

This is a goalkeeper tip on Diving Sideways from Gary Rue, a high school coach from Frankfort, Kentucky

Most GKs don't have a problem figuring out which side (of their body) will be the "ground" side on a diving reflex dive. However, when the GK is moving out from the goal closing down the ball (breakaway style), they can dive to either side without too much problem. There IS a preferred side. If the ball is to the GK's right of the goal, the GK should dive on his/her right side. That is, the legs are toward the center.

There are several reasons for this.

- An attacker will more often than not try to beat a diving GK towards the GK's head and not try to get through the legs. That means the dribbler takes the ball away from the center most of the time. This is usually a good thing.
- If the diving GK's legs do contact the ball, the natural direction of the resulting kickout will be more to the outside as the leg(s) follow through. If the legs are towards the outside, there is a better chance the ball will be sent into the middle.
- If the legs (and feet) are towards the middle, the GK's recovery back to feet would also be closer to the middle. This difference of a yard/meter towards the center could make a big difference in the next save attempt.

GKs must train to make the next save as well.

If the GK took the correct path to close down the ball (slightly bent run from the center, the dive to the correct side is more natural and takes less time. Diving head to middle would cause the GK to "run-around" the ball taking a fraction of second longer.

If I see a GK dive with feet to the outside in training, then one of two things need to be overcome or fixed. Either the GK has a preferred side, which may be 100 times worse than a field player having a preferred foot; or the GK is not taking the optimum and safest way to close down the path to ball. Of course, it could be the GK was not taught correct technique in a prior life.

Guideline--(when possible) dive to the side that is away from the center.