

WHAT STYLE SHOULD YOU PLAY

TRY A COMBO

Over the years, goaltenders have always been classified by the style they play. In general, goalies have been grouped into three categories...by the "Stand-up Style", the "Butterfly Style", and the "Scramble Style".

In reality, no goaltender is purely one style or another. They are a hybrid . . . a combination that depends on the way the goaltender plays different situations. Ideally, the goalie should take the pluses of each "style" and avoid the "minuses" in developing his own personal method or system of playing goal somewhere on the "Style Continuum."

STYLE CONTINUUM



The Stand-up Method - One Extreme

This used to be the way most of the best goalies played. Coaches looked for goalies that stayed on their feet at all costs. They are extremely systematic, very positional, play the angles, use skate saves rather than pads, and rely on their defense to pick up the "backdoor" and rebounds. They fill a lot of net down the wings, but have trouble on screens, deflections and quick plays around the net and from the slot. When they make saves, they often open holes because they get "frozen" a lot by the shooters. Stand-up goalies are rather predictable, and are rarely out of initial position. It hardly looks like they are working. They have trouble "scrambling" and while they make excellent saves (many look easy), they have had trouble in recent years winning big games. The feeling, by some, is that the very fundamental stand-up goaltender has trouble raising his game a notch or two because they are only good on the first shot. Few, play this way today. Examples include Arturs Irbe and Corey Hirsch.

The game has changed, and many question whether the extreme stand-up styles of the late Jacques Plante, Gilles Villemure and Bernie Parent (for example) would be as effective today.

The Scrambler/Gambler Method - The Other Extreme

As predictable and controlled as the stand-up style may be, the scramble is just as unpredictable and uncontrollable. This style is characterized with "no system" only by acrobatic, athletic goalies who make fantastic, incredible saves, but can give up some very bad goals. The same shot to the same spot brings different save selections. They are very quick, often over-react and guess, ending up in some bizarre positions. They are very competitive and thus literally "fight" for the puck. They probably still use some skate saves and make a lot of full splits. They

often play very deep in the net.

Unfortunately, this style is a "crap-shoot." Performance is often a "roll of the dice." The upside is a very big game, but the downside is a very bad one. Rarely is there an in-between. This goalie often does not make the same save, the same way, twice. Examples include: Trevor Kidd, Byron Dafoe and Curtis Joseph.

The Butterfly Style - The Middle Point

This kind of goalie drops first and then finds the puck. They often do not see the puck that well. Their positioning of arms and legs are almost identical each time. They have good lower body flexibility so they can get both pads out pretty far to each side. They play a very simple game. Few are at this extreme. Examples: Jocelyn Thibault and J.S. Giguere.

Hybrids

The majority of the goalies fall here. They are a combination of a variety of "styles". In general, Hybrids use 1/2 butterflies rather than full butterflies. They are more controlled, more consistent and tend to be more versatile. For classification sake, let's say there are two different Hybrid zones

"Hybrid A":

This is the more "stand-up" hybrid goalie who uses his pads very well. Half butterflies, great fundamentals, good reads, great patience and limited excess movement highlights this style. They may not scramble as well as a hybrid "B" because they play less athletically. Examples include Sean Burke, Mike Dunham and Dwayne Roloson.

"Hybrid B":

This is a more "athletic" goalie, who has many of the traits found in "Hybrid A", but plays more athletically. They often are not as disciplined with their patience, arms and legs. If they are patient enough and eliminate some of the sloppiness, they have the most "upside" and can really dominate. They make saves most others can't make. Examples include Martin Brodeur, Mike Richter, Tomas Vokoun and Jose Theodore.

These goalies still must play angles, they still must look "big" down the wings and they must have ability to scramble . . . thus their "Hybrid Style" falls somewhere inside the extremes on the "Goaltending Style Continuum."