: Why did you go down? Could you have waited? Could you have gotten closer to the puck? This method will give you more credibility and hopefully provide better results.



Look at the Zone. Do you know where it is best to drop and where it is best to stay up? How far does the puck have to be away from you before you are comfortable standing up? How poor does the shooter's angle have to be before you can stay up and fill the angle?