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GOALKEEPING

Drills and games for all ages

Train your Goalkeeper like a Pro!



Now you can train your goalkeeper like the pro's with drills designed by professional and national team goalkeepers.

This manual features drills for you to take right to practice. There are sections on Diving, Ball Handling, Shot Stopping, Footwork and Fitness. In addition, all the goalkeeping techniques are explained in detail. There is also a variety of "special topics" designed to provide you with professional tips on how to improve your goalkeepers overall performance.

"It's like having your own goalkeeper coach right at home".

Goalkeeping Introduction



There are three types of people who work with their hands.

People who build and move things using their hands, people who use their hands and minds to create things and people who use their hands, minds, and hearts. These people are called **goalkeepers**. They use their *hands* to control the ball and to communicate, their *minds* to make challenging decisions, and their *hearts* to express their passion for the art of goalkeeping! Goalkeepers are not better than anyone else, but they are very special and unique people.

The goalkeeper is arguably the most important position on the field. A goalkeeper can win a game with one brilliant save or become the villain with a mistimed dive. The nature of the position requires agility, speed, athleticism, confidence, bravery and good communication skills.

For decades, goalkeepers were expected to train alone or were often simply blended into the regular practice sessions with very little attention being provided to the goalkeepers specific needs. Goalkeepers are different from outfield players and must be trained accordingly. Specialized training is needed for specialized positions. The role of the goalkeeper has changed more than any other position in recent years. With the introduction of the back-pass rule, goalkeepers are required to be as comfortable as outfield players with the ball at their feet.

Goalkeepers are the last line of defense. They should think like sweeper backs and use the full range of the defensive third of the field. Goalkeepers are the first line of attack. Quality distribution is vital for counter-attacking. Keepers must possess a wide range of distribution skills in the area of kicking and throwing.

Good hands are unusable without quick feet. Footwork is the key to all good shot stopping and catching.

Communication between a goalkeeper and the team is critical for good organization. Whether it be setting up a defensive wall or calling for a high ball, the goalkeeper must be commanding, confident and clear. Bravery is a pre-requisite to play in goal at any level. Unlike outfield players, there are rarely second chances to win the ball in a one v one situation.

Your goalkeepers should be challenged at each practice session. With good planning and organization you can easily implement a specific training regimen. Your goal should be to challenge them to a level of technical excellence.



It is also of paramount importance that you understand how quality technique is developed. "Practice does not make perfect" rather "practice makes permanent." This holds true for both good and bad training. The quantity of practices must never be more important than the quality of practices.

Keep your sessions simple, intense and short. To reach a level of technical perfection, the technique must be isolated and performed until it becomes habit.

Three important components should be applied when training your keepers.

1. Repetition:

Repetition is important in developing the motor memory patterns to enable the goalkeeper to execute each technique automatically, without thinking, so this becomes an ingrained habit. The practices should be designed to ensure that goalkeeper is getting as many touches on the ball as possible.

2. Consistent Quality:

Repetition can be a dangerous thing if the skill is being rehearsed incorrectly. The mechanics involved in each execution of the technique must be accurate and consistent. Aim for an 80% success rate. The coach must be the facilitator in ensuring that poor technique is detected early and precise information is provided to the goalkeeper to correct the problem. The coach must know the mechanical movements involved in each goalkeeping technique to be able to correct those techniques.

3. Explosive Movements:

As soon as possible the goalkeeper must practice the technique at a speed that simulates match play. Slow practices will develop slow goalkeepers and up-tempo practices will develop fast and explosive goalkeepers. Never sacrifice quality for speed when practicing technique.

This section has been designed to provide coaches with a variety of specific goalkeeping drills and games. The practices in this section are used by top professional goalkeeper coaches and they can be modified and applied to any age level. Inside you will find challenging and fun practices in the areas of Diving, Ball Handling, Shot Stopping, Footwork and Fitness.

The Keepers Tongue: The Foundation of Communication



"My philosophy is work smarter not harder."

How do you make your job as a keeper easier on as well as off the field? The answer is to communicate effectively. On the field the keeper is the most important person with the vision to see the offensive attack and most importantly on defense, the counter attack. By communicating effectively a keeper can improve defensive organization of the entire team and initiate the attack thus handling fewer shots and resulting in less goals.

The role of the keeper is that of a leader. A leaders voice and language must be firm, spoken with conviction, and specific; never wavering or panicky. A keeper that speaks softly sends a message that he or she is unsure or lacks confidence. A keeper that screams and yells with a panic stricken voice sends a message of weakness to the apposing team and sends chaos through the defending team.

Communication can be two forms: verbal and non verbal. Verbal communication should take the form of simple and very specific phrases. Anything more than three words is missed by the defenders. One word instructions are most effective. Non verbal is simply hand gestures. Non verbal could be in the form a point to open player, the number of players needed in a wall shown by fingers, or the wave of the hand to push players up when distributing the ball.

Common Commands:

Keeper - Not keep. A cop doesn't yell stop it is the **Pol!** It just isn't effective enough. You need that second syllable. This the most important word in the keeper dictionary. It must be said with confidence and loud enough for the stands to hear you. This tells the team that the keeper is committed to the ball. This tells the attacker that the keeper is coming and he is in for it. The keeper call must be shouted prior to leaving the line. Again it is a warning and it will also tell the closest defender off the ball that they need to get back and cover the net.

Mark - Who is Mark? Sometimes I hear keepers call his name once or multiple times in a panic: Mark Mark Mark. What does that tell a defender? Does it give a specific instruction or location? The who has so and so..... question also kills me. That doesn't tell anything either. If calling you defenders name and a point to the open player doesn't do the trick then assign the mark to a defender. Field players are classic for saying "he wasn't my man" but he had to belong someone. Whether it is a middle fielder running down the wing, a stopper pushing up into the attack, or a set piece such as a corner the keeper has to dictate responsibility. The keeper should say with conviction "Jay, 10, left"; "Jim stay middle"; "Jeff front post"; "Jack back post"; "John, step, 8".

Back - Is used to indicate that the keeper is an option. The keeper should also point to the area outside the goal mouth where the ball should be played. Yelling back to a defender for a marking instruction creates confusion when it is also used in another manner.

Drop - I use drop when also communicating with my defenders. "Ken drop" This would tell Ken that he is up too far. Wall - In direct or indirect situations the keeper must call "Wall" and the number of people in the wall. When positioning the wall, again short and sweet: "Two steps left"

Out - To catch the lazy striker off sides moving the defense quickly out is effective when the ball is cleared. Moving the defense quickly allows less space and time for the attacking team to organize anything substantial. This also helps eliminate a screen by a defender or a poor deflection into the net. Careful not to call out or push up too soon on corners! When the ball is cleared out of danger or there isn't a one time shot threat then release your players off the post by calling out.

Outside - Indicates to the defender with the ball to take the ball outside rather than turning it into a player or pressure. Outside communicates that there is no option inside.

There are terms and commands unique to each keeper. The important thing is that the command is spoken with a firm confident voice, concise, specific, and understood. On the flip side, don't over do it. Communicate effectively to organize the field but don't talk so much that it becomes a ringing in the ears of the field players. Too much can be counter productive.

Contact info@keeperstop.com with any training or product questions.

Remember, One Stop Makes All The Difference!

By: Christian Benjamin, Keeperstop.com

How Far Off The Line Should The Goalkeeper Be?



Too Often I see keepers camped out on their goal line while the play is going on in the other keeper's box miles away. This leaves a giant space behind the defense for a dangerous long ball to be played. The goalkeeper is the General out on the field. He needs to stay connected with his defense to communicate and organize his players. This requires a keeper to be close enough to communicate with his team and cover the space behind the defense but at the appropriate distance to not get caught by a long shot from an unpressured attacker.

Goalkeepers should take up the line between the ball and the middle of the goal and position themselves at a place off their goal line to act as a sweeper - keeper. Younger keepers, youth coaches, or keepers without foot skills will not be terribly comfortable with this but it is a critical part of team defending. Goalkeepers can offer themselves as a back pass option or clear away any long through ball behind the defense if they adjust their positioning on the field based on the looming threat.

Positioning Based On Ball Location:

The other 18:

If the ball is on the other side of the field around the other 18, the keeper should be at least at the top of their 18 yard box. If the keeper moves along with the play he or she is closer to the action in the event that instructions need to be shouted to defenders on marking responsibilities; to clear a ball played into space behind the defense; or offer themselves as a pass back option. When the play is on the other end of the field this is not the time to turn off and out. The keeper has to stay focused in the event of a long clearing attempt. It is important to stay loose, shake out the hands and arms, and focus on the game. This is the time to organize marks and defensive shape in the event the ball is turned over; better yet send players into support. Sometimes it is as simple as communicating and shifting the weak side center midfielder to offer more support or be in position for counter attack through the midfield.

When the play is at midfield:

As the play moves out of the defensive third you want your keeper moving to or above the penalty strip, 12 yards off the line. The keeper should be square to the attacker in possession of ball positioned properly in the right angle. Their placement will depend on where the ball is at midfield. Why is it that we teach our keeper the importance of the correct angle during the shot save but not when the ball is out of immediate danger? Proper positioning while the ball is around midfield can help a keeper deal with through balls that lead to breakaway situations. You know the space that I referring to. The space that is halfway between the end line and the half line. Often a lofted 20 yard ball played in this area over the defense to a striker causes the defense to panic and countless breakaway situations. If the keeper is positioned properly they may be in a better position to sprint out to deal with the danger.

As part of my goalkeeper instruction I instill the importance of their movement, how it helps in team defending, and concentration. Staying focused on the developing play is one of many ways to keep your pulse on the game and in proper position not to mention a defensive asset.

When the attack is in the defensive 3rd, in and around 30 yards away from the goal:

The keeper should be positioned 3 to 6 yards off the goal line depending on their comfort level. A ball that is being played from around 30 - 35 yards out should not be an immediate scoring threat. A diagonal pass or a chip over the top of the defense into the empty space outside or in the upper portion of the 18 is more of a reality. This is where many breakaway situations occur. Once the ball is under control the striker has a better angle to shoot the ball. If the keeper is playing higher in their comfort zone then they are in a better position to win the ball cleanly, make the decision to narrow the angle, or instruct the first defender to keep the defender outside. Breakaway situations arise much more frequently from this scenario than a chipping opportunity caused by a keeper's poor positioning. With the ball 30-35 yards out a keeper can see when a player is unpressured and ready to chip the ball. If needed with a quick drop-step and footwork a keeper can retreat closer to their line if there is a threat of a shot. The keeper should be adjusting their positioning depending on the location of the ball and the pressure around the ball.

Will a keeper get chipped or get caught way too far out clearing a ball while working out the bugs? Sure. That is part of the educational process. The keeper and team will learn by making decisions. The keeper will learn where to be during certain situations, at what depth, with what stance, and how to deal with varying through balls. The team will learn to depend on the keeper as a critical member of the defense for a pass back option as well as a sweeper to deal with appropriate through balls.

About Keeperstop.com:

Keeperstop.com is the goalkeeper equipment and education website created by Christian Benjamin. It is a resource for the goalkeeper community to review and ask questions about goalkeeper equipment, camps, and training.

By Christian Benjamin, Owner of Keeperstop.com, Central Connecticut State University Assistant Coach, and Connecticut Olympic Development Staff.

Keeper Language



The major objective is to produce more successful goalkeepers. One important way of accomplishing this is to have your goalkeepers handle fewer shots. Great, we hear you saying, but how?

One means is by improving the quality of communication by the goalkeeper, thus improving the defensive organization of the entire team. That's how. With a highly organized defensive unit, obviously the goalkeeper handles fewer shots, and suffers fewer goals.

The goalkeeper's language is spoken in a firm voice, with conviction and leadership. He must never sound panicky or desperate. The goalkeeper who whispers commands comes across to teammates and opponents as being indecisive and unsure of himself or herself. But remember that just being loud isn't enough. Your most vocal goalkeepers are not necessarily your best communicators.

At very high levels of play, where crowd noise is high, communication from the goalie may be a hand gesture, i.e., pointing outside to let a defender know where to take a play. At lower levels, verbal direction is required. This may take the form of simple commands (one or two words, or short phrases) or specific directions.

When a goalkeeper yells, 'Who has #9?' or "Cover the middle," he/she has not been specific enough, so very often no one responds. The correct command should be, "Jim, left, #9" or "Jill, stay middle." Every goalkeeper has a few unique expressions. They must be effective (simple and specific. You must also be sure the defense is educated to know what they mean.

Let's establish a small vocabulary of goalkeeper language:

Back — Calling for the ball to be passed back by a defender; should be accompanied by a hand gesture, pointing to the outside of the goal mouth.

Yes — Also used to indicate a back pass.

Outside -- Indicating to a defender in possession of the ball to take it outside; not to attempt a back pass.

Out — After a clearance, moving the defense quickly out, away from the goal. This is done to catch opponents offside, to create less space for them to reorganize an attack, and to avoid being screened on return shots.

Keeper — Said with confidence and conviction. This lets opponents (and teammates) know the goalkeeper is totally committed to the ball.

Depth or Cover — In a situation where the attack is coming down one flank, the goalkeeper has to be aware of the position of his weak side midfielder and defender, and be satisfied that weak side defensive cover is provided. The command is to a specific player.

The Wall — In wall situations, the goalie immediately indicates the need by commanding, "WALL!" This command is followed by the number of players needed in the wall, e.g., "4".

The number of players in the wall is determined by the distance and shooting angle. The wall plays the near post, i.e., the post nearest the ball, while the keeper plays the far post. It is suggested that one field player is specified to organize the wall, while the keeper remains alert to save.

The wall should stand 7 to 8 yards away from the ball to reduce shooting angle. The rules state it must be 10 yards away. However, you should let the opposing team or referee request your wall to be moved back. Generally, the tallest players should be in the wall.

They should be linked together to minimize space where the ball could slip through. When the ball is struck, the wall should move forward to stop or deflect the ball.

The wall is requested by the keeper when the ball is placed within shooting distance of the goal. Naturally, level of play has to be taken into account. If you are playing the Brazilian National team, everyone including parents and spectators should be included.

The wider the ball is placed from the goal, e.g., the closer to the side and end line it is placed, the lesser the number of players necessary. For example, if the ball is placed approximately 5 yards from the end line and 18 yard box, only one or two players would constitute a wall. Likewise, if the infraction occurs with 10 yards of the goal line, all players are placed on the goal line. Both ends of the wall would curve out

Corner Kicks

On corner kicks, there is a series of commands. "Bob, short, corner" indicates Bob should watch the quick, short kick. "Bill, front post"; "Jim, #9", "Paul, #5, no run." This tells Paul not to allow #5 a running start to the ball, obviously because he is dangerous with a strong head shot. By alerting Paul to obstruct #5's path to the ball, his timing to head will be thrown off.

In the flow of play an alert, take-charge goalkeeper can quickly read the attack and initiate the defensive organization. A defender is often caught with a choice: attack the ball, or stay with the runner. Without defensive cover, the goalkeeper would most likely command, "Bill, stay, runner." Once the defensive cover was established, the goalkeeper would command, "Bill, play, ball."

A very important command from the goalkeeper is “CONTAIN.” Once again, the goalie reads the lack of defensive balance and cover, and instructs his defender handling the opponent to contain, or slow down, the dribbler, without committing to the tackle until defensive cover is established.

Additional goalkeeper language that is helpful:

“Jane, Front, #5.” — This would be used on an opponent’s throw-in from the defensive third. A long thrower can pinpoint a target person. The goalkeeper should prefer Jane to play in front of #5 to make it difficult for her to receive the ball directly from the thrower. If the ball is lofted or thrown beyond #5, the goalkeeper assumes the responsibility for the ball.

Clear — This indicates that the defender receiving the ball should not attempt to control it, but instead should “one-time” it out of danger.

Thus far, our goalkeeper language has dealt with defensive organization. Quite frankly, 95% of the goalie’s communication should be defensive. There is no need for the goalkeeper to become a cheerleader when his team has possession, especially when the play is out of the defensive third. There is, however, some goalkeeper language that can be helpful to the offense. For instance:

Wide — This indicates to a defender in possession that he has time to play the ball wide, relieving pressure and beginning the offensive flow.

Support — This indicates that, once the keeper has the ball, his outside backs should support square and wide, offering themselves for a rolled ball to build the offense. When they hear this, midfielders should leave the defensive third to facilitate constructive possession out of the defense.

Hand gestures are often used for offensive communication. A wave of the hand may indicate a long goalkeeper foot clearance to relieve opponent pressure or change the game’s tempo. *The goalkeeper’s language:* simple commands to specific individuals that are spoken with a voice indicating confidence and commitment.

It is a simple language that very well may keep your opponent from developing anything complicated.

So coaches, correct goalkeeper terminology can help organize a more effective defense. Good luck in coaching your goalkeeper in proper keeper language.

Courtesy Dan Gaspar - Star Goalkeeping Academy

Pass Back Rule



The new pass back rule dramatically affects how the goalkeeper interacts with his or her teammates. The rule calls for a new generation of goalkeeper training. To be effective the keeper as well as his or her teammates must be properly prepared.

The rule basically says: Should a teammate intentionally pass the ball back to their goalkeeper, the keeper cannot handle the ball with their hands. The keeper must use their feet to control or clear the ball. Indirect kicks are awarded at the spot where the goalkeeper picks-up the ball. However, if the referee interprets that there was no actual intent to pass the ball back then no indirect kick is awarded.

The ball may be passed back using either the head, chest, or knee. However, if trickery is used to lift the ball, that is considered un-gentlemanly conduct and an indirect kick is awarded at that point of the foul.

More Than a Keeper issue

There are several options a field player in possession of the ball with intent of passing the ball back to the keeper must consider.

- Is there an immediate danger of losing the ball?
- Where are the opposing players?
- When should the ball be passed?
- Which foot is the ball passed to?
- What speed is the ball pass passed at?
- How do other teammates create space and move into good receiving position?

To properly deal with these issues the keepers and field players need to train as a unit to insure effective coordination and communication.

Training Activities

1. Keepers must warm-up as team players to better develop their foot skills. The keepers need to develop the same confidence in their feet as with their hands.
2. The coach serves balls at various angles and distances. The keeper plays the ball with their feet and quickly returns it to the coach.
 - a. The coach assesses techniques, accuracy and keeper positioning.
 - b. Moving targets are added and the keeper must serve to moving targets.
 - c. Keeper should pass short distances with low balls to teammates and hit long distances with high balls to play over the heads of imaginary defenders.
3. Incorporate chasing attackers to place pressure on the ball and the defender.
 - a. Look for proper communication between the defender and keeper.
 - b. Observe decisions of defenders to either pass back, turn the attack, or clear.
 - c. Insure that communication is clear and specific
4. Advance the session by placing small sided goals on the touchlines and a second regulation goal at mid-field.
 - a. Same observations as Number 3, except increase the number of players. This results in better match related training.
 - b. The keeper and defenders can now score by accurately getting the ball through the side goals or by clearing long to the regulation goals at mid-field. Design a point system to encourage a higher degree of play.
5. 6 versus 4 scrimmage, the 6 players and a keeper are attacking. The training team is 4 defenders and one training keeper. The practice area is the same as described in technique Number 4.
 - a. The team of six has 3 points awarded for each goal scored.
 - b. The team of four has one point awarded for a successful pass back and clear. Clears may be either to a free teammate or a long kick into one of the side goals. This teaches the keeper to clear long, wide and accurately. (This may have to be modified for younger players.) They may also score in their opponent's goal.
 - c. Play starts with the practicing keeper passing the ball to a teammate and receiving the ball back.

Game Time

Prior to game time, it might be best to discuss with the referee their interpretation of the pass back rule to eliminate potential problems that could occur during the game. Remind your players to play the game as they practiced.

Conclusion

The modern keeper can no longer train in a vacuum. New individual and team related skills are required to be a successful keeper. A new generation of goalkeeping instruction is being introduced to meet these challenges.

In regards to the pass back rule -- the best option is to maintain possession whenever possible. However, when in doubt, clear the ball with distance, height, and width away from danger.

Courtesy Dan Gaspar - Star Goalkeeping Academy

Selecting Your Keeper Gloves



The most important tool for a goalkeeper is their gloves. It is vital that the keeper be well informed before making an investment when selecting the gloves.

Goalkeeper glove technology has advanced tremendously over the years. It has progressed from simple cotton (garden style) through the dimpled rubber, the polyurethane, the latex to the complex gor-tex models. Sondico's innovations such as, cliff cuff protector, velcro fasteners, waffle palms, pin-prick, zig-zag, flecked, diamond, cube, suction cups, octopus, and even 15% larger palms have come along. All these innovations were designed to accommodate various environmental and playing conditions to individual preferences. However, the bottom line is these features only assist in capturing the ball – the goalkeeper must have the proper technique to stop the ball.

Purchase Wisely

Gloves should be purchased wisely and based on the level of commitment and play. In the past, gloves were virtually indestructible. However, today many are assembled using hi-tech material, therefore the higher the price and performance the less life expectancy of the glove.

Size and Comfort

Unlike driving gloves, where a snug fit is preferable, it is highly recommended that the keeper choose one that is 1/2 to 1 full size larger than the hand size. The over-sizing provides several benefits:

- The comfort and freedom of hand movement allow your hand to breathe.
- The additional catching surface.
- There is less stress on the stitch on the glove upon impact of the ball.

Features

When purchasing your gloves be aware of the unique features that meet specific weather and playing conditions. The various goalkeeper equipment suppliers provide many different palms, hand size charts and recommendations for proper selections. Utilize this information.

How Many

All keepers should have at least three pair of gloves:

- One pair for training only.
- Two pair of match only gloves. One is a soft palm glove and the other is a hard palm glove. These are changed to adapted to the field and climate conditions. The up front investment is high, but in the long run you save money because of the increased life expectancy of the match pair. As a match pair begins to age it should be used for training.

Quality

When I'm selecting my pair, I am interested in wearing top quality material and advanced technology for ultimate performance. It can make the difference. The following are points that you consider when selecting a new pair of gloves.

- It is important to catch some soccer balls of different material to feel how the gloves respond.
- Does the glove feel flexible and comfortable on your hands.
- What is the thickness of the palm and does the palm provide good adhesion.
- Does it have external gussets to ensure a better fit. These gussets should also be vented to allow your hand to breathe and helps to eliminate premature glove deterioration.
- The wrist area should be well constructed. Tapered wrist entry vents permits ease of hand entry. Dual rather than single Velcro fasteners provide a snug fit at the wrist and lessen the likelihood of it dangling. Extended wrist support offers additional protection from hard shots and helps to prevent hyperextension.
- External seams improve flexibility and palm contact area.
- When ordering through mail order, become familiar with the brand's method of sizing. Different vendor sizes can vary by as much as a full size.

How to take care of your gloves

- Gloves should be stored in a glove wallet. The wallet protects the gloves from dust and sunlight that reduce the life expectancy.
- Wash your gloves regularly in luke warm water with a mild detergent. I wash my gloves while they are on my hands. I do not use a washing machine. Additionally, I turn them inside out and wash them again. I rinse them and air dry them in a shaded area.
- Do not expose you gloves to direct sunlight, heat sources or lighting. It makes them become brittle and lessens the life expectancy.

Match time play

- By slightly dampening the palm of your gloves at playing time you have increased absorption level and add more life to your best friend – the glove.
- Approach the referee and ask to touch and get a feel of the game ball before the actual start of the game.
- Select the proper glove for the field and weather conditions.
- The glove wallet should be placed within goal area should you need to change them during match conditions because of the ball's surface, change in the weather, breakdown of the glove or confidence level.

Personal experience and preference

Finally, base your choice on personal experience and preference. In conclusion, the glove is only a tool and selecting the proper glove increases the chances of snuffing the ball as it comes towards the keeper with a tremendous amount of spin and movement. The keeper must do more than secure the ball with their hands, the entire body and mind must be involved in the process of terminating the path of the ball towards the goal line.

Courtesy Dan Gaspar - Star Goalkeeping Academy

Tryout Suggestions



1. Project your best positive self.
2. Introduce yourself to the players and coaches.
3. Form a relationship with your defenders.
4. Specific, demanding verbal and body communication.
5. Do not wait for an invitation, be the first one in.
6. Play outside of your box respectfully.
7. Avoid high risk action. Play within safe zone.
8. Monitor your defender's weaknesses and strengths.
9. Surveillance of your box with markings.
10. Remove ball from net quickly.
11. Do not celebrate your team's goal at center field.
12. Touch match ball prior to game for glove selection.
13. Bring extra pair of studs, etc.
14. Warm-up with regional team players in visible area.
15. Under no circumstances do you panic, maintain emotional control.
16. Go strong to every ball.
17. Strike your own goal kicks.
18. Positive self talk. One word or image to stimulate and energize yourself. *Visualize!!*
19. Be ready at *all times*. No mental time-outs while on pitch or bench.
20. Step forward. Ask regional coach if there are plans for special goalkeeper training sessions. If yes, express that you are looking forward to the evaluation.

Be responsible 100% for your actions. Success is doing the best you can with the tools you have and accepting the outcome.

Courtesy Dan Gaspar - Star Goalkeeping Academy

The Rhythm Influence



Rhythm exists in everything; and the rhythm of goalkeeping in particular can be mastered with practice. Harmonious and disharmonious rhythms occur in goalkeeping. It is imperative to distinguish carefully between the keeper rhythms of flourishing and the rhythms of decline.

Plug into:

the rhythms of the match

the rhythms of the opponent

the rhythms of your body movement

the rhythms of your mind

We need to understand the *correct* rhythm versus the *wrong* rhythm.

- Are you dancing in harmony with the ball or are you out of sync?
- Are your movements in flow with the game or are they moving at a different beat?
- Are your rhythms big and small or slow and fast?

Learn to observe and feel the differences – make sure the music in your head reflects what you see in the soccer match. If the match is slow, then the tune must be at the same rhythm. If the opponent is about to breakaway from your defender then you must quicken your pace. Remember to make the save, you must understand the rhythm of your opponent. Keep goalkeeping on your mind. Work diligently in a straight forward manner. As your mind becomes trained in this manner you'll be more prepared to succeed.

Courtesy Dan Gaspar - Star Goalkeeping Academy.



- I have prepared properly, I am ready to play my best today.
- I always use any pre-game anxiety to gain a positive mental advantage.
- I consider myself to be the most important player on the team.
- I always think about how I will help my team play its best today.
- I go through my warm-up with confidence, I know that I am prepared for anything the game may present.
- I have total concentration on the game as play begins and maintain my intensity of concentration as the game demands.
- My weight is evenly balanced so I can go in any direction as I prepare to handle the ball.
- I always keep my weight forward on the balls of my feet as I prepare to handle a shot.
- My angle play is exceptional, it helps me be more effective in challenging shooters and limiting opportunities.
- I see the shot coming, I get my body behind the ball and handle it cleanly.
- I always keep my weight forward on the balls of my feet when I prepare to handle a service in the area.
- I see the cross serviced into the goal area, I judge the trajectory, get into the line of flight and catch it cleanly at the highest possible point.
- I always get my body behind the ball and allow my body to give and absorb the speed of the ball.
- I always have my hands in position to catch cleanly as the ball arrives.
- I make early decisions if I am to punch or parry because of pressure and/or the elements.
- I see the shot taken, I step, drop my center of gravity and extend to catch the shot driven to the lower corner of the goal.
- I see the shot taken, I step, drive and extend to reach and catch the ball driven to the upper corner of the goal.
- I read the speed and spin on the ball to be too difficult to catch cleanly, as I drive and extend, I will touch the ball around the bar.

- I always keep my weight forward on the balls of my feet as I prepare to read and handle through balls.
- I read the through ball early, I come off my line and cut off the opponent's attack before it occurs.
- I read the through ball and come off my line to challenge and win the ball off the opponent's long touch in the dribble.
- I read the through ball and come off my line to challenge and save the shot off the opponent's foot.
- I always stay on my feet as long as I can when I come off my line to handle breakaways, I know I can win the ball off the long touch or save the shot by having courage, maintaining my balance and waiting for the attacker to make their move.
- I always make good decisions on tipping or boxing balls over the bar that I cannot catch safely.
- I get excellent extension on my drives by quick footwork, carrying my body across my planted foot and good extension from my power step.
- I feel like I am unbeatable in goal, no one can score on me.
- I will be a positive force within my team and promote cohesion.
- I will earn the respect of my team, opponents and officials with the effort I put forth in today's contest.
- I am a winner, no matter what the outcome of today's match.
- I give 100%, I am the best goalkeeper I can be.
- I am the best, I like myself.

Courtesy Dan Gaspar - Star Goalkeeping Academy.

Winners versus Losers



The *Winner* is always part of the answer.
The *Loser* is always part of the problem.

The *Winner* always has a program.
The *Loser* always has an excuse.

The *Winner* says "Let me do it for you."
The *Loser* says "That's not my job."

The *Winner* sees an answer for every problem.
The *Loser* sees a problem for every answer.

The *Winner* sees a green near every sand trap.
The *Loser* sees two or three sand traps near every green.

The *Winners* train.
The *Losers* complain.

Courtesy Dan Gaspar - Star Goalkeeping Academy.

Winning Mentality - Goal Setting



Goal setting is a powerful tool you can use to help you achieve the things you want. Learning to set goals will give you the ability to develop a clear picture of where you want to go and how to get there. Use the information below to help you set goals.

Self Questions

What do you like most about goalkeeping?

What do you expect to achieve from playing in goal?

What do you consider to be your major strength?

As a goalkeeper, what areas do you think you need improvement?

What are your goalkeeping objectives?

Goal Setting - Key Points

1. Set performance goals not outcome goals. Outcome goals are often not entirely under your control. For example, "I am going to score two goals in the next game." Performance goals are stated to give you control and take responsibility. For example, "I will increase my ability to take a one touch shot on goal."
2. Set challenging but realistic goals. Know your current level of performance and set goals that extend you.
3. Set specific goals in measurable and behavioral terms.
4. Set short-term goals as well as long term goals. Short range goals provide the opportunity to see immediate improvement. They help to motivate and are usually steps toward your long range goals.
5. Set positive goals. Write your goals to state what you are going to do. Identify target dates for goal attainment.

6. State the strategies you will use to reach your goals. Strategies answer the question, 'How?'
7. Set goals for practice and competition. Practice goals let you take responsibility for what you get from practice sessions. Practice goals are often critical to the achievement of competition / game goals.
8. Set daily goals. Make a positive statement of what you are going to do today. You can use daily goals to improve the quality of your practice time.
9. Put your goals down in writing. Writing your goals down on paper makes your commitment to achieving them stronger.
10. Identify support. Who are the significant people who will support your efforts.

Coach – teammates – friends – family.

11. Identify who will give you feedback. Feedback is essential to goal attainment. You need to identify persons who will help you evaluate your progress in a clear positive manner.

Final Goal "Final Goal"

Other people can assist you in the goal setting process but — the final goals must be the goals that are important to you!!

Courtesy Dan Gaspar - Star Goalkeeping Academy.

Angle Play



Once the goal keeper has established good body position, good projection of one's self, good dynamic stability, good balance and equal distribution of weight, it's time to start talking about angle play. Great goalkeepers generally make their most spectacular saves between the six and the twelve yard lines. They come off their line, and so should you! 'But,' you ask, 'When?' 'How far?' 'Should I favor one post over the other?'

'What about chip shots?'

Angle Play is three dimensional. Obviously the keeper is concerned with left and right, the near post and the far post. They also must be concerned with balls kicked above their head. Additional factors that influence how far the goalkeeper should come off the goal-line include the following: their physical abilities, their physical dimensions, the speed that the attacker is coming toward the goal, the likely speed of the shot; the likely direction of the ball (near post, far post, high or low), the likely flight path of the ball, rising, falling, or looping, and the condition of the field as far as ability to change positions is concerned.

The first priority in angle play positioning is to protect the near post. The ball has a shorter distance to travel and its speed will be greater. Tip: **Two hands to the near post, one hand to the far post.** Because the goalkeeper is more vulnerable near post, he/she must position themselves to be able to get two hands on any ball struck to the near post even if that means that they can only get one hand on a ball struck to the far post. If a goalkeeper is conceding goals to the near post, more than likely it is the result of poor positioning.

The best goalkeepers are not necessarily the most athletic goalkeepers. The best goalkeepers determine their positioning by their reading of the game and their anticipation of what is most likely to happen next. Their experience helps them constantly evaluate all the factors mentioned above and determine the optimal position on the field at any point in time. Then their athleticism and movement skills help get them there.

In angle play, the goalkeeper must constantly position themselves so that the flighted ball will split them in half, sending half to the near post and half to the far post. This straight line between the keeper and the ball is called the ball line. When the ball is in motion, the goalkeeper is in motion. When the ball is stationary, the goalkeeper is stationary. The motion of the keeper should be harmonious and in synch with the movement of the ball. Assuming that the attacker with the ball is marked, the further the ball is from the goal, the further the keeper is from the goal-line. The closer the ball to the goal, the closer the keeper is to his/her line.

For the purposes of angle play we could rename the posts the fast post and the slow post. The reason the near post is the fast post is that the ball gets there quicker. It's moving faster and has less distance to travel. We want to invite the shooter to shoot for the far post. We hope that our defenders may be able to recover in time to assist us on far post shots. Therefore, our positioning will usually favor the near or far post

One of the best aids in helping goalkeepers visualize correct angle play is the rope. Tie each end of the rope to each of the posts and then stretch it out to the point where the ball lies. The rope now delineates the widest possible ball paths that can result in a goal. As the position of the ball moves, the rope can be moved to continue to outline the shot cone. The player must move forward so that a dive in either direction will allow their hand(s) to extend to either boundary of the shot cone. This would mean that a smaller player would have to move out further than a tall player. While this does make the small player more vulnerable to chip shots, those are among the most difficult to execute, especially on the move.

The rope as a training aid is also valuable in teaching the correct angle to make the dive. Many goalkeepers assume that their dive should be parallel to the goal line. Others believe that the dive should be some what forward. Still others believe that if they have advanced off their line that the dive should be slightly rearward.

Star Goalkeeper Tip: The most effective direction to dive to deny the greatest number of shots is perpendicular to the rope line, that is, the outer edge of the shot fan.

There are approximately 360 non-overlapping paths that a ball can travel and go between the goal posts. It is the goalkeeper's job to deny as many of these as possible to the shooter.

The goal is, of course, stationary and fixed in its' dimensions. However, simply as a result of a goalkeepers accurate positioning, the goal can be made to appear to a shooter to be much smaller than it really is. Especially at the higher levels of play, a correct position can often be measured in inches - getting the fingertips on the ball to deflect it wide.

Courtesy Dan Gaspar - Star Goalkeeping Academy.

Dominate the Box



What is “controlling the box”?

Picture this: The through pass beats the defense. The speedy winger is running onto the ball, a shot is imminent. Then, out of nowhere, the goalkeeper courageously slides through and intercepts the ball just as the winger is reaching it.

Statistically, is it a save? No. Was a shot even taken? No. But was it possibly a game-saving play? You bet!

Or: A winger dribbles past his defender and curls a dangerous cross into the penalty area. The center forward approaches the ball to head it into the goal. The goalkeeper steps in and, using the privilege of the position, snatches the ball just before the forward can get his head to it. No save! No shot! Is this keeper dominating the box? You bet!

That is *dominating the box*.

The box refers to the penalty area (18 yards x 44 yards). “Dominating the box” is an asset possessed by most top goalkeepers which enables them to intercept or extinguish a potentially dangerous situation before it materializes. Top goalkeepers who do not dominate the penalty area have the ability to dominate the smaller box, the goal box.

A goalkeeper who dominates the box should see fewer shots and, hopefully, allow fewer goals than one who does not dominate the box. However, other ramifications exist too. Teams playing with a box-dominating goalie will have a tendency to cross less, or cross to the top of the area. They’ll overlook the through pass, and push the ball wide instead. They’ll shoot from further out and, when they finally penetrate into the penalty area, they will always feel the pressure of the dominating keeper. All this helps the goalkeeper’s defenders, too. The box belongs to the keeper and opponents will sense this and, consciously or unconsciously, will alter their game.

As a goalkeeper, you should strive to become more dominant in the area. As a coach, you want to assist your goalkeeper in developing this ability. But how? First, does the goalkeeper have the qualities necessary to dominate the box? The dominating goalkeeper must be courageous, often diving at the feet of onrushing opponents. This dive has to be technically sound, creating the “body barrier” for safety as well as success.

The keeper must possess two types of quickness: perceptual quickness (to see the play developing and be able to anticipate the pass) and reaction quickness (so that once the move is initiated it is done with a burst of speed and conviction that can neutralize a seemingly dangerous situation). Certainly, the goalkeeper has to be able to make correct decisions, not just *decisions*. The keeper who goes for the through pass, but misjudges the speed of the winger and gets to the ball second, will suffer many goals.

The dominant keeper sees the situation an instant before it actually takes shape and has initiated movement before the ball is delivered. This is anticipation. It comes from inborn qualities, to some degree, but also from a goalkeeper learning how to read the game, to understand the alternatives an opponent with the ball has, and then to determine which reaction he will choose.

What can the goalkeeper and coach do to help the goalkeeper reach this ability to dominate the box? *Match condition challenges* are paramount. In practice, offer 4 vs. 4 drills, with two goalkeepers in full goals over a 40-yard field. Let the goalkeeper see crossed balls daily—sometimes with no pressure, sometimes with congestion and challenges. Train the goalkeeper technically. Have him create a “body barrier” when going for the ball in different situations (where he or she may get to the ball slightly ahead, at the same time, or even slightly after the opponent). With this type of training, the body reacts well under the pressure of a match, just as it was conditioned to react in practice.

All this training, over the course of a season, develops the confidence a keeper needs to *dominate the box*.

Courtesy Dan Gaspar - Star Goalkeeping Academy.

Role as a Team Player



The requirements of the goalkeeper position are uniquely different from the rest of the squad. Regardless of those distinctions, however, the goalkeeper is a team player. The skills that a goalkeeper masters must be practiced and integrated with the team. Harmony and interaction within the entire group, not just amongst the field players, is of utmost importance to a successful team performance.

We all understand that the goalkeeper protects the goal area by mastering techniques for shot handling. We must also remember the keeper frequently starts the attack by effective and selective distribution of the ball. The goalkeeper also must possess the ability to direct players verbally and through the use of physical signals. To capture and utilize these skills to their fullest, and to develop a sense of responsibility within the goalkeeper, he must be involved as a vital member of the team.

Here's the million dollar question: How important is your goalkeeper to your team's success? I'm sure you'll agree the goalkeeper is vital to team performance. Some would claim that the goalkeeper is the most important player on the team. I would have to agree that, while the goalkeeper is very important, his role is certainly no more dominant than any other individual. All players on the team are assigned crucial roles, and it is important that they understand how each functions in order to form a cohesive unit. Isolating the goalkeeper's training has merit, but total team training also provides results. Integration of all players is the key. So much attention has been given to training equipment that perhaps not enough attention has been given to the actual demands of the game itself.

Visualization

We need to do more than physically train the goalkeepers, we need to educate them to visualize the entire game. Accurate observation is a trained, learned visual skill. Nothing affects a keeper's actions and reactions more than the things he observes. Sight is a primary channel of information, and using this information in a positive, experienced manner is extremely important to the goalkeeper.

Learning how to effectively observe through experiences, recollection, association and repetition is the basis for training more acute visual judgment. The goalkeeper needs to see, assess and act in an environment that is familiar and within the context of the game.

There are several activities that will highlight the various aspects of goalkeeping, and how they work within the overall framework of the team game.

Warm-up

Focus:

The team prepares the goalkeeper to train.

Challenge:

Interaction among all players in the preparation process, with restrictions. Stretch between various restrictions.

Observations:

Attain proficiency in the areas of technical maintenance, the psychological component, and the physical elements of the game.

Activities:

1. Each goalkeeper is in possession of the ball inside the goal box area. Field players move about creatively at a comfortable pace. Goalkeeper distributes a low ball to a field player. Player accurately pushes it back to keeper. The goalkeeper continues to distribute to and receive balls from other field players.
2. The keeper can now begin to serve air balls to field players. Field player then collect the services and strike ball back to the keeper within a comfortable saving distance. Field players must accomplish within three touches of the ball. After each service or save all players must perform an exercise (e.g. pushups or forward rolls).
3. Expand the area and distance. We now ask the goalkeeper to find and locate the player farthest from the ball, and distribute it to that player. The player receives the distribution from the keeper (which may be a thrown, full or half-volleyed or a struck dead ball) and serves the flighted balls into the goal box.
4. We can now begin to link up field players with combinations before we deliver the ball to the keeper. Example: Field player receives the ball from the goalkeeper, who now locates other teammates, and strikes the ball at the keeper. The connection between field players can be in the form of a wall pass, takeovers, one touch, seeking out furthest player, etc. What's important are the goalkeeper's movements with the ball.

As we progress, the demands on the keeper increases. Let's reverse it, and have all field players involved in maintaining ownership of the *magic object* -the soccer ball.

5. We stress communication. The goalkeeper must signal - either visually or verbally - for the ball. The keeper then receives the ball, and sends it to the field player, who in turn sends it back to the keeper, constantly increasing the pace.
6. Players are dribbling. On the coach's signal, the player will sprint, with the ball, at least 10 yards. The goalkeeper, who is now ready for such activity, will perform break-away saves.
7. You can link field players in groups of two to add pressure in many of these activities.
8. You can match goalkeepers to challenge each other, resulting in increased competition.
9. You can split the squad into two teams and play keep-away. Every third pass must go to the keeper.

These activities, and variations of them, are limited only by your imagination.

Technical Practice

TYPE ONE

Focus: Absorbing low balls.

Challenge: Rapid fire.

Observations: Saving stance; the ability to drop; dynamic stability; and shooting signals.

Activity: All players outside of the goal box, keeper in goal. One serving player is in possession of all the balls. Other shooting players are lined up near the balls. The distributor touches the first ball to a shooter, who strikes it low and fast to a pre-determined side of the goal. This activity is performed rapidly and continuously -once the save is made, and the keeper is in position, the next shooter fires. Observe the keeper's starting position versus the saving position. The saving position should focus on the keeper getting closer to the ball. As soon as the shooter drops his head, and begins focusing on the ball, the keeper should be progressing forward. When the shot is just about to be delivered, the keeper gets balanced with equal distribution of body weight.

TYPE TWO

Focus: Handling bounced balls.

Challenge: One bounce only.

Observations: Foot skills; body and ball relationship; area covered.

Activity: Each goalkeeper has a ball, which they serve to a field player. The player strikes it away from the keeper, who has to chase and catch the ball before it bounces a second time. It's a lot of work—try it! A variation is to have players juggling the ball 25-30 yards away. Keepers in goal area. Each player has a number. When the coach calls a number, that player serves an air ball anywhere into the goal area, and proceeds to chase it down.

The keeper has to get to the ball first, as early as possible, preferably before the second bounce. The keeper distributes the ball to target players, and rotates to the end of the keeper line. Rotation must move rapidly, and the keeper must move aggressively forward toward the ball to make this exercise a success.

TYPE THREE

Focus: Flighted balls.

Challenge: 3 v 3 + 1

Observations: Perception and action; communications.

Activity: Keeper in goal, three offensive players, three defensive players, and one free player. All are outside the goal box. Free player serves to offensive players, who touch the ball back to the free player. The free player then serves a high ball into the box, and the offensive players chase it down. After making the save, the keeper distributes the ball to the defenders, who either find the free player or reload by returning the ball to the goalkeeper. Note the keeper's evaluation of the high balls and his ability to direct defenders.

TYPE FOUR

Focus: Break away save.

Challenge: Solo save.

Observations: Attitude, anticipation and courage. Keeper in goal, field players in groups of two with one ball. Assign numbers to each group. Players move freely, passing the ball to each other, 25-30 yards from the goal. Coach calls out a number—player in possession quickly attacks the goal. After a two second delay the second player in the group becomes the defender and pursues the attacker. Keeper has to decide whether to stay in goal or come out for the save. Should the keeper make the save, he distributes the ball to the pursuer. Note if the keeper is projecting hands and body to the ball when saving; hands should be to the near post side unless the attack is coming straight down the middle. Down the middle, we go to the keeper's strongest side. Demand the keeper win the ball as early as possible (it's considered a win when the field player loses possession).

Courtesy Dan Gaspar - Star Goalkeeping Academy.

Secrets of Good Positioning



Great goalkeepers have the ability to make great saves appear easy. But that doesn't happen by luck, or by instinct. It's knowledge that lets a goalie attract a ball like a magnet.

What's the secret to that knowledge?

Good positioning, which is often only a matter of one or two inches in any direction. But how does the goalkeeper achieve that good positioning, which reduces shooting angles and makes the goal appear smaller than it really is?

First, the body and mind must be prepared to react. The body cannot be rooted to the ground. It needs to be in constant balance. The feet should be shoulder width apart, with the weight on the balls of the feet. The center of gravity is in a position of mobility. The palms of the hands are facing down, showing 90 degrees of flexion at the elbow joint. The head is steady, with the shoulders square to the ball.

The body is in motion, to overcome the effects of inertia. This allows for a pre-stretch movement just prior to the shot, which provides the muscles that move the levers of the body with a better physiological advantage. Concentration and total preparation are essential. Now that body and mind are in good starting positions, let's get in between the goal sticks. Create an imaginary line from the ball to both posts. Take a central position (known as the ball line). This allows equal space to both sides. These lines form a triangle.

Now the keeper must read and anticipate the situation by being alert to his or her surroundings. The amount of angle that's cut down depends on several considerations: distance and position of the ball, the speed at which the opponent is approaching the ball; the type of ball (bouncing, rolling or stationary), and the anticipated intention of the player with the ball.

The keeper must also keep in mind that angle play is three-dimensional. Left and right angles, with the near post coverage being the top priority, are important. But there is also a third angle; above the head. Certainly the keeper's own stature is a factor to consider.

Effective positioning reduces the number of goals suffered, and gives the impression that only something very special will beat this keeper. To develop this perception, the keeper must be a student of the game. When the keeper does concede a goal, he or she must rehash and analyze the goal. Constant self-evaluation results in few mistakes.

And the keeper must play the game often. Accumulation of these match experiences develops anticipation. Good positioning and recognizing dangerous situations will sharply reduce the number of scoring opportunities he or she faces.

Courtesy Dan Gaspar - Star Goalkeeping Academy.

The Game Training the Goalkeeper



Focus:

We must connect the goalkeeper and the field players. Training groups of goalkeepers on an separate island, in an isolated manner, does not fully develop the keeper to his/her maximum potential. In order to create a higher standard of goalkeeping performance, we, as coaches, must demand that the keeper play the game. *The game is the best goalkeeper coach.*

By establishing this environment, we can focus on the following: effective decisions by proper visual assessment, physical action resulting in correct solutions, distributing for possession, and organizing through body and verbal expressions. Our objective is to also increase pressure and encourage decision making.

Challenges

1. Keepers inside a grid the width of a goal. Field players are outside the grid in possession of the ball. Players call out the keepers name, and the keeper quickly moves to position themselves between the cones. Field players serve the ball and keeper makes the saves. Repeat.
2. Two keepers in grid facing in opposite direction, with field players outside of the grid in possession of the ball. Keepers control who shoots. After the save, they quickly move to the other side to make another save. Low, medium or high shots may be taken. Increase demands by placing field players inside the grid to restrict the keepers.
3. Two regulation goals, 30-40 yards apart. Split field players and place players in front of each goal. Keeper strikes goal kick to opposite goal. Receiving keeper executes high ball save with pressure from field players. Saving keeper distributes to target player. Inactive field players perform a designated exercise.

4. Two field players, each with soccer ball, plus one goalkeeper. One player punts a high ball, while the other strikes a low ball. Keeper saves low ball first, then saves high ball while server chases.
5. Five sets of two field players, one ball per set. One keeper in goal. Balance of keepers in goal box. Groups of two play one touch. Two groups, each positioned on opposite sides, flank the groups, each positioned 20-25 yards away at an angle to the goal.

The last group is 35-40 yards away. Crossed balls from flanks, shots or solo runs from players 20-25 yards away and lofted ball from players 35-40 yards away. Opposite rotation. Keepers in box challenge. Offensive players serve, defensive player passively chases.

6. Two regulation goals and a good number of soccer balls in a line. Two lines of shooters. One player touches the soccer ball in alternate fashion. Shooters have three options – shoot, go for the goal creating a breakaway opportunity, or touch ball to flank for a cross.

Courtesy Dan Gaspar - Star Goalkeeping Academy.

Central/Peripheral Awareness



This is an essential skill for a goalie. When following the person with the ball, the goalie must remain aware of the position of all the other players in the vicinity of the goalie, so that he will be able to anticipate the decision making process of the offensive player and properly position himself/herself for either the shot or pass.

Techniques for improving central/peripheral awareness:

1. While taking a walk, look at an object straight ahead and try to notice everything around you. Try to notice specific details of trees, buildings, people or whatever else is around you. At first, it will be difficult to notice specifics about what you are seeing in the periphery of your visual field. However, with practice you should be able to notice subtleties such as the expressions of people, birds in trees, etc... Remember not to look anywhere other than straight ahead.
2. This is a two person technique for which you will need a chalkboard and a piece of paper. One person closes their eyes while the other person (the trainer) writes a ten digit number on the chalkboard. The trainer will cover the number they have written with the piece of paper. The other person now opens their eyes and looks at the center of the covering paper. The trainer says, "ready, one, two" and then as quickly as possible moves the paper up to expose the number which was written and then back down to hide it. The person who is watching must tell the trainer what the first two and last two digits are. With practice, this technique will be mastered and the digit span will be able to be increased, two digits at a time, up to sixteen or more digits in length.

Courtesy Dan Gaspar - Star Goalkeeping Academy.

Depth Perception



This visual skill is of critical importance when trying to make a save. Timing when jumping up to catch or punch the ball at just the right moment is a skill related to good depth perception. The goalkeeper must be able to judge the speed and spin on the ball as well as how quickly other players are moving toward or away from him/her. Everything in soccer is in almost constant, relative motion. Thus, there are many visual equations that the brain must constantly and quickly solve.

Techniques for improving depth perception (depth perception can not be improved directly, but by working on other visual skills one can enhance his/her depth perception):

1. You will need two people for this exercise. Get a twenty foot long piece of thick kite string and 4 or five beads of 3/8" to 3/4" in size and of different colors. Thread the beads onto the string and tie a knot at one end so that the beads cannot slide off. Have the person assisting you hold the end of the string with the knot at full arms' length either above their head, down toward their waist, out to the right or out to the left. You will hold the un-knotted end of the string up to your nose at a distance great enough for the string to be taut between the two of you. The person assisting you will call out a bead color and you will immediately look at that bead. You should be aware of two strings which appear to meet at the opening of the bead.

If you notice the strings meeting in front of or behind the bead try to get them to meet at the bead by using your eyes. If one of the strings disappears you are only using one eye and probably have poor or inconsistent depth perception (see an eye doctor who specializes in sports vision training). With practice you should be able to spontaneously and instantaneously get the strings to appear to meet at the opening of whichever bead you are looking at.

2. You will need two people for this exercise. You will also need a pickup stick and a straw (a normal straw, not the large bore ones available at McDonald's!) for this technique. You will hold the pickup stick in your preferred hand while standing approximately two feet from your assistant who will have the straw. Your assistant will hold the pickup stick at your eye-level, parallel to the front of your body. You will then hold the pickup stick at a distance of four inches from the straw so that if you were to move it directly toward the straw without moving it closer or further away

from you, it would end up inside the straw. Once positioned, you will move the pickup stick directly toward the straw without fine-tuning the distance from you that you are holding the pickup stick. If your eyes are working properly together the pickup stick should go directly into the straw without even hitting the side of it. Now put the pickup stick back down at your side and have your assistant reposition the straw, still at eye-level but at a different distance from your eyes. Repeat this technique twenty times and keep track of the “hits” and “misses”. With practice you should consistently be able to get at least eighteen “hits” in twenty tries. If you cannot master this technique even after practice you probably have a problem with the eye-teaming mechanism in your brain (see an eye doctor who specializes in sports vision training).

Courtesy Dan Gaspar - Star Goalkeeping Academy.

Ocular Motility



Eye tracking ability is important in soccer. Quick, accurate, teamed eye movements are needed to survey the rapidly changing locations and movements of the other opponents and the ball. Studies have shown that head and neck movement is inefficient, increases stress, uses extra energy and causes you to lose balance because of stimulation of the inner ear. Try to free your eyes to be independent of head movement and use visual information when concentrating on the ball while controlling balance. It is certainly easier to move two eyes that weigh several ounces instead of a head that weighs close to fifteen pounds.

Techniques for improving ocular motilities:

- 1.** Place an ink dot on the center of each thumbnail and stand comfortably with one arm loosely extended in front of you. Now move your thumb in a constant circle, always seeing the dot on your thumbnail clearly. Do this for ten rotations clockwise and ten rotations counter-clockwise. Repeat using the other arm. Be conscious of your head and neck muscles remaining still while you are seeing the dot on the thumbnail. As you improve, change the size of the circular pattern that you are making. After one week of daily practice, start taking small steps forward, sideways, backward, and diagonally while seeing the dot on your thumbnail. Increase your speed to simulate movements in goal. You can use this as a visual warm-up exercise.
- 2.** You will need four newspaper headlines for this technique. Sit in a chair placed four feet from a wall. Tape the newspaper headlines to the wall so that two are two feet to the right of you and two are two feet to the left. They should also be positioned so that one on each side is one foot above eye-level and the other is one foot below eye-level. You will read the first letter of each headline, going from top-left to top-right to bottom-left to bottom-right, while being sure that your body is relaxed and your head remains facing the imaginary point on the wall which would mark the spot between the all of the headlines.

Repeat this with the second letter of each headline, then the third and so on until you have reached the end of one of the headlines. As you get better at this technique change the order in which you read the headlines. As you get better at this it should become easier to locate a ball which has been crossed in front of you for a quick shot.

Eye-Hand/Body/Foot Coordination

All are helpful to a soccer goal keeper. If your eyes do not give you accurate information and then accurately direct your body parts, your hand/body/foot movements will be inappropriate for the type of play that you will be trying to make.

Techniques for improving eye-hand/body/foot coordination:

You will need three people for this exercise. One will play goalie and the other two will be shooters. The goalie will stand ten feet from a wall which he/she will be facing. Each shooter, equipped with a few balls will stand six feet behind the goalie and slightly to either side. The shooters will randomly and in rapid succession take shots off the wall which the goalie will have to prevent from passing by him/her on the rebound.

Courtesy Dan Gaspar - Star Goalkeeping Academy.

Speed of Recognition Time



This is an important visual skill for a goalie. Opportunities to properly position oneself to make a save only present themselves for fractions of a second. Once the ball starts ricocheting off players in front of the goal, speed of reaction time can be the difference between being the hero or the goat.

Techniques for improving speed of recognition time:

This technique is best done with four people. One person will play goalie while the other three (shooters), each with a soccer ball, will be positioned so that one of them is at each front corner of the penalty box and one of them is directly in front of the goalie at the top of the penalty box. The goalie will center himself/herself in the goal, fixating on the ball directly in front of him/her in a ready position and say "ready". The center shooter will then say "ready, one, two, three". On three, all three shooters will approach their soccer balls and appear to be shooting on net. However, only the prearranged shooter will make contact with the ball and take a shot. To successfully make the save the goalie will have to be able to rapidly recognize which ball is moving and react to it instantly.

Speed of Focusing

This is important in soccer because one has to be able to shift focus rapidly in any order among targets which are near, far or intermediate, in any order, rapidly throughout the game, while general body stamina is running down due to heavy exertion .

Technique for improving speed of focus:

Take a newspaper headline and tape it to the wall at eye-level. Stand ten feet from the wall with a column of print from a newspaper in your hand. Alternately read three letters from the headline, three letters from the column of print, three letters from the headline, three letters from the column of print, etc..., for a period of about five minutes.

Courtesy Dan Gaspar - Star Goalkeeping Academy.

Visual Acuity



As soccer is a sport of almost constant motion for all players and the ball, dynamic visual acuity is of greater importance than static visual acuity. Static visual acuity is what is being tested in the eye doctor's office when you read the acuity chart on the wall. Dynamic visual acuity is tested by having the athlete read a chart while either they, the chart, or both they and the chart are in motion.

Techniques for improving dynamic visual acuity:

1. Get hold of a record player with speeds of 33, 45, and 78 RPM. Cut out various headline-size letters from a newspaper and tape them to various parts of a record that you no longer listen to. Turn on the record player at the 33 RPM speed, disengage the record arm and read out the large letters as they turn. Pick one large letter in the center of the record and see it clearly for five minutes. After one week of practice, change the letters and increase the speed to 45 RPM. Repeat as above and then increase the speed to 78 RPM.
2. You will need a mini-tramp. Cut out various headline-size letters from a newspaper and tape them to a wall at a height from one foot below eye level to a height of two feet above eye-level when standing on the mini-tramp. While bouncing on the mini-tramp at a distance of ten feet from the wall, try to read the letters. Pick one large letter in the center of the wall and see it clearly for five minutes. After you master this with headline-size letters try to also master this with small size letters from the newspaper.
3. The above two techniques can be combined so that you will be trying to read the letters spinning on the turntable while bouncing on the mini-tramp.

Courtesy Dan Gaspar - Star Goalkeeping Academy.

A Professional Pre-Game Warm Up

Introduction

Leave an elastic band in the freezer overnight. Take it out the next day, and pull on it hard. What will happen? It will snap. If you take it out of the freezer, put into the refrigerator and then into room temperature, you now have to prepare the elastic band to be stretched to its maximum. Your body and mind are no different.



It is vital that you standardize your pre-game warm-up. This warm-up should be yours. Design the warm-up to fit your specific needs. The warm-up is a reflection of your personality. A solid warm-up provides consistency in your game. Too often, goalkeepers warm-up according to the competition or importance of the game.

The result: You play well against good teams and play poorly against average teams. We tend to be more motivated to play against top competition.

The very best keepers are considered the best because they consistently deliver good performances. The factors that are critical to address are mental and physical preparation.

If you appear to know what you're doing, even before the game, you have already established yourself as a professional! Players, coaches, and spectators admire a quality warm-up. Get the pre-game edge.

When I was the Portuguese National Team keeper coach, Vitor Baia, was rated as the second best goalkeeper in the world. We both designed a detailed warm-up to meet his needs. It took time, experimentation and work to assemble a warm-up that helped him be ready for the international arena. Regardless, if he was playing in Italy or Estonia, the warm-up was identical. By the way, Vitor gave up the fewest goals during the World Cup qualification process!

Here are the factors we needed to consider.

Calculated the length of the warm-up

Matches were televised around the world. Therefore, we needed to make sure we were on time. It took us exactly

23 minutes to complete the warm-up. We calculated the length of the warm-up, so that there was enough time for Vitor to complete his warm-up and return to the dressing room to put on his game jersey. He had two sets of clothing, pre-game and match.

Rehearse

The high level of noise required us to choreograph the pre-game warm-up the day before. This was necessary so that we did not have to verbally communicate instructions because we could not hear each other. Our body language provided us with the clues to know what was next.

Establish a rhythm

It was very important to establish rhythm. This allows things to flow. It cannot be accomplished unless it is trained on a regular basis. It needs to be mastered. If you do not establish a proper sequence, you will not be smooth and the spectators will sense that and jump all over you.

Comfort zone

The warm-up provided a comfort zone and a needed level of confidence to handle anything.

Visualize

His warm-up began before he even entered the field. Mentally, he was visualizing before the match. Even his dressing was very methodical. Vitor would begin to visualize. He would play the game in his mind's eye before he actually played. This is a very powerful tool. We sat down and recalled his best saves and moments in exquisite detail. It involved a series of different saves as well as effective distribution and communication. So when the game began, he had already played it and was ready to confront any situation. He was relaxed and ready to perform. One of his trademarks is how cool he remains even when the action gets hot.

Courtesy Dan Gaspar - Star Goalkeeping Academy.

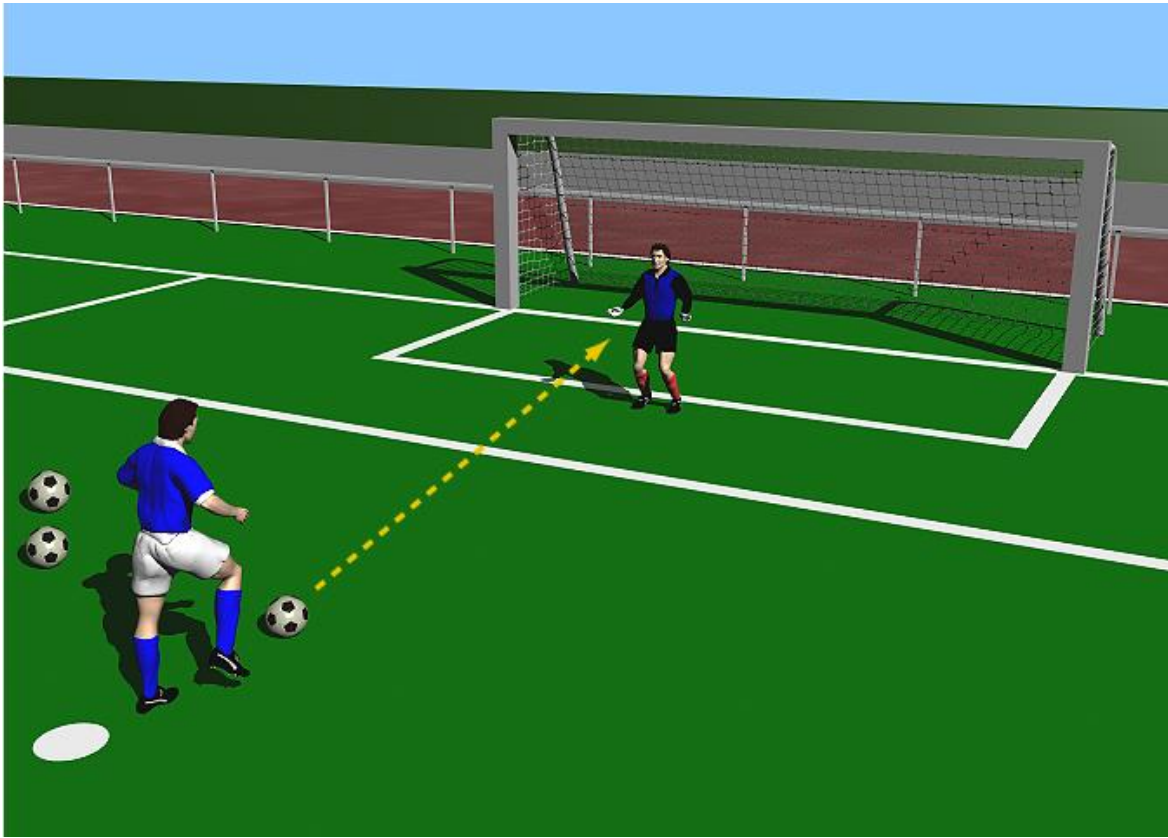
A Professional Pre-Game Warm Up - Step One



Step One: Stretching

5-7 minutes of aerobic style activities inside the goal box (skipping, light jogging, twisting, various footwork movements). Incorporate static stretching (hold your stretch for 10 seconds and then release). It is a good idea to establish a friendship with the goal box during phase one. Survey the goal box and inspect the area for glass, rocks, sprinkler heads, or anything that might affect the action of the ball. Walk the goal and inspect the soccer net. If there are any problems, bring it to the attention of the referee. Visualize yourself as a spectator in the stands and watching yourself play well. It works if you believe it does!

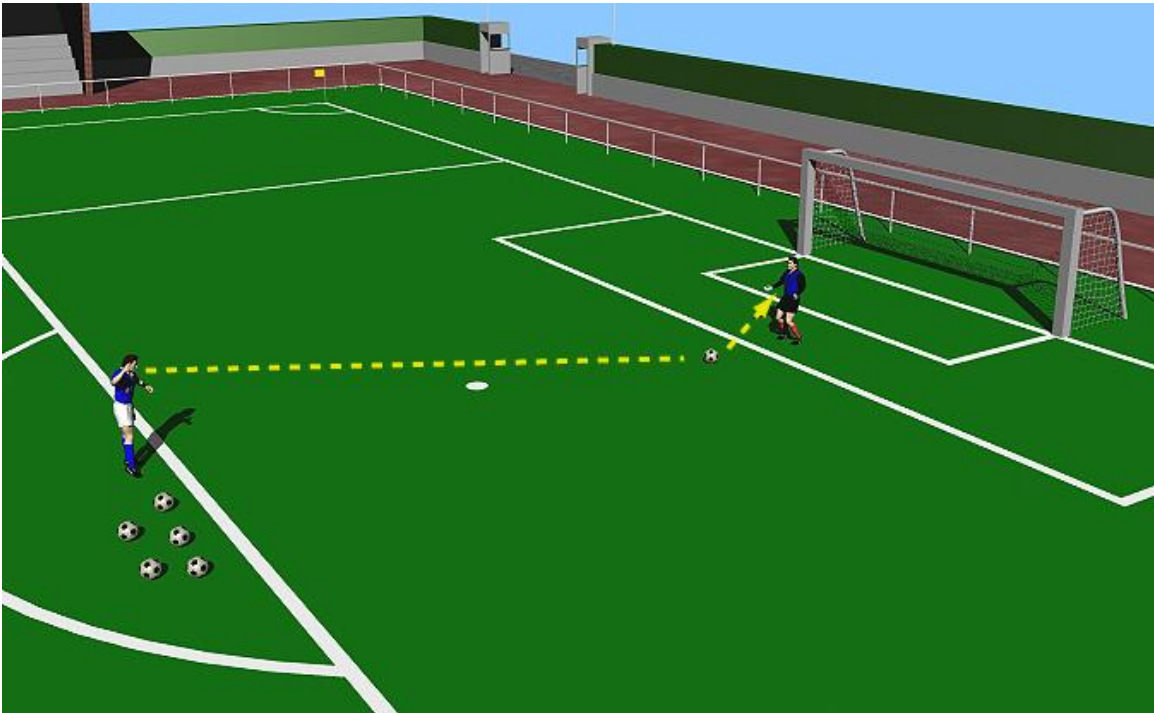
A Professional Pre-Game Warm Up - Step Two



Step Two: Getting a feel for the ball.

From 12 yards out (penalty spot): Strike the ball at the keeper. You may volley or strike the ball from the ground. This process is to warm-up the hands first. Get a feel for the ball. All services must be accurate. It is frustrating to waste time chasing the ball. Always have soccer balls near by.

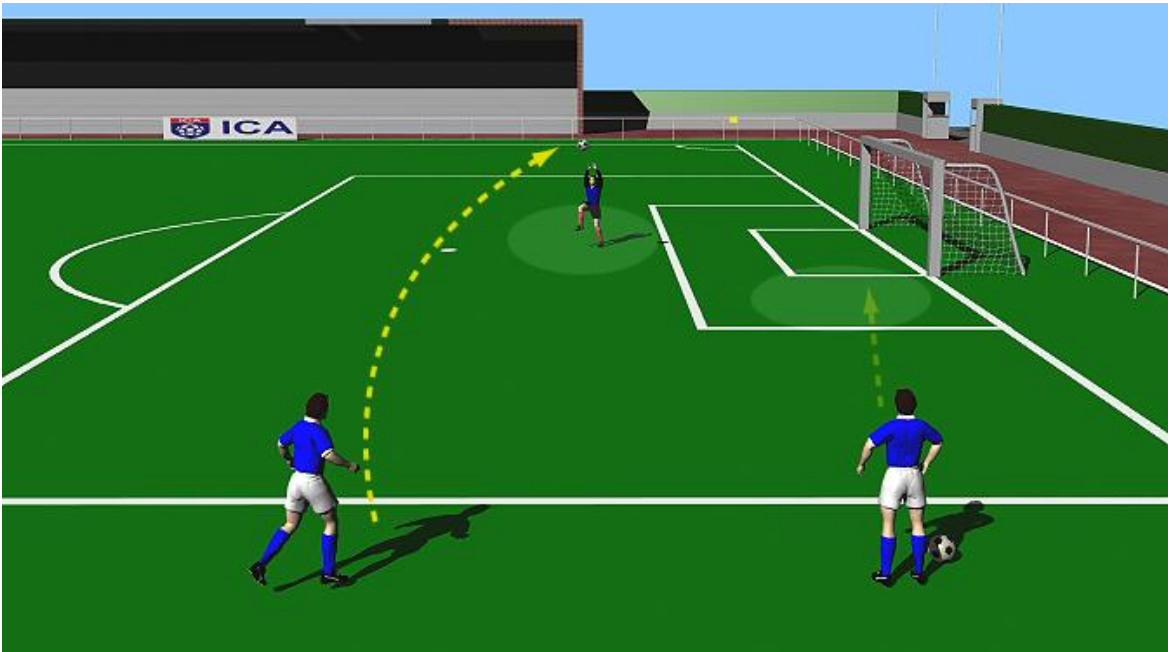
A Professional Pre-Game Warm Up - Step Three



Step Three: Serve Skipping Balls

Serve skipping balls with an overhand throw. It's important to test how the ball reacts to the service. Especially when your away from your home field. Skipping balls are the most difficult balls to read. It requires great timing.

A Professional Pre-Game Warm Up - Step Four

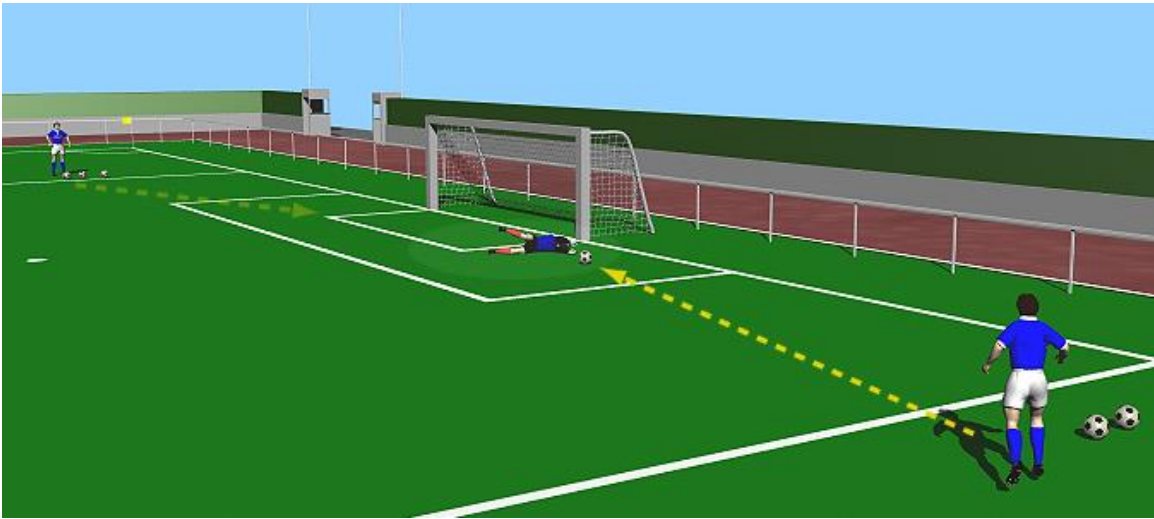


Step Four: Progress to two servers.

Progress to two servers. Start at the end line, 14-16 yards away. The servers are side by side. The first server strikes a low ball to the near post. The second server strikes a medium ball at the keeper. They move in an arc until they reach opposite end line.

Repeat to opposite direction. This activity encourages the keeper in goal to move into the ball line. Angle play is dynamic as a result of the shooters movements. Goalkeeper is in motion and setting for the save. The objective is not to beat the keeper but rather to prepare the keeper in a progressive fashion.

A Professional Pre-Game Warm Up - Step Five



Step Five: Two shooters each side.

Two shooters. One about 2-3 yards off the end line. The other shooter in the same position on the opposite end line. Keeper protects near post. Shooter drives low diagonal ball across the face of the goal. Keeper saves and jogs to opposite post.

No more than six repetitions. I believe your warm-up is exactly that, a warm-up and not a work out. So keep the number of repetitions reasonable.

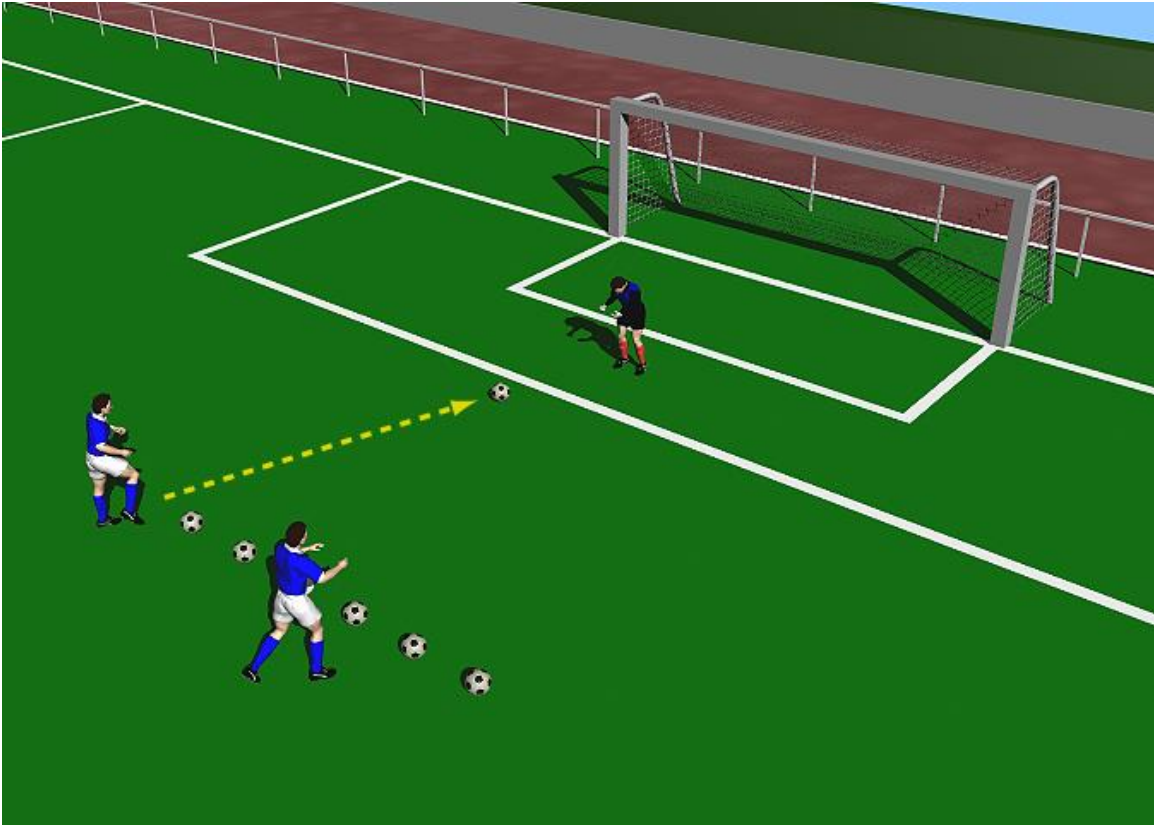
A Professional Pre-Game Warm Up - Step Six



Step Six: Crosses and Distribution

Handle crosses and finish with a hand or foot distribution. One server is on each side near the touch line. Always change the angle of service and height of the ball served. Drive them near post, to the six yard line, to the penalty spot and between the penalty spot and eighteen yard line. Alternate services from each side. Be patient when serving. Don't rush. The quality of service is very important. Strike a moving ball. A total of eight crosses is plenty.

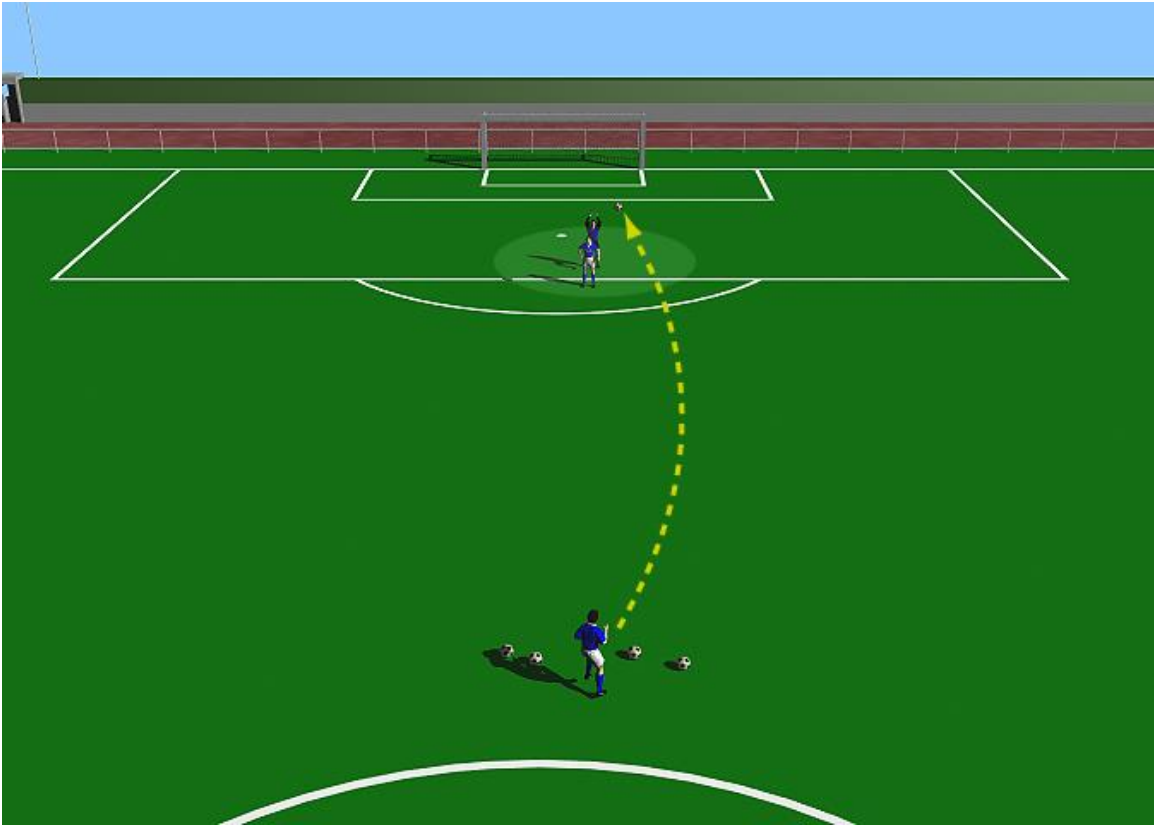
A Professional Pre-Game Warm Up - Step Seven



Step Seven: Close range serves.

Place six balls in front of each post, about twelve yards away. Same serve from each side. First: low driven ball. Second: medium tossed ball. Third: upper corner tossed ball. This activity is dynamic.

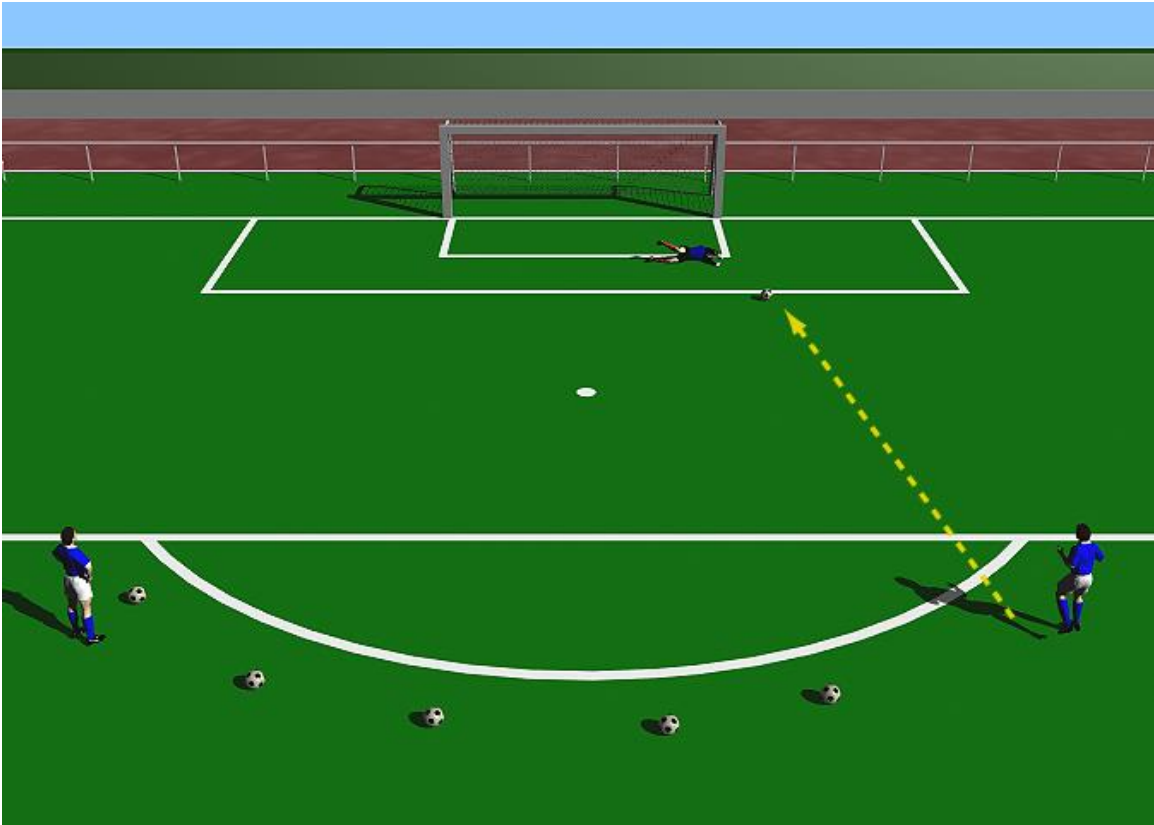
A Professional Pre-Game Warm Up - Step Eight



Step Eight: High serves edge of box.

Server at forty yards away, in center of the goal. Second player at the eighteen yard line. Server, drive the ball either left or right of the second player. Keeper reads the service and attacks the ball. Second player chases the ball down. The keeper has the absolute right of way. The field player must avoid the keeper. This rule must be very clear. Only two 1 v 1 saves.

A Professional Pre-Game Warm Up - Step Nine



Step Nine: Two shooters edge of box.

Place six balls around the big "D," just outside the eighteen yard line. Two servers alternate shooting on goal. Here, we challenge the keeper with power, but with emphasis on accuracy. Keeper is now ready for live action.

In between, these activities the keeper must stretch all parts of the body. We covered it all: Various shot handling techniques, angle play, and distribution. The mission is to prepare the keeper by seeing all types of situations and in the process make them look good. This builds confidence. It's like preparing a champion fighter.

GOALKEEPING

Waist Height Saves



What you need to know

Step One: Get the body directly in line with the flight of the ball. Feet shoulder width, knees slightly bent, body weight forward. Head held steady, eyes focused on the ball.

Step Two: Trunk bends forward from the waist. Arms extended out towards the ball with slight bend in the elbows. Forearms are parallel with the elbows tucked in. Palms of the hands face upward. Once the ball contacts the hands and forearms it will be absorbed deep into the pocket of the chest and stomach.

Step Three: Upon impact the body will relax slightly by getting slightly on the toes to absorb the impact of the ball. Body must be square to the ball at all times.

GOALKEEPING

Head Height Saves



What you need to know

Step One: Head and eyes should be focused on the ball, ignore other players. Arms extended above but slightly in front of the head. Hands are held even with finger's spread to receive the ball.

Step Two: Once the ball is caught, it should be drawn smoothly back into the chest.

Step Three: The keeper's intentions to win the ball should be clearly communicated with fellow defenders in the form of a loud, commanding and early keeper call.

Factors to be taken into account:

- The distance from which the ball is traveling.
- The pace of the ball.
- The weather conditions such as wind, rain, sun, etc.
- Presence of opposition strikers.
- Last couple of strides should be exact.

GOALKEEPING

Above Head Height Saves



What you need to know

Step One: Head and eyes should be focused on the ball, ignore other players. Arms extended above but slightly in front of the head. Hands are held even with fingers spread to receive the ball.

Step Two: Once the ball is caught, it should be drawn smoothly back into the chest.

Step Three: The keepers intentions to win the ball should be clearly communicated with fellow defenders in the form of a loud, commanding and early keeper call.

Factors to be taken into account:

- The distance from which the ball is traveling.
- The pace of the ball.
- The weather conditions such as wind, rain, sun, etc.
- Presence of opposition strikers.
- Last couple of strides should be exact.

GOALKEEPING

Dealing with Crosses



What you need to know

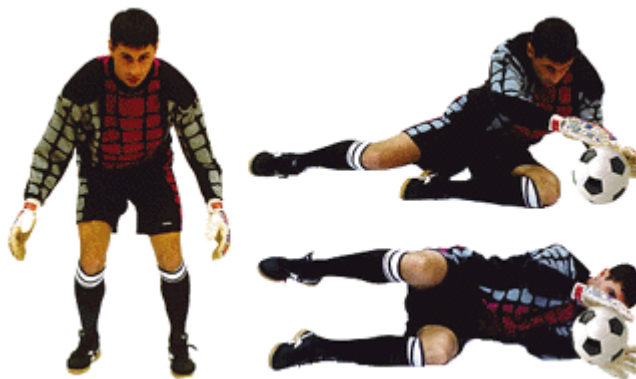
The high ball or cross can not be successfully negotiated unless one understands the mechanics of the one footed take off.

Factors to be taken into account:

- The distance from which the ball is traveling.
- The height and trajectory of the ball.
- The pace of the ball.
- The weather conditions such as wind, rain, sun, etc.
- Presence of opposition strikers.
- Last couple of strides should be exact.
- Last stride should be the longest. Non jumping leg/knee is driven upward to provide upward momentum. It is also but incidentally used for protection.
- Arm swing and knee lift should take place simultaneously.
- Head and eyes should be focused on the ball, ignore other players.
- Arms extended above but slightly in front of the head.
- Hands are held even with fingers spread to receive the ball.
- Once the ball is caught, it should be drawn smoothly back into the chest.
- The keepers intentions to win the ball should be clearly communicated with fellow defenders in the form of a loud, commanding and early keeper call.

GOALKEEPING

Diving Saves



What you need to know

There are 3 main types of breakaway saves:

1. The keeper may save before a shot is taken. In this instance the attacker is not in control of the ball, misplays the ball or the through ball or pass which is intended for him is over hit. This situation clearly favors the keeper and is usually 60/40 in his/her favors.
2. The keepers save at the foot of the striker just as the shot is taken. Commonly referred to as the smother save. This is 50/50 ball.
3. Saving after the shot is taken, here the keeper attempts to delay the striker by advancing from goal, closing the angle, staying big as long as possible and forcing the player to shoot. This type of save is reactionary and the feet are often used when the shot is low hard and very close to the body.

Elements Common to All 3 Types of Saves:

- Keepers must make their minds up quickly.
- Must judge their rate of advance and attempt to narrow the angle - thus reducing the amount of goal the attacker can see.
- Must be in control of their bodies by keeping footwork and balance right.
- Shoulders and head are forward.
- Go low into the ball - get lower as you approach the ball.
- Present large and long barrier as possible.
- Be courageous - have no fear.
- Concentrate on the ball.

GOALKEEPING

Parrying the Ball



What you need to know

Step One: Eyes should be focused on the ball. If the ball comes from the right side, use the right hand. If the ball comes from the left, use the left hand.

Step Two: Contact the ball through the middle. Do not swing wildly at the ball. The save should be a short sharp stabbing action.

Step Three: The Goalkeeper should communicate effectively with the defenders by calling for the ball.

GOALKEEPING

The Drop Kick



What you need to know

Step One: The ball can be held in either one or two hands. Drop the ball from waist height in front of kicking leg. Swing kicking leg forward from the hip.

Step Two: The knee is flexed on back swing and extended on follow through. Toes are pointed down and ankle is locked.

Step Three: Contact is made through the bottom half of the ball with the laces. Contact is made when the ball rises approximately 6 inches off the ground. Follow through by continuing the upward swing of the leg.

GOALKEEPING

The Full Volley



What you need to know

Step One: The ball can be held in either one or two hands. Drop the ball from waist height in front of kicking leg. Swing kicking leg forward from the hip.

Step Two: The knee is flexed on back swing and extended on followed through. Toes are pointed down and ankle is locked.

Step Three: Contact is made through the bottom half of the balls with the laces. Follow through by continuing the upward swing of the legs.

GOALKEEPING

The Goal Kick



What you need to know

Step One: Approach the ball at an angle. This will assist in the natural swinging motion of the kicking leg. The head should be kept steady and eyes fixed firmly on the ball. The last stride on the approach to the ball should be the longest. This will increase the length of the back swing from the kicking leg.

Step Two: Plant the non-kicking foot along side and slightly behind the ball. Do not position the non-kicking foot too close to the ball as to interfere with the natural swinging motion of the kicking leg. Contact with the kicking foot on the ball is made with the instep. The ball should be struck through the center and on the under side of the ball, where the ball rests on the surface of the ground.

Step Three: Withdrawal from the kicking leg comes from the hip as well as the knee for extra power and distance. The follow through is long and continues through the ball into the direction of the intended target. There is hardly any backspin on the ball, thus allowing the ball to roll as it makes contact with the ground.

GOALKEEPING

The Javelin Throw



What you need to know

Step One: Ball is held in the palm and cupped against the wrist with the fingers. Step with the opposite leg bending at the knee.

Step Two: Take the ball back in arc until it is by the side. Ball is swept back over shoulder and released on the follow through.

Step Three: Ball should have a head over tail spin as it leaves the hand. This will help it roll once it hits the ground.

GOALKEEPING

The Under Hand Roll



What you need to know

Step One: Ball is held in the palm of the hand and cupped against the wrist. Step with the opposite leg and bend at the knee.

Step Two: Take the ball back and release on the follow through. Release the ball low in a smooth controlled manner.

Step Three: The rolled pass should have the correct pace and accuracy to get it to its intended target. This technique is used when you wish to play the ball quickly and accurately over distances between 20 to 50 yards.

Repeated Diving Drill

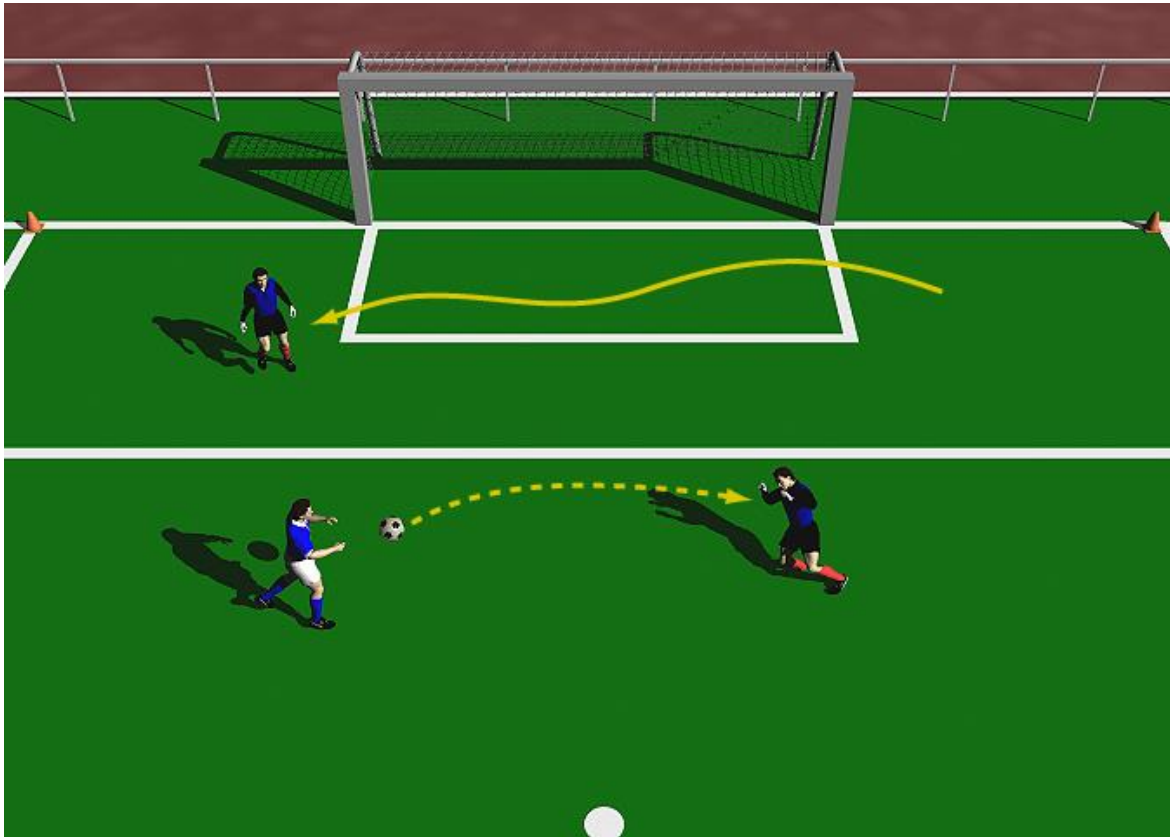


Coaching Points:

This practice is designed to improve the goalkeepers diving ability. Two goalkeepers and one server are positioned in the six-yard area. Both goalkeepers alternate receiving the ball from the server, working their way from one post to the next and back again. The server plays the ball with his feet while moving across the six-yard line. The goalkeeper must to dive for the ball and recover as quickly as possible and ready himself for the next shot.

Work must be rapid while maintaining quality technique.

Dive and Catch Drill



Coaching Points:

This practice is designed to improve the goalkeepers diving and catching ability. Two goalkeepers and one server are positioned in an area approximately 18 yards by 18 yards. Both goalkeepers jog around the grid and alternate receiving the ball from the server. The server either rolls a ball for the goalkeeper to dive or serves a high ball for the goalkeeper to catch.

Work until near fatigue, rest, then repeat exercise.

High Save, Low Save Drill



Coaching Points:

This practice is designed to improve the goalkeepers diving and catching ability. Two goalkeepers and one server are positioned in the six yard area. Both goalkeepers alternate receiving high or low serves from the server. The server either throws the ball high into the top corner or rolls the ball low into the bottom corner to challenge the goalkeepers. The goalkeeper must save the shot and recover as quickly as possible and return the ball back to the server.

Work must be rapid while maintaining quality technique.

Save or Dive Reaction Drill

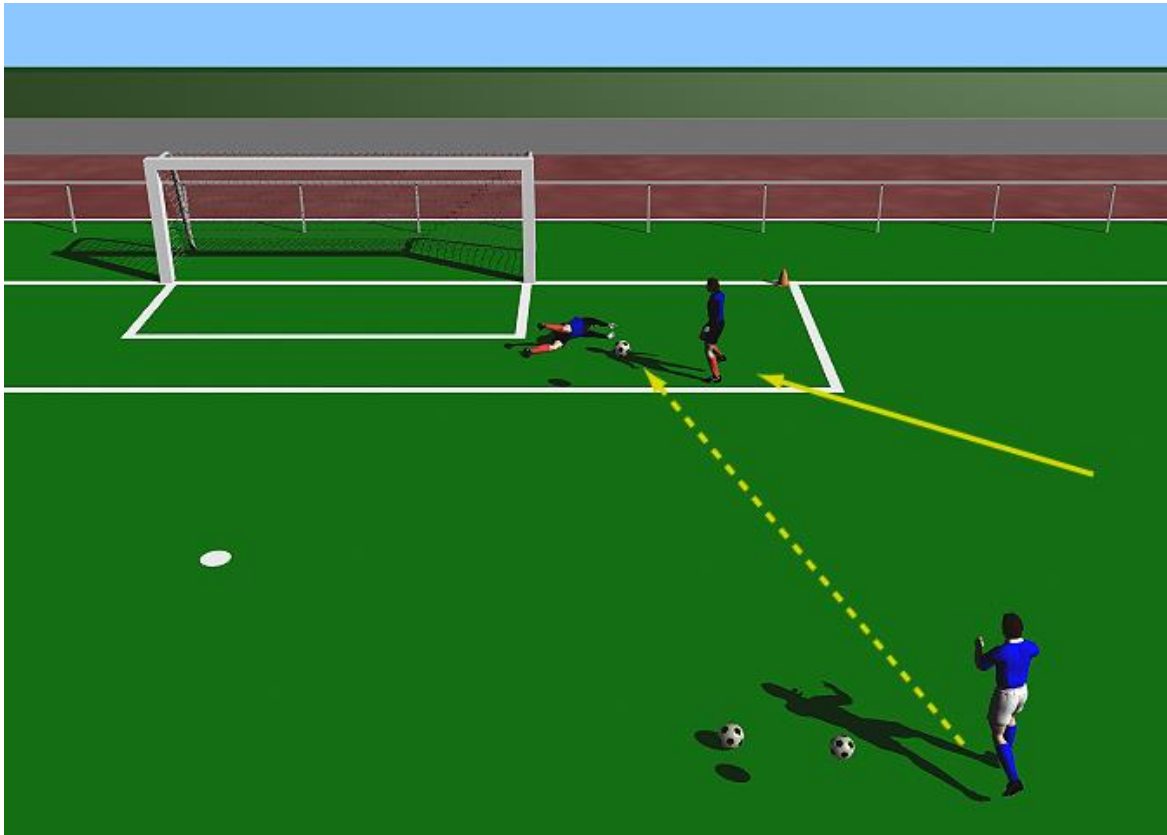


Coaching Points:

This practice is designed to improve the goalkeepers diving ability with an emphasis on reaction. Two goalkeepers are positioned in the penalty area, one on the penalty spot and the other on the six yard line. Goalkeepers are assigned a number, either 1 or 2. The server calls out 1 or 2 as he volleys the ball to the selected goalkeeper. Whichever goalkeeper's number is called must save the ball and return it back to the server. The other goalkeeper must dive to any side and recover as quickly as possible readying himself for the next command.

Work must be rapid while maintaining quality technique.

Diving Break Aways Drill



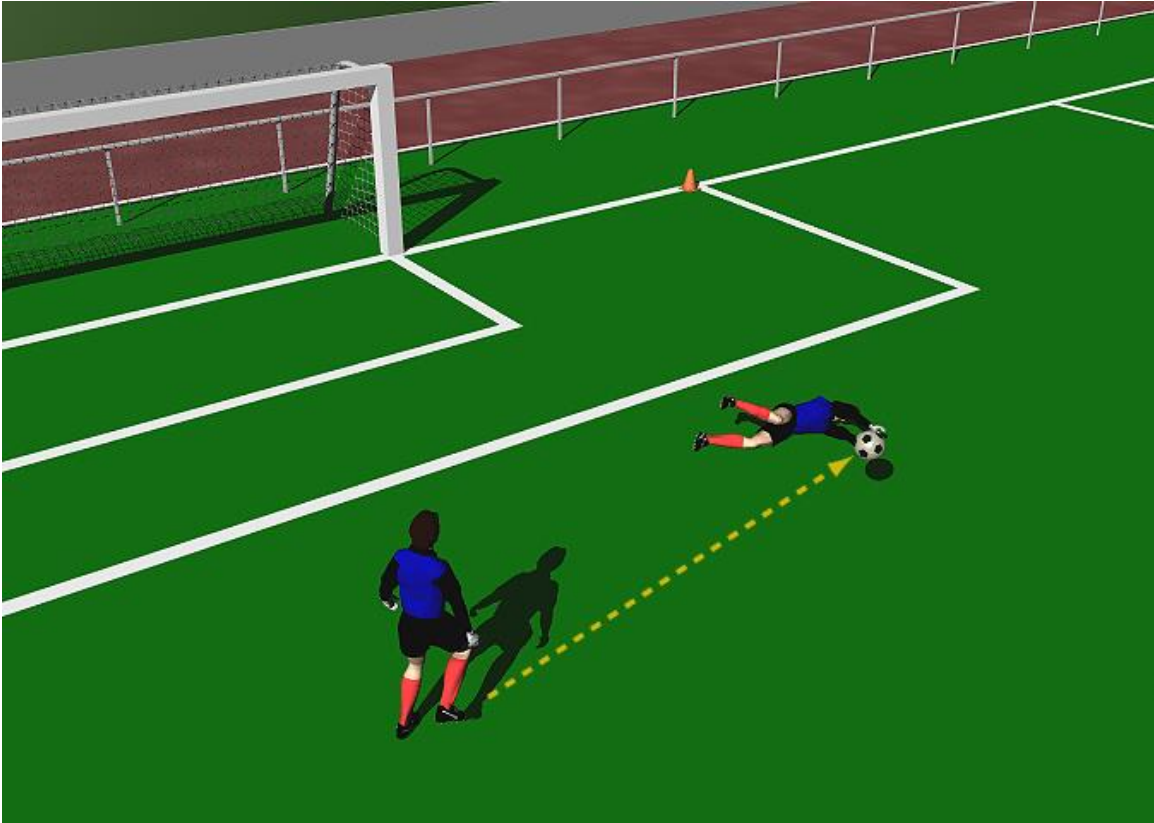
Coaching Points:

This practice is designed to improve the goalkeepers diving ability with and emphasis on 1 v 1 breakaways. One goalkeeper is placed in goal and a second goalkeeper who acts as an attacking player is positioned on the top of the penalty area. The server plays a pass midway between the goalkeeper and the attacker.

The goalkeeper must come out quickly from the goal and dive to stop the breakaway. The attacker performs a passive role at first, then progresses to eventually trying to win the ball and score. Alternate the goalkeepers on each attempt.

Work must be rapid while maintaining quality technique.

Chase and Dive Drill



Coaching Points:

This practice is designed to improve the goalkeepers diving ability. Two goalkeepers are positioned in the penalty area. Goalkeepers stand facing each other approximately 5 yards apart and alternate passing the ball back and forth. After four or five passes, one goalkeeper opens his legs for the other goalkeeper to hit the ball through.

The pass through the legs should be firm and approximately 10 yards to 15 yards in distance. After the ball travels through the goalkeepers legs he must then chase after the ball and dive to secure possession. The second goalkeeper must trail the diving goalkeeper then resume play as quickly as possible. Goalkeepers alternate diving each time.

Work must be rapid while maintaining quality technique.

Five Ball Drill

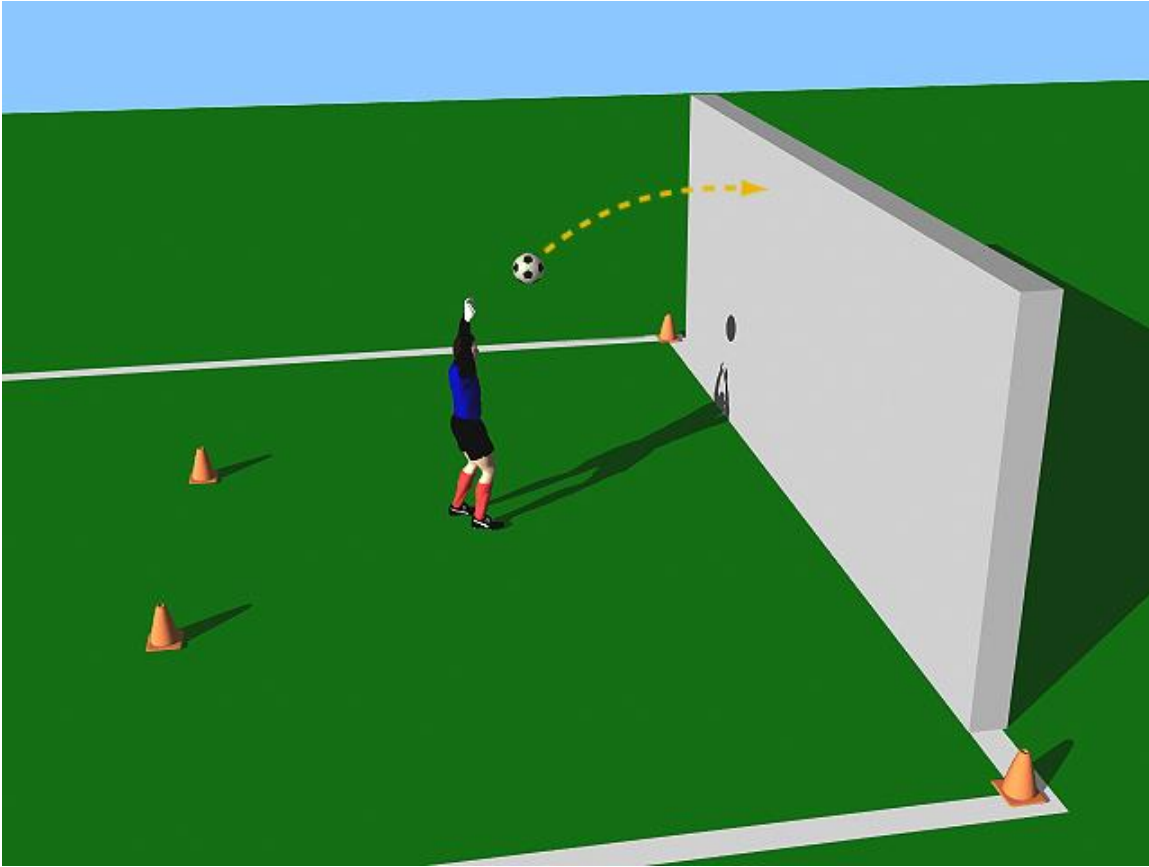


Coaching Points:

This practice is designed to improve the goalkeepers diving ability. The goalkeeper is positioned in goal with the server on the top of the penalty area. Five balls are placed within the penalty area. On the servers command, the goalkeeper must run and dive onto each of the balls, returning to the goal line after each dive. On the fifth and final ball, the server volleys the ball for the goalkeeper to catch.

Work must be rapid while maintaining quality technique.

Off the Wall 1



Coaching Points:

This practice is designed to improve the goalkeepers catching ability. The goalkeeper stands 5 feet from a wall. Using both hands the goalkeeper throws the ball (like a throw-in) and catches the rebound. Vary this drill by alternating service from one hand to the other, while catching with the one free hand.

Work must be rapid while maintaining quality technique.

Off the Wall 2



Coaching Points:

This practice is designed to improve the goalkeepers catching ability. Two goalkeepers are facing a wall, one behind the other, with the front keeper standing approximately 10 feet from the wall. The keeper in the back throws the ball against the wall over the right or left shoulder of the front keeper. The front keeper reacts to the rebound and catches the ball. Alternate throwing locations to change the projection of the ball off the wall. Repeat drill 8-10 times and then switch positions.

Work must be rapid while maintaining quality technique.

Side Pass the Ball



Coaching Points:

This practice is designed to improve the goalkeepers catching ability. Two goalkeepers are positioned in the penalty area. Goalkeepers stand facing each other approximately 3 yards apart. Each goalkeeper has a ball. The goalkeepers move side to side in a synchronized fashion while throwing and catching the ball. Perform drill for short periods, rest and repeat.

Work must be rapid while maintaining quality technique.

Up and Down and Throw Game

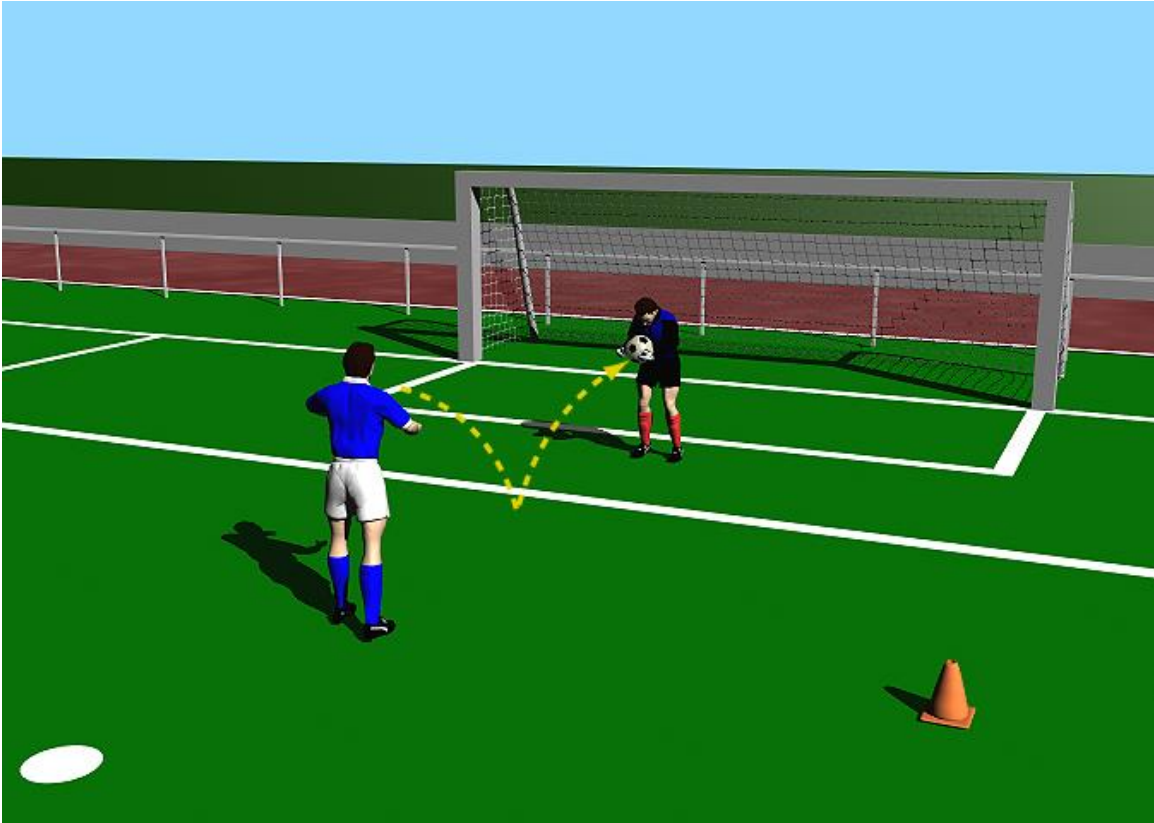


Coaching Points:

This practice is designed to improve the goalkeepers catching ability. Two goalkeepers are positioned in the penalty area. Goalkeepers stand facing each other approximately 3 yards apart. Each goalkeeper has a ball. One goalkeeper acts as the server by throwing the ball for the other to catch and return. In-between catching the served ball, the goalkeeper must throw his ball into the air above him and catch it. Both goalkeepers must concentrate to synchronize their timing.

Perform drill for short periods and alternate roles. Work must be rapid while maintaining quality technique.

Drop Ball Drill



Coaching Points:

This practice is designed to improve the goalkeepers catching ability. Two goalkeepers are positioned in the penalty area. Goalkeepers stand facing each other approximately 3 yards apart. Each goalkeeper has a ball. One goalkeeper acts as the server by throwing the ball for the other to catch and return. In-between catching the served ball, the goalkeeper must throw his ball into the air above him and catch it. Both goalkeepers must concentrate to synchronize their timing.

Perform drill for short periods and alternate roles. Work must be rapid while maintaining quality technique.

Turn and Save Drill



Coaching Points:

This practice is designed to improve the goalkeepers catching ability. Two goalkeepers are standing approximately 15 feet apart, with the “working” keeper facing away from the “serving” keeper. The serving keeper vocally signals for the working keeper to turn (to face him/her). At that moment the serving keeper serves the ball (from hand or foot) to the working keeper who catches the ball. Vary your services in speed and location.

Repeat drill 8-10 times and then switch positions. Work must be rapid while maintaining quality technique.

Rapid Save Drill



Coaching Points:

This practice is designed to improve the goalkeepers catching ability. One goalkeeper is placed in the goal the second on the penalty spot who acts as the server. The server delivers a variety of serves, by either throwing or volleying the ball. The server should challenge the goalkeeper by placing his serves into different areas of the goal. He may also fake to throw the ball in one direction, but quickly serve it in another.

After catching the ball, the goalkeeper returns the ball to server and return to the starting position as quickly as possible. Drill is repeated 10 to 12 times then goalkeepers change roles.

Work must be rapid while maintaining quality technique.

Side to Side Drill



Coaching Points:

This practice is designed to improve the goalkeepers catching ability. One goalkeeper is placed in the goal. Two serving goalkeepers with a ball each are positioned on the six-yard line approximately 5 yards apart. The receiving goalkeeper starts by facing one of the servers. The server delivers an under-handed throw for the goalkeeper to catch. After catching the ball, the goalkeeper returns the ball to the server, side steps quickly to the next server and repeats action. This sequence is continued for approximately 20 serves, then goalkeeper changes roles with one of the servers. Repeat until all goalkeepers are worked sufficiently.

Work must be rapid while maintaining quality technique.

Catch and Pick Up Drill



Coaching Points:

This practice is designed to improve the goalkeepers catching ability. Two goalkeepers are placed on opposite ends of the goal line. The server is positioned between both goalkeepers and also on the goal line. The server delivers a variety of serves, by either throwing the ball high or rolling the ball across the ground for the goalkeepers to collect.

After collecting the ball, the goalkeepers return the ball back to the server and jog back to their starting position, while always facing the field of play.

Work must be rapid while maintaining quality technique.

Across the Goal Drill



Coaching Points:

This practice is designed to improve the goalkeepers catching ability. Two goalkeepers and one server are positioned in the six-yard area. Both goalkeepers alternate receiving the ball from the server, working their way from one post to the next and back again. The server delivers an under-handed serve while moving across the six-yard line. The goalkeeper must catch the ball and return it back to the server and ready himself for the next serve.

Work must be rapid while maintaining quality technique.

Front Post Bounce Drill



Coaching Points:

This practice is designed to improve the goalkeepers catching ability. Two goalkeepers are placed in the goal. The server is positioned on the corner of the six-yard box. The server delivers an over-head throw (one bounce) for the goalkeeper to collect. After catching the ball, the goalkeeper returns the ball to server. He then jogs back to the starting position. The second goalkeeper then repeats drill.

Work must be rapid while maintaining quality technique.

Two Catch Drill



Coaching Points:

This practice is designed to improve the goalkeepers catching ability. Three goalkeepers are placed in the goal. Two servers are positioned in the penalty area, one to the side of the area, the second near the arc at the top of the box. The first server delivers an high volley serve for the goalkeeper to collect. After catching the ball, the goalkeeper returns the ball to server. He then jogs to the second server who throws a high serve for the goalkeeper to collect.

After catching the ball, the goalkeeper returns the ball to the second server. He then jogs back to the starting position. The second goalkeeper then repeats drill.

Work must be rapid while maintaining quality technique.

Front Post Angle Drill



Coaching Points:

This practice is designed to improve the goalkeepers shot stopping ability. The goalkeeper is placed in the goal, close to the post. The server is positioned on the corner of the six-yard box. The server delivers a series of shots aimed at the front post for the goalkeeper to collect. After saving the ball, the goalkeeper returns the ball to server and readies himself for the next shot.

Work must be rapid while maintaining quality technique.

Break Away Drill



Coaching Points:

This practice is designed to improve the goalkeepers shot stopping ability with an emphasis on breakaways. Two goalkeepers are placed in the goal, one behind the other and close to the post. The server is positioned at an angle, inline with the corner of the six-yard box. The server delivers a series of through balls aimed towards the front post area for the goalkeeper to collect. After saving the ball, the goalkeeper returns the ball to server and returns to the goal. The second goalkeeper repeats the drill and the sequence is continued.

Work must be rapid while maintaining quality technique.

Two Goal Drill



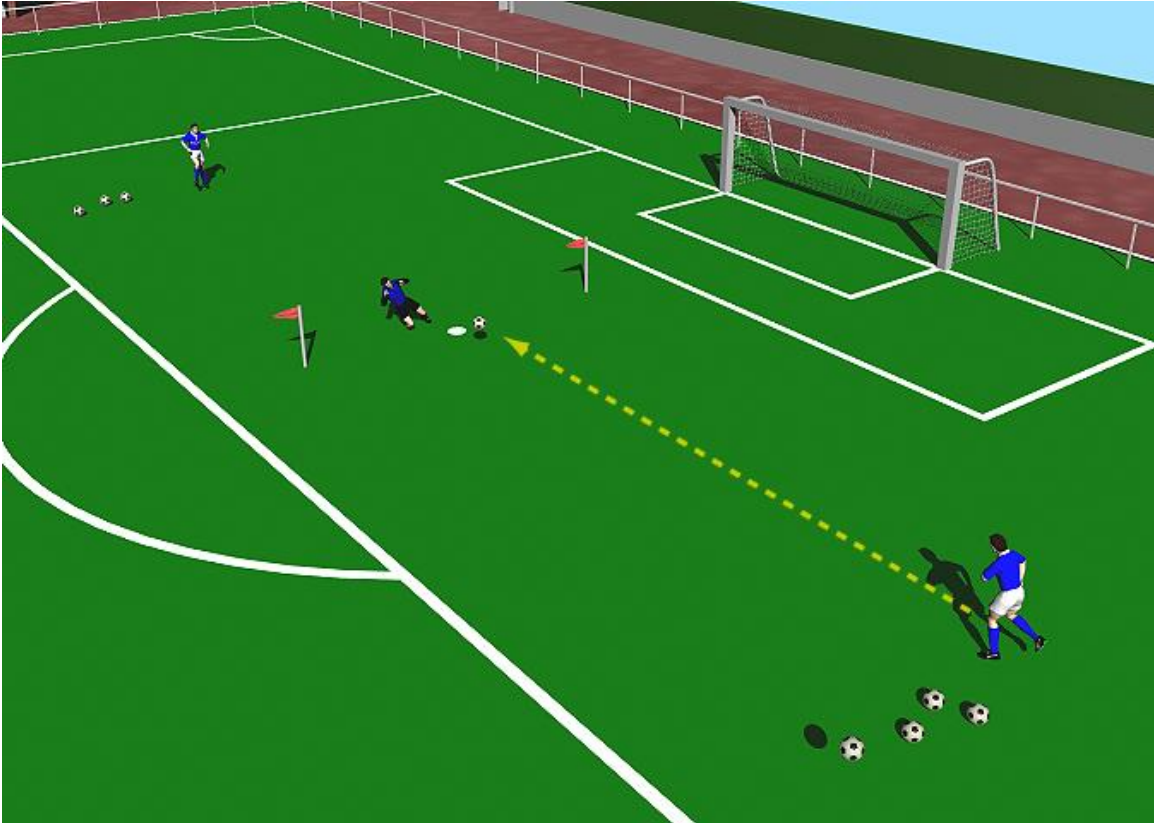
Coaching Points:

This practice is designed to improve the goalkeeper's shot stopping ability. Two goals are made using corner flags, one in-line with the penalty spot, the other on the side of the six yard box. A goalkeeper is placed in each of the goals. A third goalkeeper is positioned in the center of the regular goal. Two servers are placed outside the penalty area, one on the edge of the arc and the other at the side of the penalty area facing the side goal.

The two servers deliver shots for the goalkeepers to stop. The goalkeepers must stop the shot and return the ball back to the server. The third goalkeeper works on his "footwork" by side stepping from post to post. As soon as the goalkeepers return the ball to the server, all goalkeepers rotate.

Work must be rapid while maintaining quality technique.

Shooting both Sides Drill



Coaching Points:

This practice is designed to improve the goalkeepers shot stopping ability. A goal is made using cones and is placed along the centerline of the penalty area. The goalkeeper is positioned in the center of the goal. A server is placed each side of the penalty area and facing the goal. The servers alternate delivering shots to the goalkeeper. The ball must travel between the cones and below head-height of the goalkeeper to count as a goal.

The server on the opposite side must always be alert to strike the ball when it comes into his end from a shot. If the goalkeeper saves the shot, he turns around and rolls the ball out to the opposite server. Work for short, intense period and rotate the goalkeepers.

Work must be rapid while maintaining quality technique.

Change Angle Drill



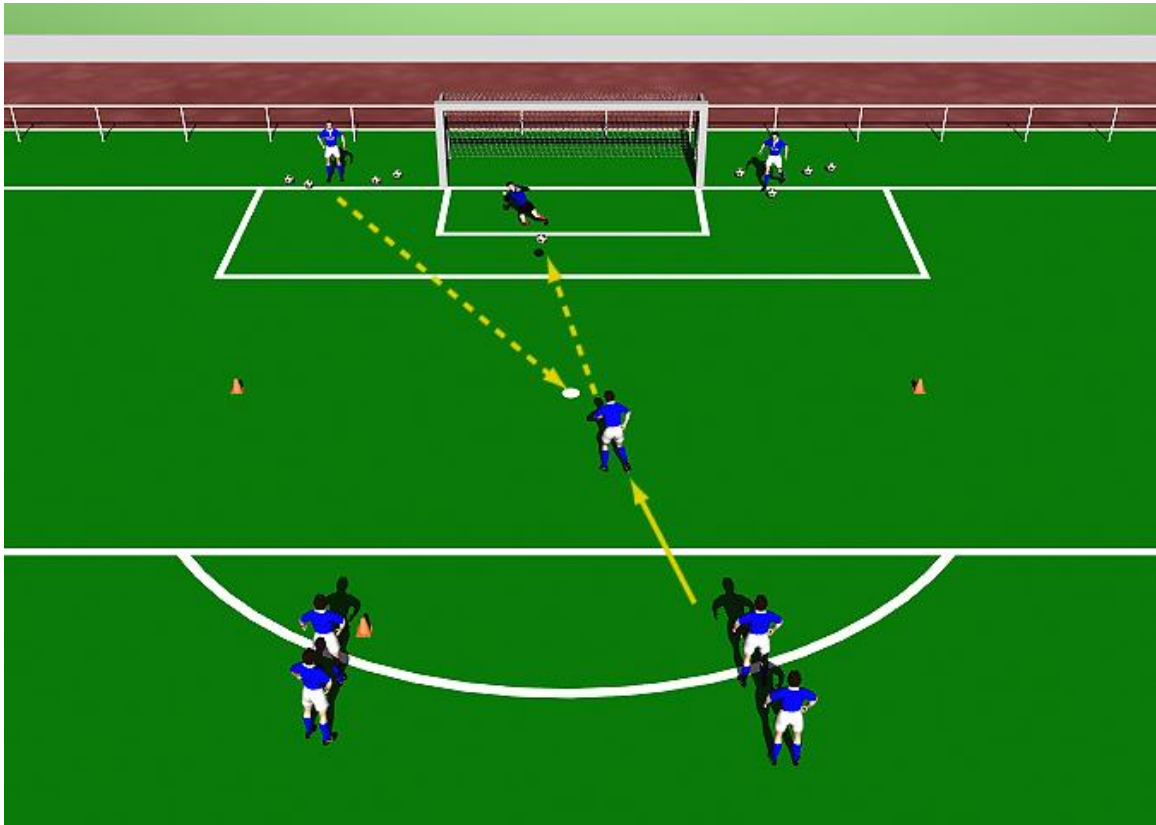
Coaching Points:

This practice is designed to improve the goalkeepers shot stopping ability with an emphasis on changing angles. The goalkeeper is placed in the goal and close to the post. The server is positioned to the side of the same post. The second server is placed on the edge of the six-yard box. The first server throws an under-handed serve for the second server to volley (using the inside of the foot) at goal. At the moment the ball is delivered from the first server the goalkeeper must re-adjust his positioning and ready himself for the shot from the second server. After saving the ball, the goalkeeper returns the ball back to the first server and resumes his starting position at near the post.

The sequence is then repeated. Rotate goalkeepers to change roles.

Work must be rapid while maintaining quality technique.

Rapid Shooting Drill



Coaching Points:

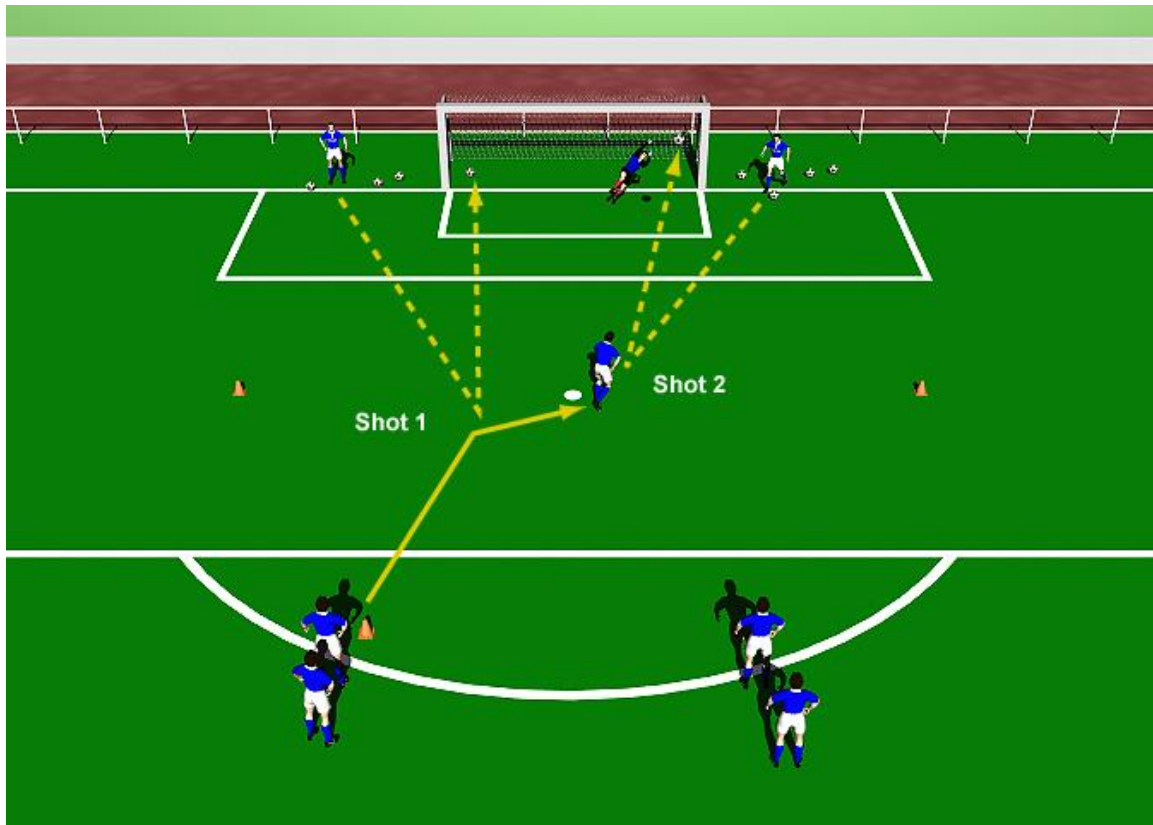
This practice is designed to improve the goalkeepers shot stopping ability. The goalkeeper is placed in the goal. A group of players are divided equally into two sets and positioned at two cones placed at the edge of the penalty area. Two servers, each side of the goal, serve the ball on the ground and in-between the two cones placed approximately 12 yards from the goal line. Each server alternates serving.

Players shooting must receive a pass from the server diagonally opposite. The ball must be struck after it passes through the cones. Any ball struck before passing through the cones does not count. The group works as a team to see how many goals they can score in three minutes. After three minutes all goals are totaled.

The goalkeeper has to stop as many shots as he can in 3 minutes. The goalkeeper is awarded a goal for every successful save. Scores are compared against the attacking players.

Work must be rapid while maintaining quality technique.

Two Shot Drill



Coaching Points:

This practice is designed to improve the goalkeepers shot stopping ability. The goalkeeper is placed in the goal. A group of players are placed at the edge of the penalty area. Two servers are positioned each side of the goal. One server passes the ball to the edge of the box for the shooter to hit first time. Immediately after shooting the ball, the second server delivers a short-range pass for the shooter to strike at goal. After taking both shots, the shooter returns to his starting position and joins the end of the line.

The group works as a team to see how many goals they can score in three minutes. After three minutes all goals are totaled. The goalkeeper has to stop as many shots as he can in 3 minutes. The goalkeeper is awarded a goal for every successful save. Scores are compared against the attacking players.

Work must be rapid while maintaining quality technique.

Center and Wide Drill



Coaching Points:

This practice is designed to improve the goalkeepers shot stopping ability. The goalkeeper is placed in the goal. A group of players are placed at the edge of the penalty area. Two servers are positioned each side of the goal. One server passes the ball to the edge of the box for the shooter to hit first time. Immediately after shooting the ball, the second server delivers a short-range pass at an angle from the goal, for the shooter to strike.

After taking both shots, the shooter returns to his starting position and joins the end of the line. The group works as a team to see how many goals they can score in three minutes. After three minutes all goals are totaled. The goalkeeper has to stop as many shots as he can in 3 minutes. The goalkeeper is awarded a goal for every successful save. Scores are compared against the attacking players.

Work must be rapid while maintaining quality technique.

One vs One Drill



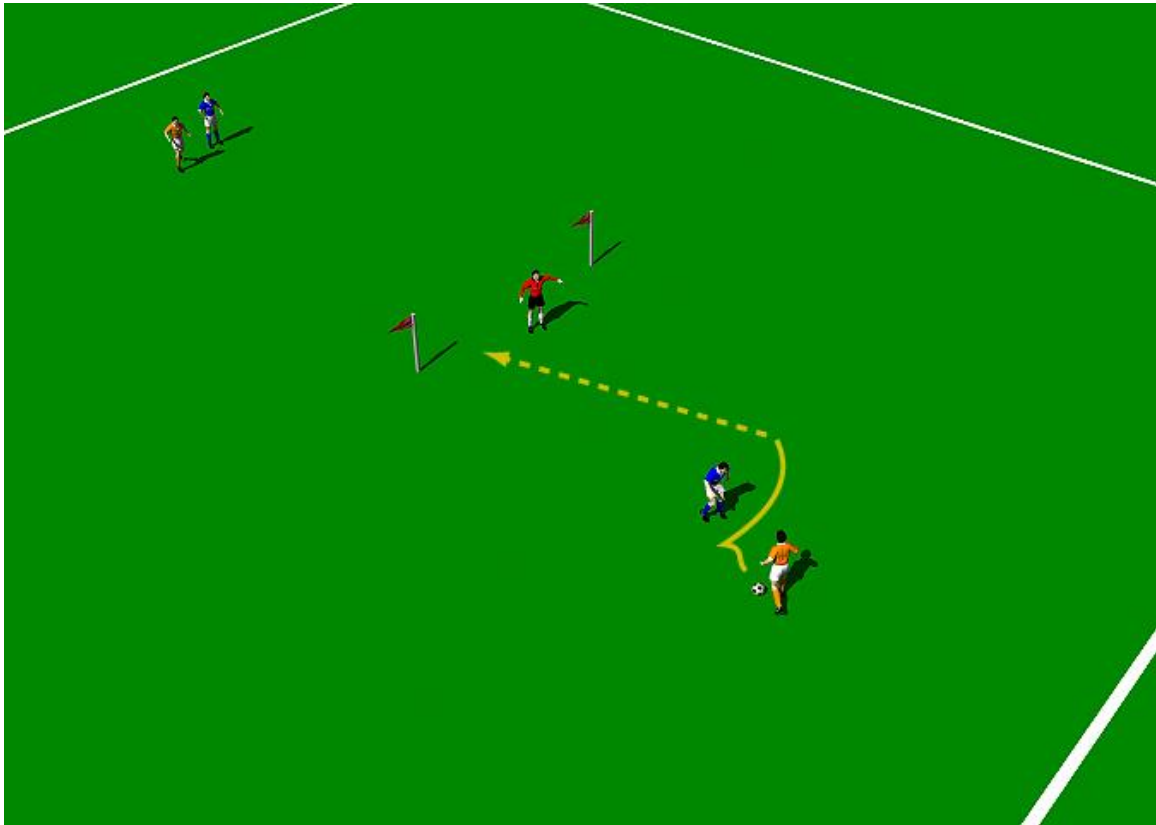
Coaching Points:

This practice is designed to improve the goalkeepers shot stopping ability. The goalkeeper is placed in the goal. A group of players are divided into pairs and positioned opposite sides of the goal to their partners. Each pair is assigned a number, either 1, 2 or 3.

The goalkeeper starts the practice by throwing the ball out into the penalty area and calling out number 1, 2 or 3. The pair nominated has to run for the ball. Whoever wins the ball becomes the attacker, the other becomes the defender. The attacker has to try and score past the goalkeeper. The defender must defend the goal. Roles are reversed if the defender can win the ball. Once a goal is scored or a shot is out of play the practice is repeated with a different pair of players. The goalkeeper has to provide information and communicate verbally with the defender.

Work must be rapid while maintaining quality technique.

One vs One Both Sides



Coaching Points:

This practice is designed to improve the goalkeepers shot stopping ability. A goal is made using cones and is placed along the centerline of a grid approximately 20 yards by 40 yards in size. The goalkeeper is positioned in the center of the goal. Two players are placed either side of the goal. The goalkeeper starts the practice by rolling the ball to one of the players. Whoever wins the ball becomes the attacker, the other becomes the defender.

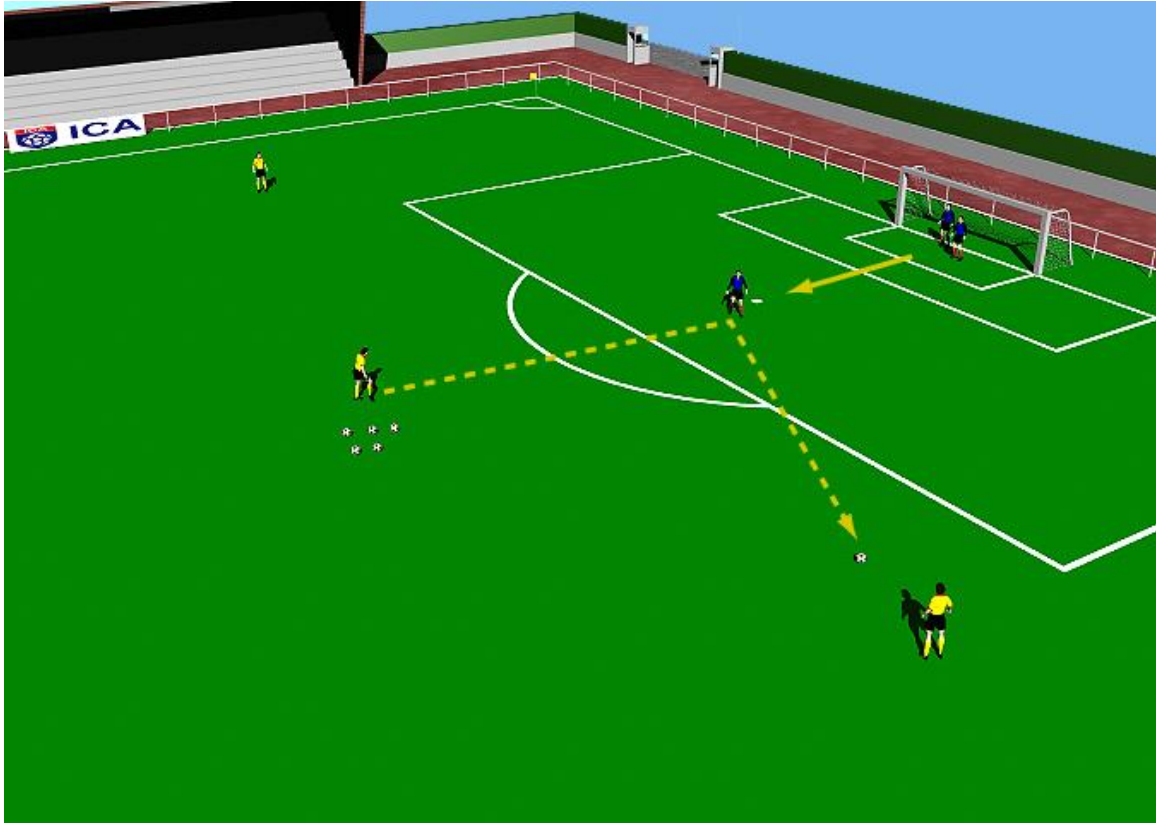
The attacker has to try and score past the goalkeeper. The defender must defend the goal. Roles are reversed if the defender can win the ball. The goalkeeper has to provide information and communicate verbally with the defender. Once a goal is scored, a save is made or a shot is out of play the practice is repeated from the opposite side of the grid. The ball must travel between the cones and below head-height of the goalkeeper to count as a goal. Goals are awarded in the following manner:

- 3 goals if the player scores on first touch.
- 2 goals if the player takes two touches before scoring
- 1 goal if the player takes three or more touches before scoring.

The players on the opposite side must always be alert to strike the ball when it comes into their end from a shot. If the goalkeeper saves the shot, he then turns around and rolls the ball out to the opposite players.

Work must be rapid while maintaining quality technique.

Ground Passing Drill



Coaching Points:

This practice is designed to improve the goalkeepers ground passing technique. Three goalkeepers are placed in the goal. A receiver is positioned on each side of the penalty area. The server is stationed at the edge of the penalty area inside the arc. The practice starts with the server passing the ball on the ground to the goalkeepers feet.

The goalkeeper must look to pass the ball as quickly as possible to either of the two wide receivers. After passing the ball, the goalkeeper returns to the goal and the next goalkeeper repeats the practice.

Pressure Passing Drill



Coaching Points:

This practice is designed to improve the goalkeepers ground passing technique while under pressure.

A grid is marked out approximately 20 yards by 40 yards. Goals are made using cones on each end-line of the grid. A goalkeeper is placed in each goal. A receiver is positioned on each side of the grid. Two servers are stationed in the middle of the grid with a ball each.

The practice starts with one of the servers passing the ball on the ground to the goalkeepers feet. Immediately after passing the ball, the server pressurizes the goalkeeper at full speed and tries to win the ball back. The goalkeeper must look to pass the ball as quickly as possible to either of the two wide receivers. After passing the ball, the goalkeeper returns to the goal and the practice is repeated from the opposite side.

Long Range Kicking Drill

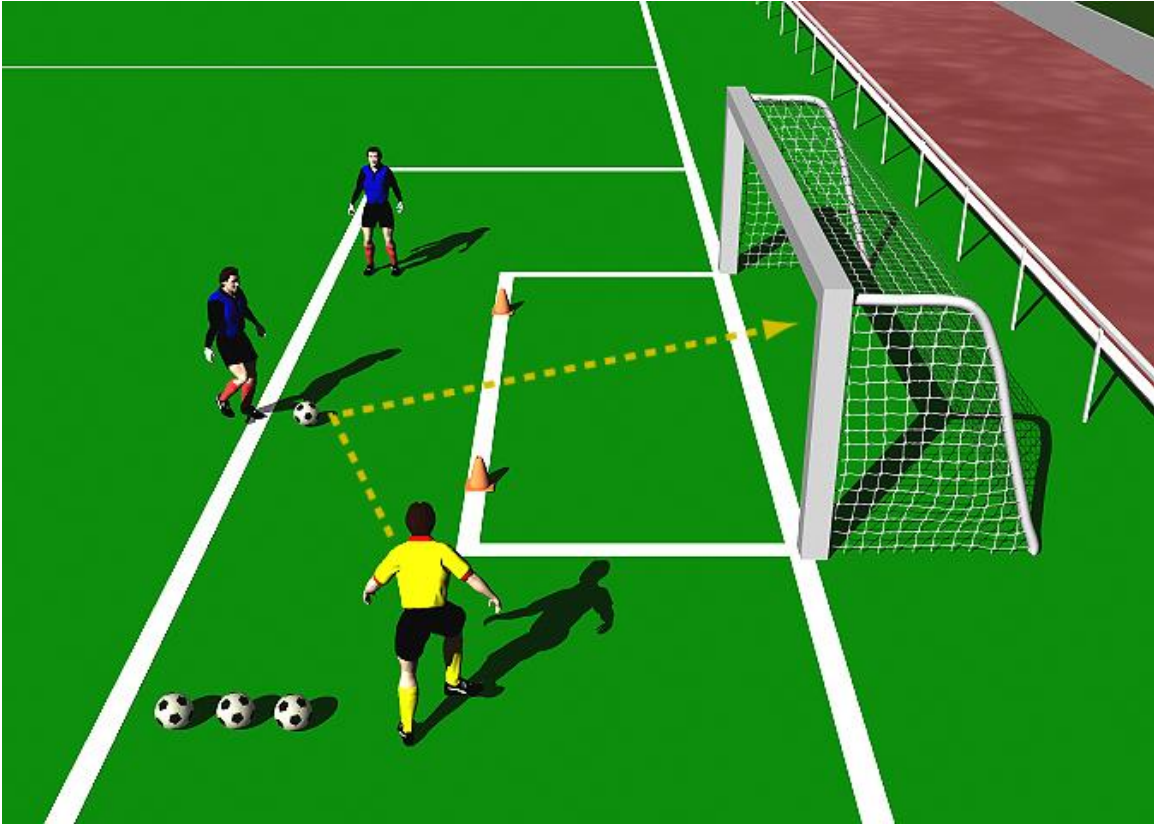


Coaching Points:

This practice is designed to improve the goalkeepers long range kicking technique with an emphasis on the lofted pass. Two goalkeepers are positioned opposite each other approximately 40 yards apart. Each goalkeeper is placed in a 5 yards half-circle marked out by the cones. Goalkeepers alternate lofted passes while attempting to deliver the pass into their partner's circle.

The goalkeepers receive a point for each successful pass that hits the target. Keep score and compare. Increase distance for older players.

Rapid Kicking Drill



Coaching Points:

This practice is designed to improve the goalkeepers kicking technique. Two goalkeepers are placed at the penalty spot and facing the goal. The server is positioned on the six-yard line and in-line with the post.

The practice starts with the server rolling the ball along the six yard line. The first goalkeeper in-line runs forward and strikes the ball "first time" into the net. After kicking the ball the goalkeeper returns to the starting position and the next goalkeeper repeats the practice.

Work must be rapid while maintaining quality technique.

Volley Drill



Coaching Points:

This practice is designed to improve the goalkeepers long range kicking technique with an emphasis on volleying.

Two goalkeepers are positioned opposite each other approximately 50 yards apart. Each goalkeeper is placed in a 5 yards half-circle marked out by the cones. Goalkeepers alternate volley passes while attempting to deliver the pass into their partner's circle.

The goalkeepers receive a point for each successful pass that hits the target. Keep score and compare. Increase distance for older players.

Catch and Sit Up Drill



Coaching Points:

This practice is designed to improve the goalkeepers general fitness level while incorporating ball handling skills.

Two goalkeepers are positioned in the penalty area. Goalkeepers are facing each other approximately 5 yards apart. One goalkeeper sits on the ground; the other goalkeeper acts as the server. The practice starts when the server delivers an under-handed serve for the sitting goalkeeper to catch. After catching the ball, the goalkeeper brings the ball to his chest and performs a "sit up" with the ball in his hands. On returning to the sitting position, the goalkeeper then throws the ball back to the server to repeat the practice. Goalkeeper works to near exhaustion then change roles with the server.

Work must be rapid while maintaining quality technique.

Sit Ups: Tones upper abdominal muscles.

Position: On back, hands on the ball, elbows out to side, feet on the ground.

Exercise: Catch ball and slowly relax back to lying down position. Roll upper body smoothly toward sitting position at a 45° angle. Return ball to server.

Sit Up and Dive Drill



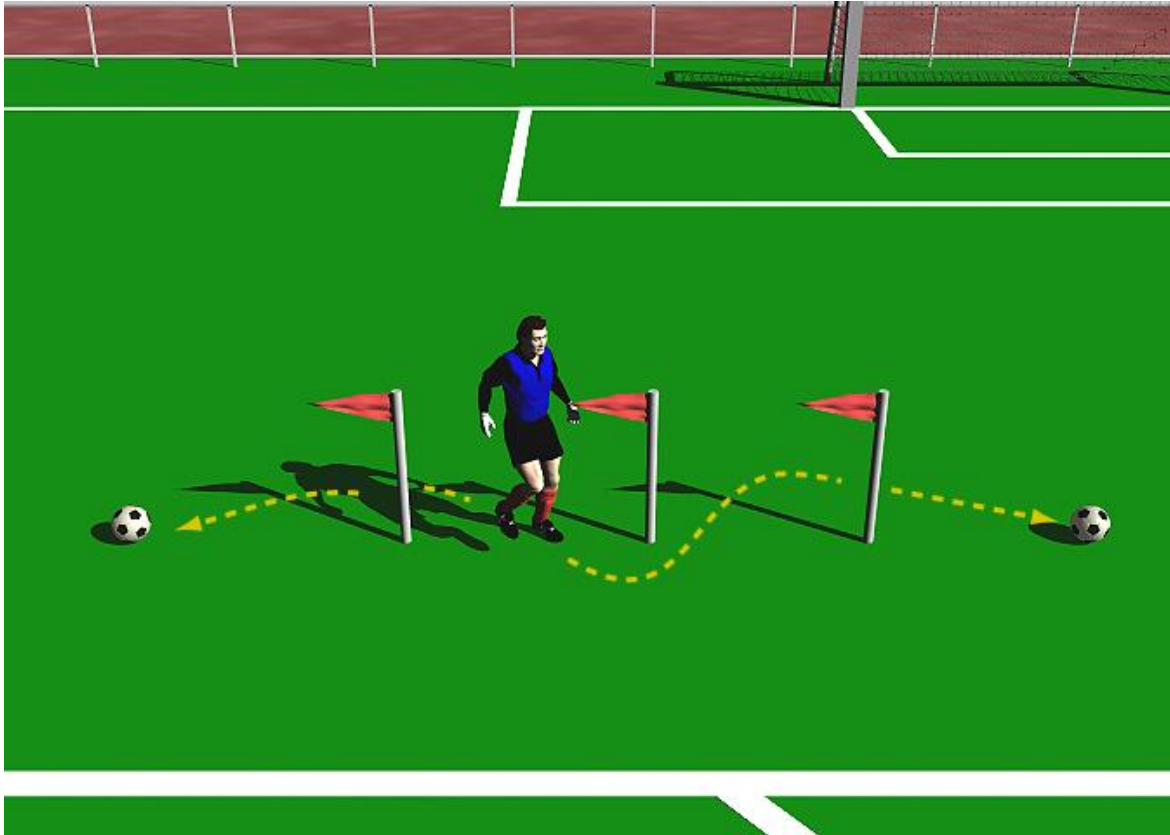
Coaching Points:

This practice is designed to improve the goalkeepers general fitness level while incorporating ball handling skills.

A goalkeeper is positioned in the goal and at one of the posts. The server is stationed at the penalty spot. The goalkeeper starts the practice by performing 4 sits up's, turning and diving for a ball delivered by the server. The goalkeeper returns the ball back to the server and repeats the drill. The goalkeeper works to near exhaustion then changes roles with the server. Exercises can be varied.

Work must be rapid while maintaining quality technique.

Slalom Drill



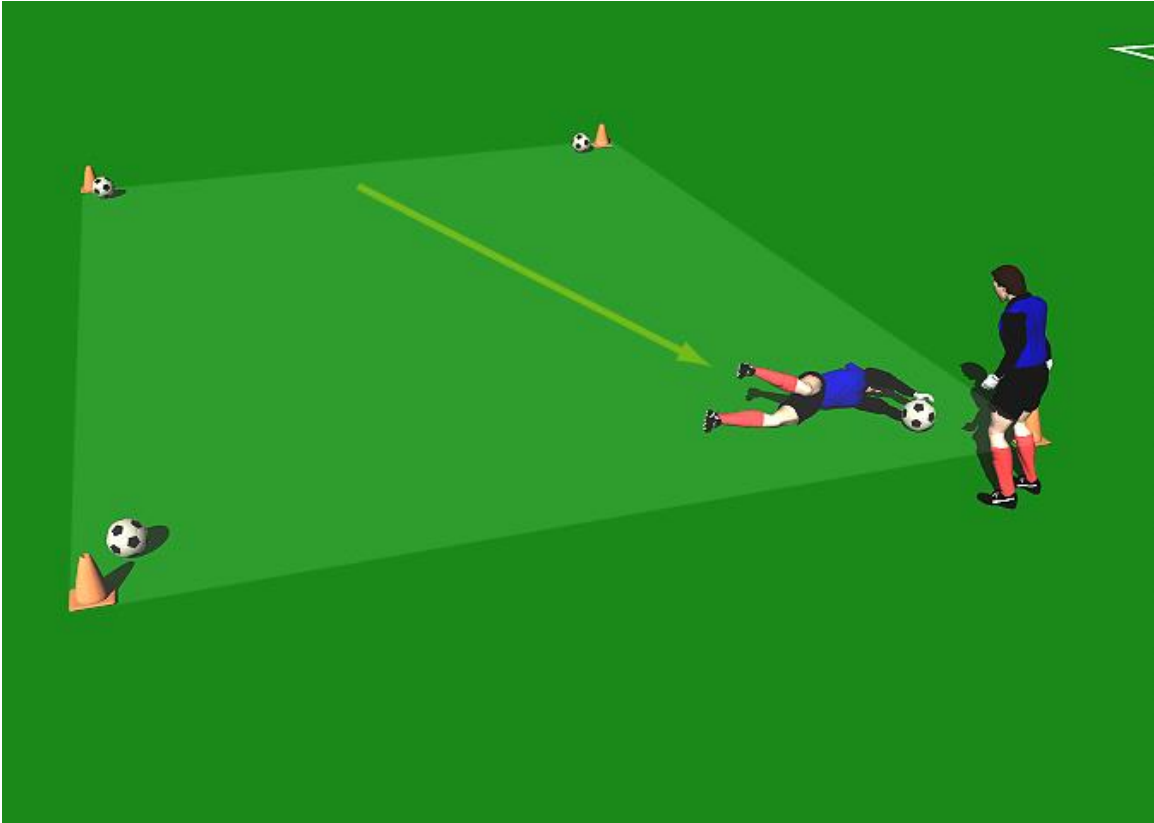
Coaching Points:

This practice is designed to improve the goalkeepers general fitness level while incorporating footwork technique.

Three corner flags are placed approximately one yard apart. A ball is placed at the end flags. The goalkeeper "side steps" in-between the flags and dives at opposite ball. The goalkeeper must quickly recover and continue to repeat back to opposite side. This sequence is continued until the goalkeeper is near exhaustion then changes roles with the resting goalkeeper.

Work must be rapid while maintaining quality technique.

Ball Shuttles



Coaching Points:

This practice is designed to improve the goalkeepers general fitness level while incorporating diving skills.

Two goals are made using cones and are placed approximately 10 yards from each other. Two balls are placed near the corner of each goal. Goalkeepers are positioned in goal.

One of the goalkeepers starts the practice by side stepping to one of the balls. The opposite goalkeeper must run out quickly from his goal and dive to the ball his partner has selected. After diving to the ball, he must quickly recover and jog backwards to his own goal. He then side steps to a ball in his goal for his partner to run out and dive. This sequence is continued until both goalkeepers are near exhaustion. To make the practice less predictable, the goalkeeper who selects the ball, can side step in one direction, then quickly step to the opposite ball.

Work must be rapid while maintaining quality technique.

Reaction Drill



Coaching Points:

This practice is designed to improve the goalkeepers general fitness level while incorporating reaction and diving skills. Two cones are placed approximately 8 yards apart, with a ball at each cone. Goalkeepers are positioned in the middle and at either side of the cones. One goalkeeper is assigned as the "working" goalkeeper and the other as the "shadowing" goalkeeper.

The "working" goalkeeper has to dive to either of the balls. Before he dives he must try and trick his partner and disguise which ball he is going to dive for. He can use body feints and head fakes to disguise his intentions. The "shadowing" goalkeeper must try and guess which side his partner is going to dive at, then dive to the ball before his partner.

A goal is scored each time the "working" goalkeeper can lose the "shadowing" goalkeeper and successfully dive at the ball. Goalkeepers should alternate every 3 minutes. Score should be kept to determine winner.

Work must be rapid while maintaining quality technique.

Goalie Wars



Coaching Points:

This practice is designed to improve the goalkeepers general fitness level while incorporating their shot stopping techniques. Two regulation goals are placed opposite each other approximately 20 yards apart. One goalkeeper is positioned in each goal.

In a one-on-one competition the goalkeepers alternate, attempting to score. The goalkeepers can shoot at their opponent's goal by either kicking from the ground, punting, half volleys or by hand distribution. The first goalkeeper to concede five goals loses. Work must be rapid while maintaining quality technique.