

GOALKEEPING

See also *PenaltyKicks.doc*, *SetPieces.doc*.

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KEEPER PSYCHOLOGY

NSCAA 1998 -- Why Keepers Fail - The Mental Dimension of Goalkeeping

Presented by Dan Gaspar - Star Goalkeeper Academy, trained Portuguese keepers, US MetroStars keeper coach, coached last year in Japanese J League, NSCAA advanced national license, tech consultant for US Soccer Project 2010

Gaspar started the session by asking the coaches to cite reasons for keeper mental failure. Some of the responses were:

poor concentration, fear, anxiety, poor preparation, lack of team work, poor decision making, lack of specialized training, poor communication, leadership

problems, technical deficiency, negative self talk, not getting to position, lack of ability to forgive

He then gave the responses from some of the top level goalkeepers on what sets them apart from the rest – their responses were:

- leave all outside life in the locker room
- try to stay in line with the ball throughout the game
- focus on the present, don't worry about past mistakes
- staying in the game through communication
- the ability to rebound after a mistake; Meola told about how he responded after one of his worst mistakes (occurred in the Romania WC game, he gave up a near post goal, of course); but he went on to play the best game of his career.

The visual functions are very important to goalkeeping - what the goalkeeper sees and how he processes what he sees is important.

Vision

Visual acuity - Write letters on goal post 10 feet above eye level and ten feet below; jump up and down and stay focused on a certain letter

Ocular mobility – the ability to track; it's important to keep the eyes moving and the head stationary; train by watching a mini-ball move in a circle.

Speed of recognition – one goalkeeper in goal with two goalkeepers seated near the penalty spot; a server take shots from out side the area; the seated keepers save what they can and deflect what they can't save to create problems for the keeper in goal

Peripheral vision - focus on one object, yet be aware of details around them; two players passing, but looking each other in the eye, not ball watching. Players can also practice by walking down the hall or street, being aware of surrounding things, without looking at them.

The gift of failure

- it is the BIG fear, but it is really a gift;
- teach players how to fail,;
- taking risks (winners take more risks but fail more often);
- mistakes are the perfect stepping stones;
- there is absolutely nothing you can do about mistakes except learn from them and then forget them;
- post competition analysis is very important;
- one must fail to succeed

Why do most players fail to develop mental toughness – they don't pay the mental dues; it all starts with training; you must train with emotion in order to cope with emotion during prime time. The Japanese cultural history makes it difficult for them to recover from failure. They tend to dwell on the failures. It is not uncommon to see a team win many matches in a row and start a long losing skid after one bad outing.

98% and 2% - 98% of a group will just show up day in and day out. The other 2% are emotionally involved in what they do, they are mentally plugged in everything they can to learn.

The body mind connection - Your mind thinks and your body follows. The birth of excellence is the understanding that you have the choice of how you feel. You don't HAVE to feel bad if you don't want to.

Inner Coach – Self-fulfilling Prophecy; it ensures all cylinders are working.

Be persistent and motivated

GIGO factor - garbage in, garbage out; you are what you tell yourself. You wouldn't let someone dump garbage in your room, so why put garbage in your brain?

Recognize negative thoughts and delete them - self-suggestions have an impact on the entire body.

GOYA factor - get off your backside; go for it; fantasize in as complete as possible detail; no matter what, act as if everything is okay. Be in control and stay positive; always stay cool and calm, in control of the emotions.

Have a game plan

- create a big enough WHY;
- have an impassioned focus;
- paint clear and positive pictures;
- positive pressure - know where you want to go;
- link pleasure with achieving - know what pleasure you will get when you achieve
- link pain with not achieving which is just as important;
- develop a hunger and desire to achieve

Coping - the power of questions, avoid endless loop questions because they put you in a negative rut.

The power of question, what makes you:

- happy;
- proud;
- grateful;

- excited;
- enjoy;
- feel commitment

Concentration - fully connected to what you are doing, you are aware of nothing else; it is a paradoxical skill; when anxiety increases, performance decreases; on recognition, you should quickly bring yourself back to the positive forces; whose side is your brain on; is it your friend?

Broom demo – two different volunteers tried to balance a broom; one was told to look at top; the other was told to look at bottom; one performed the other didn't; what you concentrate on is most important; it better be the right thing.

Ball stare – train concentration by staring at ball for 5 minutes; this is difficult to do without losing focus; raise the ante by adding the TV on in the background; then add moving people.

Here and now rule - this is where you mentally crumble; mental time and place violations;

- the NOW is all you have control over;
- you can't change the PAST;
- TOMORROW has no guarantees;
- what are you telling yourself in that 200 words per minute self talk;
- the most important self conversation you can have will link pleasure with achieving.

Uncontrollable - other players, field conditions, weather, referees, etc.

Controllable

- you can control your eyes and ears; you can only control your individual performance.
- watch out for goals that depend on others.
- create an image before the game of the best you can do.
- have focal points. For instance, go out early before the game and sit in stands and visualize the game, mentally create waste baskets that you can crinkle up a mistake and quickly throw it in, after game go to waste basket and review to learn, then discard.

Stress and performance – the greater the stress, the more performance suffers.

Forgive yourself - switch away from mistake and replace it with positive talk,

Don't Hang onto It - breathe slower, let it go, develop a ritual to handle this (for example, after a bad play pick a blade of grass, refocus, breathe slower acknowledge that you can't change the mistake, relax and throw away the grass). Do what works for you.

When is world cup – it is now! - Play and practice as if now is the most important moment in your life.

Avoid the words Can't/Never/Impossible - at least add the word YET behind them.

Success - doing the best with what you have.

The line – once you cross the line onto the pitch, you are a player, nothing else. When you cross the line going back, you become a student, son/daughter, etc.

The power of choice - you choose how you feel about yourself - hit cancel button - takes training and time to get good at this

When is the World Cup? Your World Cup is right NOW!

This session report submitted by Gary Rue.

WARM-UP & CONDITIONING EXERCISES

Keeper Warmup Exercises

One and Two Person

The following exercises/drills can be performed by goalkeepers working alone or in pairs. They will help to improve goalkeeping skills, while field players participate in traditional warm up routines. Allow the goalkeeper(s) adequate time to stretch before and during the exercises.

One ball per goalkeeper:

In place . . .

1. *Quick catch between the legs*--ball is suspended between legs with one hand in front of the legs, the other behind. GK quickly switches placement of the hands and catches ball before it bounces. (Front hand moves the back and visa versa). Try for 20-30 "catches" in a row.

2. *Bounce between the legs*--stand with legs apart bounce the ball through front of legs, swivel around and catch the ball behind the body. The Feet stay planted. Throw the ball back through the legs, catch it in front of the body. Use the "W" technique to catch the ball.

3. *Sit, throw, jump, catch*--just as it sounds. (Important to throw the ball straight up over head).

4. *Diving and falling with ball in hand*--GK practices diving and falling with the ball in his/her hands. Go from sitting, kneeling, squatting and standing positions. Practice pinning the ball on the ground (one hand behind, one hand near top of ball).

5. *Ball jumps*--With feet together, GK jumps from one side of the ball to the other (50 times in a row). Can also be done front to back.

6. *Bounce and catch*--GK throws the ball at the ground while jogging, catches with "W" hand placement before the ball rises above hip level.

While jogging/moving forward . . .

1. *Toss and jump*--GK throws the ball up in the air while jogging, jumps up to catch it with arms extended and one knee up in front of the body.

2. *Toss, somersault, catch*--GK throws ball up and forward, does a somersault, and tries to catch the ball before it bounces.

3. *Toss, spin 360 degrees and catch*--while jogging across the width of the field.

4. *Roll and scoop*--GK rolls ball forward a few yards, runs onto it and scoops it up, can also work on the forward vault (scoop while diving/falling forward).

Two goalkeepers, one ball:

1. *Trunk rotations*--GKS stand back to back, turn body and hand ball to each other. Both GKS swivel bodies around to the other side and hand it back.

2. *Catch and throw*--Any variety works. Have GKS vary types of throws (high balls, bouncing balls, half-volleys, etc.).

3. *Catch and throw while shuffling sideways*--GKS start 5 yards apart. Can also perform while one jogs backward.

4. *Diving and falling practice*--One GK throws the ball within reach but to the side of other GK. Each takes turns practicing falling to the side. Have GKS progress through these starting positions: sitting, kneeling, squatting and standing.

5. *Through the legs*--one GK with the ball stands facing the back of the other. He/She rolls ball through the other GK's legs who then dives onto it.

6. *Ball wars*--Both GKS grab a hold of one ball and struggle to get the ball free.

Moral - Proper technique is crucial. Habits are formed with repetitive performance. Goalkeepers should watch every ball into the hands.

Submitted by Colin Schmidt . Colin is the club coach in Colorado and the author of "Coaching Cards for Soccer" an innovative resource with 120 practice games and drills on pocket-size cards. The goalkeeping activities listed above are reprinted from a special 25-Coaching Card section on Goalkeeper Training. For more information about this resource check out Colorado Soccer Net or call ((303) 215-054.

GOALING

In pairs, one ball per pair. With 10+ yards between partners, trot side-by-side down the length of the field and punt the ball from your hands to your partner. If the partner can catch it in the air, that is a point. Punt it back and forth. From the far end of the field, turn around and come back (this switches who is using right foot/ left foot). As they get better, increase the distance. When they get pretty good, have them do half-volleys where they drop the ball and kick it on the bounce.

Keeper Warm-up

Date: Mon, 7 Sep 1998

From: Gary Rue

With older GKs, it is important that they establish their own warm-up. Before I go on, I've an interesting story from this high school season about a GK warm-up.

I have only one full time GK this fall, though I have two backup field players that play some between the pipes during the spring. Without a second GK, my assistant coach warms up the GK. After the first friendly, my GK came to me and asked if he could warm up with another player as his own routine is different from that of my assistant coach's. The problem was he never told the coach that he had a specific routine. Coaches, even at the high school age, players are still afraid to tell their coaches their feelings, so be prepared to hear them when they need to talk. Even at a fairly young age, I will ask the GK how they want to warm-up. Even if they have no idea, I want to establish the mindset that it is up to them to establish a routine that works for them.

There are several areas that I want a GK to work on in his warm-ups and some ways to do it:

- * foot passing - warm-up with rest of the team in early passing exercise, every now and then, the GK can run through and pick up a ground ball or the passer can "shoot" a ball at the GK
- * standing catching - a server (or second GK) throws or volley kicks at or near the GK; throws should be used early to stretch the GK (the GK should alternate throws with each arm to stretch the back)
- * ground pickups and run throughs - server running backwards touches serve from GK off to opposite direction, as GK runs through the pickup
- * footwork, side to side, front to back - as GK moves side to side in a gate (2 cones 8 yards apart) or goal mouth, serve balls wide, but within reach (have GK move along an arc where he is about 3 yards out from the gate. Serve a low ball for a shin pickup, then a high ball behind and to the side of the GK, for him to recover back for the catch.
- * collapse and stretch diving - from a near squat stance, serve the ball low and about a foot to the side for the GK to get the hands to ball and the hip to ground. Serve a wide toss for a series of 3 dives to the same side across the gate or goal

mouth and then return. Serve balls to alternate sides as the GK dives his way forward from the goal line to the 18 (focus on diving forward).

* high balls - catch some flighted balls from corner kickers or crossers; have a nearby player or coach "bang" the GK a little on the catch

* distribution (throws and volley kicks/punts) - can be worked into several exercises or as separate exercise where two GKs throw or punt to one another

* taking shots - the GK can take a few practice shots in a team shooting exercise; however, the GK must be substituted frequently or be asked to back off and only take every other shot, as this is only an exercise to get a feel of the goal.

It is very important to ensure your GK has a good feeling about playing between the pipes before the team takes the field. I prefer to use the backup GKs in the team shooting exercises. My GK this year, knows how to pick his focus times and take breaks on the other shots.

Goalie Fitness Drills

Date: Tue, 8 Jun 1999

From: Brian Smith

Having played Keeper for 25 years and coaching keepers for the past 5, the one thing you have to realize about keepers (especially in the older ages) is that they want to specialize as a keeper and don't think they have to run as much as the field players.

I always make my keeper run with the team and stretch with the team. Luckily I have 2 assistant coaches who can handle the field players at practice and I can concentrate on the keepers.

Some good drills are.....

What I call 18 yard suicides. Start at the goal line, sprint to the 6 yard box, jog to the goal line, sprint to the penalty spot, jog back, sprint to the 18, jog back. 5 sets, 30 seconds rest between each. Make them really work on getting a good fast first 2 steps.

If you have 2 keepers, have one line up the goal line (between the pipes) and the other 4 yards out facing each other. Have them start at one goal post and shuffle to the other post. Have a ball between them that gets tossed back and forth. This works on their foot work, and also, tactical awareness (where they are). Make sure the keeper outside of the goal does not stop at the goal post, but goes about 1-2 yards past it. 5 sets, 1 minute per set, switch positions between each.

Setup a box approx 8 yards wide by 7 yards long. Have the keeper start at one side on the 8yrd line, shuffle across, and then a diagonal sprint to the opposite

corner. Then they have to back peddle straight back. At any time during the drill, you can shoot a ball at them. This again works on fitness and footwork.

Have 2 keepers sit next to each other on the end line, have 2 people serving balls to the sides of the keeper (a little diving to each side is necessary). Start on the end line and go to the 18 diving from side to side (make sure their form is correct). After the save, they need to sit up with the ball in their hands, toss it back, and scoot forward. You can make this a race if they want to compete.

I usually do these drills, plus a few other (for older keepers only) AFTER they have done the team warm up and stretches. Our Team warm-ups are usually small sided games, keep away, 8 consecutive passes, 2 team consecutive passing, etc.. Last about 30 minutes and I don't send them out on a run. We start the warm-ups slowly, get some stretching, then start increasing the speed and work rate to game speed.

Date: Tue, 8 Jun 1999

From: George M. Lasher

For keeper fitness I like the square of death that Bobby Muss (UConn I believe) showed me and my fellow coaches at a clinic over the winter.

Set up a square field with those little flat cones sprinkled liberally throughout it at random. Have at least 2 different color cones.

The keepers have to side shuffle through the square, without stepping on the cones and see how many they can touch in 30 seconds, 45 seconds, 1 minute, you make the duration.

Then have them touch 3 reds before they touch a yellow.

Then have them shuffle between the cones while you randomly throw balls into the mix that they have to explosively scoop.

The strategically place balls throughout the square and have the players side shuffling and when you yell ball they all move to scoop one. Of course you can play this like musical chairs and have one less ball than number of keepers and who ever doesn't get a ball "loses".

These drills can be done if you have 1 keeper, or 2 or better yet a whole slew and they're great aerobic conditioners which utilize the keepers game ability of quick side stepping.

Strong Hands

Date: Thu, 6 Aug 1998

From: Gary Rue

Here are a couple of GK exercises to reinforce quick and strong hands on the ball. Poor hand position will quickly be apparent to the coach and GK.

Quick hands--the coach will serve the ball from about 2 yards away from the GK; once the GK will catch and send the ball back to the coach; the coach will punch the return pass immediately back to the GK. This catch/return is continuous. The coach should punch the ball in different directions.

Jump and Catch--with the GK standing in the goal mouth. The coach serves the ball to the maximum height the GK can reach. The GK is to jump, catch and toss back to the coach before hitting the ground. As soon as the coach catches the ball, he serves it again. Use the cross bar to help locate the serve. I like to do 2-3 sets of 10 jumps with a rest break between.

Sit-up and Hold On--the GK does a sit-up with ball, bringing it forward as the coach kicks the ball. This reinforces the GK hand position on the ball. If the ball gets loose, the GK is to recover it as soon as possible and do another sit-up.

Dive and Hold On--the coach serves a ball to the GK who makes a diving catch. As the ball is planted, the coach kicks the ball. As above, this reinforces the hand position. The coach should vary the power of his kick based on the GK's ability. The aim is to improve and give the GK confidence in his hand position, not to discourage. Kicking the ball on the dive should provide the GK confidence that his face and torso are protected.

Drill for Quick Reaction (No Rest for Keeper)

Simple make a circle with your players. Size of the circle depends on amount of players in it. Keeper in the middle. Keeper has ball, rolls it to player, he shoots low right at the keeper. Keeper makes save everyone applauds and rolls it to a different player. If it goes off the keeper, closest player to ball can shoot (one touch if possible or control and shoots. If out of position to shoot can pass to a teammate and he shoots). If shot gets by keeper, player in circle behind the keeper can shoot or control and shoot. Keeper better turn around fast if the ball goes past him. Since shots are low, Keeper must drop to save. If it deflects he better recover fast or a shot can get him in the face. If the keeper is lazy its bad for the keeper. Have some space in the circle. Do not over crowd it so players behind Keeper has to line himself with the shooter, so the ball does not get out of the circle. Have plenty of balls so as not to waste time. Have the player who missed the ball make a hard run to retrieve the ball or if the shot is high the shooter makes the hard run. Just keep playing no rest for the keeper.

Make sure the ball is inflated correctly and you should not have an injury problem. The good keeper always want to play this game.

Quick Shots at Keeper

From: richard brown

Surround the keeper with your players. The idea is one touch low shooting. Players are looking to shoot low, right at the keeper. Keeper makes a save we applaud him. Then he immediately rolls the ball to another player who immediately shoots.

The players beyond the keeper must watch the shooter, the player must line himself up with the shot to block or control the shot if it gets by the keeper. Then he immediately shoots at the keeper, if he cant get a quick shoot, he must pass to a teammate and then that player will shoot.

If keeper deflects shot the player closest to the ball can shoot. If keeper dives and deflects shoot, he better get up fast or get hit while he is down and out of position.

If the ball goes over the keepers head the shooter sprints to retrieve the ball, while we play on with another ball adjusting the circle.

If player beyond the keeper forgets to line himself up with shooter and the low ball gets by, he sprints for the ball.

It takes guts for the keeper to play this game, and its a serious aerobic exercise for the keeper. Good for keepers reflexes, and for second & third and fourth efforts. To save shot after shot coming from all angles and positions. He can not rest or risk catching a ball in the face.

The ball must be properly inflated before you start. Never had a player get a major injury doing this drill. However, make a circle within the circle where the players cannot enter, so the keeper will not get kicked by mistake.

Double Keepers, Quick Shots on Goal

Date: Fri, 14 May 1999

From: John Peachey

Good for: general shooting, the fast shot, recognizing shooting opportunities, also good for goalie work - large amount of diving required.

In the center of a large open area make a square using four corner flags. Make the distance of the sides of the square at least 3/4 the distance between your appropriate sized goal posts. Put two goalies inside the square. Outside the square, two or three teams of 4 - 6 players try to score by shooting across one of the four goal lines.

Options: one goalie inside a triangle, require shot to cross two sides to score. Limit passes. Limit touches. Beat a defender before shooting - anything you need to work on.

Quick Reaction and Pregame Warm-up

Here's a keeper activity that helps build reaction and can be used as a pregame warm-up.

Keeper starts positioned on the goal line middle of the goal. Coach shoots so that keeper can make the save. Keeper makes save, rolls the ball back to coach. Keeper then does a front roll and as soon as keeper is back on feet the coach shoots again. Keeper makes save and returns ball to coach. Keeper then back pedals to goal. Coach serves high ball that the keeper tips over the bar or catches.

Keeper then takes up initial position and starts over.

After 5 reps give the keeper a rest.

You want to serve the various balls to the keeper so that at least 60% of the shoots are saved. If a lower percentage is saved, shoot directly at the keeper or reduce the pace on the ball to get to 60%. If the keeper is able to save 80-90% then increase the difficulty. The idea is to keep the keeper working in a range where she has success and gains confidence but where she is still challenged.

You can find ideas on the footwork required for the back pedaling on my web site <http://www.ntrnet.net/~less/u18/>

Quick Catch

Date: Wed, 1 Mar 2000

From: Gary Rue

Here is a great goalkeeper (GK) reaction exercise that works recovery ("reloading"), quickness, footwork and hand work.

Coach/server has a ball in each hand, alternatively providing soft serves to the GK, a couple of yards away. The GK makes the catch of the first ball, and tosses it back as the next serve is on its way. The serves are to the side, up, down,

bounced, etc. The coach dictates the speed of the GK's reaction with the timing of the next serve. The coach may ask the GK to lock the ball in (ball pressed to chest with both forearms covering), each time, on a specific type of catch or any ball that is not cleanly caught. Otherwise the ball should be returned to the proper hand of the server that does not contain a ball.

Several series can be run with a rest break between. On a latter series, the GK should make a collapse dive catch on some/all tosses. The coach can serve the next ball while the GK is still on the ground, in the process of reloading or just after the GK has recovered to on-balance. The server should intermix the type and timing of the serve as needed.

Though speed of hands, feet and recovery is all important in this exercise, do not allow the GK to get lazy with his/her catches. Achieving an on-balance state as quickly as possible is very important, so sporadic tosses back across the GK's recovery motion is advisable. Having the server moving backwards as the GK moves forwards helps to establish a "forward" mindset with the GK.

"Whoever is first in the field and awaits the coming of the enemy, will be fresh for the fight; whoever is second in the field and has to hasten to battle will arrive exhausted." Sun Tzu, The Art of War

Quick Turn Drill (dr038)

Purpose: Simple drill to teach reaction and control

The GK stands on the goal line, but looking inside the goal; back to the playing field. A teammate (can be another GK) has to be halfway between the goal line and halfway in the central mark with several balls. At the same time the teammate shoots the ball to the goal line, the coach can shout "NOW" or can whistle and the GK in the goal line has to turn around and look for the ball. That will give him/her a fast reaction and control when seeing and going to the ball.

Reaction Time for Goalkeepers

Date: Wed, 18 Nov 1998

From: Bryan L. Pinn

Digging thru the filing cabinet, I came across an old technical paper by Dick Howard, ex-pro goalkeeper and CSA National Coach. It pertains to diving saves by the GK. (Interesting historical note: "B. Robinson, the Southampton goalkeeper, revolutionized the whole technique of goalkeeping in 1901 when he dived to make a save in a game in Vienna.")

To relate to Howard's statistics, picture an overhead view of the 18-yard box and goal area, with lines extending from the goal posts forming a triangle as they meet in the centre of the 18-yd line.

Point A is the centre of the goal line. Point B is the centre of the 6-yd. line. Point C is the penalty spot. These three points are GK positions relative to a shot from the centre of the 18-yd line.

Time taken for shots to reach GK in seconds. Speed in mph.							Horizontal distance each side of GK to imaginary triangle.
Speed	10	20	30	40	50	60	
A	3.68	1.84	1.23	0.92	0.74	0.61	12 feet
B	2.45	1.23	0.82	0.61	0.49	0.40	8 feet
C	1.23	0.61	0.40	0.31	0.25	0.20	4 feet

Now imagine a 3D view with two more lines from the top of the goal posts to the same mid-point on the 18-yard line, forming a narrow pyramid on its side, with the goal as its base.

At point A, a 5'10" GK has 192 sq. ft. to cover.
 Point B, 85 sq.ft. approx.
 Point C, 22 sq.ft. approx.

At point A, it takes a GK 1.2 seconds to move and go full-length to push a ball around the base of the post. So any ball struck at more than 30 mph will likely beat him if he stays on his line.
 As he advances to close down the shot, he reduces the area he must cover, but also reduces the time for the save. The closer he comes to the shooter, the quicker and more physically economical his technique becomes, changing from diving to collapsing or falling to the ball.

Can a Keeper Move Downward Faster than Gravity?

Date: Thu, 11 Nov 1999
 From: Dennis Mueller

Well I do have a PhD. in Physics. And the truth is Ian and Dan are both right, but only sort of. Part of the problem lies in language and the other part lies in an incomplete description.

It is absolutely true that unless your feet are glued to the ground, or your touch something else you center of mass cannot move downward any faster that it would under the force of gravity alone (assuming it started from rest).

It is also absolutely true that your upper body can move downward faster than it would under the force of gravity alone, while your feet remain in contact with the ground.

The reason for this apparent paradox is that your center of mass is not a fixed location inside your body (it is about a few inches inside you at your belly button when you are standing erect with arms at your side). If you bend over so that your head is between your knees, your center of mass will move from where it was (at your belly button) to a lower point (roughly mid to upper thigh, depending upon your body type and flexibility). So while your head moved from about 5.5 feet above ground to about 1.5 feet above ground, your center of mass moved from about 3.5 feet to 2.5 feet above ground. Thus, your head moved downward roughly 4 times faster than your center of mass. (Please don't argue about the exact distances, they ARE close enough for discussion purposes.)

Like I said in an earlier post, the issue is one of straightforward mechanics, but the details are complicated. The English language is a bit too loose and colorful to allow for a complete and accurate description of what is going on, for that you need higher level math (and in the case of a body that changes shape, like you can, probably a complete computer model to get all the details right).

STANCE & FOOTWORK

Proper Stance

Date: Wed, 2 Dec 1998

From: Ken Gamble

A good exercise that we were taught to teach feet placement and stance for goalkeepers was to place a tennis ball under the ball of each foot and require that the keeper balance on them without placing the toes or heels on the ground. A player who is balanced properly can be tipped over easily from behind. The idea is that keepers should be balanced on the balls of their feet with their weight slightly forward.

Date: Thu, 3 Dec 1998

From: Gary Rue

This is a good exercise Ken. Now have them JUMP onto the tennis balls and balance. One of my ex-GKs in college was trained on the cushion in a high jump pit to improve balance.

We tell our GKs they should feel like if they move forward the least bit, they will fall on their faces--similar to the feeling one gets when they hit that maximum point leaning back in a chair.

For field players, we do one-footed volleying and heading while standing on an inner tube, 4x4, or broom stick to improve balance. We haven't quite mastered standing on a soccer ball yet :-)

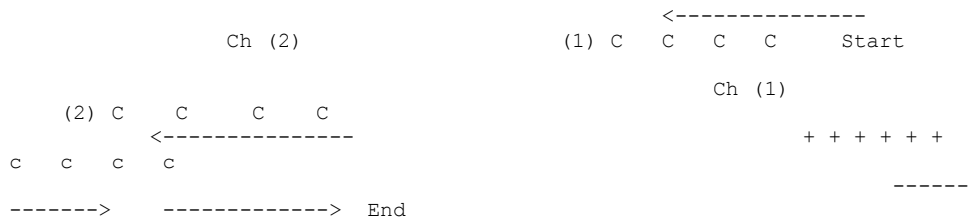
Keeper Footwork Drills

Date: Thu, 6 Sep 2001

From: Karl Keller

Today my U13 (who plays backup keeper) did some keeper drills today with one other U13 keeper, a two U14 keepers, and a U15G, where in the first part of practice, the focus was on foot work.

Here's how it was set up. Ch is coach; C is large cone; + is the speed ladder; c is small cone. Large cones about 4 yards apart. Small cones about 1 yard apart. (Hope this formats OK)



Each keeper would move counter-clock wise, from the start position. At line 1, keeper would face coach 1 and vault the cones sideways while making a catch from a coach's toss, for a sequence of 4 catches. The coaching point here is to do the proper movement across the goal mouth with good footwork; launching off the foot in the direction you're going and crossing over with the other foot to land. For example in line 1, the keeper is moving from his left to his right, so he would launch with his right foot, cross over with his left. In line 2, the opposite occurs: moving from left to right, vaulting off left foot and crossing with right, again with a series of catches. Each coach should toss the ball so the keeper gets good arm extension, and can get hands behind the ball.

After two sequences of cone hopping and catching, each keeper goes to speed ladder and does a two feet out, two feet in sequence; and then at the small cones, two feet hops over, and then back to the start line to repeat.

Once the rythm gets going, you can get a lot of footwork activity done in a very short period of time with a lot of kids. Two coaches I think could handle up to 8 keepers at a time for this. But I think this would work also with one keeper, though you would have to pace things a little bit more, since the drills are very strenuous.

I was very impressed with this drill setup.

Split Step Technique

Date: Mon, 29 Jun 1998

From: Gary Rue

In a recent WC match (Holland vs. Yugoslavia), a GK was beat to his near post. Initially I thought the GK was moving when the shot was taken, which is a major sin. A moving GK loses the ability to react quickly in any direction but the way the body is moving.

To prevent this, the split step is a key element. The split step is a technique used in tennis. As the opponent starts to hit the ball, the split step stops the player's movement, enabling the player to react in any direction. The GK should use this same technique on a shot. It was once stated (by Tony DiCicco, I think) that even if a GK is out of position (e.g., not at the near post), generally it is better for the GK to stop his movement just before the shot, then to continue to his desired position.

In the game I noted above, the GK did go into a split step, unfortunately, instead of the feet being about shoulder width or slightly wider apart, the feet were spread almost double, greatly restricting his movement. He could not get his hand down to knee level, because his body was locked in this spread upright position.

I'm sure the GK was trying to be as "big" as possible at that moment, however, he gave up his mobility (in this case, vertical mobility) when his feet went to wide apart.

POSITIONING

Keeper Positioning

Date: Wed, 8 Apr 1998

From: Gary Rue

I use the rule of thumb of 3 yards from the goalline to the top of the arc for the average teenage GK. This may be closer to 2 yards for less than U12 and about 4 yards for a skilled and tall high school or older GK.

There is similar concept that is a triangle (not an arc). It is called the three goals. Place a marker (e.g., cone or piece of paper) at the 3 yard mark out from the center of the goal. When the ball is directly in front of the goal, the GK should be at the marker, guarding the goal mouth.

When the ball is at a 45 degree angle (near the corner of the eighteen), the GK should be near the center of the second goal mouth (more towards the near post) that is the line between the goal post and the marker. If you line up the ball with the marker, the line should pass on or wide of the far post. If the GK can defend this (approximate) 6 yard imaginary goalline, he can defend the real goalline.

Of course the third goal is established when the ball is on the other side.

Though I have never had (or forced) a GK to be real committed to this visual setup for every game, I will "encourage" my new GKs to place a piece of tape (or spray paint) at the 3 yard apex. The feedback has been positive. Of course, they had to work on it in practice.

Reading the Ball

- Adjusting to the ball

Have a ball feeder at the top of the penalty arc. Have the keeper sit on the penalty spot, facing the goal. Have the feeder yell "GO", then feed a air ball over the keeper towards the goal, giving the keeper just enough time to stand and move towards the goal and turn around and read the ball.

This is just one of many ways... Make them think quickly to read the ball. Repetition is the key. the more they do it, the more they train there eyes and mind to adjust to the ball.

Deciding Whether to Come Out or Stay Back

Date: Thu, 11 Jun 1998

From: Gary Rue

The decision on whether to come out or stay back is difficult. I offer the following training suggestion. It seems to me from your description that the GK that comes out is overly ball focused. Work with you GK on looking away from the ball then picking it up again.

For example, put down several cones within the six in front of the goal starting about 3 yards out. With the GK starting on his goalline, loft a high cross in front of the six. The GK is to identify where the ball is going as he starts moving out. Then he has to look down to move between and around the cones (do not allow him to touch a cone). Then he is to refocus on the ball. The purpose is not to train him to look down, but to take his eyes off the ball while it is in the air, then pick it up again.

Then with the same setup, use human cones. Lastly, have the human cones move around as the GK works his way through. As a variation, have a header stationed just outside of the six in case the GK can't get there. At least your GK will be trained to look away from the ball. Whether he will carry it over to the game remains to be seen.

In one of the World Cup games on the first day, a GK violently pushed his own teammate out of the way to get to a ball. Your GK should not be shy about doing this if he has to. Of course, he needs to use a little judgement about how he moves an opponent out of the way. Moving through opponents should be practiced as well.

One last point, backing up is rarely a thing to do once a GK has committed. It would be better that he tried to block the header, than back up. A GK that lacks some forward movement (no matter how slight) has lost most of his advantage. If he does have to back up, he should try to stop in a balanced state, no matter where he is, just before ball touch time. His body will be in a position to react in any direction

Date: Mon, 3 Aug 1998

From: Richard Jackson

Aside from all the technique training, I give my young keepers the following two ROTs concerning coming off their line to meet the ball. (By young I mean U-12, 13, 14)

1- If you still have your defenders between the attack and the goal, stay put. When the attack has gotten past your defenders, you have to come out.

2- When you start, don't stop. In other words, when your instincts tell you to come out, trust them and don't stop half way and change your mind - you wind up in "no man's land".

From: Gary Rue

Rich, they sound great. Be careful, however, that the second one is not misinterpreted. By that I mean, there are still times where a GK can start his

move, but stops (and backs up?) when he sees that his assessment and timing is incorrect. But, as you said, once they make up their mind, then go all out.

My (pointed) football coach once told me, if you are going to block the wrong man, then block him 100%.

I'll add a few more rules of thumb--come to a balanced stance anytime the ball is about to be played and move when the ball is not being played, regardless of your positioning in the goal mouth. It is best to be able to respond in any direction to a shot, then it is to be moving to the desired defensive location at the time of the shot.

Move to ball when you can get close enough to play it away, make a save or block any shot attempt. If the attacker will have an opportunity to chip the GK, then the GK has moved too soon. If the GK can sneak out and time the ball to make the save about 16 yards out, then that will give him a little room to spare. In the MLS shootouts, it appears that the GKs move off their line a little sooner than this, but the chip seems to be a difficult ball for most of the attackers to hit. I think the height of the GKs helps here, because the chip must be higher the closer the attacker gets to the GK and the goal.

When dealing with a breakaway, the GK should inch out, then make his move. Here again, the GK should go balanced at every point where the attacker touches the ball, until the GK can close down the ball and the shot.

Date: Mon, 3 Aug 1998

From: Gary Rue

I think you are doing the right thing in getting them to move off their line, but take it slow. You don't want to get the cart before the horse on this one.

See my post on GK pickup. I would start with this basic move out. I would only go into more advanced things like breakaways, etc. after they have most of the other basics down. Until then, keep them in that 3-4 yard arc from post to post on anything but a ground ball.

What you want is an intelligent move off the line. In most youth games, there are very few times where a GK needs to be much off his line, when the ball is in the other team's attacking third. If they will move from post to post along the arc, this will take care of most needs.

Cutting Down the Angle

Date: Sat, 12 Sep 1998

From: chris mohr

Ken Decker wrote:

Would someone explain the principle of the keeper coming off his line to cut down the angle? Why does this work and how do you explain this to U10s?

Fortunately, the basic principle of coming out to "cut off the angle" can be done by a simple demonstration that makes equal sense either an adult or a 10-year old being introduced to the concept. Here's two ways to go about this demonstration, depending on available materials (the first is a bit better, but both will work). To start with, find a real soccer goal.

1) METHOD 1: Take a rope or piece of brightly visible cord about 3+ times as long as the goal mouth is wide. Tie off one end on one side post, and the other end on the opposite side. Grab the rope in the middle, and walk it outwards from the goal until you've formed a triangle, with the apex of the triangle about in the middle of the goal, and lay the rope on the ground in this triangular shape. Now lay a ball at the apex of this triangle. Have one player stand just behind the ball, to represent a player imminently about to take a shot, and a second player representing the goalkeeper stand on the goal line, initially stand halfway between the posts.

The triangle formed by the rope illustrates the outside edges of the range of angles a shot can take from where the ball is, and go into the goal. A ball shot outside the rope will miss. HOW MUCH OF THE TRIANGLE CAN THE GOALKEEPER COVER FROM THE GOAL LINE WITH A QUICK REACTION SAVE (i.e. by reaching out in either direction, without first having to move the feet sideways to get into position?) How much unprotected range of angles does that leave on either side for the shooter? Ok, now have the GK move progressively out from the goal, and demonstrate the same thing. As the GK moves out, the unprotected range of angles gets smaller. Of course, the downside of "coming off the line" is that the farther the GK is off the line to cut down the shooter's angle, the more vulnerable the GK may be to balls chipped over his head, and s/he also opens up a space / angle behind him that may be vulnerable if the prospective shooter passes to a suitably positioned teammate over to the side.

The final part of the demonstration is to move the apex of the triangle to one side rather than the middle of the goal, so the triangle is no longer equilateral, and again place a ball at this apex. The range of angles the shooter has available, and the goalkeeper must "cut off" becomes visibly smaller the farther the ball (and apex of the triangle) is placed to one side. Hence, the further to the side, the less the GK needs to come "off the line" to reduce the range of unprotected angles available to the shooter. Of course, the GK can still fluff the save even if s/he has come out to "cut off the angle", but at least they have the best chance at it here.

A coaching point is that the ideal position for the GK, all other factors equal, is in the center of the triangle made by the two goalposts and the ball, even regardless of whether or how far the GK comes out to try to "cut off the angle". This leaves the shooter two narrower corridors on either side, rather than a fat one to one side if the GK is off-center within the triangle.

2. METHOD 2: You can lay cones out along the ground instead of rope to tangibly illustrate the triangle made by the ball and goalposts, three or four along either side of the triangle and one at the apex will do. However, this isn't nearly as convenient to move the apex around to the side, to illustrate how the range of makeable angles for the shooter narrows the further the ball is positioned to either side. But, the demonstration is otherwise the same.

As an adult, you can probably follow this explanation fairly well as a mental exercise, and can visualize it especially well in front of a real goal with just a ball and a goal, even without cones or ropes. However, you very probably need the rope or cones to tangibly drive the point home to most 10-year olds, to avoid having the explanation whizz right past them as a muddled abstraction gee-will coach shut-up and let us play already ;=).

Date: Sat, 12 Sep 1998

From: David Graham

Chris gave a very clear explanation of how to use a rope to do this. If you don't have a rope or cones, put your keeper on the 18 in the middle of the net. Go and stand on the goal line yourself, and let him see how much space a shooter has to aim for. Now walk towards him with your arms spread wide and let him see how the visible portion of the net steadily diminishes with every step you take. That should do the trick.

In essence, it works because of optics -- the closer things are, the larger they look, so even a small goalkeeper can obscure a large portion of the net if he's close enough to the shooter. :-)

Date: Mon, 14 Sep 1998

From: mcneishm

In my training sessions for beginning GKs, I do the following:

1. When your GK first goes to the goal he's defending, have him find the center of the goal line and mark it by scuffing it with his shoes.
2. Put a ball somewhere in front of the net, starting about 15 or so yards out.
3. Have him line up with the ball such that he's on a line which passes from the ball, through his chest, and to the mark he put on the center of the goal line.
4. Move the ball around, back and forth across the mouth of the goal. Make sure he follows the ball and stays on this line. (Enforce this discipline such that

regardless of where the ball is on the field, even if it's at the other end, your keeper is always moving to make this line. This way, it becomes automatic; he doesn't have to think too much about where he is in relation to the goal mouth.)

5. Now, add the twine or string as noted above. Move the ball and the twine apex back and forth across the mouth of the goal. Have your keeper continue to move with the ball but also move out towards the ball. Show him that as he moves towards the ball, he becomes "larger" in the net and can more easily block shots.

There are, of course, many caveats to "cutting down the angle" but this is a basic intro to the concept. Because it is mostly visual, it tends to make an impression on younger players. (I've used it on older ones too, up thru U19.) The next issue in the progression would be to begin teaching WHEN/WHY to come off the line to cut down the angle. That's really a whole different discussion but basically, my instruction to my GK is thus: If an attacker with the ball crosses the 18 with no defender close enough to either win the ball, cut off the attack, or block the shot, then come hell-bent off your line to the ball to block the attack. Don't change your mind halfway there and back up into the goal. Make your decision quickly, but once made, stick with it.

I've never seen this diagrammed on a web site tho I think it's fairly easy to visualize. In terms of goalkeeper-related sites, try Les Sparks site at <http://www.ntrnet.net/~less/u18/keeperdrills.htm>. There are at least three topics/drills on his list concerning how to deal with breakaways. There is also a wealth of other GK drills/games/information to keep you busy with your keepers for quite some time.

Date: Sun, 13 Sep 1998

From: Gary Rue

Chris' post of visually showing the angles is excellent. One of the best methods I've seen for describing where a GK should be is from a coaching clinic put on by Notre Dame's men's coach, Mike Berticelli. He recommends the "three goal technique."

From the center of the goal, step off 2-4 yards. The distance will depend on the size and athleticism of the keeper. At the U10 level it is probably 2 yards. At the college and professional level, it may be 4 (or slightly more) yards. Put a cone down in practice. I've seen GKs scratch a mark in the area or put down a piece of white tape or paper. This gives them a visual reference point. The three goals are the sides of the triangle created by connecting the posts to the center mark.

When the ball is directly in front of the goal, the GK should be on or about the center keeper mark. When the ball is at an angle to the goal, the "goalline" made by the center mark and the near post is narrower than the actual goalline.

Demonstrate how a shot that crosses over the center mark will be on or wide of the post.

Personally, if you can get your GK to use this three goal technique, I don't think you will have to worry much about cutting down the angles. To be honest, I attributed many of the goals scored this last World Cup to keepers that moving out to "cut down the angles" and were not balanced enough to stop the shot.

In a breakaway situation, I want my GK to wait until the attacker has approached the area, then to sneak ground between touches to close the distance, but to be balanced and ready to react on the next touch. At some point in a breakaway, the keeper must commit and try to reach ball before or on the next attacker touch.

Date: Wed, 16 Sep 1998

From: Jeff Boardman

Gary,

I've used this method with my U-15 boys team and it is an extremely simple but effective way to teach them the angles.

If I may, I'd like to add one additional thing that Berticelli stress's with this method. Once the goalie understands the two new goal lines set up by the center mark and the posts, he should move along these goal lines as the ball is played laterally across the field by the offense player. He should not cut across the triangle. (he should move on the dotted lines in the figure below). In other words he moves away from the goal when the ball is center and back in closer to the post as the angle of the ball changes.

A good drill is to have players A,B&C pass the ball around, letting them take a shot when the goalie doesn't move quick enough. The main coaching point is to have the goalie move along with the ball staying on the dotted lines of the triangle not cutting across the triangle..



| _____ |
Date: Thu, 17 Sep 1998

From: Bryan L. Pinn

Tommy Godwin (GK for Bournemouth then Div. 3 South, English FA and Eire) was my GK instructor as a Youth Player back in the mid 50's. In those simpler times, his approach to narrowing the angle and coming off your line was also simple. He told us to imagine there was a peg stuck dead centre on the goal line between the posts. A cord was attached to the peg. The cord passed through the GK's body (colourful depiction of anatomical impossibility omitted) and led directly to the ball. The GK moved up and down the cord "like a shirt button on a string". Pretty good visual imaging.

One of the most important lessons he taught was that a GK must ALWAYS know where the middle of his goal is. I think most experienced keepers would agree that, after umpteen games, you do develop an instinctive awareness of position... but it sure helps to have a visual reference. That's why it's a good idea to scuff a mark in the center of the 6-yd box line. Combined with the penalty spot, it gives the keeper his central line.

Ray Clemence, of Spurs and England, now an FA instructor, talked about the "hot" and "cold" sides, as seen by the shooter (near and far post sides respectively). Clemence was in favour of shading his position very slightly to the hot side, if only a matter of inches. I suspect that all veteran GKs do this without being aware, but I'm reluctant to teach it to young keepers. Better, I think, that they learn the geometry as suggested by the rope and/or "three goal lines" methods... and then let experience teach whether to steal a small slice of near-post angle.

Date: Tue, 25 Apr 2000

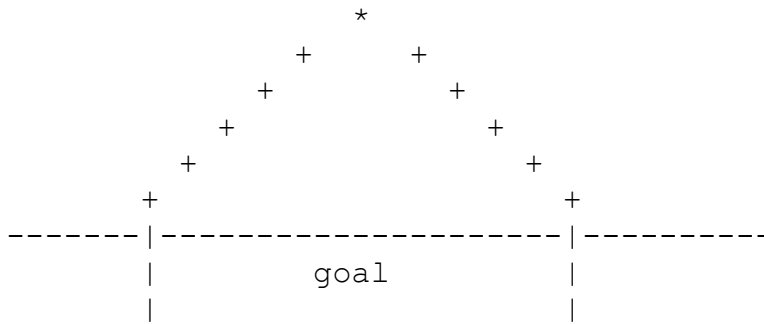
From: Gary Rue

The late Mike Bertricelli of Notre Dame, taught a "three-goal" method for GK positioning.

The GK standing in the center of the goal on the goalline takes three steps out and marks the spot with a piece of tape (for example). Draw a line from each post to the mark and you have the three goallines in this triangle. When the ball is in the center of the field, the GK is at the 3 step mark. If the ball is off at an angle, then the GK has the line from the post to the mark to cover.

Draw a line from the post through the mark and out. Somewhere on this line, place the ball. If the ball is shot directly over the mark, it should not go in the

goal. The GK now has about a 6 yard goalline to cover. When the ball is at an angle, he should be on this "new goalline" and he has a reference point (mark).



Date: Wed, 26 Apr 2000

From: Robert C. Christensen

Of course you can use ropes to help the keeper visualize the angles on the goal! In fact, I do this when working with younger keepers. But I find that after about age 12 they can visualize the angles just fine. Besides, they will not have any ropes handy during games!

Another teaching tool that I use on positioning out on your line follows. I figured since we are on the subject of goalkeeping, and since I will be going over this subject this afternoon in my weekly Keeper Kamp, I would share it:

One of the most difficult things in training young or new keepers is to instill in them good decision making with regard to how far out of the goal to play, and when to come out aggressively (vs when to stay on line and be patient).

I start by having the keepers stand near the corner of the penalty area, facing me in the goal. I stand and spread my arms and legs as wide as I can, while standing on the goal line, with one hand just covering the near post. I ask the keepers: "How much of the goal am I covering?" They answer about a quarter of it (or something....the exact amount is not important). Then, I take 3 big steps out directly towards them, and adjust my positioning very slightly towards the center of the field to compensate for my "larger presence". Then I ask again: "How much of the goal am I covering?" They answer about a half. Then I take another 3 steps out (near the 6) and repeat the question: "How much of the goal am I covering?" They answer almost all of it.

Now, the stage is set for some more complicated thinking. I now return to the near post position and ask: "How many steps would it take for me to cover the far post?" They answer "I dunno" usually, so I actually pace it out. It take me about 7-8 steps. Then, I ask how many steps out did it take for me to cover the entire goal, including the far post, when I came out towards them, instead of sideways

along the goal line. They say about 9. Good. Now, I show them a line between their position (at the corner of the penalty box) and the far post. I actually walk along it towards them to emphasize it (you could use a rope to good effect here). Then, I tell them that this is the area that they must cover. It will be wide if it is outside this area. I ask them: "From the near post position, how can I cover this line with the fewest steps?" The answer is to come out at roughly a 45 degree angle to intercept the line. I then do this and count out the steps. It takes me 5-6 steps to cover this angle. We talk about this briefly. Hmmm...7-8 to cover the goal line angle, 9 to cover coming straight out, and 5-6 to cover coming out at an angle.

At this point it almost always clicks in the mind of the keepers. I then position a keeper on the near post position and go through the same thing, except I use a ball. From the corner of the penalty box, I slowly pass the ball to the far post and have the keeper count steps along the goal line, coming straight out, and then at the proper angle. I roll the balls slowly so that the keeper can actually think about the proper angle and count steps without being hurried. This normally works well and the keeper will now at least understand the concept of coming out off the line at an angle, rather than simply stepping sideways (which feels intuitively right to a new keeper) to try to cover the goal line.

Sometimes, a keeper will STILL not refrain from going sideways instead of out at an angle. I have had good luck by placing the keeper in the corner of the penalty box (facing the spot), and (with the keepers heels on the corner paint) then explaining that each and every save should be made within the painted lines (which are about 45 degrees to each side of the keepers position as he or she faces the center of the penalty box). Some work with the painted lines REALLY helps some keepers visualize the correct line to take, and by working within the defined lines, it becomes a bit more natural.

Narrowing the Angles

Date: Sun, 6 Dec 1998

From: Jim Turpin

From: GEOFF COLLINS

What I am looking to do is do some practice with our keepers on narrowing angles on forwards coming through on goal. How far out from the goal-line should they come and how to get the angles right on covering both posts.

First, at the risk of incurring some wrath, find a keeper coach to work with your keepers. While it is not impossible it is rare for ex field players to be really able to teach keepers correct and aggressive and safe play.

As far as narrowing angles the timing on this is different for each keeper and you did not say what age we are talking about however 3 general ideas

1. Keepers should ALWAYS take away the near post.
2. Keepers should usually "split step" when the forward draws a foot back to shoot.
3. Keepers, once they decide to come off their line, must not stop until they either reach the ball, the shooter prepares to shoot or pass, or the ball is lost in some other way. If their timing is right the edge of the box should not be an automatic stopping point. Practice is the key here.

As keepers advance they should be trained to stay low and "expose the post" so as to draw the shot that the keeper is most likely to save and to try to draw that shot with the forwards "week" foot.

The only way for keepers to get really good at handling breakaways is to handle breakaways in practice. As much as I hate it the MLS shoot out is a fair tool to use in practice for this. Just be sure that the keeper is recovering after each attempt back to their line before the next player starts. Do not use a lot of shooters for this 3 or 4 should be plenty and will keep them from standing around. Also work the break from all angles. And use 2 on 1 with the defender instructed to try to force the pass some times.

Be aware that, as with any realistic keeper work, there is an element of risk and the keeper MUST be correctly trained in diving and catching and footwork and self protection BEFORE any breakaway work is attempted. Also do not use players that cannot control their attack for this or there will be uncontrolled contact and someone will get hurt.

Earlier when I said "Expose the post" what I meant was that when the shooter is not in shooting position the near post should be given and the taken back away so the shooter will shoot at the keeper. Also keepers stay low to draw the more difficult high shot.

Date: Sun, 6 Dec 1998

From: Kyle O'Harra

Narrowing angles is a battle between limiting the open space a forward can shoot at by stepping off the line and risking less reaction time or a pass behind the keeper. This will be determined by a keeper's experience judging how far they can come off their line in any given situation. A good way to get the angles right is to let them see the "triangle" the forward has to shoot at (provided there is no spin on the ball, but the shrinking of the "triangle" will be seen). A simple way

to do this is to tie each end of a rope (at least 25 yards long) around a different post. Stand anywhere around the goal and pull the rope in the center until the whole rope is taut. You will see a visible triangle formed between the posts (goal line) and from each post to where your hand is pulling the rope. Your keepers can decide where in the triangle to stand to cut off the angle best by pretending the ball is where your hand is. Many goalkeepers will move right up to the center of the triangle, while others will be slightly closer to the near post since there is less reaction time here. Maybe someone else can instruct you here. I have added hooks to the rope ends and a metal ring in the middle to make it more quickly usable. I've tried to include a cheap graphic to get the picture across if it is hard to understand.

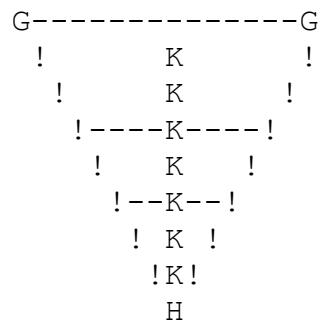
G:goalpost

---:goal line/space to shoot

K:keeper, moving up to narrow angle but risking pass behind and less reaction time

!:rope

H:hand/ring



Date: Mon, 7 Dec 1998

From: Connie T. Matthies

The use of ropes tied to the posts is an excellent way for kids to learn angles. If you proceed sequentially around the goal, and put a flat cone at the distance where the keeper can cover both sides of the angle, you will show the keepers that their running pattern around the face of the goal will be an arc (in other words, they don't move directly from post to post - they move along the arc illustrated by the flat cones).

I usually try to work on the setting of angles at the same time that I work with strikers on taking advantage of keeper positioning errors. It is very handy to put the strikers into the position of keeper at some point - and to put the keepers out on the field. In fact, the best way that the keepers will understand the utility of coming out is by letting them see how "big" they are in relation to the goal as they come out. This visual image helps considerably in developing a willingness

to set the proper angle - so don't overlook it (especially with adolescents who may tend to discard any information if it is not obviously relevant/helpful).

Date: Mon, 7 Dec 1998

From: Gary Rue

Geoff, there are so many factors at play in making this decision. I will try to address some of them.

Factors in the decision making:

- * speed of the attack, is the attacker under control
- * where will the NEXT touch be--inside or outside of the area, close or far away from the dribbler
- * angle of the approach, straight on, 45 degrees or acute
- * location of the closest defender (and his recovery capability)
- * skill of the attacker (skilled dribbler)

The GK must protect his goal from reasonable shots. If the attacker is outside the area, and moving slower than full speed, then the GK must protect the top post by not being much more than a few yards (3?) out. The distance from the line is about 6 yards if the attack is down the center and the next ball touch will be close to the 18.

If the next touch will be about 14-16 yards out, the GK should be stealing ground to the ball and in a position to either: 1) react to the next touch if the attacker can get to ball first (shot deflection or diving save); or 2) make a total commitment to the breakaway save if a 50-50 ball or better.

GKs must exhibit patience on a skilled controlled attacker as headlong over-commitment will be in the attacker's favor most of the time. The GK should be in a crouched, hands down and wide, with spread fingers and ready to react to either side or forward--there is no going back.

If the approach is at an angle, the must not over commit to the ball too soon on an attacker under control. The far post makes a great target for a chipped shot and is far enough behind the GK to allow a lofted ball to drop. Also, because of the angle, the GK can reduce the scoring zone effectively by being at his normal near post position. I would recommend a 12-14 yard from the near post decision point on closing down an attacker coming in at 45 degree angle. This is nearly the same point as a central attack, but the 6-8 yards deep into the area. Many GKs make a mistake of going out as soon as the attacker approaches the corner of the area--this is too far away. Another reason a GK should not move off his near post position too soon, is that he is in a better position to stop a ball crossed into the center.

If the attacking angle is acute (along the goal line), the GK would do best to stay at his near post--even moving back on the goal line slightly towards center if the shooting angle is almost impossible. A decision to come out on the ball probably should be delayed until the attacker reaches the goal area.

If a defender is with the attacker, the GK may decide the defender is in a good enough position to bother the attacker and force a bad shot. In that case, the position of the GK should be closer to his protection line. I've seen a lot of savable balls score because the GK came out on a shooter that was being defended.

As with most things, there is a lot of room for coaches to decide how they want their GKs to react in a given situation. Decide what would work best for your GK's talents against the level of competition and style of play. Then work the situations in training to develop and rely on the game to do the teaching.

GK Angles

Date: Wed, 21 Jun 2000

From: Gary Rue

As I remember (key word) DiCicco saying this at the National Convention several years ago. If the attacker is near the 18, then the GK position is about 3-4 yards. If the attacker is 35-40 yards out, then the GK must be about 2 yards off the line. The further away a potential shot is, the closer to the goalline the GK should be. Sounds strange, until you realize what the most dangerous shot is from an attacker 35 yards out. It is the one that is at the top post, not wide. I've since heard him use the 6 for more mature GKs.

In a prior post, I mentioned the 3 goal positioning using 3 yards as a spot. You are using the 6 for the same thing. I would normally recommend about 3 yards for a young GK. I have found closing down the ball is a formula for disaster with most youth GKs as they tend to expose more goal than take away. Most dangerous youth shots that originate from outside of the penalty area tend to be high looping shots and not the low screamers that cutting down the angle is meant to save. I tend to go somewhere between 3-6 for my high school GKs depending upon their footwork, leaping ability and quickness.

Now if the attacker is bearing down on goal (no defender) and is inside the penalty area, then this requires close down and putting pressure on the attacker. Other than this "breakaway" situation, I don't think moving out of the goal does much to challenge the shooter.

Date: Tue, 27 Jun 2000

From: Jeff Benjamin

One thing about positioning no one has mentioned yet: when the ball is at a sharp angle (ball-post-end line angle of 30 degrees or less), and must defend against a shot (*not a cross*), make sure the keeper is positioned *outside* the near post. I.e., if the keeper squares to the ball and extends their arms perpendicularly, their near-post hand should not point into the net. This ensure that deflected balls go outside the post and not into the side netting. Inexperienced keepers will feel like their backside is exposed with all that open net is behind them - tell them that's what defenders are for! Remind them this is only for an uncontested shot; they should stay closer to the middle of the goal if they think a cross is a possibility.

Also, remind keepers to check their posts whenever they have a spare half second. All the positional knowledge in the world won't help you if you don't know where the goal is!

Here's how I demo angles:

- 1) Start with a rope from the center of the goal to the ball. Move the ball around the penalty area, showing how this keeps the keeper centered in the goal. This sets the side-to-side position.
- 2) Add ropes from the posts to the ball. Again move the ball around, showing how the keeper must come off the line until they can cover both posts comfortably. This sets the forward-and-back position.
- 3) Add the concept of staying outside the post at sharp angles. Move the ball around at sharp angles and adjust accordingly.
- 4) Now, position the ball at the intersection of one side of the penalty area and the end line. Line up the ropes, have the keeper set their position themselves, then mark their position with a cone. Move the ball progressively around the penalty area, marking the keeper's position as you go. You should end up with kind of an arc with flat sides at the goal posts.
- 5) The top of this arc will be quite far out, typically - 12 to 14 yards off the line. What's wrong with this? The keeper can be chipped. Have them adjust the arc so the top of it is at a point where they can get to a ball over their head.
- 6) What you end up with is a rounded rectangle that roughly approximates the goal area and what Tony DiCicco call the "Arc Angle". This is the guideline a keeper should use for starting their positioning, then vary it side-to-side or forward-and-back based on the situation. Every keeper's arc is different and will change with size and ability; they must learn theirs and always update it as necessary.

Moving Forward and Cutting Down the Angle

Date: Sun, 8 Aug 1999

From: Gary Rue

In the WWC99 final PK shootout, Brianna Scurry provided a great example of how to cut down the angle of an attacker approaching the goal. Ignoring the PK situation, imagine this scenario--an attacker has beaten the back line of defense and has a run on goal. The attacker will have control of the ball in the penalty area before the GK can get to the ball. The GK needs to move out towards ball to cut down the shooter's angles. However, the closer to the ball the GK is, the quicker the GK must react to the shot.

Because the attacker is close to the goal, it is improbable that the GK has to worry about a shot over his head, therefore he should come out to close down the angle. In this situation, the closer he can get to the ball the better. However, it is extremely important that the GK reach a balance state (i.e., stop moving and not leaning) at the time the attacker is going to play the ball. <This is assuming the GK is not close enough to the ball to smother the shot attempt on the kicker's foot.> Note, in the WWC Final, Scurry was still moving forward on the first two PKs and was not balanced enough to react quickly in the direction of the shots.

Warm-up: a gate (two cones about 4 yards apart) are positioned 3-5 yards in front of the GK. The GK moves out to make the save IN FRONT of the gate. Side to side or up and back movements can be added before the GK moves to the gate. Initially, work on the GK getting to the gate and getting on balance before the shot is served. Progress to the GK on balance behind the gate and then moving to making saves of longer shots, again in front of the gate.

Breakaway: The exercise setup is to place a stationary ball at or around 14 yards out with an attacker positioned on the 18. The GK is about 2.5 to 3 yards out from the goalline. The gate is 2.5 to 3 yards towards the attacker and used as a guide for how far out the GK must get. The ends of the gate can be lined up with the stationary ball and the posts to indicate the GK's saving area. The setup emulates the ball being played forward by an attacker allowing the GK to "steal ground" while the ball is away from the attacker's foot. Focus on the speed in which the GK steals ground and the how quick he gets on balance. The GK should have a slight bit of forward lean (definitely not a backward lean), the knees should be bent, feet should be at or slightly less than shoulder width and the hands should be low, forward and wide.

Progress to the attacker playing the ball at full dribble into the area. This puts the exercise in a more dynamic mode and allows the GK to make the decision on when to come out.

It is important that the exercise is changed to where the attacker comes from the corner of the 18. There are two differences to the attacker coming from the middle versus coming in from an angle. First the GK does not have to go out as far to cut down the angle. Again this can be demonstrated with a stationary ball and the gate cones lined up with the posts. Secondly, the GK has to be more concerned with a shot over his head to the far post as there is now more distance between the GK and the kicker and the GK and the goal for the ball to loop over the GK and drop down into the goal.

Develop the exercise at a slow enough pace to make sure the GK understands how to move, where to move and how to get on balance. Then make the ball and attacker more dynamic and mobile to develop the GK's decision making.

Goalkeeper Coming Out at an Angle Tip

Date: Thu, 20 Apr 2000

From: Robert C. Christensen

Yesterday afternoon I conducted my weekly Keeper Kamp. I am working with grades 7-9 goalkeeper prospects (including the starting goalkeepers) to develop and hone goalkeeper skills.

The 7th grade goalkeeper has a "unique" habit of not coming out at an angle when going after the ball. She goes completely laterally on the field. I worked and worked on getting her to come out at an angle, but she struggles even when just working on it with no pressure (old habits die hard??).

Anyway, I found it really effective to have her stand in the corner of the penalty box, facing the center of the box. I then told her that all of her movements and saves must be inside the box. I was standing in the center of the box. I told her to imagine the goal directly behind her as she faced the center of the box. This would put the imaginary goal diagonally on the field. I began to play balls to her in a variety of ways, and the lines gave her a visual reference point in which to execute her runs, dives and saves. It worked really well.

Then we moved to the regular goal mouth (which of course has no "guide lines" available. She improved her approach and runs dramatically (still not perfect). I plan to attend her game this evening (after my own) and see if this carries over to her game-time play, or if it is merely an artifact of the practice environment.

But considering how well this worked, after 2 other sessions with very limited progress, I thought that I would pass this simple but effective training tip on to the rest of the list.

Defending When An Attacker Is Dribbling Along the Endline

Date: Tue, 24 Aug 1999

From: Jonathan Wills

Last week I had the pleasure of taking the NSCAA Goalkeeping Level I course with Bill Steffen, head women's coach at the University of Oregon (former pro keeper, former Anson Dorrance assistant and frequent head guy with Tony DiCicco's GK camps). He was a very clear and concise teacher, with a great attitude about youth training. He had some great GK training ideas.

Regarding covering the goal with an attacker dribbling the endline:

Steffen's point was that there are **three** goals for the GK to cover in these situations. (When coaching attacking we all love these situations for exactly those reasons.)

First -- the one with the net. The keeper must protect from a shot coming from the attacker. Admittedly, this takes quite a bit of skill for most youth players, since it involves a bit of a chip, and a bending one at that, to beat a properly-positioned keeper. (The proper position involves all three goals. See below.)

Second -- a line from the near post to about 3-4 yards straight out. This is the area through which a ball must travel if it is being passed back to an advancing attacker -- the diagonal ball back to the penalty spot. So the keeper must protect against the cross.

Third -- the back post. A chip over the keeper to an attacker at the back post is also dangerous. Again, it takes a skilled player to deliver such a cross.

Steffen's preferred GK position in this situation is at the near post. That protects from the immediate shot and covers the "second" goal. The chip, being by necessity a slow floating ball, allows the keeper time to recover to the back post.

His activity to train this was a variation on the channels game. In a 40 x 40 area, full size goals with keepers. Two teams (4v4, 5v5 -- not too many in the field). The corners of the area are marked off with cones at about a 45 degree angle -- from maybe 5 yards out from the posts to the touch (side) line. That makes a triangle area **about** 10 x 10 x 14.145 yards (thanks, Pythagorus . . .)

One player is in each triangle -- in each case attacking the goal nearby, and like in the channels games, is the only player allowed in the triangle.

The idea was to get the attacking team to play the ball to one of their triangle players and then quickly attack the goal via one of the three goals the keeper was attempting to cover. With this size field, both keepers he used could throw

the ball directly to their team's triangles -- which seemed to make the game pretty good for training quick transitions from your attackers and defenders.

Steffen added conditions as the game progressed -- 5 points for every goal scored from the triangles, 4 for one-touch passes out of the triangle, one or none for goals scored without going to the corners. A variation that would make GK sense would be to have each shot saved count as a point.

It was a fast-paced game, quickly going end-to-end. In this instance, all the players were GKs, but if used with 2 keepers and your field players, you could get many training possibilities. For GKs of course, but also for your attacking players. Coach Steffen would say it all depends on where you stand during training. If you're training your keepers, stand near them.

Square Balls Across the Mouth

From: Gary Rue

When the ball is on the outside edge of the penalty area, the GK should be positioned on an imaginary line drawn from the near post to a point 3-4 yards straight out from the middle of the goal. The GK should be at about arms length away from the near post (I personally don't recommend much closer, unless the GK has trouble with near post collections from this distance. Shoulder against the post is too close.) The GK's feet (and hips) should open to the field not directly facing the ball. That is, the feet should be on the imaginary line. The reason for this is three fold: 1) vision for what is behind; 2) ability to move and react quickly towards the center of the goal; and 3) the body is in a more straight-on position to go collect the cross.

GKs have great trouble assessing low balls from the flank. First of all, the ball path is difficult to judge as the flight is oblique to the goal line. The GK does not have as good a point of reference to the goal as when the ball is out in front. Coming off the line for a flank ball always means giving up the goal mouth if the ball gets behind or past the GK.

Secondly, if there is any spin on the ball, it is generally away from the GK. Even a slight deviation and away from the goalline can put a ball out of the GK's reach. This spin is much harder to see and again assess with the relation to the goal. To show the problem, serve balls from the corner of the penalty area and the goalline to different targets between the near post and the penalty mark. Vary the speed, height and spin on the serves and watch the GK's delayed reaction in trying to decide if he can get to the ball. Even knowing this cross is coming, is not enough.

Thirdly, a GK must assess the attacking players that are moving to the near post- can the GK get to the ball first? Players coming from the far post side are difficult to see before the GK must make his decision. To play this ball, the GK has to assess if he can get to the cross first. If he decides, then he must commit to the ball. Else he must decide where the cross is going and who will get to it. The GK must move along that imaginary line, adjusting to the attacking player the GK feels will get to the ball first. The GK should be at that 3-4 yard mark if the GK thinks the ball will be played directly in front of the goal. On a cross to the far post, the GK may have to drop step and power step to get across the goal mouth quick enough.

Yes - the keeper can do things in many circumstances. It is a difficult thing and requires a high degree of courage for the young players. A lot of work needs to be done working with the kids in protection before working with this because the keeper is a little more exposed here.

The keeper when possible tries to intercept this ball and prevent this ball from going through the goal box. To accomplish this the keeper will dive forward facing the ball - head pointing away from the goal. The technique is the same as a low shot on goal. The only difference is the keeper prevents the ball from penetrating. This is a VERY difficult ball for the defense to clear (usually results in a corner once cleared) So depending upon skill level, teaching this GK technique can prevent many dangerous ball from developing.

Technique: Keeper must protect near post as always and then will prepare for the cross as usual. When the keeper reads the ball and determines it is a low ball that they can win. Their 1st step is important. It must be forward at an angle. Stepping backwards allows opponent to intercept the ball and increases chance for injury. 1 or 2 steps is all it will take and then a good big step forward to plant and start the dive getting both hands behind the ball and IMMEDIATELY bringing the ball down to pin. Finish this ball off like any regular dive.

The challenge with this is 1) reading the ball - keepers typically look for a crossed aerial ball. When the ball is driven low (albeit playable) you will see many GKs frozen. If the ball was in the air, they would make the save. 2) courage - The keeper is going down with perhaps 4-5 fast moving player coming directly at them. The GK must dive in the direction they are coming, they may not be able to see the ball and opponent, and they are a little exposed (head and back).

Other than that, the keeper must just use good footwork to move with the ball, cutting angle, and hope that they can block a shot from close range.

3v2+GK Game

Date: Tue, 21 Sep 1999

From: Bernie Hayden

We used a little game in last night's practice and judging from the results I feel it's worth passing along.

I'm coaching U9 and used our regular field set-up; 35x45 yards, 5 yard wide by 5 foot tall goals (flags).

Each team of three had a designated GK. The GK could use his hands within the normal boundaries, a line 6 yards from the end line in our case.

The conditions of play were that each player must touch the ball after a change of possession before a shot on goal AND all three players, including the GK, must be on the attacking side for the field. This game was intended to allow for GK training while preventing the usual amount of "nap time" when designating a GK in scrimmage. It was also to emphasize decision making, when to come (stay) "out of the box" and challenge a field player vs staying (getting) home.

It also forced quick transition from attack to defending for the field players who were going from "numbers up" to 3v2 defending. On attack the restriction that all three have to play the ball really helped promote checking to the ball and support. On defense the premium was on immediate pressure at the ball balanced by support from the second defender and recovery by third defender/GK. Sort of like the real game :')

We had eight players at practice. I used the "wall player" trick I picked up at my E license. The "substitute" was positioned behind the opposing teams goal line. They had to say off the pitch but could play the ball back into their team rather than having a goal kick or corner.

The work rate is very high. We played for 20 minutes. The "wall player" was substituted frequently for one of the two field players. The GKs played the whole scrimmage... No rest for the wicked!

CATCHING THE BALL

Catching the Ball

Date: Mon, 3 Aug 1998

From: Gary Rue

Following are the catches that a new U11 GK should work on and learn:

First of all, teach the ready position, hands forward, palms facing out, fingers pointed towards ball, elbows close together, knees slightly bent, feet moving in a direction or slightly bouncing, and the body is balance with a twinge of lean forward.

After the ready position, start with the catch. Serve the ball about chest high. The hands should be in the form of a W with the index fingers turn slightly in from parallel, and the thumbs near each other, but not touching. The server should see the ends of the fingers when the catch is made. That means the hands are forward and the catch is high on the ball. Too low of a catch may allow a hard shot to bend back the fingers, allowing the shot to go through.

Move the ball to the left and right, asking the player to move the feet to get behind the ball. The hands should move in tandem. The W is maintained on every catch. Serve wider where the GK has to catch with the fingers pointing to the side (the GK should still move the feet and try to get behind the ball). The arm on the opposite side of the ball must be high in order to get both hands in a W behind the ball.

Now move the serves to waist or below. From the ready position, the hands just turn where the little fingers are next to one another. The key component here is that the forearms and elbows are close together. The arms have to be extended a little to get the elbows in front of the body. At the catch, the hands roll the ball up to the chest. Often the chest is bent down around the ball. Increase the pace of the serve. The GK should hop as the catch is made to cushion the catch.

The ground pick up is one of the most important of the catches. The GK should ALWAYS run through a ground pick up. Here the elbows must be close together, the lead foot leg should bend, dropping the trail leg knee behind the ball. The GK must learn to get the arms to the side of the lead leg. The ball is scooped up to the chest as the body comes up and the trail leg swings through the area of the pickup.

Note, GK of any age can't catch enough balls. New GKs should start catching a ball as soon as they arrive at practice.

Catching Technique

Date: Sat, 5 Sep 1998

From: Gary Rue

This is a spin-off of the recent thread of bare-handed catching to improve technique. The focus of the discussion is not so much that a player trains bare-handed or with gloves, but what are some ways to train and establish the proper catching technique. The hands must be able to yield to a hard hit shot (AKA "soft

hands"), yet be firm to totally stop the ball's inertia without allowing it to bounce out of the grip.

Making hundreds of catches is to a GK like 1000 ball touches a day is to a field player. There is no better exercise than catching a soccer ball (thrown or kicked) to improve one's catching ability. However, here are a few "abstract" exercises that a coach can use to target specific problem areas.

* One-handed catching--the purpose is to improve the reaction, hand position and softness of each hand. This is useful for GKs that tend have one strong and one "weak" hand. A server throws to a single hand side at least chest high. The GK one-hands the catch and throws back with same hand.

Watch for hand position behind ball. Be sure to vary throw velocity. Progress to throwing to the left side of the body for a right handed catch and visa versa. This should improve the movement of the off-hand to the ball. It is important that the GK does not just reach across his body, but turns his shoulders (towards ground) so he can get his off-arm up. The GK feel as if he is moving his far shoulder to his ear.

A quick two GK warm-up is each GK has a ball and simultaneously throw at the other GK's opposite hand; that is, GK1 right hand to GK2 left hand, etc.

On a side note, the coach must make the GK understand that he is doing one-hand catches to improve his two-handed catching technique and that one-handed catches outside this exercise will not be acceptable.

* Different size and weight balls--medicine balls are good to strengthen the hands and catching of a GK. They are great for warm-up throw and catching. Bad catching technique becomes very apparent with weighted balls. These balls force the GK to get both hands behind the ball.

Lightweight balls (such as rubber playground balls) are also useful, as the hands actually have to be softer to catch and maintain a hold on to these extremely bouncy balls.

The smaller #1 soccer balls are useful. They can travel very fast and require quick reaction by the GK. The server can throw or kick these balls. They help the GK to get both hands behind the ball, as well. They also make good balls to deflect and punch as the smaller surface requires a precise touch.

* Tennis Balls--The GKs enjoy it when I bring out my tennis racket and smack tennis balls at them. They have to be very quick in their reaction time to get to the ball and to catch the ball requires very soft hands.

* Water balloons--last and definitely least are water balloons. The ultimate in reinforcing soft hands, as there is an ample penalty attached. Actually, I've found the serve of the balloon to be more of a problem than the catch.

In summary, these activities can be used as some fun things to do, but with proper coaching can be used to help develop good catching technique.

Keeper Drills for Up/Down Catching

Date: Wed, 2 May 2001

From: Karl Keller

Over/Under Variation -- Pair off, two balls, 8-10 yards apart. One has ball high over head, one has ball low, almost touching ground with ball. High ball throws to position over head of partner, while low ball throws underhand with both hands to space between partners legs. Partner moves from low to high, or high to low, depending on starting position. Repeat, this time with partners in opposite position. This exercise is designed to work the range of up/down catch positions, and get good bending at the waist.

GROUND BALLS

Shots Off the Ground and Below the Waist

Date: Mon, 26 Apr 1999

From: Brian Smith

The shot just off the ground and below the waist is probably one of the hardest to save cleanly. What I train my keepers to do is always move forward on a save. This means that you step into the rolling ball, dive forward, etc...

The low shot you describe is difficult, because it is in-between "known" ways to save a ball. What I have my keepers practice is to get low, almost dropping to their knees, and getting the hands out in front of them, so they make a platform for the ball to land on. Putting the hands together with the thumbs spread out. When the ball makes contact with the hands, the fingers should curl up and then the forearms, then the elbows, then the ball can be cradled into the chest.

You can start out with slowly tossed balls so they can get used to catching the ball on the bottom and cradle it into the chest. Then as they get better at that, they need to start stepping into the shot. If the ball is below the knees, they may need to dive forward so that they land on the forearms with the ball between the arms and the chest.

Date: Wed, 28 Apr 1999 06:39:42 -0400

From: Gary Rue

Mark out two 5x5 areas (alter size as appropriate) 10 yards apart (again adjust as needed). One GK per grid, one ball. Make the GK start in the center of their grid. The GK with ball scores a point by throwing the ball to land in the other grid. Do not allow deflections--the GK must catch the ball (in her area) or let it hit outside. This will give the GKs work on low falling balls.

Handling Ground Balls – Knee Down? - GK vs Baseball Fielder

-----Original Message-----

From: Jeff Benjamin

One of the problems I have as a goalkeeper coach is retraining kids to *not* use the "knee down basket catch" for rolling balls on the ground. The preferred method to use, when possible, is bend from the waist, bent knees, feet together and behind the ball.

<snip>

(BTW, coaching point - for long, difficult-to-handle low balls – wet grass, very uneven turf, whatever -- you *do* use a knee-down position; this provides you with a larger "backstop" for safety. However, the no weight should ever rest on the down knee so the keeper can quickly move if need be.)

Date: Fri, 19 Nov 1999

From: Steve Procniar

In my experience, the 'knee down' method should never be used. In my playing (and coaching) experience this tactic has always resulted in disaster. When you bend your knees down that low your mobility is completely compromised (whether you touch your knee to the ground or not). I have seen time after time where a keeper sees the ball coming in and commits to the knee too early allowing the slightest misdirection of the ball (from holes, rocks, wind, wet grass, a funny bounce, ... whatever) to get by them and into the net. You must always assume that the ball will do the unexpected. Therefore a goalkeeper should remain in their ready stance for as long as possible to avoid these problems.

Another point that I'd like to make is about the over obsession with getting other parts of the body behind the ball in case the save isn't made. This should be a very low priority. A goalkeeper MUST have confidence in their hands (if they don't, they should drop everything else until they do). A goalkeeper must trust that the ball is not going to get through their hands, and concentrate on using their other body parts to position their hands as to give them the best opportunity to make the save. Its always a good idea to get other parts in the path of the ball when its feasible, but never at the expense of technique. This is hardly ever the case.

I can tell you what I teach MY keepers (about low saves), and see if might help you. I classify low balls into 3 categories (with a corresponding save technique for each):

1. slow rollers - ball is in continuous contact with ground
2. medium paced balls - coming in on the ground or shoestring level (bouncing or not)
3. fast paced strikes - coming in anywhere below the knees

Here's the corresponding save techniques:

slow rollers - These are usually easy to deal with. Slow pace, with little chance for a change in direction. While moving towards the ball, step forward with the lead foot placing it right next to the incoming ball. It should be a long step so the body already begins to lower (but lower with the body remaining erect). Keep lowering (bending at the waist and slightly at the knees). The hands should be lowered as to almost scrape the grass, and end up between the open stance directly below the groin. This is where the hands should now meet the ball, assuming it has kept moving towards you. The save is made HERE, with the hands, at ground level. The ball is then brought up and tucked away against the chest while the body continues to move forward. The ball should never be allowed to roll up the arms, as this constitutes lack of control and WILL burn you someday.

medium paced balls - With some added pace low balls tend to break contact with the ground, and usually come in at shoestring height. This presents a trickier situation for the goalkeeper. In this case, the goalkeeper (as always) must first move forward towards to the ball. Once they have determined that its time to leave the ready stance, they should halt their forward motion and line up in the ball's path. All of the following should be done in one fluid motion... the feet should be brought together behind the ball (more so to complement the form as compared to a barrier), the hands should be brought straight down (with palms out) to ankle level where the save is made (ALL the bending is done at the waist, not the knees), and the head should be kept as erect as possible to keep a good line of vision. To make this motion easier, I also teach them that when the feet are brought together, a little stutter backwards should be executed. This motion (in conjunction with bending at the waist) literally pulls the hands and upper body down faster, as well as allowing the hands to be brought straight down. Blah! This save is much easier to do then it is to describe.

fast paced strike - These save are completely different animals that would take too long too describe in writing. But the gist of the save involves some of the medium paced technique combined with that of a forward vault. The key to making these saves is getting yourself positioned correctly.

Date: Fri, 19 Nov 1999

From: Gary Rue

Oh boy, we have a good technical problem and divergent opinions to discuss. Let's assume a rolling ball with some pace, not a screaming grass burner. Now also assume the GK needs to go meet the ball and not wait for it to arrive (which should be the rule not the exception).

I am a strong proponent of the lowered thigh technique. Having taught the more upright save in my early years, I have seen the problems this causes. I first will describe the technique, then explain why I recommend it.

The thigh down technique is not a stationary catch. It is a continuous run through as the GK collects the ball. Only the feet and fingers touch the ground. Under no conditions should the knee touch the ground.

The thigh down technique is a knee bend and not a waist bend. The lead foot steps forward as the other thigh is lowered behind the path of the ball. Again, the knee should not touch the ground.

The most difficult part of the pickup is getting the arms to the inside of the lead leg. However, this causes the player to actually get his/her forearms close together, which is a key component of most catches.

The catch is made as the body is moving forward through the pickup. As an added touch, the GK can sweep the trail foot through the pickup zone. This is not really necessary, but this sweep could actually kick a misplayed ball away. If the standing pickup (i.e., forward step with more waist bend than knee) is used, this foot sweep could be extremely important.

Now the reason I choose this technique. The waist bend is very difficult for a lot of players. They can't get their hands low enough. Also, they do not get their forearms together as they do not get their arms far enough in front of their bodies. I've seen many a GK knock the ball out of their grasp because they bang it on their knee when bringing it up to their chest. Also, the feet together pickup implies a stopped GK. That slowdown to bring the feet together could be the fraction of second an onrushing attacker needs.

The GK is able to make the thigh down pickup with very little slow down. The GK can attack the ball and bring it under control without the fear of banging it off the knees. Also, the GK mobility is much better in this position, than the other techniques. Bad bounces are generally only a problem when a GK waits on a ball.

My JV GK this season had very lazy technique on this pickup. He was scored on in a varsity game, because he did not get his thigh behind the ball. His attempted

pickup was a waist bend, but his arms were not together and the ball had a nice space between the legs to run through.

Take any other technique and add a charging attacker or two on a 55-45 ball. The lowered thigh is the only one that allows the GK pickup at speed so the GK can clear the area (and not get run-over). The waist bend puts the GK's head and neck in a very dangerous position (head down and leaning forward) in the vicinity of on-rushing attackers. The thigh down, keeps the upper body more upright where the head won't be jammed into body if there is a collision.

I also have an aversion to the much used and taught forward dive catch on the low hard shot, but that is another post.

Perhaps the thigh down technique requires a little development work, but it beats the alternative for not only GK efficiency, but safety.

Date: Sat, 20 Nov 1999

From: Gary Rue

Jeff, under no pressure, the GK can do just about anything he wants. Actually, the waist bend pickup is not a bad way to dynamically stretch the GK in warm-ups, but I still don't teach it as a pickup. The reason I stress the thigh down pickup is to constantly reinforce the need for a GK to make every save going forward as much as possible.

Some of my worst fears of injury when refereeing are when GKs go to their knees during a save. The ball and the GK become a stationary target for attackers that coming in hard and can't stop or veer off. I feel most GK don't get proper technique training period. It's been my experience that new youth coaches tend to worry more about "blocking" the ball instead of catching it. Due to lack of knowledge, these coaches lean towards having a defensive or reactive GK versus training for active and positive GK play. You may be correct about baseball, but I think that may be assuming too much.

A couple of things with the waist bend pickup. What does a GK do when s/he can't get the hands to the ground due to tightness of the hamstrings? I find this to be the rule with most youth players. Their bones grow faster than their muscles and tendons can stretch. In this case, the knees must bend some.

Also, to pick out a little of the recent gravity discussion, the waist bend may be the slowest way to get the hands down compared to using the knee bend. If the knees bend with both feet together, then they certainly can get in the way for elbows and forearms when bringing the ball up. The thigh down technique, gets some of the body (thigh) behind the ball, the hands get down very quickly, and the GK is mobile.

One other technical point on the thigh down method is the lead foot. If a GK can get the lead foot between the ball and the attacker, then it will be very difficult for the attacker to get a foot on the ball. Like a GK using the side of the leg as protection when going up in traffic for a high ball, the side of the leg gives decent protection to the body.

When presented a minimum amount of GK training time, this is the technique I use for the ground ball pickup. For the slow rollers with no pressure, I figure the GK will be able to do just about anything they want without extra training from me.

Ground Pickup

Date: Mon, 3 Aug 1998

From: Gary Rue

After working on general catching, including ground pickups, I would focus on having the GK move off the line to pickup the ball and run through the pickup.

There are several things a coach can do. Here are a few.

Warm-up:

As a server runs backwards, the GK rolls a ball to him. The server plays the ball off to one side and the GK must run through the pickup, rolling the ball back to the server for a layoff to the other side.

With three players, a GK in the middle is passed ground balls alternately. The GK must pickup the ball on a run through and pass it back to that server.

Exercises:

Place a gate (two cones about 10 yards wide) about 5 yards away from the goal line. With the GK a yard or two off the line play a ground ball between the gate from about the top of the penalty area. The GK must make the pickup before the ball crosses the gate. Increase the distance of the gate from the goal line as the skill is developed.

Using field players as passive attackers, play a ball into the area with an attacker running after the ball. The GK is to make the run through pickup. Have the field players attack the ball from different angles until the GK is used to making the pickup under pressure of an attacker's presence. Gradually increase the attacker's involvement, being sure to play 60-40 balls to the GK. At some point, everything is live. The serves can be more 50-50 or even 40-60 where the GK can start making decisions on when to come out. (As we are talking new GK here, this progression is late in the development stages.)

At a more advanced stage, the ball is played from the halfway with an attacker running on. The GK must decide if the ball will reach the penalty area before the attacker (hand pickup) or if the GK must go out of the area and play the ball with his feet.

HIGH BALLS

Catching High Balls

Date: Sat, 4 Jul 1998

From: Gary Rue

The following is intended for those training GKs to catch high balls. I would suggest that any age GK can be introduced to the skill of catching high balls. However, the technical training that involves decision making should be restricted to GKs age 14 and over or to those GKs who have a good fundamental development of catching low and medium high balls and goal mouth positioning. The requirement for this technical skill is certainly not as needed in the games for those players less than 12 years old.

Catching the high ball requires some different skills from the GK than the normal techniques of guarding the goal mouth. Generally the high ball catch is not a save, but a way to prevent a shot. First, the GK must know how to judge the flight of a ball, then react with the appropriate footwork to prepare for the catch. The GK has to be able to catch a ball of different heights, coming from different directions, moving towards the GK, across the GK's body and away from the GK.

The GK has to decide if attempt should be made to get to the ball or left to the defensive field players. The presence of attackers and defenders that may block or impede his path to the ball is also a decision factor. Can the GK get to the ball before an attacker, or before the ball leaves the area where the GK can handle the ball?

If the GK is able get to the ball, the final decision is whether to catch or to punch/deflect the ball.

Assuming the catch can be made, the GK should use the following technique:

- * get behind the ball, so the ball does not get behind the GK; this may mean the first steps of the GK are backwards.
- * get in the path of the ball; ball swerve can be recognized and adjusted to easier.
- * go forward into the catch; falling backwards does not put strength into the catch.

- * catch the ball at maximum height (when other players are present); arms are extended up, elbows are only slight bent.
- * use the standard "W" catch, where the index fingers and thumbs form a "W" like shape; the thumbs may be further apart on this catch.
- * make the catch above the head; a catch to the side is much more difficult and the ball cannot be made at maximum height.
- * secure the ball to chest, as soon as possible. (Note: when making a leaping catch in traffic, it is recommended that the ball be controlled and held in the air, until the feet are grounded and the ball can be pulled down to the chest without contact being made with other players.)
- * "KEEPER!!!!" Teammates know to get out of the way, and who knows how the opponents may react; a firm call should be made as soon as possible before the catch (not during or afterwards); this MUST be practiced.

When making a leaping catch, the following should be considered:

- * the knee and leg closest to the pressure of other players should be driven into the air, driving the arms up in unison; the knee should be angled away from the player to avoid fouling the other player and to use the raised thigh as a shock absorbing buffer in case of contact; the support leg is also protected for landing. (Note: often the driving knee is the outside one; that is the one turned closest to the field of play. This is because the pressure will be coming from that direction.)
- * the raised knee should be turned into the path of the ball to get the hips and shoulders turned into the path of the ball.

On a cross where the GK cannot get into the path of the ball, the GK would be best advised to punch the ball away. A dropped ball in traffic with the GK off his line often will not be a positive experience for the defending team. Rule of thumb, be ready to punch the ball if making the catch is too dangerous.

Some training exercises for catching high ball include:

- * two man catch and serve warm-up
- * technical perfection
- * two man toss and bang
- * server tosses ball straight into air and pushes/forearm shoves/jumps into GK as he makes the catch
- * man in the middle (two servers) warm-up
- * vary serves, short/long, straight on/wide to either side
- * efficient footwork
- * technical perfection (including communication)
- * serves from the front of the area short and on goal.
- * getting behind the ball; moving backwards and forwards
- * initial catches are flat footed, then move to jump catches
- * drive the knee up and slightly across the body
- * add player that runs onto ball, but veers off at last moment

- * change direction of the attacker's run
- * serves from 20-35 yards out wide into the area
- * getting behind the ball and into the path of the ball
- * picking the right angle to arrive at the catch point
- * drive outside leg on the jump
- * add attacking players running from the 18, then from the far post
- * serves from 10-15 yards out wide, square into the area
- * getting behind the ball and into the path of the ball
- * picking the right ball position and height to make the catch
- * decision not to go out on balls too high to catch
- * add several players (defenders and attackers) clustered in the area
- * serves from the corner or goalline, played back between the goal area the penalty mark
- * making the catch on a ball moving away from the goalline
- * decision to punch the ball
- * short corner or far post movement and reaction
- * add several players moving in the area
- * add a player that intentionally tries to obstruct the GK's movement

Many of the above exercises can be molded into session with field players, teaching attacking runs and defense. Initially, the attackers are only interested their runs and timings on the ball, as the GK works his technique. Then the attackers/defenders can be allowed to head on goal or clear, as the GK works on footwork out then back to his goal. Lastly, the exercise can go real time.

GK Knee Positioning When Catching High Balls

Date: Thu, 16 Dec 1999

From: Gary Rue

When teaching young goalkeepers to catch high balls, protecting the body from on rushing attackers or even teammates is critical. The knee (closest to the pressure) should be driven up (not out) on the jump to catch the ball.

The key element in this technique is to turn the knee slightly away from the pressure point and expose the side of the leg. Even if the GK is facing the on-rushing player, the knee can still be turned out enough not to cause a problem with catching the ball.

This leg turn is important for several reasons. First, the side of the leg can better diffuse the hit of an attacker running into the GK. The GK is more apt to stay on balance if a player runs into the side of the leg than the knee.

The second reason is the danger a knee driven towards another player presents. Not only may the GK be sanctioned, but he could cause an injury to the other player.

Thirdly, the driven knee helps to propel the GK into the air after the ball.

Defending Against High Balls

What angle are we talking about? Chipping over the keeper too far off his line in the center, or long far post balls from around the corner of the box?

If long far post balls from the corner, then it seems likely that your keeper is heading to the near post too early. With his height, he should be able to stand somewhat in from the far post (usually around 2/5 point and a step or so forward of his line), and still dive to protect the near post. It is always easier to go forward than to back-pedal, and it is quite common to see younger keepers standing almost even with the near post on such angles (way over-protecting the near post) while giving up the far post shot). You need dual training of your keeper and near post protector (probably your CD) on these shots. Put a bunch of balls at the corner of the box, and put the keeper at around the 2/5 mark (meaning not in the center, but a bit towards far post). If necessary, get out the old rope - or take him out to the shooter - to see that until the shooter moves in a bit, the angle is quite sharp - and he can protect the near post from this point (or put his near post guy just out from the post towards the shooter to cut off the near post option). Then, work on long shots - as well as a quick step or two towards the near post as the shooter moves closer if his near post D isn't available. Make sure that the near post D is a bit off the post, as the keeper needs to be able to dive in behind him if necessary (and probably should be ready to do this quickly if necessary).

If the problem is a chip over the keeper from shots taken in the central area, then either your defenders need more work on closing this guy down - and/or the keeper needs to work on his charging. These are tough saves - and the charge has to be quick (with the keeper low and arms out wide) to succeed. Good idea to have your keeper watch as many MLS shoot-outs as possible to get the hang of this, as there is an art to saving central balls - and the key is to get out quick to close off as much of the goal as possible and to get settled before the shot.

Does this sound like the picture you see--the GK is out several yards from the line, a high shot from 30 yards comes in, the GK is square to the ball, backpedaling, leaning backwards, reaching up as the ball sails over his outstretched hands?

If so, it's a common ailment and the GK should take the following ROT prescription daily:

- * (when the ball is within scoring distance) the further away the ball is from the goal line, the CLOSER to the goal line the GK must be. We aren't as worried about the shots over our heads when the ball is close.
- * When the ball goes into the air towards goal, the GK must DROP STEP into a side-on position and start moving back until he KNOWS where the ball is going. From this side-on position, he can go backwards or forwards very quickly. Plus his weight will be balanced ready to spring.
- * On high shots, GET SHORT--that is, bend the knees in order to get spring in the jump. This helps the GK to MOVE backward instead of reaching up and leaning backwards.
- * If caught off the goal line, or at the near post for a far post shot, the GK should learn to do the cross-over step; i.e., to turn to the right, drop step with the right foot, then drive the left leg across the right into a sprint towards the ball target.

We do a lot of short/long practice with our GKs. In warm-ups we throw or volley short and quickly follow that up with a ball that is behind them. We look for the immediate drop step on any ball where the GK is unsure of the depth of the kick.

Later in goal, we play a near post ball. After the low save, a ball is sent to the far post. We look for the drop step and usually the cross-over step in order to get to save.

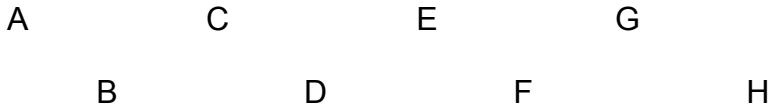
My current GK reacts very well to high balls. He generally is off the line 3-4 yards when the ball is 30 yards out. With other GKs that don't react as well, I will move them back to 2 yards off the line. If an opponent has the ball in the central part of the PA, the GK may be 4 and 6 yards off the line to on the ball depending on the situation.

The first rule of defense is DELAY.

One of the exercises we do with our GKs to improve their jumping (noted on several posts) is to deliver the ball at just below their maximum reach height. The GK jumps, catches and tosses back in one motion before landing. The server sends another ball immediately. Do 10, then rest. If I only have one GK, we will do some slow foot passing until the oxygen levels are raised.

This exercise could be changed slightly to moving to a cone three yards in front, then going back for a high toss. The GK collects, returns the pass and moves to the cone to restart the process. This reinforces the need to move back as soon as the ball goes into the air. Be sure to toss in some short lobs. Going forward after going back is important as well.

One method that worked for my girls (U-17 & U-16 doing every other day) was to set up some cones about 3-4 feet apart in the pattern below and perform the following.



1. Standing on the left foot at cone A, crouch and jump as high as possible coming to rest on the right foot at cone B. Go from B to C using the right foot and so on. Go from A though H and then back again. Repeat 1 time.
2. Standing with both feet together at A, crouch and jump as high as possible coming to rest at cone C. Again with both feet together jump diagonally back to cone B. Jump ahead to D, diagonally back to C then to E, to D, to F, to E, to G, to F, to H, to G. Head back the other way. Repeat 1 time.

Parrying Chip Shots Over the Goal

Date: Wed, 27 Sep 2000
From: Jim Turpin

A while ago I wrote a progression that will help your keeper with their "turning" of the ball over the goal.

I is really intended to help a timid keeper become more confident in getting out of the goal mouth but it also will help with the body turn and hand use and jump in the situation you describe.

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RECOVERY FOR THE CHIP

WARNING: As with most keeper work this can be dangerous. Be sure to progress slowly for technique.

To gain confidence to leave the line and play more of the modern keeper/sweeper roll the keeper will need to be confident in his/her recovery for the chip.

1st be sure that the keeper understands that he/she should always turn the ball over the top with the hand farthest from the goal.

Work these VERY slowly at first.
Start with the recovery footwork. Have the keeper start at about the penalty spot. Facing the field. Place 2 balls on the ground about 1 yard inside and one yard in front of the posts. (If he/she, as my current top keeper does, tends to go all out

set this up away from the goal so that there will be no collision with the posts.) The keeper stands facing the field and you call either right or left. The keeper should execute a "drop step" directly toward the called ball and with a fairly deep knee bend move to touch the ball. The technique of the "drop step" is VERY important. I will assume for this that you called "left." The keeper should step a comfortable distance with the left foot directly toward the ball at the left post. While stepping the keeper should keep the knees bent and drop his/her left shoulder. (If you can find a tape of Walter Zenga (sp) in his prime he had one of the best drop steps I have ever seen. Brianna Scurry's is good too.)

Every time the keeper returns to the spot call a ball. Watch the drop step and watch for the shoulder drop. Once they are moving correctly increase the speed and keep watching his/her footwork until he/she is working very hard after he/she is fatigued but not exhausted slow them back down and refresh the drop step technique.

For the next part you will need to work in the goal area. Have 10-15 balls around the spot and the keeper on the line in the center of the goal. The place you stand with the balls should be adjusted for size and confidence of the keeper. For my U17G keeper I am now standing 1/2 way between the spot and the edge of the 18 but I started with her half way between the 6 and the spot. Hold a ball in you hands about waist high. Keeper moves out and touches the ball with either hand and begins to back pedal. As soon as the keeper begins to back up serve the ball toward one or the other upper corner. At first let the keeper know where the serve will be but as they progress use surprise with the drill. (Again adjust the serve for ability, but be sure that he/she must drop step jump and turn the ball for the save.) HE/She should make the same drop step as before and as the ball is entering her "hitting zone" jump and PUSH the BOTTOM of the ball straight up. The ball will go over the top because it already has enough forward momentum. Continue to watch the drop step and shoulder drop and assure that he/she is remaining low until he/she jumps. As he/she progresses increase the speed and reps. The idea is too use this as both training and conditioning.

At high speeds this "dive" or jump is the one that has keepers appear to spin in the air after a save. It can be a bit of a trauma and sometimes dangerous. Start slow and don't progress until the keeper is confident at each level. It might help if a martial arts instructor works a few times with them on landing. I am lucky to have martial arts background and can teach how to protect oneself from injury while diving in this manner.

Young keepers often have a problem with the all out recovery required for this. Just keep working and he/she will get it because it makes sense and keepers are smart, crazy but smart :-), and with the brightly colored shirts it looks so cool.

One more time. Do NOT progress too fast. each step builds on the last and 80-90% of goalkeeping is technique.

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One more thing: The biggest part of this technique is the footwork and the second is attacking the ball with the correct hand. In the US v China game Sun Wen hit a great free kick over the US wall and Siri's footwork broke down just a little and this caused her to try to save with the wrong hand and the ball was unstoppable with that hand. I believe that with the footwork she usually has the ball is saved but a little break in concentration and the technique broke down and a goal was scored.

Work on technique over and over until it is PERFECT in practice then work on it some more. Keepers have the hardest job on the team because they are not directly involved in the play very often.

Goalkeeping: Long periods of boredom interspersed with brief moments of total panic.

Train so the panic is manageable.

Keeper Parrying the Ball

Date: Wed 11 Dec 2002

From: S. Fung

What are the circumstances under which a keeper decides to parry a ball over the crossbar with the back of his hand, instead of attempting a save using both hands to catch the ball?

I guess what I am asking is what are the visual cues for the keeper? Pace of the ball? Height? Whether the ball is dipping or rising when it reaches the goal? Spin on the ball? Whether there are opposing players in the goal area? Place on the field where the ball was kicked?

Can a parry ever save a ball that would have otherwise just kissed the tips of the extended fingers of the keeper? Asked another way, if a ball is too high to be caught with the open hands, would a parry have been the better alternative?

From: Dave Maul

Without question, the body's extension is greater when a single arm is raised to parry the ball over the bar, as opposed to attempting a two-handed save. I am the proud coach of a "height-challenged" goalkeeper. She is definitely learning to distinguish between those balls which she is capable of attempting to save and those which she clearly needs to elevate herself simply to play over the bar.

From: Paul Pring

I think parrying of the ball is good means of saving a ball that can't be stopping whilst moving forward or 'threatening the ball'.

It's an effective way to use the momentum already on the ball to deflect it away from the goal using the open palm.

If the GK makes the decision that the parry is the best course of action then it is wise to take a sideways on stance with the dominant hand at the back (this change takes place when the ball is travelling). This will enable swift backwards movement and therefore a greater leap.

From: Bob Christensen

I teach keepers to parry the ball in two situations:

1) When the pace of the shot or congestion in the goal mouth make a clean catch questionable.

2) When a chipped shot (or any other shot) causes the keeper to retreat quickly towards his (or her) own goal line, and catching the ball would likely result in the momentum of the keeper (and ball) to carry them into the goal.

And it is with the base of the palm, not the back of the hand.

From: Tom Hart

"with the back of his hand"

NEVER.

From: Richard Brown

When you have to fully extend your arms/arm up from your body to get a hand on the ball then you should parry.

It is a hard catch if you have to do that because you can't have your hands out from the body to meet the ball from that position.

If you can have your arms out towards the ball, then you can bring your arms into your body to take the force from the ball. Then you can make a safe catch on the ball.

So it is a lot safer to give them a corner when you have to extend your arms up instead of out first.

From: Dave Maul

Paul Pring writes:

> it is wise to take a sideways on stance with the dominant hand at the back
Paul,

Why dominant hand at the back? I'd always heard that the ball should be played (when parrying over the bar, or reaching to deflect a ball struck wide) with the hand across the body. For instance, when moving quickly to your right to save a ball struck wide to the right, the left hand should come across the body to make the deflection. That, then, would be the front hand. Wouldn't that hold true for parrying over the bar as well?

From: Paul Pring
Dave,

You're absolutely right. I had a vision of Bruce Grobelaar doing exactly the same in my head (I think it was against Everton?). He backtracked sideways from around the edge of his penalty area and still managed to put the ball over the bar. I checked a few keeping resources that I have and they confirm that if you lead with the left leg use the right and vice versa.

From: Jeff Benjamin
> "with the back of his hand"
> NEVER.
Nor with the fist!

As Tom and Bob pointed out, parrying is done with an open hand, palm facing the ball. A "hard" parry, usually around the post, is done with the heel of the palm, although it can be tipped with the fingers if that is all the keeper can get to the ball. A ball parried over the crossbar is done, again, with an open hand, using the fingers (mostly) to push the ball upwards and over. Punching with a closed fist is reserved for crosses, and the fist is used to punch the ball *away* from the goal, not over or around it. Don't confuse the two techniques!

One decision making criteria for parry vs catch has already been alluded to. You can get a little further reach with one hand vs. two; parrying is typically a one-handed save. So if you can reach the ball with two hands, you ought to be catching it.

> I guess what I am asking is what are the visual cues for the keeper? Pace
> of the ball? Height?

Probably just these two, and the only real consideration is can the keeper catch the ball? If so, do it. If not, but the keeper can still get to it with one hand and get a piece of it? Then parry. Pace of the ball is key with heel-of-the-palm parries -- the keeper might choose to parry a very hard shot and deflect it away rather than try to catch it. But again, the catch should always be the first choice. Height is more a consideration for balls going over the keeper's head, which is about the only time you'd want to parry over the bar.

> Whether there are opposing players in the goal area?

This is a consideration on crosses, catch vs. punch, but that's a different subject.

> Can a parry ever save a ball that would have otherwise just kissed the
> tips of the extended fingers of the keeper? Asked another way, if a
> ball is too high to be caught with the open hands, would a parry have
> been the better alternative?

I assume here you mean "kissed the tips of the extended fingers" on a two-handed save. I guess, then, the answer is a qualified "yes", since you might get that little extra reach with one hand. But it will depend on the keeper and the particular shot.

From: ront

not being a goal keeper, I still have some thoughts. first off, to confirm that you are talking about the high ball, not one shot to a far post where the keeper has to dive and extend and if lucky get a fingertip on it (I see that as a deflection, and a parry as something that is done with some control of the ball)

so, with a high drive coming in and it's like "I don't think I can catch this", then over the bar is a good way to go. but to GET it over the bar, never the back of the hand (unless we're in the 'whatever I can touch it with' scenerio above.). basically, wherever you are now take your right hand and put it straight up in the air palm forward, fingers up. now bring it down so that your palm is still forward but elbow is at right angle. Now bend back at the wrist so that palm is facing up w/fingers back at about a 45' angle. (if you've done it correctly, you should now kind of look like a waiter carrying a tray through a crowd). as the ball comes, the 'tray' is lifted, the ball strikes the heel of the hand/palm and is lifted and guided up and over. (much easier to demo than to describe!!!)

as to circumstances, pace, height, traffic all figure in although I'm not sure that spin or place from where shot came do.

From: S. Fung

> From: Tom Hart
> "with the back of his hand"
> NEVER.

Thanks, Tom. I'd forgotten that because I've seen some players use the back of the hand to parry. Maybe that's a carryover from volleyball where if you use the palm it's a carry but if you use the back of the hand, it isn't.

What is the biomechanical or physical reason for using the open palm and not the back of the hand? In other words how do I explain to a 13 year old why he/she should always do it the one way and never the other? 'Specially if they are used to doing it the never way.

From: Tom Hart

I heard a goalkeeper once say that "the palm of your hands should never see the net". There is a good bit of truth to that. You can't play the ball with your palms facing backward.

"Deflecting" or "tipping" uncatchable balls can't be done with any success using the back of the hand.

When a goalkeeper chooses to catch- he'll do it with both hands. If it's a "floater" or ball with little power/pace/speed and it's too dangerous to catch he must choose to box or punch the ball high and away. "Dangerous" in this sense usually means a crowd around the GK or a strong challenge by opponent to win the ball.

When the shot has plenty of power and the GK cannot get both hands to the ball, he is left with tipping or deflecting. As posted earlier it's usually done at full stretch for balls shot to the side of the GK. The GK will try to make contact with the heel of the "top" hand- using the palm and fingers as over play for safety's sake. When diving to the right to cover this shot you can get more reach and extension with the left hand as you fly to your right.

For balls that are hit with little power but are dangerously close to goal the GK should push them HIGH as possible over the crossbar. Not high enough and you slam dunk one in your own net. And that's not a good thing. :)

Volleyball players make hilarious goalkeepers- almost everything in volleyball is counter to good goalkeeping:

1. In VB, jumping is done without regard to opponents behavior- in soccer you have to "lean in" to keep from being knocked over. Basketball is a much better cross training activity for goalkeepers.
2. In VB, you smother the ball it's bad- in soccer it's good.
3. In VB, hard body surfaces are preferred when playing the ball so it can be kept in play- in soccer you want the ball hugged to your chest or out of touch.
4. In VB, intentionally playing the ball out is loss of serve or a point for the opponent- in soccer you save it or play it out of touch. But you sure as heck don't keep it in play to let the opponent get multiple chances to shoot.

Experience is the best teacher, using the back of your hand will score goals:

Put the kid in goal, you stand 10-15 yards away with a dozen balls. Serve by hand- try to stretch the range of the keeper. You want them to be unable to use both hands to reach the low balls served to the side.

For balls that get played over the top of the keeper, you stand at the Penalty Spot with balls- have your keeper start at the goal line and run out to you. The GK "tags" the ball and drop steps back to goal (side on). You serve a rainbow- high and far enough to just drop on the goal line. If your GK is fast- you lower the trajectory and put more speed on the serve. If the keeper can catch them you increase the speed of your service. The keeper should be pushing the ball OVER the crossbar.

The GK doesn't "back peddle"- you trip and fall and you have no vision of your goal. Proper method is to take a somewhat arcing path to the goal line. The GK keeps body facing the sideline- this allows maximum extension of one hand to make the save. If you are shuffling back to your goal with your body facing your right sideline, you will have your left hand closest to the opponent. THAT'S the hand that will play the ball, NOT the right hand farthest away.

To get an idea of where your hand goes stand (side on) to the ball. Put your hand up like you are directing traffic and want someone to STOP. Now imagine that the ball takes a path directly overhead to the goal. Your hand will follow that same path and make contact UNDERNEATH the ball (if it's hit with little power) and you will PUSH it high and away. If its hit with a bit of steam, you will make contact to steer it clear of the crossbar (it's power will carry it to safety).

For balls hit with power- the palm of the hand merely redirects the path of the ball away from goal. For balls that have little power the goalkeeper must provide a push to play them out of danger. That push should be as high and far as possible.

In volleyball AND soccer, getting your hand or head caught in the net is a bad thing. :)

From: Perrone Ford

Because when they get older, some strikers will shoot the ball hard enough to shatter their wrists and rip the tendons. Guess how I know that (and no, I'm not a keeper).

From: Robert C. Christensen

Another reason for using the base of the palm (rather than the back of the hand) is that you will get little power or control using the back of the hand. Most keeper gloves are designed to use the palm to control the ball, and many are constructed of material that is slippery on the back, which would compound the problem.

From: Jeff Benjamin

Tom does a good job at describing the mechanics of parrying and some of the reasons behind them. In short, the goalkeeper is simply pushing the ball up or wide, *not* pushing it out of bounds! The momentum of the ball is what takes it out of bounds; the goalkeeper is simply making sure that it does not leave the field between the posts and under the crossbar. :-)

You keep an open palm facing the field because you have more control than with a fist (ever see a keeper punch one into the top of their own net?), and because it is difficult to get any upward push if the back of an open hand or with the palm facing the goal. Goalkeepers never want to push the ball towards their own goal; a keeper who turns their palm backwards will likely just "dunk" the ball into their own net.

For some more details on the technique, see the "Parry & Punch" page at my goalkeeper coaching web site: <http://www.frii.com/~benji/goalkeeping> .

From: Gary Rue

Here are a couple of backhanded comments :-)

One of the great secrets to goalkeeping is the art of going forward with the hands and upper body on the catch or parry save. The forward motion can be a fraction of an inch, but be all the difference between a saved ball that goes out and up (see Jeff's description) and one that goes "through" the hand save.

Experiment: bend up elbow and extend your hand, wrist and arm straight up in the air. Have a partner push against the tops of the fingers and note the pressure required to bend them back. Now, lock the wrist slightly forward. The fingers should automatically move forward as well. Have the partner agains press against the fingers. The amount of strength in the hand that resists the pressure should be quite apparent.

If you turn the palm back toward you and have someone push the back of the hand, I believe you could see what would happen to the back of the hand if hit by a "heavy" ball.

Quick Parry Drill (dr037)

Combined with the **Quick Turn Drill**, these two drills, and many others like it have the potential to create incredibly agile keepers.

- A coach or other GK, who will be the "thrower", must stand at the 18, alternating from the center, left and right of the "D" .

- The GK in the net must sprint from the goal line to the ball, and touch it with one hand, then shuffle back towards center goal line.
- The option is then left to the thrower to choose a side to lob the ball to AND whether or not to inform the GK of which side the ball will be lobbed to (depending on the abilities of your keepers).
- Obviously, the next step is for the GK to shuffle toward the side of the net that the ball is lobbed to.
- Keepers should remember, when parrying, not to break form.
- Coaches should emphasize correct body angle on the shuffle back to the net, as well as using the correct hand on the parry.

NOTE: There is much room left for variation in this drill, that's why I like it so much. Depending on age groups and abilities of your keepers, you can lob the ball from anywhere you please within the area.

NSCAA 1998 -- Creative Handling of High Balls

Sue Kelly, Head Women's Coach, University of South Carolina

- Began with statement that we need to spend more time training keepers with the rest of the team. She then proceeded with a session that was designed for a single coach working with a full team. At the beginning of her session she alternated between starting activities for a small group of keepers (4) and a group of about 15 field players.
- Field player warm-up - 3 players inter-passing, follow your pass, each group in a restricted area
- Keeper warm-up - keeper seated and a partner keeper knocking ball towards keeper face to catch
- Keeper warm-up - keeper catching a served high ball starting from one knee coming through ball from behind ball, call for ball with "keeper"
- Field player warm-up - combined groups so all groups are working in a single large area, however they still were using the 3 person groups
- Keeper warm-up - 2 keepers challenging each other for a high ball
- Field player warm-up - same groups of 3 rotating through different sized areas – the different sized areas cause players to adjust what they are doing to make the drill succeed
- Keeper warm-up - Keeper in goal, collapsed on their side with hands close to near post with ball in hand, throw their ball to partner/coach get up and catch high ball, she used pairs of keepers on each post
- Asked field players to pause warm-up to stretch
- Field player warm-up – continued the 3 person groups, allowed unrestricted movement and added the restriction of 1 touch
- Coaching point - its all about timing to catch a ball high
- Keeper warm-up – one keeper at a time shuffles from post to post while partner tosses high balls to either side, do 5 catches as you cross face of goal

- Field player warm-up - 3v1 in the different sized grids, defender held a penny in hand so they could switch defender quickly from time to time in warm-up, as she was working with the keepers she paused from time to time and rotated the field players from grid to grid
- Coach Kelly placed two goals in a “v” shape with the opening about 18 yards wide, long high balls were driven in from a distance, one keeper at a time in the opening , get behind ball, get high, distribute with throw to ball collector for person sending balls in, an assistant coach was using punts to deliver ball in
- Good goal keepers have great kinesetic sense (know where their body parts are)
- End of warm-up phase
- Set up 2 facing goals 15 yd apart, 4v4 in front of goals, keepers in each goal, Field players can score on either goal. The balls were delivered in from wing areas as deep crosses would be. The keepers were asked to go through the field players to get the ball. She set up an extra 4 player group and switched groups when a score was made removing the group that did not score. She said this was to develop a warrior mentality
- Opened the space between the two goals to 36 yards, added markers along sidelines to form a 30 yard wide playing area, set up 3v3 with keepers in this zone, added 1 winger on each side who stayed outside the playing area and where free from any pressure, the ball starts with keeper who distributes to a free wing who moves to opposite goal, staying wide (outside of markers) and plays a flighted ball into 6 yd. box, to simplify the drill early on Coach Kelly restricted the 3's in middle only to go on offense
- Coach Kelly got in their faces to raise the level of play. Some commented that she was being unreasonable and didn't clearly explain what she wanted the plays to do. I thought she might have been making an effort to indicate the kind of coaching she would give to challenge the players to work at a higher level.
- Coach Kelly then opened goals farther apart and allowed the keepers to distribute to anybody with a 6v6 grouping of field players (still had the free wingers). Added the restriction of only allowing players to create scoring opportunities when a ball is played to the free wing, who then plays the ball into the box. The wing can play the ball in to feet of players or flight it in
- She wanted the keeper to first move to back side $\frac{1}{4}$ when ball is flighted in before any other movement to the ball.
- Next she moved to a large field game with no free wings, asked the field players to create a situation where the ball is driven in from outside
- She was not getting as many shots on goal as she wanted so she added the restriction of the first person in the wing with the ball was to free (unmarked) to improve chances at balls played in to goal

GK Drop Step Recovery for the Chip Shot

Date: Wed, 14 Jun 2000

From: Jim Turpin

This is something I prepared in response to a question about how to build confidence in a keeper to leave the line. It contains exercises that help the drop step.

Remember that the key is correct form is the key. Progress slowly and make sure that the base techniques are correct BEFORE increasing speed. Practice does NOT make perfect, perfect practice makes perfect. Practice makes permanent.

=====

Recovery for the chip.

To gain confidence to leave the line the keeper will need to be confident in her recovery for the chip.

1st be sure that the keeper understands that he/she should always turn the ball over the top with the hand farthest from the goal.

Work these VERY slowly at first.

Start with the recovery footwork. Have the keeper start at about the penalty spot. Facing the field. Place 2 balls on the ground about 1 yard inside and one yard in front of the posts. (If he/she, as my current top keeper does, tends to go all out set this up away from the goal so that there will be no collision with the posts.) The keeper stands facing the field and you call either right or left. The keeper should execute a "drop step" directly toward the called ball and with a fairly deep knee bend move to touch the ball. The technique of the "drop step" is VERY important. I will assume for this that you called "left." The keeper should step a comfortable distance with the left foot directly toward the ball at the left post. While stepping the keeper should keep the knees bent and drop his/her left shoulder. (If you can find a tape of Walter Zenga (sp) in his prime he had one of the best drop steps I have ever seen. Brianna Scurry's is good too.)

Every time the keeper returns to the spot call a ball. Watch the drop step and watch for the shoulder drop. Once they are moving correctly increase the speed and keep watching his/her footwork until he/she is working very hard after he/she is fatigued but not exhausted slow them back down and refresh the drop step.

For the next part you will need to work in the goal area. Have 10-15 balls around the spot and the keeper on the line in the center of the goal. The place you stand with the balls should be adjusted for size and confidence of the keeper. For my U17G keeper I am now standing 1/2 way between the spot and the edge of the box but I started with her half way between the 6 and the spot. Hold a ball in your hands about waist high. Keeper moves out and touches the ball with either hand and begins to back pedal. As soon as the keeper begins to back up serve the ball

toward one or the other upper corner. (Again adjust the serve for ability. But be sure that he/she must drop step jump and turn the ball for the save.) He/she should make the same drop step as before and as the ball is entering his/her "hitting zone" jump and push the bottom of the ball straight up. The ball will go over the top because it already has enough forward momentum. Continue to watch the drop step and shoulder drop and assure that he/she is remaining low until he/she jumps. As he/she progresses increase the speed and reps. The idea is too use this as both training and conditioning.

At high speeds this "dive" or jump is the one that has keepers appear to spin in the air after a save. It can be a bit of a trauma and sometimes dangerous. Start slow and don't progress until the keeper is confident at each level. It might help if a martial arts instructor works a few times with them on landing. I am lucky to have martial arts background and can teach how to protect oneself from injury while diving.

Young keepers often have a problem with the all out recovery required for this. Just keep working and he/she will get it because it makes sense and keepers are smart, crazy but smart :-), and with the brightly colored shirts it looks so cool.

One more time. Do NOT progress too fast. Each step builds on the last and 70-80% of goalkeeping is technique.

Date: Wed, 14 Jun 2000

From: Gary Rue

Jim gave a excellent example of when the drop step is needed (for a goalkeeper). It is also required in field players. When running speed exercises, players can be asked to change starting positions of the feet and body shape. A player that is turned backwards to the course, could use the drop step to start his sprint.

One technical point on any footwork, if too big a first step is taken--"too big" could be just a few inches--the body core may take longer to get moving in the desired direction. A shorter strides will keeps the core closer to a balanced position and allows the body to get going in proper direction quicker. This is one reason why a "quick" player may beat another player in the first ten yards, but lose to that player in a longer sprint. It is because the faster player's start is too slow due to longer starting strides.

DIVING

Diving

Date: Wed, 5 Aug 1998

From: Gary Rue

After working on catching, ground pickups and footwork, it's now time to start diving. The first step to plant the ball.

The hands are positioned on the ball in the "W" catch. When the ball is planted on the ground, one hand is directly behind the ball and the other is on top of the ball. The third hand is the ground. The GK should sit on the ground, legs out in front, with the ball in the hands. As the GK falls to one side, he is to plant the ball. Key elements on to put the ball out in front and to NOT land on the elbow. The ball should be planted before the shoulder touches the ground. Look at the hand position. The GK should sit back up and fall to the other side. After a few times, the coach can serve the ball to GK to catch and plant.

The next step is to position the GK in the final dive position. The GK should be touching the ground with his shoulder and hip. The top leg should be brought up towards the chest, with the forearms covering the chest and the ball protecting the face. The bottom leg should be stretched out.

Now the GK should squat with ball and fall into the dive position. One of the common problems is falling on the arms and elbows. To help prevent this, have the GK, without ball, put his hands in the prayer position and fall to one side from a squat. This get the arms out of the way and point out how the GK should fall with the ball. The coach can then serve a ball to the GK who collapses into position.

Standing with ball, the GK takes a step, dropping the hip of the step leg and falls with ball, planting it first. At this point, watch for over stretching the arms reaching for the ground and falling on the stomach or back.

When the GK can attain the dive position, it is now time to train with some movement. With the GK at one post, server the ball low, but in the air for the GK to catch and dive. As soon as the GK dives, he passes the ball back to the server, recovers to standing position and receives another serve to the same side. This process continues until the GK reaches the other post. Encourage the GK to move forward on all catches. Reverse direction.

Next, serve the ball on the ground, alternating serve sides. The GK should now be making the saves moving forward, until he reaches the top of the penalty area.

Date: Thu, 6 Aug 1998

From: Joe DeMay

One addendum to Gary's post....make sure the GK is attacking the ball at all times. This means that the ball and hands are out in front of the rest of the body. If the GK gets the ball and hands out in front of him/her then the head, shoulders,

trunk, hips, etc will follow. One common mistake you will see with new GKs is them falling backwards when receiving the ball and then planting it on the ground. This will cause the feet to be out in front of everything else and the ball will be last in line. When the GK is training the way Gary described, he/she should always constantly move forward with each dive. I typically have GKs training this way start at the goal line and get all the way out to the six, twelve, or eighteen, depending on the age.

You will also notice that the GK will automatically be able to reset to the starting position (sitting, kneeling, which I would go to before squatting, squatting, or standing). For example, if the GK is starting from his/her knees they will be able to immediately reload onto the knees again if they've attacked the ball properly and have the hands and ball out in front. If they fall backwards without attacking the ball, it will cause them roll back to their butts before getting onto their knees.

Attacking the ball is important for several reasons. One, it allows the GK to get the ball more quickly. Secondly it allows the GK to cover more of the goal (to demonstrate this to the GK have them stand a yard of the goal line in the middle of the goal, take a small shuffle plant step toward either post, and fall forward into an attacking diving position then backward to the improper diving position. You and the GK should notice how much more area the GK has covered by attacking the ball.). Thirdly, it allows the GK to reload--which means to get back to their feet to make a second save if necessary--quickly and be balanced to make another save.

Teaching Proper/Safe Diving

Date: Sun, 29 Nov 1998

From: Ken Gamble

Lincoln Phillips, director of Top Flight Goalkeeping Academy, at one of the weekend clinics that he puts on. Coach Phillips feels strongly that the keeper be involved with the team during practice and not just working by himself.

Four lines of attackers each with a ball facing the goalkeeper who is centered up in front of the four lines about twenty yards away - goal to his back. Each attacker is numbered 1 through 4. Five yards behind each attacker is a defender sitting down. The coach calls out a number 1, 2, 3 or 4 and that attacker plays a long touch of about ten yards toward the goal. The defender with the same number also responds by jumping up and pursuing the attacker. The keeper must go out and make a proper safe dive on the ball. He must keep his head down on the ground with the ball and hands protecting his face until both the attacker and the defender have jumped over him. The keeper then jumps up and distributes the ball wide to the defender using an underhanded roll. The coach then calls out another number.

Coaching Points

Safety and proper diving technique while under attack are the aims of this exercise. Go through the exercise slowly to be sure the goalkeeper understands to keep his head down until after the defender has jumped over him. Be sure that the keeper keeps the ball and hands in front of his face as protection against the attacker kicking his head.

Variations

- a.. Have defender who is standing behind the attacker pass the ball through the legs of the attacker when his number is called out. The drill proceeds in the same manner.
- b.. Have a second goalkeeper behind the net and swap them after every ball.
- c.. Do not use supporting defenders at all.
- d.. Have the attacker use a shorter first touch to put more pressure on the keeper. In this case the defender must be right behind the attacker so that the attacker has little time to fool around.
- e.. A coach can even serve the ball from the opposite side of the field. In this case the GK must talk to defender so the defender knows if the GK is going to try to beat the attacker to the ball or if the GK is going to retreat and rely on the defender to support him or delay or tackle the attacker.

Defender 1	Defender 2	Defender 3	Defender 4
Attacker 1	Attacker 2	Attacker 3	Attacker 4

Coach

GK

	Goal	

Date: Fri, 9 Jul 1999
From: Gary Rue

By lowering the butt prior to making the dive, the body is that much closer to the ground and more importantly, puts the hands in a lower position. The best way to lower the butt, is to step forward and towards the ball, bending the knee. This "power" step, not only puts the body in a diving position, but it gives length to the dive, if needed.

The dive should be more of a horizontal spring, than a vertical fall. The preliminary training from the squat position is important as the GK must lower to a semi-squat before actually making the lateral dive. This is of course not the power air borne dive we like to associate with GKs. However, it is the collapse or low power dive that makes most saves of the low balls.

Date: Fri, 9 Jul 1999

From: Dan Roudebush

I'll just endorse Gary's excellent post and add one comment on close in balls that do not require a dive..

First by lowering the butt you bring the body down faster with the muscles than gravity, so you get down quicker. One other addition. if the ball is closer you have to "collapse" the body more, rather than push off. This means getting the near hip out of the way to get down to the ground.

Here's a buildup sequence. On all fours, knees spread shoulder width collapse to one side, say right, by moving the right leg to the left (which remains stationary). This squeeze moves the right hip out of the way and the body falls to the right. Repeat with the left.

Move to a squatting position. Collapse again, three or four times each side.

Add a ball. Roll to the side (close). The player catches with one hand on top the other behind as the body collapses.

Now from a standing position. Squat quickly and collapse. You'll see what I mean about the body getting down faster than gravity. Add ball.

This technique is used for balls close enough that a dive is not required, but the shot is so "hot" that a side step kneel save is too slow.

You can add low air balls here too. Catch as above and use the ball to help break the fall.

As the ball gets further away the keeper has to make an adjustment. Instead of collapsing he pushes off to the ball side with the near leg.

But the initial squatting move is the same.

Landing without Getting Hurt

Date: Thu, 10 Sep 1998

From: richard brown

Start with the keeper sitting on the grass with his legs extending out facing the server. Then you roll the ball very close to the sides of his body alternated sides of the body as he makes the save and recovery.. He drops to the sides to catch the ball and returns to the passer. You keep doing this till he is moving farther to his sides until he is fully extending himself. When he gets used to it you increase the speed on your serves to your keeper, to make his recovery in between saves faster.

Tell him his upper body must be fully spread on the grass when making the save, not just hitting one little area to absorb the shock over a bigger area.

When he is confident with this then he goes into a squat position low to the ground, and you do the same thing until the player gets use to it on both sides of the body. Then increase the service for a faster save and recovery.

When he is used to this he goes into the crouch position, same thing. Gets used to the dive from a higher position.

At the higher positions on the outside save he pushes off with the leg on the side that he is diving from.

He must never take his eyes off the ball, and most always land on his side or he will lose the ball. He should pull in the ball into his chest after the catch.

Date: Thu, 10 Sep 1998

From: Brian Whitney

To aid in the landing, and to take the kids mind off of landing, from the sitting position, have the kid hold the ball in a good "W" position. Now, have them take the ball to the ground on either side. Make sure they maintain the "W", with the bottom hand behind the ball and the top hand on top (to get the 3 point contact). Have them use the leg to roll up and go the other direction.

The purpose of this drill is to focus on bringing the ball to the ground. The intent is to make sure they aren't trying to catch themselves with their hands, or elbows. So, key points, make sure they are "slamming" the ball down and keeping control. That the ball is slightly ahead of body, arms are in front. Look for where the grass stains are developing. They should be on the side.

When they get this down, then start having them catch and bring the ball down. They should notice that it hurts very little to do it correctly, but a lot if they don't!

As you get to the feet, you must make sure they aren't turning their back on you! And if you have to, get real close for the toss so they have to dive and can't chase.

Date: Thu, 10 Sep 1998

From: rkelso

For most keepers diving doesn't scare them but landing does. Try teaching landing practices on sand or an air mattress for technique then moving to soft dirt then finally grass. Any throw oriented martial arts instructor can help with falls and rolling out of dives.

Two approaches to landing safely.

First, try and get as much of your body to hit the ground at the same time. In other words think that ALL of your body is magnetized to the ground and sticks to it so all parts absorb the shock and spread it evenly. Although the outside of an arm etc.. can slow down your impact be careful not to have a strait arm if using the hand or to land on a bent elbow. What you are trying to avoid here is a palm, elbow, shoulder, hip or knee hitting the ground first. The parts most people try to avoid hitting the ground are exactly the parts that need to. IE - forarms, triceps, lats (ribs), thighs and calves. BTW slapping the mat as most martial arts do certainly won't work for a keeper holding a ball so the next approach works most of the time.

Second, try teaching the keeper to roll out of dives, most evective would be to role off the outside of the arm or leg onto and across your back. Be careful not to tuck any part too early. The body should arc as necessary to create the role.

These explanations may be difficult to understand until you work with an instructor that can show you how it is done.

I have always taught diving into mud puddles, warn parents first so they can bring towels etc. Young kids love it, and teenagers hate it, which makes it fun for me all the time. (Those with young teenagers don't let anyone see you crack a smile) ;-)

Date: Thu, 10 Sep 1998

From: Richard Brown

Not one of my best skills, but on high side side volleys or over head volleys (bicycle kicks) where you must jump up with the non kicking foot to get to the ball. After you strike the ball on the side volley the act of turning your hip into the strike will twist your torso so you can land on your front facing the ground with

your hands in front of you as you hit. Again you don't want to land on a small area of the body. You want to spread yourself out over a bigger area as you contact the ground to absorb the force of the blow.

Same is true with the over head volley. You make a twisting move so you are facing the ground as you make contact with your hands in front of you.

Date: Fri, 11 Sep 1998

From: Gary Rue

Landing is a problem that many of us coaches do not take time to address. One of the worst ways to stop a fall is with your hands. Now that I've said that, The next time I fall, the first thing I will stick out is my hand. So what are your options?

I have no martial arts training, but I think several who have would say the way to distribute the force of hitting the ground is to use the entire length of the arm to break the fall. The few times I have watched Judo, the person being thrown seems to "slam" his arm on the mat before his body hits.

As discussed in prior posts, this same technique of defusing the landing holds true with goalkeeping. If the ball hits first, it takes away the force of the fall. The only areas that should be touching the ground after a GK save is the shoulder and the hip (preferably the meaty part). Look at the dirt and grass stains on your GKs. If you see any on the elbows and knees, then they need more technical work to keep those areas clean.

Sometimes I have the players do somersaults. Instead of the feet over the head somersaults, springing off the hands, I will have them tuck their head, brace the ground with their forearm and roll over their shoulder. This type of roll could come into play if you have just been tripped or the GK has taken you and the ball off your feet.

On bicycle and other overhead kicks, the side shoulder roll is mandatory if you don't want to land on your head.

One last comment on goalkeeping, I can not think of an example or situation where I want my GK to be in a situation that requires a roll, especially onto his back. The main difference between a GK and a field player is that the GK makes the dive on his own volition and seldom off a dead sprint; whereas, when a field player hits the ground, it is usually a surprise and they are often at full speed.

Date: Fri, 11 Sep

From: Gary Rue

To reinforce the idea that your goalkeeper should never land on his elbow when making a dive, have your GK squat and put his hands together as if in prayer.

Then have the GK drop his near hip to the ground, followed by his shoulder. Other than the shoulder, the rest of the arm should not be touching the ground. After a few times to both sides, have the GK do this holding a ball. The ball should be the first ground touch, followed by the hip, then the shoulder.

Progress the session to a semi-squat, then to standing. When standing, the GK should take a short step forward and to the side, bending the knee and dropping the near side hip. Again, ball, hip, shoulder should be the order of ground touches. I've seen trained goalkeepers able to make high ball dives and make "soft" lands on hard floors.

Proper Way to Land After a Dive

Date: Wed, 2 Dec 1998

From: Kyle O'Harra

I was just wondering if anyone knew the proper way for a goalkeeper (older player who is fully grown) to land after making a diving save. I have read that you first allow the ball to hit the ground, then the forearm, then the shoulder, then the side of the body, then the hip, and so on until the last thing to absorb the shock is your feet. However, this seems difficult to do...let alone the fact that it also seems painful and appears to have a high chance of losing the hold on the ball since it takes the most impact. I have also read that you should bring your knees up after catching the ball. This approach would seem to injure the knee caps on a regular basis and run the risk of the knee coming into the stomach.

Date: Wed, 2 Dec 1998

From: Steven Carr

The main point is to ensure that the goalkeepers always play with their chest facing out. A coaching method would be to get them to catch balls thrown to left or right 2-3 feet above the ground by collapsing and falling to the side the ball is thrown. Ensure their chest is still facing the front when they catch the ball then pull it into their chests. Don't let them use the ball to break their fall as it will ultimately squirm loose as their body weight comes down on it. Instead get them to almost roll into the dive to absorb the impact. If the dive is advanced to the stage of diving across goal in mid-air ensure that they know how to roll once the ball has been caught or alternatively get them to use the favoured method of modern day keepers of tipping or palming the ball away from danger.

Date: Wed, 2 Dec 1998

From: Bryan L. Pinn

Steve's a good lad, and means well, but his goalkeeping instruction loses something in the translation from Gaelic.

The first consideration is when and when not to dive for a ball. Inexperienced 'keepers often tend to 'make a meal' of shots which could be stopped with less dramatic effort. Good positioning and good, quick foot movement will turn a lot of dives into less spectacular and much safer saves.

When the GK has no option except to go full-length in an aerial dive, the last thing he/she should be worried about is the landing. Focus on good technique, and landings will take care of themselves.

1) Every ball that CAN be caught SHOULD be caught. Only deflect or punch the ball away if it cannot be held: i.e. a wet ball... a shot too hot to handle... a screened shot seen late... a shot in a crowd where players may contact the GK as he attempts to catch... a ball with heavy away swerve... or any ball that can only be reached with part of the hand.

2) Shoulders/chest square to the flight of the ball. Keeping the body open to the ball ensures the best view of the ball, with the arms outside the line of sight.

3) Watch the ball into the hands. The GK's focus must be totally on the ball. If he's already thinking about his landing, he's gonna fluff it! If he IS totally focused, he'll land relaxed.

4) Hands spread and "soft", to each side and slightly behind the ball.

5) Whenever possible, begin drawing the ball into the body while still in the air. Again, if the GK is totally focused on his job of securing and then protecting the ball, his landing will have happened before he even thinks about it.

6) Whenever possible, land on the side, with shoulders, arms and thighs absorbing the landing... much like a break-fall in martial arts.

7) If the ball is still "out there" at arms' length before landing, twist the shoulders and "fall with the ball securely wedged against the ground between hands and ground." (Peter Shilton.) Immediately secure the ball into the body, curling around it in a fetal position.

With modern gloves, the modern ball is much easier to catch and hold. The reason we see more deflected saves is the wicked "movement" good players can impart to their shots with today's ball.

Date: Wed, 2 Dec 1998

From: Gary Rue

Bryan's post came just before I sent mine, but I will send mine anyway in case there are some other discussion points. Bryan makes a great statement about not being concerned about how you land. I totally agree with that point if it's

game time. In order to train the muscle memory, however, you must be concerned about the landing in practice.

Kyle, the landing technique may sound difficult, but the way you were told is almost right for a power dive. A power dive is one where the GK must make a radical dive to the side and elevate in the air (often the hips are above the horizontal line of the head). The reason for this type of elevation is that the GK should have (with proper technique) stepped and pushed off with the near foot and driven the far leg and arm hard towards the diving direction.

Now in this position (after the catch), the GK should land as follows: first is ball (hand on top and hand behind ball), very closely followed by the shoulder and lastly the hip. Other parts of the body (i.e., upper arm, thigh) may touch the ground and absorb some shock, but they are secondary to the above. After the landing, the bottom foot should be about a foot or so off the ground and the leg is straight out. The top leg knee is near and in front of the chest. The forearms are close together, only the shoulder (and upper arm?) touching the ground.

The reason the ball should touch the ground first is to break the fall. Inexperience GKs tend to stick the ball out towards the ground instead of holding it in the catching position and as they fall to their side. That's when balls get loose. I've watched experienced GKs make power dives and land softly on linoleum floors, because the ball touches first. And their landing is quiet, not a thud.

The hand position keeps the ball from being lost on impact. Also, the tight forearms and ball help protect the GK's head. The lower leg in the air is leverage for springing up off the ground. As the leg comes down, the upper body can be pulled back up. Often after a catch, there is usually not a quick recovery by the GK--there is an unofficial worldwide mandate that the GK is to lie on the ground for a few moments to receive the adoration and applause from friends and foe for making such a great save. However, if the catch was not made, this automatic leg position would certainly help the GK recover quickly.

More important, however, is the top leg. This position across and in front of the abdomen protects the vital areas--crotch, stomach, diaphragm, spleen, gall bladder, etc.

Now if the GK is making a collapsed dive (recommended for early GK training), the hip and shoulder should hit the ground at nearly the same time. The GK wants to get as much of his body behind the ball as soon as possible. The hips should NOT be first as that usually means the hands are late getting to the ball. In this dive, the ball is generally on the ground and it can't be used to break the fall.

Look for dirt or grass stains on a GK's knees or elbows. If present, they're doing it doggy style and that ain't good!

Date: Wed, 2 Dec 1998

From: Brian S Dougher

Also an item that was left off the last couple of listings sent about catching the ball, is not to allow the goalkeeper to land on his elbow. This is a trait that is common among new goalies and self taught keepers. If you play on some of the fields that my team has to battle on, the keeper that lands on his elbow enough times will sooner or later do some serious damage to his shoulder socket. A lot of the times when you see the ball being pop out of the keepers hands is because the jolt themselves on the landing because of the awkward landing.

As said by Gary there are two kinds of diving. The "power" dive (I haven't heard it called that before but it works) and the collapsing dive.

The power dive requires the hands to be in the traditional "W" formation with one hand on top and the other in the back (the ground makes the third hand) When the player is coming to the ground in the save, the body should be extended and the parts hitting the ground goes:

1. Ball
2. Shoulder/ Rib Cage
3. Hip
4. Legs

Seeing that the goalie should be diving forward. It will be natural for the feet to whip around and that is your defense against that forward who is coming in to challenge and get the rebound(Does anyone have one of those). The cleats up but not used as a weapon. Remind the keeper not to turn his back on the oncoming traffic, bad news for the kidneys.

The collapsing dive is almost the exact opposite. When the ball is right to the side of a keeper and he/she can not move to get in front of the ball (which leads to another interesting discussion) The goalie must collapse getting the hands down quickly and then collapsing in the following order:

1. Calves
2. Hips
3. Shoulder

The idea is to get as much of the body down as quickly as possible. The keeper must keep their eyes on the ball at all time and get their hands on it. The same "W" formation and remind them not to land on their elbow. This dive is when you will get more of your keepers to do that. If they want to know how to catch it then tell them to tuck their elbow in, moving the elbow forward.

The drills I use on my keepers and when I do clinics is the traditional side to side starting on the sitting position, for older players have them keeper their feet in the air and not allowed to touch the ground, it's a harder workout. Roll the ball to

each side, concentrating at the level of the drill on hand position. The next is the knees and up to the squat, this is where you start to watch the landing and the elbows. In the squat bring in the concept of the step forward and a bit to the side for the push off. This also is evident when you progress to the standing position. I use no set amount to either side with these drills. If a keeper needs more help with one side, we have a tendency to stay to that side until he/she feels comfortable, or extremely tired. I also don't allow the keeper to get frustrated with themselves. If the keeper is not catching the concept move to the other side and get their self confidence back up.

Also I thought I would throw in my other \$0.02 about goalies and training, and something that I say a lot as a goalkeeper coach. The goalie should rarely ever get on his/her heels. Can't do much when you are caught flat footed.

Date: Thu, 3 Dec 1998

From: Gary Rue

Brian, thanks for the elbow pickup. It surely was inferred with the forearms being close together but not stated as directly. (I did say no dirt on the elbows).

As a warning to coaches, be aware that a good collapse dive is NOT like a giant tree that has been cut down. It would take forever for the GK to get his hands to the ball. It's too slow to dive this way. I wish I had a centavo for every ball scored under a diving GK's armpit.

I agree that GKs must be trained in steps, but please don't lose sight of the golden rule for GKs during training:

Get the hands to and behind the ball as soon as possible.

A good collapse dive starts with lowering the near hip, putting the hands low and behind the ball. On many a collapse dive, the hands should be on the ball before the hips touch the ground. The upper body and hands should be low as soon as possible, else you get the ball under the armpit goal as the GK's body is toppling. It is probable in many cases that the hips touch ground first, but if the shoulder is not immediately after hip touch, then the GK has made what I call the "tree" dive. I would discuss any part of the leg touching the ground in training. Even if the leg does touch the ground first on occasion, it should not be trained.

The degree of movement with the near foot determines where the dive goes. Preferably, the near foot should step forward at an angle. This effectively lowers the hips and the upper body. The forward step puts the GK in a positive forward motion. The step to the side allows for the GK to cover more distance on the dive.

The ultimate collapse dive is what I call the kick out. The near foot is kicked out across the body, with the near hand sweeping down next to where the near foot was. This gets the hands low and brings the body to the ground immediately. Hips and shoulders are almost simultaneous. This is a great dive when the ball is coming quick and in that bad area of a foot wide of the GK. A normal dive would take the hands past the ball. The kick out dive puts the GK down right there.

If you concentrate on the golden rule, the diving technique starts to take on new meaning.

Safe Diving for New Keepers

Date: Thu, 10 Feb 2000

From: Robert_C._Christensen

You asked how I teach safe diving technique to young (or new) keepers.

I begin by having the keeper on his or her knees about 6-8 feet in front of me. If I am working with several keepers, I have them pair up facing each other about 6-8 feet apart.

I start by demonstrating the correct technique myself, unless I have a technically sound keeper present to give a better demo. Key points:

- 1) Angle out from the goal with the dive.
- 2) Stretch out - get long.
- 3) Pin the ball to the ground.
- 4) Clutch the ball quickly and safely cover it up. (We have already gone through making the ball yours and how to cover the ball up in the gut area by the time we get to diving saves).

Now begin by rolling a ball slowly 4-6 feet to one side of the keeper (who is on his or her knees). The keeper should stretch out and pin the ball to the ground with the top hand, and stop the ball from behind with the bottom hand (top hand = left hand if diving to the right, and visa-versa). If done right, the body should not slam down to the ground. The top hand should take most of the weight of the fall, and the shoulder and upper arm of the bottom hand should take the remainder. If the player complains of sore hips, they are simply flopping down and you need to work on more aggressive distribution of weight to the top hand.

Also make sure that the keeper is not diving directly to the side. There needs to be an angle (ideally nearly a 45 degree angle) of attack. This seems counter-productive to most new keepers, who feel that they can cover more of the goal area by diving straight to the side. This would be true if the ball was coming from the side as well (say a shot from the corner of the goal box to just inside the near post, and the keeper is recovering from the far post). But proper keeper positioning should result in shots coming from in front of the keeper going wide to

find a corner of the goal. That is what I train my new keepers to react to, since it should be the normal save.

As the keeper becomes comfortable making a save of a gently rolling ball from his or her knees, gradually speed up the delivery of the balls, and switch from one side to the other randomly. This will force them to react to the delivery rather than anticipate it and go into the "falling tree" type of dive.

Now you are ready to begin working on the dynamics of the dive (of course I don't use such fancy words with the kids ;~) As the speed of the delivery increases, you will see a tendency to try to push off using the legs to "get to the ball" quicker. At this early stage, still working off the knees, I work hard to get the kids to equally drop the weight from the ball-side knee while equally pushing off with the other knee. This begins setting the stage for much more complex dynamic lowering (rotation) that will come much later in the training process. But a sound foundation now really helps later. Plus, it gets each keeper more in touch with the delicate balance necessary to be an effective keeper (ballet or gymnastics anyone?). This is something that the bigger, stronger, more aggressive, (typical) keeper needs to be aware of. You cannot make up for poor technique with strength and aggression as a keeper, like you can as a field player.

Now, have each player stand, assume the keeper ready stance, and begin with slow moving balls again. You will have to move out away from the keeper to a distance of about 15 feet to do this effectively. Once again, roll the ball at an angle so that the keeper must stretch out to reach it. Start so that the keeper does not need to actually dive to reach the ball, just collapse. This is about 6-8 feet for most youth players. Again, insist on good technique. Make sure that the angled dive is used, and the hand positioning and down force of the top hand is maintained. Also, make sure that the keeper follows through and clutches the ball, and brings it to the safe (gut) position immediately. This is particularly important for safety. You DO NOT WANT any following strikers to think that there is ANY chance of getting a boot to the ball after the keeper has possession!

Also, make sure that the body rotates during the dive so that the keeper lands on the side, not on the stomach. The face down dive leaves the keeper very vulnerable to kicks to the side and kidney areas, and landing on the chest can also be dangerous.

As the keepers become accustomed to the correct technique, gradually increase the speed of the ball, and then increase the distance of the delivery so that it is farther away from the body. The keeper should now have to be actually diving for the ball. Make sure that the keeper does not "jump" for the ball. If you see an arc-like trajectory for diving saves of balls on the ground (and all deliveries to this point should be on the ground), the keeper is pushing off with the far-post leg too

much, or is not collapsing the near-post leg enough. It will result in too much "air time" and poor diving save success.

Finally, incorporate balls off the ground. I like to start with the keeper on knees again and work through the entire procedure again. Same key points hold true, but timing becomes critically important. Make sure that the hand positioning and weight to the top hand are maintained, and the keeper should not have any trouble with sore spots on the body. Always look for the landing to be smooth, with plenty of weight on the top hand, and the remainder of the weight distributed to the rest of the side of the body: arm, shoulder, and hip. Also, look for the keeper bending his or her lower arm. This will result in too much weight landing on it, and can result in the ball bouncing free.

I spend about 20-30 minutes on rolling balls with the keepers on their knees, and another 20-30 minutes with the keeper standing (after a break). This is usually enough to correct technical problems and get each keeper to the point where they know what it SHOULD feel like. They are then to the point where they can practice, practice, practice and hone the diving skills. But this is a milestone skill. Once players "get it", they find it lots of fun to work on, since they can make some pretty spectacular saves safely and with no discomfort. The players LOVE this feeling and it makes keeper practice and warm-up much more appealing to them.

Date: Thu, 10 Feb 2000
From: Robert_C._Christensen
Ethan,

Arm strength is a must for goal keepers. But it is not essential. Proper technique can make up for a lot of strength when it comes to diving saves. What happens during the landing is that the ball is pinned to the ground by heavy pressure on the upper hand. The lower hand needs to be behind the ball, stopping it from squirting through. The pressure on the top of the ball during the landing is only for a split second, just long enough to take the edge off the landing, and to effectively pin the ball to the ground. It DOES require enough strength to suspend the body momentarily, but this is not as much as you would think. It is mostly a mindset. Get them thinking in terms of proper technique and then have them practice until it becomes automatic. The practice itself will serve to build upper body strength, and it will be gratifying for the keepers to see themselves become more effective. Older keepers often do quite a bit of work with weights, medicine ball, and abdominal building to get in shape to be an effective keeper. I prefer to use my limited time to work on proper technique and practice, practice, practice.

Date: Thu, 10 Feb 2000
From: Gary Rue

Ethan, there are at least two camps of thinking on this. One camp does not want the ball to be the weight bearer on the dive. They say the body should hit first and take the brunt of the dive. The reason is that so the ball is not jolted away.

The other camp is as Robert has described (and to which I am a lifetime member). This group of trainers would like the ball to be planted just BEFORE any other body parts touch the ground. The reason--the exact same as the other camp--the ball may be jolted away by the arm striking the ground causing the hands to shift on the ball.

I've seen GKs demonstrate power dives on hard floors. The ball breaks their fall as the body seemingly floats to the ground.

I would disagree that anything above average arm strength is mandatory. In fact, I don't think that proper arm position would allow for much leverage anyway. Technique and timing are the key factors.

With the body first method, I constantly would watch for a GK that lands arm or elbow (worse) first. The ball first method generally has the player reaching for the ground with the ball too soon (thus jamming the arms) as its major technical problem.

Here's a tip I posted once--Let Us Pray

Have the GK squat with his palms together (as if praying), elbows in, then fall to one side. The very top of the shoulder is the only part of the arm that should touch the ground. This will give you a real good image of what parts of the body should touch the ground in a dive. Now add the ball, and ask the GK to plant the ball on the ground just before the rest of the body touches ground (especially the shoulder). Now you are starting to lay the foundation of the dive. You should also see that arm strength is not a major factor.

Date: Tue, 15 Feb 2000

From: Gary Rue

No Ethan, I don't think I explain things well at all. I have taken a specific point and without the proper training evolution, I have confused things even more.

On your dive test, it appears to me that you are taking the short trip to the ground, straight down. Only in a few cases will a GK need to fall straight down. Usually most dives are lateral. The shoulder should be the last part of the body to touch. That is why I recommend "pinning" the ball on the ground to keep the shoulder up as long as possible. If you miss the ball on your dive, then the jolt your body receives probably will be the last thought on your mind.

There are several types of dives. The base dive is the collapse dive. The training should/can start with the GK sitting, legs out in front and the server tossing a ball to one side. The GK leans, catches, (plants/pins the ball) and lands on the ground. In this case, the first thing that touches the ground is the butt cheek (which has never left the ground). Here you start to work on putting the arm inside. The "Lats" referred to in a prior post are the latissimus dorsi. These are the back muscles that flare out (just behind the armpit) and run down the side of the body. Much of the side of the body will touch the ground. Also, the very tip of the shoulder will have to touch at some point.

Now you work up to a squat position and receive tosses to the side. We like the GK to think of getting the butt down as quickly as possible. We do not want the GK to "rise" out of the squat, but to fall out of it. If we can get the butt down early enough, this provides a barrier of the whole body to stop the ball if the hands miss it. The best dive landing would be ball, hip/butt, side (lats) , point of shoulder in that order, but very close together.

The next step is from a crouch position. Now the focus is work the near foot step towards the ball (generally at a 45 degree angle out and away from the body). With this step, the GK drives the hands (and body) at an angle towards the ball. As important, this step involves lowering the near side butt/hip towards the ground. On the catch, the same landing process as above should occur. Now we trainers work to ensure that the GK is diving out towards the ball (not just sideways), the knees are bending to lower the butt (so we don't look like a tall tree toppling over) and we are sending our hands low and to the ball.

Also, we want to make sure the GK is not rolling on his back. Notice, I refer to butt/hip. Actually, the more impact you can take off the hip and put on the big cheek muscle, the better. Unfortunately, much of the ground strike must be on the hip, else the GK will roll on his back. There is a fine line that the trainer must walk on this one. I generally point the GK to a soft spot just past the hip bone.

I will stop the discussion with this last phase, though there are more areas of diving to go into. The standing shuffle puts the prior training into a more realistic situation for the GK. With the GK shuffling across the goalmouth, serve a low ball. Train the near step, the lowering of the butt, the angle of the dive (forward and out), the catch and the post catch position (which we didn't go into). Here, footwork is important. Most GKs leave out the near step which puts their bodies and hands too high when they start their dive. At the least, the near leg must bend to put the GK in the lowest position to make the catch and hit the ground with this least damage. The dive force is more lateral than straight down. Think of the dive as originating from a squat and springing laterally, than from a standing position and falling as if having been hewed off at the feet.

I hope this helps more than these other attempts have. If you watch any high level soccer, see how low a GK gets just prior to their dive. The rest of the technique, with some minor adjustments will work itself out.

Date: Tue, 15 Feb 2000
From: Tim Hanley
>Please define "lats" and "rainbow"
>Ethan

Ethan,
A rainbow dive is what all the young keepers want to learn right away. It is the dive in which the keeper leaves his feet to catch a waist high (or above) shot. It appears to be a rainbow as the outstretched arms lead with the legs being the last to take off. An arc so to speak. Very rare in real use and yet some like to do it on simple saves, thus creating oohs and aahs. Campos, Grobbelar, and many of the cover photos on goalkeeper books. This arc style does come into play significantly when one is attempting to parry a cross or lob shot when one can not catch cleanly.

"Lats" i see Gary has defined for you. I will say again that pinning a ball to the floor is a specific action for a specific type of shot. On most dives the lats will and should hit the ground first. Nothing else is correct.

Watch any professional train be it in a video or live and you will agree. I watched Peter Shilton again on video last night as well as Kasey Keller training on the Honda Player of the Year show. His exercise was similar to Gary Rue's kneeling side to side action. Lats first every time, no pinning.

GK Recover to Balanced Position Without Using the Hands

Date: Wed, 1 Mar 2000
From: Gary Rue

In training, GKs should be mandated to recover ("reload") to an on-balanced position without using the hands or arms. The hands should always be free to move in either direction. If a hand is supporting the body, it cannot be used in making the next save.

One technique is to rock the ground side leg. On a dive, if the ground side leg is "rocked" off the ground on the dive, when the legs come back down, this give the GK momentum to "rock" back into an upright position. GKs that are trained to reload without the use of their hands will find the ways to get up. This is not only good technical training, but excellent strength training.

GK motto of the day--no dirt or grass stains on the gloves.

Date: Wed, 1 Mar 2000

From: Paul Cialone

In a message dated 03/01/2000, Gary.Rue writes:

<< One technique is to rock the ground side leg. On a dive, if the ground side leg is "rocked" off the ground on the dive, when the legs come back down, this give the GK momentum to "rock" back into an upright position >>

As a GK, I'd have to say an even better technique is to rock the leg opposite the ground, or the upper leg. This way, whether it's straight out or bent for the dive or for the landing, you can still create momentum from it and use that to get up without using the hands. If upper leg is straight, teach GK to simply perform forceful adduction(move upper leg toward center of body) with leg kept straight. If upper leg is bent, then teach to kick it out, toward the horizon, with the sole of the foot pointing down. Either one works to bring GK back to the feet.

Date: Thu, 2 Mar 2000

From: Gary Rue

I like this, Paul. Your description of straightening the leg is like the motion used to get a swing started with the legs. Though I normally focus on the lower leg being off the ground to keep the GK in motion, the upper leg plays a major role as the force that pulls the GK up. This upper leg technique is especially useful if the GK has lost his motion when on the ground. The upper leg then must generate the action. This would be especially useful in exercises where the GK starts in a stationary position.

Using a Rope in Dive Training

Date: Sun, 13 Jun 1999

From: Gary Rue

Rope can be used as a visual reference for a GK on "playing the angles." Another great use for rope is for diving practice. There are (at least) two GK diving problems the rope can help solve.

Problem #1 - Balls tend to go under GK as he is diving; that is, the GK does not get his hands low enough, quick enough. It often appears as if the ball rolls under the GK's arm pit as he dives late. This type of save is for balls that are low and 4-9 feet from the GK, requiring a low "power" dive. This is a collapse dive with some lateral movement.

Solution - one person holds one end of the rope and the other end is tied to the goalpost, a fence, or have another person hold the other end. Don't tie both ends, unless the rope can be dislodged easily. The holder(s) should let the rope go if the GK hits it. The height is about 2.5 - 3 feet off the ground (hold taunt for no

sag), but can be raised or lowered depending upon the skill level and size of the GK. The rope should be about 3-5 feet from where the GK will start his dive. Serve a ball to the opposite side of the rope. The GK's step with the near foot forward and to an angle, lowering his near hip to the ground. The near hand slides along the ground as the body goes under the rope.

The usual problem with most GK dives is they dive from height, like a tree falling. They need to lower the hips as quick as possible to get their hands low. Their dive is then lateral, parallel to the ground. The rope is useful as it forces the GK to think low and lateral.

Problem #2 - No height on the dive for high balls, tends to be a belly dive. That is, the GK's chest is turned towards the ground during the dive and after the dive, ending prone on his "belly." Also, the GK does not "fly" when making the air save well to one side. Generally the technical problem is that the GK does not get the off-hand over top the head. Instead the off-hand moves straight to the ball across in front of the head causing the upper body to turn towards the ground. This not only put the GK in a belly dive, but it keeps the GK from getting the height needed to make the save on the high ball.

Solution - again with the rope tied or held at about 1 to 2 feet off the ground. The ball is several feet off the ground and 4-9 feet wide of the GK. The training needs to be developed to a point where the GK has good technique on this dive. It is also useful that the GK is properly padded and/or the landing area soft enough for repetitive training. Pads use for aerobic exercises or sand pits are beneficial here.

With the rope in place, the ball is served to the opposite side of the rope. The GK using his near foot "power step" to plant and launches himself, driving up with the off-side knee. The off-hand is pulled over head to the ball, which lifts the hips over the rope. The catch is made parallel to the ground. Sometimes the hips can actually be slightly above the ball. The landing is crucial as the ball should be planter FIRST, with the shoulder (not arm or elbow) and hip hitting a fraction of a second later. The ball helps to disperse and dissipate the kinetic energy of the fall.

The power air dive technique is, of course, advanced. GKs need to master the collapse dive before working on the power dive.

The rope can be used to reinforce getting low on ground balls, and height on air balls. As you can surmise, not much length is needed--which is good, since I'm used to being on the short end of a long rope. :-)

Breakaway Dive

Date: Thu, 17 Feb 2000

From: Gary Rue

Dave, have you followed a steady progression of teaching the GK to land, as in my recent post to Ethan (same subject)? If not, then you will not have a foundation on which to train the next level. Does she just not dive or is this problem only with 50-50 balls? The training solution/focus may be different, depending upon the situation.

Given the fact that your GK is kicking a ball, then my first thought would be, 'have we done enough training of ground pickups?'

If the kicking is because of on-coming pressure, now we are into breakaway training. Here, the GK must first be trained to go meet the ball with a dive finish. One good early breakaway dive exercise is for the GK to make a breakaway dive to a stationary ball, without the use of the hands, moving the ball with the chest--I want the chest to "pop" the ball away. The purpose of the exercise is to train the GK to dive while running forward and to position the body with the ball at the chest level. It also reinforces the dive "through" the ball. Be sure the lower arm is not in contact with the ground.

Attacking pressure is gradually increased, from a standing attacker, then more quasi-active levels (generally the coach is the attacker to regulate the amount of activity). Progress the training to 60-40 balls and finally to game time situations where the GK must decide if s/he can get to the ball or not.

If this is truly a U12 "premier" team, then this young lady better learn to get her hands on the ball (either through a ground pick or a breakaway style dive); else, you need a new GK.

Dive to the Side Away from the Center

Date: Tue, 21 Nov 2000

From: Gary Rue

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

An attacker will more often than not try to beat a diving GK towards the GK's head and not try to get through the legs. That means the dribbler take the ball away from the center most of the time. This is usually a good thing.

If the diving GK's legs do contact the ball, the natural direction of the resulting kickout will be more to the outside as the leg(s) follow through. If the legs are towards the outside, there is a better chance the ball will be sent into the middle.

If the legs (and feet) are towards the middle, the GK's recovery back to feet would also be closer to the middle. This difference of a yard/meter towards the center could make a big difference in the next save attempt. GKs must train to make the next save as well.

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

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

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

GK Roll As You Fall

Date: Wed, 14 Jun 2000

From: Robert C. Christensen

After reading Jim Turpin's excellent post on goalkeeping technique, I thought that this post would be appropriate. The ability to roll as you fall is crucial to avoiding injury, and is an important element of both field players and goalkeepers.

Anyone who has played the game has taken a fall. This is just part and parcel of the game. But there are ways to reduce or eliminate the injuries that occur from falling. One of the best ways to reduce injury is to roll with the fall, spreading out the force of the fall over a broader area of the body, a longer period of time, and meeting the ground at a lower angle of attack.

Let's start with a typical situation where a fall occurs. You have the ball and are attacking the opponents goal from just outside the box. The defender executes a well timed tackle as you try to dribble past, on the run. The force of the tackle stops the ball cold, along with your foot, and your momentum causes your body

to continue towards the goal, and since your foot has stopped, you fall to the ground.

When you fall, it is instinctive to try to "catch" yourself by putting out your hand to brace for the fall. This is possibly the WORSE thing that you can do! First of all, the sudden shock of your entire weight landing on your hand and arm will likely break your collar bone. Second, your hand planted on the ground can be easily stepped on by teammate or opponent. Either way, it could easily ruin your entire day.

OK, so you don't catch yourself by putting out a hand. What in the heck DO you do?

Roll with the flow! Jim T, with his background in martial arts, can attest to the fact that rolling with the fall is a great technique to minimize injury, and to get back into play on your feet as quickly as possible.

If you are going down, there will likely be at least some rotation involved with the fall. So you would not fall straight onto your face, but rather turn slightly as you fall, due to the force of the tackle on one foot. DO NOT FIGHT THIS ROTATION. Simply tuck your shoulder down (arm in), and roll over along with the force of the fall. Done correctly, this will place the burden of the force of the fall on the back of the shoulder (actually the upper back in the shoulder area), and it will be a glancing blow, rather than a straight shot to the body. When done correctly, the head will not impact the ground, but rather follow the shoulder through the roll.

It is more difficult to execute the roll if both feet are taken out (like in a bad tackle), but even a bit of roll, along with the arm tucked along side the body, will go a long way towards softening the landing.

An added bonus is that the roll will allow you to quickly get back up to your feet, and continue on with play.

While the roll can look like a dive (since you sometimes roll over and over), it most certainly is not. A diving player will writhe in (apparent) pain, while a rolling player will quickly be on his or her feet and back in the game. I first learned how to roll with the fall when I learned to ski. I have found it to be very effective while playing soccer, and while mountain biking.

Just a random thought. I do teach proper technique to goalkeepers for taking a low ball, and I do teach the proper sliding technique for slide tackles, but I have never thought to teach my players how to roll with a fall to prevent injuries. What do you fellow listers think of such a "training topic"? Would it be appropriate, and for what ages?

Date: Wed, 14 Jun 2000

From: Jim Turpin

Bob,

First thanks for the accolades but my information was just good basketball post play applied to goalkeeping.

As far as the roll. For field players it is a technique that I include in my training about once or twice a season. I have one gymnast on my U11s that when I showed it said can "I do this?" and executed a full tuck flip instead and landed in full stride. Of course I said that she could do as she wished her gymnastic training is at least as good for handling a fall as anything I could teach her.

Now, for keepers, in most face on situations the roll should be avoided and technique should reinforce a slide through the ball.

If a keeper rolls, either way, at the feet of an attacker, they expose themselves to injury. The basic technique must be a slide through the ball with: Hands on/behind the ball; ball in front of the face; Lower leg extended and relaxed upper leg curled up to protect the stomach.

If executed correctly the proper position prevents a roll and on rough ground can get a keeper a bit skinned up BUT they are protected from being severely injured by being kicked. I once rolled after a slide and got kicked in the kidneys. The player that kicked me was red carded and missed one additional game. I missed 3 weeks.

The other part of keeper self protection that I train, and you have to be REAL careful here, is how to adjust for the fall after being knocked around while fully extended in the air.

Again martial arts training helps BUT the techniques must be modified and they have to be adapted to each keeper. Of the 9 that I am training right now only 2 are good at this, the others just cannot seem to get the idea but they are getting better. I have one that I swear can fly. She NEVER seems to land out of control and can adjust her body in the air. I have another, a boy, that no matter how much training and work we put in can't seem to get the idea that his job is not finished with the save, he must protect himself from injury. He gets hurt often after he has made a turn or a punch because he relaxes. I think he treats his injuries as badges of courage.

Every keeper is unique and while there are some basic principals those of us training keepers need to watch our charges, in game situations, in order to properly train them to keep healthy. A SMALL breakdown of technique is all that it takes for a keeper to be badly injured.

Teach them to fall. Teach them how to get up. Even teach them how to determine the severity of an injury. (Read their own body.)

Many trainers forget this VERY important part of keeper training and that shortchanges their keepers.

Thanks Bob for reminding me of the importance of training for survival.

Date: Wed, 14 Jun 2000

From: Robert C. Christensen

Point on about the keeper saves at the foot of an attacker. I teach different techniques to my keepers for different situations. The rolling fall is, like you point out, best reserved for situations when the keeper is getting upset at full extension, like when punching away a cross in traffic. They have different "tools in their tool belt" for the other situations.

Hand Position and Ball Possession on a Diving Save

Date: Thu, 16 Dec 1999

From: Gary Rue

I never have the GK "wrap-up" the ball when making a diving save. Because I always choose safety over possession, this is the way I compromise in this situation. I want the ball planted, slightly in front of the GK--one hand on top, the other behind the ball and wrapped around with fingers tips pointing forward. Though this exposes the ball a little, it should be locked in solidly, with little fear of a first time strike knocking it loose. The other thing this technique provides is the first defense of the head and torso. The ball, forearms and the top leg (drive the knee up to the elbow) provides a barrier to stop kicks into the critical areas (head and torso). A kick to the forearm or shin is much better than one to the head or torso.

Every now and then during a GK diving warm-up, strike the ball when the GK has planted it after a dive catch. This reinforces the hand position and provides the GK with confidence on holding a planted ball. I also like to kick a ball that a GK brings forward after doing a situp. They generally have to readjust their grip after a few kicks. Not only does it help technique and confidence, but it starts to remove fear of being in that situation when a foot is coming forward.

For boys, wrapping up a ball when on the ground is potentially dangerous for the ball to be hammered into the genital area. Keep the ball in the hands and not against the body when on the ground--where possible. Don't wrap up, unless you are standing up.

Keeper Drills for Diving and Sliding

Date: Wed, 2 May 2001

From: Karl Keller

Saw a bunch of very interesting keeper drills over the past couple of weeks, including three on diving/sliding.

Over/Under Variation -- Pair off, two balls, 8-10 yards apart. One has ball high over head, one has ball low, almost touching ground with ball. High ball throws to position over head of partner, while low ball throws underhand with both hands to space between partners legs. Partner moves from low to high, or high to low, depending on starting position. Repeat, this time with partners in opposite position. This exercise is designed to work the range of up/down catch positions, and get good bending at the waist.

This is a good sequence of sliding/diving drills.

Diving/Sliding Alone -- Keeper rolls ball, then slides to grab it. Emphasis on getting hands on ball, on top and beyond, and hard, with good outstretched form.

Diving/Sliding When coming out.

Position two flags/cones about ten yards apart. Keeper 10 yards on one side of flags, partner on other at 10 yards. Keeper plays ball with feet on ground to partner through flags. Keeper attacks partner in ready position, moving quickly to area just beyond flags. Partner plays ball (ideally one touch) toward one flag or other. Keeper slides/dives to make save. Repeat. You can vary distance and flag separation to decrease, increase difficulty.

Diving, sliding on dribbler.

Pair off, keeper and dribbler, almost chest to chest. Dribbler pushes ball to side. Keeper runs with him, and dives/slides to take ball off feet. Dribbler should start easy to get rhythm, and then increase difficulty to challenge keeper. Always go hard to ball and dribblers feet, using hands only, not face or body. (Coach should be dribbler, or one of your more skilled players). This drill seems especially effective with youngsters, who are probably wary of going hard to dribblers feet. They realize after this that if they are in the proper position and time well, that their face will not get in way of dribblers feet, that they will get mostly if not all ball, and that the dribbler, who is really seeking to escape, simply does not have the kind of forward energy that is going to result in injury.

BREAKAWAYS

NSCAA 1999 - 1 v 1 Principles of Goalkeeping

Date: Tue, 20 Apr 1999

From: Gary Rue

1 v 1 Featuring Safety, Technical and Tactical Principles of Goalkeeping
Lincoln Phillips, Black Soccer Coaches Association,
Top Flight Goalkeeper School

<Convention Program Notes>

Diving at the feet of an oncoming attacker is probably one of the most dangerous goalkeeping skills to perform. A goalkeeper can sustain serious injuries when diving into the patch of oncoming players, especially in a reckless manner. A goalkeeper who is well trained in dealing with one vs one situation will not only perform game winning saves but also significantly reduce the incidence of injuries.

Safety Points to Remember

Do's:

1. Present a long barrier
2. Stay on the goal side of the ball
3. Present both hands to the ball Position the head close to the ground and at a safe distance behind the hands
4. Stay down as long as possible until it is safe to get up.

Don'ts:

1. Slide into attacker feet first
2. Slide in head first
3. Get up too soon

Drills (accent on safety and technique)

1. Goalkeeper lying on the side with hands approaching ball
2. Goalkeeper in the kneeling position diving hands first to ball
3. Goalkeeper in the standing position, steps forward diving hands first to the ball
4. Outfield players dribbling,. Goalkeeper dive at their feet to make save, GK starting position is kneeling then progress to standing.

Methods of Dealing with the 5 One vs One situation:

1. Getting To The Ball "First" ...
2. Getting To The Ball At "The Same Time" As the Attacker ...
3. Arriving "Just After" Shot Is Taken (approximately 2-3 yds away from attacker) . . .
4. Arriving "Well After" Shot Is Taken (approximately 4-6 yd from the body and. . .
5. Approaching An Attacker In "Full Control" Of The Ball.

Drills & Game Situations:

1. Attacker approaching with defender trailing
2. Ball passed between attacker and goalkeeper
3. Game situations.

There is a good selection of GK drills and games at <http://www.eteamz.com/soccer/instruction/tips/category.cfm/Goalkeeping/> also George Lasher (a member of this list) has a good section in his coaching manual on goalkeeping.

Goalkeeping - Dealing with Breakaways - Clinic Report

Date: Wed, 11 Nov 1998

From: Joseph Cohen

Reported by Joseph D. Cohen, Oregon YSA E License

West Linn-Wilsonville United Soccer Club

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Oregon Youth Soccer Association U-14 Coaching Symposium, August 30, 1998

Clinician: Bill Irwin (University of Portland goalie coach, US national coaching staff)

Players: State Select U14 goalies, Boys and Girls

Warm-up

20x30 area, about 1 ball per 2 players, but players not in pairs.

Instruction: roll or throw (javelin throw) ball to another player, use all types of footwork: shuffle, crossover, backup, forward. After receiving, move to a position to see the whole area.

Irwin encourages crisp and accurate rolls and throws (*remember, you're keepers*)

Progression:

Now punt ball to another player.

Now put ball down, take quick kick to another player.

Irwin's objective with today's session is to make it harder for the offense to score; avoid the silly goals -- through the keeper's legs, etc.

Fundamental

Receiving ground ball

10x25 area, corner flags. Keepers divided into two equal groups. Each group lines up single file behind end line. One line rolls ball, other receives. First person in group A rolls ball directly at first person in group B, 1st A then goes to back of receiving line, receiver throws ball (javelin throw) to new first person in A line, runs to back of that line.

Coaching points:

- legs not wide open
- relax
- attack ball
- good starting position, off goal line, center of goal
- be tall -- don*t crouch to start

Progression: now roll ball to side of receiver.

Coaching points:

- run through the ball -- this gets you a few extra steps
- be line with player who has the ball -- if they are on the left side of field, don*t be on the right side of the goal

Progression: roll ball far enough (and fast enough) to side so that receiver must dive.

Coaching points:

- wait in relaxed ready position: feet shoulder width, knees slightly bent, hands at or near sides (not up at chest)
- attack ball as much as possible: near foot should move at 45 degree angle, then dive to side-open position

Breakaways

Irwin categorizes these into four possibilities:

1. Attacker has a bad touch ("touch like an elephant") and ball is way out ahead - you simply need to pick these up.
2. Ball has been played somewhat ahead of forward, but not too far -- you must pick these up and get out of the way.
3. 50-50 balls.

4. Attacker has control.

Irwin uses the same field setup, with the same lines. But now Irwin puts the ball into play. The line that formerly rolled ball to receiver now takes the role of attackers.

1. Bad Touch

Coaching points:

- pick ball up, run out of way
- follow lead foot
- let ball roll up arms

2. Somewhat ahead of forward

Coaching points:

- receive ball with forward vault, angled to one side
- get there, push off to side with lead foot
- tuck elbows in
- the key is reading the touch on the ball
- let ball roll up arms

3. 50-50 balls

Irwin rolls ball and one player runs onto it while keeper makes save.

Coaching points:

- get hands to ball first; if you have a good hand position you can block everything. (Irwin demonstrates this himself, asking one player to try to kick it by him.)
- hands should not twist
- bend run
- when you vault, make yourself long and wide
- don't land on elbow -- you can hurt your elbow; it raises your head exposing it to danger; it creates a hole under your arm that ball may go through
- don't be in a hurry to get up

4. Forward in possession

Irwin rolls ball, asks line of forwards to do a toe poke. Object of GK when breakaway player has possession is to slow down the attacker. If you can do this long enough, you'll get help and it won't be a breakaway any longer.

Coaching points:

- start tall
- close attacker
- get smaller as you get closer to ball

- stop about 1½ steps from attacker
- make the attacker commit
- legs shoulder width (less than width of ball) so you won't be nutmegged

Game-related

Setup is half field, with one full size goal. Line of players behind goal line. Each serves as goalie in turn, then goes to mid field to join other line. Line of players at 35 yards, each serves as attacker in turn, then goes to keeper line. Irwin serves a variety of balls.

Initial restriction: forward must dribble ball past keeper (can't lob him).

Coaching points:

- If it's attacker's ball (he has it under control) don't commit too early.
- As soon as ball is passed to attacker, take two steps forward; in that time, decide how you will play it
- If you're just blocking ball, stop -- don't overrun attacker.
- Don't commit to taking the ball unless you are 100% certain you'll get it

Progression:

Remove restriction on lobbing ball past keeper.

Add a defender who starts from 35 yards as soon as attacker touches ball.

Coaching points:

- Key: take two steps forward -- make your decision in that time whether it's your ball (anything up to 50-50) or whether attacker has ball under control.
- If it's not your ball, don't close until the ball is over the 18 yard line

NSCAA 1998 -- Winning the 1v1 Keeper-Striker Duel

Dan Gaspar – Star Goalkeeper Academy, trained Portuguese National Team keepers, US Metrostars keeper coach, coached last year in Japanese pro league – The J League, FIFA A license, NSCAA Advanced National license, Technical consultant for US Soccer Project 2010

- IMHO Dan is a premier clinician and coach. You can learn much just by watching him work with keepers and observe his coaching technique.
- Warm-up - #1– Keepers were asked to dribble the ball from side to side and on a coach's clap go down and save the ball, come back up and dribble.
- Coaching Point - project arms to ball, do not land on your elbow.
- As he emphasized that the keeper get low and extend he called this a "grass cutter save".

- Warm-up - #2 - both feet on floor, one forward, knock the ball off of the up foot and attack, making a save.
- Coaching point – both hands need to arrive at ball at same time.
- Warm-up - #3 – keepers were asked to do a side dive with ball in hands and get up.
- Warm-up - #4 – Set up 6 balls in a zig zag pattern with balls for markers each about 7 yards from the previous ball. The keepers were asked to shuffle from ball to ball saving each ball.
- Coaching point – When recovering from the prone position after a dive the keeper should roll up to a 3 point stance with knee, same foot, and opposite foot on ground, then stand up.
- Warm-up - #5 - jog forward, go down on command of left or right and then get up to standing position.
- Coaching point – keepers must believe in themselves and be willing to take risks.
- Warm-up - #6 – began with a keeper on their side, the ball about a yard away from belly button, the coach kicks ball at the keepers mid section, the keeper closes and makes the save, closing with both arm and legs.
- Warm-up - #7 - 4 ball activity – the balls were placed at the corners of a 10x10 yd. square, 2 keepers were placed on opposite sides of the square. One goes down to save a ball while the other reacts to the choice and saves the ball on the opposite side (i.e. if keeper A dives to save a ball to his/her right then keeper B dives to save the ball to his/her left), after a time the drill was modified to having the keepers go for the diagonal balls.
- A suggested method to train keepers to develop the always ready mentality and the needed mental focus – tell them don't turn your back on a chosen player for an entire practice.
- Trivial item #10,001 – it would take 345 soccer balls to cover the face of the goal.
- Warm-up - #8 - offensive player moves to a ball, keeper saves, then the offensive player proceeds to a 2nd ball 5 yards away, keeper recovers and makes second save, the offensive player moves at 50% effort.
- Drill - #1 - keeper in center of small square (4x4) within a big square (10x10) with a field player at each corner of the larger square, the coach calls a player's name who tries to dribble to center of the square, keeper finds player and makes save, there was a cone square in the center as a target for field player to dribble at.
- Coaching point - keeper should dive with head to near post so any rebound is away from goal and when the keeper recovers he does so into the middle of goal area.

- Coaching point – the keeper should mirror the field players speed as the keeper attacks the ball.
- Coaching point - if mad, relax and be forgiving.
- Coaching point – "focus on the ball".
- Drill - #2 – 4 10x10 squares put at corners of a 30x30 square with a 4x4 square in the center, 3 players in each of the corners inter-passing and a keeper in the center square. When a group is called the player with ball attacks to center goal, keeper closes on player and saves ball.
- Drill - #3 – same as #2 except when the group is called then the player with the ball passes to space and one of the other two players attacks to the center goal, keeper closes on player and saves ball.
- Drill - #4 – same as #3 except when the group is called then the player with the ball passes to space and the other two players attack to center goal, keeper closes on player and saves ball.
- Drill - #5 – 2 goals marked with cones at 12 and 18 yd lines in front of a regular goal with keepers in each goal, a field player must beat first keeper with ball to advance to next goal.
- Coaching point - keepers should dive with head behind the ball.
- Observed keeper basic stance when standing and waiting on the attacker is to have hands down to side, palms out
- Coaching point - on a late dive open arms and legs (upper arm and leg raised high) to take up as much space as possible.
- Drill - #6 - To teach keeping elbow in on dive – start keepers in a kneeling position with hands in prayer position, on command keepers lift knee and launch into dive on their side

1 v Keeper Drill

Date: 9/18/02 (approx.)

From: Dennis Mueller

A good setup for shooters and keepers is as follows.

2 goals 35-40 yards apart, keeper in each goal with a supply of balls. Field players form lines at each post at each end (4 lines total) A keeper starts play by rolling a ball up the middle towards the other goal. The players at the front of each line at that goal race to the ball, the first to touch it becomes the attacker, the other the defender as the attacker attacks the goal at the opposite end. After the ball is shot, or attacker is dispossessed, the keeper who was defending starts play from his end towards the other end. (Shooter gathers ball and leaves it in

the net for the keeper's later use if it does not otherwise end up in the net or the keeper's hands.) You can run this drill with as few as 6 shooters and 2 keepers. With more than 15, use two setups, even if you have to use a couple non-experienced keepers. With more than 10 but less than 16 (or no 2nd set of goals), I would probably have 8 or 10 doing this shooting, while the others played either keepaway or 3v3.

This is realistic way to get lots of chances of 1 v keeper with pressure from behind. Keys for the shooter are speed, going at goal rather than sideways, putting shots on target, but away from the keeper.

Keys for the keeper are to close down the shooter to minimize the space for the shot and to stay under control so that when the shot is taken the keeper's feet are both planted and he is ready to react to the shot. If the dribbler gets close enough before shooting, the keeper must learn how to take the ball of the shooter's foot without fouling.

PHYSICAL CONTACT

GK Demonstrating Control of the Ball to the Referee

Date: Fri, 23 Oct 1998

From: Gary Rue

I coach GK technique to cover two areas:

1. GK safety
2. Stop goal scoring chances

GK safety is my number one concern. As it turns out, the proper technique not only protects the GK, but it is also the best technique to stopping goal scoring chances. In every catch position (standing, diving, etc.), the following technical points are constantly reviewed during training.

- * go to ball (move forward)
- * both hands to ball
- * fingers forward and slightly over the ball
- * elbows/forearms nearly together (close enough to stop a ball from going through)

The above gives the GK the best chance of displaying obvious control on the ball and then maintaining control if the referee allows a "late hit" to occur.

In training, we reinforce holding onto the ball by kicking it after the GK has put his hands on it. We try to take the referee out of the equation as much as possible.

We want our GKs to expect the ball to be kicked after they have control. Recovery to a lost ball is also part of the training equation. Therefore, we train to protect ourselves and to maintain possession of the ball. BTW, we train to expect and adapt to "bad" calls. Arguing with a referee or waiting on the referee to blow the whistle is never accepted behavior while the ball is still free.

Date: Fri, 23 Oct 1998

From: Brian Smith

One drill that I make all my GK's practice in to have a line of balls (about 15) in a row about 3 or 4 feet apart. The GK lies next to the ball in the proper position after having to dived for it. Then I have a striker or coach start going down the line kicking the balls. This makes the keeper have to dive for each ball, get the proper hand position (on one top and one behind).

It also get the keeper used to diving from the ground, which he/she has to be able to do in a scramble. It also gets them used to hard contact after they have touched the ball.

I only use this with my keepers from 8th grade up (high school JV and Varsity). You have to teach it slowly, and it is a dangerous drill. When I was in college, my GK coach broke my nose when I grabbed the ball and moved it.

Also, I float crossed balls into the box, with the keeper vs. 3 strikers. This always means that there will be contact with 4 people going for the ball. I don't include defenders in this drill, because we always teach defenders to stop where they are when the keeper calls for a crossed ball. The keepers are also taught to make sure they know where all there defenders are AT ALL TIMES. Many a time, I have accidentally decked a new defender who thought they could clear a ball for the keeper.

A good drill for teaching strikers and keepers how to handle breakaways is to put a striker about 30-35 yards out, and have another player pass the ball through his/her legs. This makes the striker go from stopped to sprint, and collect the ball, it also forces the keeper to decide if the ball has been passed too far ahead, or if they need to hang back for a second and wait for the striker to make a move.

Most of all, get your keeper into situations where contact will occur, either in the air, or on the ground with there teammates. Teammates will pull back a little so not to hurt the keeper, but the keeper will still get hit (just not as hard as in a game). It helps them get used to contact in a controlled situation.

Dealing with Contact and Improving Aggressiveness

Here's a fun exercise to help your keepers deal with contact and improve their aggressiveness.

Two keepers sit on the ground shoulder together facing the coach. The coach serves a ball to the keepers (toss directly to them bounce of ground whatever). Keepers fight for the ball while seated. They can not get on their feet until the ball is on the ground far enough away from them that they can not reach it while seated.

This exercise can generate a fair amount of contact but because the keepers start on the ground the contact is not hard. Coach must regulate the amount of wrestling to keep things sort of under control. Kids really enjoy the exercise. You can turn this into a game by keeping score of who ends up with the ball.

If you have one keeper who is better than the other you can even the game by tossing the ball to the weaker keeper's side. Gives the weaker keeper success and builds confidence and makes the stronger keeper work harder.

Dealing with Uninvited Guests in the Goal Box

Date: Thu, 28 Oct 1999

From: Gary Rue

The goalkeeper (GK) has enough problems to deal with on corner kicks (CK) without the presence and foul play of attackers who try to keep the GK from performing his job. However, two can play at the same game. There are several things a GK can legally do in these situations.

Firstly of all and most important, the GK must remain calm and collected when attackers move into his "area." He has a right to his space, but he must recognize that the attackers also have rights to their space as well. The GK should NEVER shove or push an attacker out of the way, though he can certainly and should be taught how to hold his position if being moved about by an attacker.

Here are some tips for the GK to handling uninvited guest in the goal mouth:

* gently remind the referee about obstruction--"Sir, please make sure he (pointing) doesn't obstruct," followed by a "Thanks!"

* stay open to the pressure; GK should never face the ball on a CK (i.e., feet pointed at ball). The GK should have the field side foot dropped back a little

* bend the knees if being charged; instead of leaning into an attacker that is charging, the GK can hold his position and still maintain some balance by

lowering his center of gravity. Unfortunately, this is the worse position the GK can be in and he should look to move away from the pressure as soon as he knows where the ball is going. Again, a quick call to the referee on this obvious foul may gain some results--"He pushing/charging me, sir!"

* stay active and mobile; this mobility may only be a foot in either direction, but it does not yield a stationary target for a foot stepping or arm hooking opponent. At the very least, the feet should not be firmly planted on the ground unless there is some vying for a certain piece of real estate.

* keep the hands (and elbows) up; a dangling arm is too good to pass up for some attackers. The attacker can easily hook the GK's arm by sliding his elbow into the crook of the GK's elbow and make the GK one armed. I like to tell my GKs to get their open arm pit above the attackers shoulder if possible.

* gain foot position on the kick; the GK can set up the impending attacker by stopping movement just before the kick, then move on the kick into a advantageous position. A GK must be careful about being hook with a leg by the attacker. Following are a couple of positions the GK may find himself in and how to take the advantage:

- attacker in front on the goalline; the GK should move off his line and set up to the side of the impeding attacker until he sees the flight of the ball. The initial area of importance is the near post. The GK must be in position to get there, so that is why he must get to the side of the attacker. It does the attacker little good to be closer to the goalline than the GK. The GK must also be able to recover back to the middle and far post. If the GK steps up and around and plants his foot hard beside the attacker's foot, the GK should be able to stop any leg hooks that attacker may try.

- attacker on the field side of the GK; this attacker is looking to hook or step on feet. The GK should move this attacker away from the goal (if he is following), then quickly move back into position on the kick. Here again a hard step to the side of the attacker's foot keeps the attacker from hooking the legs.

- attacker is planted behind the GK; here the GK wants to move the attacker as far back to the far post as he will go, then move forward on the kick. It is important that the GK open up his stance and come off the goalline to keep this attacker from coming in from behind and obstructing the GK from going back. By being a couple yards out, the GK will have more room to maneuver around this obstructing player.

Coaches should coach their GK to deal with player presence and foul play. The GK needs to command his area and all infidels that defile it. The referee should not be considered as part of the equation. Hopefully, the referee will take care of business, but it is the GK that must assume ALL responsibility.

As a passing note, I would caution about pulling too many defenders back to mark the close in attackers. Teammates are just extra bodies that tend to impede the play of the GK.

Boxing in the Keeper

Date: Mon, 19 Apr 1999

From: Jeff Anderson

I'm coaching a U9 boys travel team here in Canton, Mass; we play 6v6. On Saturday we played a team from neighboring Wayland (we ended up losing a cliffhanger, 1-0), and after the game, my son, who played keeper in the second half, told me that when we were defending corner kicks, the other team put a player right on his shoulder to hem him in (observant me, I didn't see this...). He said he had trouble getting off his line to reach the crosses (no damage done, in any event), and he asked me what he should do if that happens again.

Well, I know what professional keepers do, but I really don't want to tell my eight year old (or any of the other boys I coach) to push, elbow, etc.! Any suggestions on how to tell my keepers to handle this in a fair, firm, sportsmanlike manner?

Date: Mon, 19 Apr 1999

From: Connie T. Matthies

If he doesn't push and shove, the Ref will have no way of knowing that he is being obstructed. So, he will have to push to get people out of his way - and may even want to yell out "Obstruction" if somebody is tenaciously pushing into him when the ball is not within playing distance of him or the opposing player.

You are right to avoid teaching him dirty tricks like using elbows - or making any other attempts to hurt the opponents. At some point around HS age, he probably will discover these tricks on his own (and hopefully will also have the judgement to know when and how to sparingly use them to send messages to opponents to lay off him). However, young players need special protection from dirty tricks because they don't have the maturity to make calm judgements about whether something was intentional or about the degree of force proper for a pay-back when the CR isn't doing a good job of protecting them. Moreover, there often are huge size differentials which can result in injury (so it is a good idea to discourage him from mimicking any older keepers who may want to try to show him the "tricks of the trade" before he or his opponents will be ready to handle this).

Of course, If he really wants to learn to be a keeper, he will have to get used to pushing folks out of his way to get to the ball (and will have to give up his ribs to get his arms up to grab the ball and also to protect his head). Pushing through a

crowd with the arms up (so that an opponent cannot manage to get your arms pinned) is an essential skill for all keepers.

This is entirely proper to learn at almost any age. However, if he is HUGE for his age, he is going to have to learn to be more delicate to avoid injury to others. His priorities need to be to not put himself into serious danger; to not put the opponents into serious danger; and to get the ball. If he cannot get the ball without doing serious harm to himself or opponents, then he needs to let it go.

Date: Mon, 19 Apr 1999

From: Gary Rue

The tactics by the opponent may have crossed the legal line and could be construed as obstruction by the referee. It is too bad a U9 GK must be trained to deal with this type of play, but such is life. On the other hand, an attacker has a right to go where he wishes, as long as he doesn't "move" into the GK's path.

On corner kicks, the GK must not allow himself to become an easy target too soon by taking up a stationary position. There are three problem areas for a GK:

- * in front--can't cover the near post
- * behind--can't move to the far post
- * on the outside shoulder--can't move out of the goal

The most critical position is the one behind the GK as he may go unnoticed until it is too late. I had a high school GK taken out of play on a CK and then a throw-in, because an attacker got in behind him. As the GK's momentum went forward, the attacker just "moved" him right out of the goal mouth. The referees got an earful, but I had gave myself a good butt-kicking for not preparing my GK better. Now this is how I would deal at the high school level with three problem areas of an obstructing attacker. <I'll let you decide how to deal with it at the U9 level.>

In Front--let the attacker setup; entice the attacker to move into a spot where the GK likes to stand by moving back a little further to the far post. At a point close to the kick being played, move quickly to the outside of the attacker and plant your foot right up against the attacker's outside foot. This will keep the GK's foot free if it has to move forward or backwards. There must be contact, even if you step on the other player's foot a little (and it sends a bit of a message). Yes the GK is off the line a little (2 feet?!), but that's where he should be anyway.

Behind--a GK should never turn both shoulders towards the corner; the shoulders, hips and outside foot should be open a little to the area in front of the goal. This allows the GK to see what is behind him. The GK could set up a little further back than his preferred position, then move forward a step just before the kick is taken. Or, by stepping out and opening up, with hands up and upper arms parallel to the ground, the attacker should be effectively locked away from the

action. If the attacker is behind but a little further out from the goalline than the GK, the GK may have to move out a step and into the attacker, if the play is going to the far post.

On the Outside Shoulder--the GK should move out from the goalline, trying to get on the outside shoulder of the attacker, if the attacker persists in locking in on the outside shoulder, then the GK should take up a position that is at least a yard and a half off the line. Try to take an open stance position, as much as possible. The arms being up help to clear a little area as well.

Perhaps the most important thing a GK can do as he is repositioning and "working" the attacker, is generate awareness by referee by calling attention to the attacker's movement--"Watch the obstruction, please!"

I also train the GK to handle attackers that push, grab and hold. Bent knees to keep from being pushed around, raised arms to generate space and take away something the attacker likes to grab hold and the will to command your area are the tools of the trade.

Date: Tue, 20 Apr 1999

From: Brian Smith

Having coached keepers for some time now, this is one of the hardest things they have to deal with. What I tell my keepers to do is "take control". Remember, the striker can stand anywhere he/she wishes to, but if they move when the keeper moves in an attempt to obstruct them, it is a foul.

I tell my keepers to do a few things. First, make sure the referee knows the striker is there, most referees will position themselves behind the far post on a CK, and may have their view blocked.

Second, Make sure that the keeper realizes that the striker is the one they have to defend. I do not send a defender next to that striker, because it just clogs up more space. My teams always put a person "on the keeper" for CK's and we like it when a defender comes over to cover them.

Third, as the ball is being played in, they have to instantly decide where the cross is going, near, far, out to the PK spot. Then move accordingly. When they move, they have to get position on the striker, this means getting a leg and arm "around" the striker so they can box him out like in basketball. This will effectively remove the striker from the play.

Fourth, (we only teach this in U-14 and higher). If the striker is right on top of them and the referee is behind the far post, get an elbow in the striker's kidneys. This will distract the striker. But be very careful with this, I have seen some strikers turn around and try to hit the keeper.

Most of all, the keeper should not let a striker next to him, cause him to panic. When I play (Adult Premier) I try to get a conversation going, ask them how they are doing, what makes them think they can score on me, etc....

Date: Wed, 21 Apr 1999

From: Dawn & Greg Slate

As a coach and a keeper here is how I deal with that situation. First you have to teach your keepers that the penalty area is their personal property. They own the real estate. When I set up for a corner kick and have been boxed out one time; I set myself up about two yards away from the ball the same distance from the goal line I would normally play. As the player taking the CK approaches the ball I step up and around the opposing player attempting to box me in effectively boxing him out and putting me into a position to either catch or fist a ball coming to him away. It also puts me into a position to cover or play balls to the PK mark or to the top of the box.

Punching the Ball Away and Keeper Protection in a Crowd

From: Gary Rue

Boxing or punching the ball is an extremely important GK technique. Though there are many derivations of this technique depending upon the situation, I will discuss it in its purest forms. There is a good article in the most recent "Soccer Magazine" by Tony DiCicco on this technique for more technical and tactical information.

The flat of the fist is used to contact the ball. That is, the knuckles should not contact the ball. The thumb should be wrapped around out of the way, but not tucked under the fingers. If two hands are used (preferable), the finger knuckles should meet to form a long flat punching surface.

The punch should be executed by an extension of the arm(s) that starts cocked at the elbow. The arm(s) should be behind the punch. That is, the elbows and forearms should be close together and not separated. It is important that the arms be extended through the punch. If the arms are extended before contact, the ball will not go very far.

Like defensive headers, the GK wants to send the ball high, far, wide and accurate as possible. Height is the first priority. A high ball allows the GK to reposition before another player can touch the ball.

Distance is the next priority. This also gives the GK time to recover.

Width is preferable to keep the ball out of the middle; however, sending the ball back from where it came is often the safest box. The GK can target the contact point better if he can get behind the ball flight. A barely missed contact point on the ball, generally means a loose ball in the box.

Accuracy is the last concern. If a GK has time to pinpoint his box, then he maybe he should be catching the ball instead.

The GK should box the ball if the chances of catching the ball are not high. For instance, to get to the ball, he may have to get over teammates (or opponents). When a GK puts his arms in the air, he is not in as strong or stable position. A gentle nudge on a catch attempt can move those hands just enough to cause a dropped ball.

A punch could be used for a ball that is going over the GK, but I would recommend using the flat of the hand. There is more control and extended fingers means the GK has more height.

There is another punching technique for a ball that is going over the GK to punch the ball so that that it continues in the same general direction. This is a high level technique that requires lots of practice.

To practice, the GK can work on this by himself, just by boxing the ball in the air continuous. Two or three GKs can box the ball back and forth. A volleyball-like game over the goal post can be used. At sometime the GK must be put in a training situation where he must catch or box a ball delivered in traffic (players more focused on the GK than the ball).

A couple of technical points when training--be sure the GK uses both hands when possible. As mentioned before, the arms should not be extended too soon. The GK should focus on the contact point of the ball. Contact with the ball should be made an inch or so below center of the horizontal axis to ensure a high and long punch out. When in doubt--punch that sucker outa here!

From: Richard Brown

You did not mention the contact that results when doing this. The only time you punch the ball is when the space you are making the save in congested, or you have to run well of your line to beat the opponents striker to the ball.

Soccer players can get seriously injured when doing this, both the keeper and the opponent.

God forbid that happens, but if it does happen let it be the opponent. The danger to the keeper is getting hit when his arm are extended (Exposing his ribs-we won't mention his face). The two handed punch is also used on a hard shot about

head high. The one handed punch is used in very dangerous attacking situations, if you have to stretch to get to the ball first.

Keeper must jump when punching. It is best to put your hip in the direction of the attacking player instead of showing your front to him. Try and get your knee up for protection, your other forearm will also protect the other side of your body reflexively.

You don't want to jump straight up if you can help it. You want to be moving towards the ball for more power. I could get more into this, but I don't want to hear, "Are you trying to hurt the poor opponent". That is why it takes courage to play both forward and keeper position.

Well any way if you play the ball on your near post, punch it out to the side where the shot came from. If you have to move to the far post, punch it so you help it along to go farther in the direction that it was heading.

Keeper can make punching, a very intimidating experience for the attacker.

From: Gary Rue

I want to reemphasize a very important point Richie made. When the GK uses the leg for protection in a crowd, the knee should be pointed away from the player--that is why the hip is slightly turned into the direction of the attacking player. The thigh and not the knee should be used to "block" the pressure coming on the GK.

Unfortunately, the GK may not be able to "protect" himself with his leg, because he is in such a crowded situation. Nor will he want to raise the knee when jumping into a crowd as this may be grounds for an ejection (serious foul play).

A GK should attempt to keep the body between the ball and the goal line whenever in possession or gaining possession. The GK should not try to "protect" the ball by turning and exposing the back; the ball should be kept in front and used as protection to the GK.

If the GK is standing after the collection, when the ball is brought to the body, the forearms should be close together and in front of the ball. Look for elbows that are apart that will allow the ball to slip through. The forearms and ball should provide adequate protection from a hard charging attacker.

If the GK has gone to the ground (laying on the side), then the ball should be in front of the face, hands wrapped around (palms facing out) in a hooded cobra shape, bottom hand behind the ball and the top hand on top of the ball. In this position, the ball and forearms protect the face and chest. By driving the top knee towards the elbows, the rest of the torso is protected by the shin. (I do not

recommend the GK wrapping the arms around the ball as in the standing position above. This will expose too much of the GK's head.

I use two activities to help the GK learn how to hold the ball under pressure. First, as the GK is doing a sit-up while holding the ball, I will do an instep volley kick on the ball as it comes forward. If I knock it out of the GK's hands, they must quickly recover the ball and go back into a sit-up.

Secondly, I will put the GK in a dive position holding the ball and then I will kick it using the inside of my foot. Next, the GK will receive a passed ball (while in a dive position) just before I kick the ball. Then we move to diving catch from a crouched position, followed immediately by a kick on ball.

The GK has to learn the ball can be held through a strong kick and the ball can be used to protect.

One important issue Gary's thoughtful response didn't directly address is this: If the goalkeeper is fighting for a closely contested air ball with a charging attacker, and fears that if they don't turn the ball away from the attacker, the attacker's forward momentum into the ball at the moment the goalie gets contact with the ball will drive the goalie back into the goal off-balance, perhaps onto their butt, and they'll lose the ball or carry it into the goal in their hands. In a very close contest for the ball, the goalie has to be worried not only about getting dumped, but whether the ref will decide the goalie "lost" the ball into the goal because the goalie had a hard time cleanly fielding a difficult ball (especially if the goalie can't get square with the ball in time), or the attacker really got there first and the charge is proper.

In these circumstances, is it a worthwhile gamble for the goalie to let themselves be bowled over into the goal, perhaps with a look of determined, pained gusto on their face, in lieu of risking giving up an inadvertent own goal in the very process of trying to stay out of the goal and protect the ball from the attacker (especially if they can't get square to the ball quite before the ball and the attacker are upon them)? I wonder whether most refs would be inclined to assume, in a crowded melee, that the goalie fell into the goal due to the attacker's contact and rule the goal invalid. A goalkeeper on their butt has a lot more silent credibility than one who is not, regardless of how they *should* have been square with the ball if possible.

Chris, I think I am preaching to the choir on this one. The term gamble is a good word for a GK that turns the ball towards goal--and I don't see any benefit or payoff. <This reminds me of the definition of Lottery--a tax on people that don't understand statistics.>

As a coach, I feel the GK has two (the GK may think she has three) options in this scenario:

- 1) catch the ball; take the hit
- 2) punch the ball away
- 3) stay on her line and scream "away" to her teammates

If this situation is truly a 50-50 ball, then if she turns after making the catch, then it won't matter if she is facing forward or backward. I don't see her having any more leverage facing the goal over facing the field. If the opponent charges into the GK after the catch, then it appears to me the GK should be able to be braced with a protecting leg (see recent posts).

Granted, she may be charged into the goal with no call, but I would still never train the GK to turn towards goal. I think the GK has only one worry and that's to catch and hang onto the ball. The laws of the game are to protect her from the rest. If the referee doesn't call the foul, then kick your hat, say a few choice words, tell your GK that she "done good" and go on to the next moment of truth.

In summary, I have never seen, nor can I visualize a situation where I would recommend a GK turning the ball towards goal.

Good thread here, and just to add my wee bit to it.....a good technique to use when you are able to cleanly collect a cross or high ball in traffic is to simply leave you arms raised in the air until the traffic clears away. The reason for this is simply one of safety--by bringing the ball down into the chest, the GK risks it hitting an attacker (or even defender for that matter) on the head or shoulder or juggling it on the way in, dropping it, and having the referee rule that there was no clear possession and, therefore, the ball is live. As I said, the technique is very simple, it's only a matter of freezing your position in the proper catching technique, delaying the final step in the process of bringing the ball into the body. Again, a very specific, detailed point, but one we GK trainers go crazy over. After all, the cliché does say we're all a bit crazy anyway:).

GK Hand Deflections

Date: Thu, 23 Sep 1999

From: Gary Rue

Goalkeeper hand deflections are a key part of GK training. There are several components to the hand deflection that a coach needs to train:

1. Use the heel of the hand (if possible) - this is the strongest part of the hand and will give the ball an extra "pop" on the deflection. If the palm or fingers are

the surface used, a hard hit ball may not be deflected enough to be kept out of the goal.

2. The hand should move forward into the ball - if the hand goes lateral or even back from a line drawn through the shoulders of the GK, there may not be enough strength behind the deflection attempt.
3. The hand should be out away from the body on the ball touch. This movement sends the ball wide of the goal.
4. If possible, the arm should extend into the ball touch and not be fully extended too soon. This requires timing. Even on a finger tip deflection, the last second extension of the fingers into the ball can be enough to cause the ball to change course away from the goal.
5. On low balls, the near hand should be used. On high balls, the far hand is the preferred deflector. Of course, if the GK can get both hands to the ball, then both should be used.
6. If the GK is making a diving deflection, then the prudent thing to do is to put the ball out of play. That is, the deflected ball should be sent wide of or over the goal and over the goalline. A deflected ball back into play while the GK is on the ground can be disastrous.

Training for the hand deflection can start with a GK sitting on the ground. This allows the GK to totally focus on the important hand and arm timing. The server sends balls just wide of the GK for deflected one hand saves. Ball retrievers are very useful to keep the server supplied in balls. The GK should make solid hits on the ball and the ball should be sent wide of the goal.

The server should deliver several balls at the same height, moving to a different height after the GK can consistently deflect the ball. Only small changes in the height can cause dramatic differences in the GK response.

Don't forget ground balls, but do these as one of the last heights. Ground balls require different timing for the GK. Also watch for hands that go to the low ball from high, instead of along and parallel to the ground.

Also serve balls over the GK's head (while sitting). The GK should be able to deflect the ball over the top post, unless the ball is served too high. Be sure the GK's hands go forward as there is a tendency to go straight up or reach back.

Future training should progress to squatting and full stance training.

PASS BACK TO THE KEEPER

Backpass Training (Tactical Training Session for Keepers)

Date: Sun, 12 Oct 97

Posted by: "John H. Helsdon

THEME: Backpass Training (Tactical training session for keepers)

Clinician: Chris Ducar, National Director - SoccerPlus Goalkeeper Schools,
Goalkeeper Coach, Univ. of North Carolina Women

Team: U17 girls (w/ 4 keepers) plus Tracy (Noonan) Ducar - US National
Women's Team and former UNC keeper

Opening comment: Keeper's foot skills are lagging. They need to be as proficient on the ball as any other player on the team.

WARM-UP

Focus on the keepers, 5 keepers in an unrestricted area playing pass and follow your pass.

[He employed no stretching during the session, but you should insert some.]

Next, same basic exercise, but you must call the name of the person you are passing to (beginning of verbal communication).

Next, put them in weak-foot-only passing situation, with calling the name of the receiver.

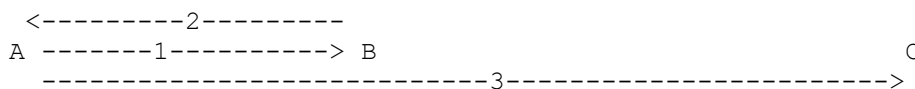
Notes: One- or two-touch passing. Balls can be played on the ground or in the air.

Coaching points:

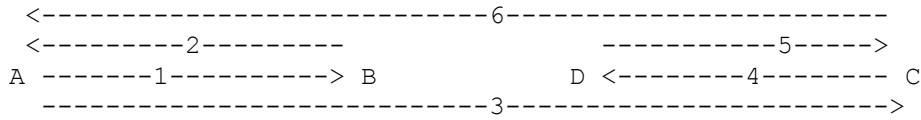
1. Looking for a clean first touch and/or set up touch.
2. Looking for vision to find target and accuracy of the pass.

Next, short-short-long passing in groups of 3 or 4 players with one ball for each group. The setup looks like (vary the spacing depending on age and ability of the players):

For 3 players



For 4 players



Player A passes the ball to player B who plays it back to player A and follows the pass. Player A takes the return pass and chips/clears the ball over the oncoming player B (player B can come at a leisurely pace) to player C and follows the pass at a sprint to become the short target for player C, who plays it to oncoming A, who returns it to C who chips/clears it to B over A who jogs in to replace C. In the situation with 4 players A and B switch and C and D switch, but they don't need to switch ends. A switch should occur after every long service (clear).

You can restrict the number of touches based on ability.

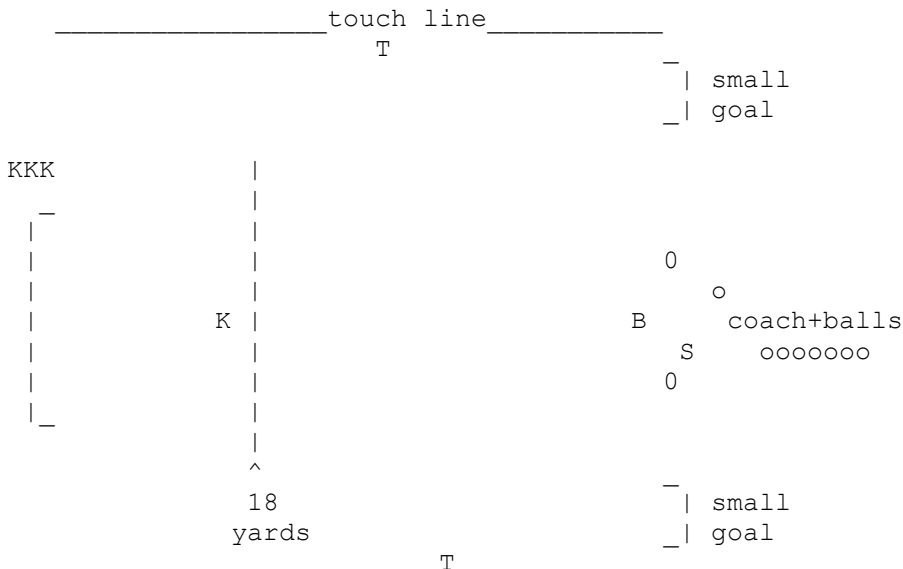
Coaching points:

1. Clean controlling (first) touches and setup touches.
2. Passing accuracy, both short and long.
3. Make sure the clearing pass is not interceptible (the oncoming player simulates a defender pressing the ball).

[Note: This is good training for all your players, so you can focus on the keepers without sacrificing anything with respect to the rest of your players]

END OF WARM-UP

Game to 1 goal: Play on 1/2 field with keepers in goal with a gate and two small goals at the half line:



O=cone gate
o=balls
B=fullback
S=opposing striker
K=keeper
T=target players

[At first play without the target players].

The ball is served by the coach for the back to run onto with the striker applying light pressure. The back chases the ball toward goal and the keeper must communicate with the back what they are to do with the ball. The service should not be so strong as to go all the way to the keeper, so that the back has to make a play on the ball. Services can be varied later on to make decision making more difficult.

The keeper's communication commands are:

1. "Back" - play the ball "back" to me.
2. "Turn out/in" - you have enough time to play the ball yourself, the best play is for you to turn it out/in.
3. "Away" - you are about to lose the ball because it is bouncing and you are under too much pressure to settle it. Play it away from the goal as far as you can toward the touch line as quickly as possible.
4. "Go wide" - After the back has played the ball to the keeper, the keeper tells the back to go wide to provide a target for a return pass in order to beat or draw away the oncoming striker.

You are looking for 20 yard backpasses in order to give the keeper sufficient time to do something with the ball. The keepers must be out by the 18 yard line (top of the penalty box) and **MUST MAKE THE CALL EARLY** in order to give the back enough time to respond. The call can't come as the back reaches the ball because you want the backpass (if it is the choice) to be a one-touch pass.

Coaching points:

1. Proper use of communication commands by the keeper.
2. Proper starting position by the keeper.
3. Keeper must recognize the type of pressure being applied to the back. Is there enough pressure that a first time clearance is necessary, or is there enough time to play through the keeper?
4. Related to 3., the keeper must evaluate and make decisions on the distance and time that are available. The decision plays into the proper use of communication commands in 1.
5. If the keeper plays a ball that rebounds off the striker, the keeper must be aware that they can play the ball with their hands, if they are in

the penalty area.

There are some issues with respect to the back chasing down the long ball that should be addressed as well. The back needs to know that, after they play the ball to the keeper, they need to peel out wide to give the keeper support - without having to be told by the keeper. Item 4 under keeper communication commands should be redundant. In the instance where the keeper can reach the ball without the back having touched it, but the back and the onrushing striker are close to the keeper (close race), or the back played the ball to the keeper with too little space for the keeper to make a safe play, the back needs to know that they must help the keeper by shielding off the onrushing striker and not allowing a direct run at the ball so the keeper has a safe path to play the ball. This is in essence obstructing the striker without getting an obstruction call. This can happen because the striker will usually be pressuring on one shoulder or the other of the back so the back already has position between the keeper and the striker and can slow down their run making it difficult for the striker to pressure the keeper. This only needs to be brief, but the back must be able to take advantage of their body position and the keeper must see this as well.

The most important aspect of this training is to get the keeper to read the situation and provide the proper information to the supporting back. The keeper's positioning is also critical.

The coach should serve a variety of balls so that the keeper and back have a number of different situations to deal with - direct, angled off, balls that are obviously playable by the keeper, balls that are obviously playable by the back, and balls that are intermediate requiring split second decisions by the keeper (ground and air balls).

Progression: Add the target players at the sides who can play the ball to the small goals. Remove the restrictions of less than 100% from the striker. Again, give services that put the ball in different places both air & ground.

Coaching points:

1. Keeper must make correct decision on how to play the ball under all circumstances.
2. If the back is to turn the ball out rather than play back to the keeper, have them make a strong positive touch laterally away from the goal and out of harms way.
3. Coach the keeper to come out of the box on long balls to make the play themselves.
4. Keeper also needs to know when to retreat into the box (they are starting by the 18) to give more space for the back to play the ball to them. This would be one of those in between situations, not obviously a ball for either the back or the keeper. The keeper would call "back" and then retreat to create space.

5. If the keeper is going to play the ball in the face of an onrushing striker, have them play it HIGH and WIDE - safety first. They should be able to play the ball up the touch line without giving a throw-in near the goal.
6. Reiterate that if the ball is bouncing, the keeper should tell the back to play the ball "away".
7. Encourage the keeper to come out beyond the 18.
8. Let the keeper know that some bouncing balls that are not playable by the back can be chest trapped past the onrushing striker and then played out of danger.

[During the course of play, Tracy Noonan even messed up once by deciding and communicating too late for the back to make an effective play].

Progression: Same set up as previous game, but play 2v2 + keeper. Two backs and two strikers start at the midfield line. Coach serves through balls that backs and keeper must deal with. Strikers get 5 points for a goal. Goalkeeper and backs get 1 point for successfully clearing the ball over the midfield line IN THE AIR directly off the play of the keeper, or 1 point if the backs play the ball into the target goals on either side. Play to 10 points and switch.

As this game progresses, see if the backs and keeper are changing the point of attack once they gain possession of the ball. If not coach them to do so because this will involve the keeper also, if done properly.

Game to 2 goals: Play 5v5 (or more) + keepers. Use an appropriate sized pitch, depending on the number of players - with 5v5, across the field would be okay, up to 8v8 on the full field. Play a 4 minute game. For the first 2 minutes, team A plays only possession with "X" number of passes being equal to a point with one of those passes having to be to the keeper. Team B is trying to score a regular goal. After 2 minutes, coach calls "Switch" and the teams reverse roles.

Coaching points: Watch for backpass opportunities and make sure that proper decisions and communications are happening.

Game to 2 goals (final game): Two even teams of as many players as you have. The object is to incorporate the backpass into the game situation. Each team plays unlimited touch soccer, but cannot attack the goal unless the ball is played through the keeper.

Pass Back

Purpose - To train the goalkeeper (GK) in receiving and distributing a pass-back (drop) from a teammate.

Drill Setup - If a soccer field and goal are available, the GK is on a touchline halfway between the goalline and halfway. A server with several balls is at the center mark. The balls are served on the ground to the GK who receives and distributes the ball into the open goal on the goalline. After all balls are served, the balls are returned to the server and the GK goes to the other touchline (to work on balls coming from the opposite direction). If a goal is not available, cones 6 yards wide can be setup 30-50 yards out and 40 to 50 yards apart to be used as distribution targets.

Technical Coaching Points:

- the GK should be limited to two touches
- the GK should DEMAND the ball with "DROP" (or whatever is the appropriate and consistent term your team uses for this type of pass)
- the GK should go meet the ball, not wait for it
- the in-coming pass should be received across the body with the trail foot; the first touch should take the ball well into space in the opposite angle of the in-coming pass
- the second touch should be with the reception foot; that should put the support foot between the ball and any pressuring opponent; that is, if the ball is being distributed to the right side, the right foot should be the passing foot
- be sure the GK "attacks" the ball on the reception; players that don't have a lot of foot skills will tend to stick out the foot so that the ball can hit it; often that is reason for a ball getting behind and away from the receiver.

Progression:

- Vary serves so that other parts of the body must be used to receive the ball
- One touch; still using the goal as a receiving area, position the GK and the server so that the one touch distribution is close to the same direction as the in-coming pass; changing direction on a one touch is a difficult skill (and in a game situation it is too risky)
- Position GK in goal; add a teammate that will drop the ball from different angles and distances; add a teammate that moves wide to receive the distribution
- Add an opponent that pressures the drop passer then follows the drop to pressures the GK
- Add another GK teammate to go wide to the opposite touch and a second opponent that will mark one of the wide men; the GK must decide which teammate is open (vision)

Technical Coaching Points on the Drop:

- The drop passer should follow the pass to the GK, providing some 'legal' obstruction; however, drop passers should be aware of a one touch return back at them
- It is best for the drop to be too hard than too soft Drops to the GK should be targeted just outside the inside post; drops across the goal mouth are too dangerous

- Drops with some angle to them, are easier to take wide
- In some situations, the passer can break off following the ball and move out into space to receive a distribution; this should only be done when it is clear the GK will have plenty of time to receive and distribute

Tactical Coaching Points:

- The GK must decide as to:

- when and how far to come out
- where to show for the drop (wide of the post, towards the 18?!)
- distribute with one touch or two
- the direction of the distribution
- instructions to the teammate on ball ("drop", "turn", "take it wide", "away", etc.)

- The field players must be trained as well in the art of dropping the ball to the GK:

- to improve their confidence level
- to learn the proper weight of the pass
- to establish a communication link with the GK
- to understand the proper action for diverse situations

Games:

- 3v3 or 4v4 with GKs; score a point by drops to GK who must one touch to passer's teammate; GKs may be assigned a team or be neutral
- in normal scrimmage, any time a defender faces his/her own goal with ball, the ball **MUST** be dropped to the GK
- in a shooting game, 3v3 with goals 25 yards apart, players **MUST** drop to their GK when facing their own goal (i.e., no turning with the ball)

Comments:

Because of the extra dimension, it is very important that GKs participate in passing drills and work on their receiving and passing skills. Of course dropping the ball to your GK is not without its dangers; however the dangers are much greater when your defenders have the ball facing their own goal without this option.

Thanks to: Gary Rue, KY HS and Select

DROP KICKING AND PUNTING

Volley Kick (Punt)

Date: Fri, 17 Apr 1998

From: Gary Rue

Here are my thoughts and observations on the technique of the GK volley kick (punt).

First, soccer coaches and GKs need to realize that this a volley kick and NOT the same as the punt in American football, though some of the basic fundamentals may be the similar. In American football, the foremost goal is height with distance. In our football, the main goal is normally distance and accuracy, with only enough height to attain that distance.

There are fundamental truths that must be attained for a volley kick to go optimum distance:

- * The ball should be struck with the hard bone on top of the foot (the instep).
- * The kicking leg swing is similar to the recent discussion on shooting, where the knee drives through with the release at the knee of the lower leg.
- * The ball should be struck no more than a foot off the ground and preferably lower. This is why half volleys are so effective, the ball is struck very low to the ground.
- * The punter weight transfer is forward (preferably onto the kicking foot) - the support foot should not stay planted on the ground after the kick.
- * The upper body should be over the ball at contact time; that is, the ball should not be too far forward of the body where the player must reach for it with the kicking leg.

Coaching points to reach this position:

- * The GK should take only as many steps as is comfortable (within four) <I've seen coaches force their players to take the maximum of four steps.>
- * Hold the ball with the hand opposite the kicking leg (e.g., left hand for a right foot kick). For younger players, a two hand hold may be necessary.
- * Hold the ball as low as possible and in front of the kicking leg. Use comfort level as the measurement how low to hold the ball (this helps to get the body over the ball).
- * DROP the ball into the kicking zone; do not toss the ball up at release time <BIG PROBLEM>.
- * Lock the kicking foot down (the save as an instep shot); we want the sensation of driving the ball, not kicking it into the air.
- * The kicking leg (as in a shot) will probably never reach fully extended if the ball is driven.
- * Land on the kicking foot.
- * An angled approach may help to get the ball drop into the proper zone, especially with the shoulder of the ball hand being dipped as much as it is.

With multiple GKs, use this time to work on catching high balls (result of a volley kick). They may have to run their butts off to get to the catch. As a technique trainer, use the net of a goal to kick into. Have the run up end with the volley kick on or about the goalline. This saves a lot of ball chasing time.

This is not an easy technique to master. I would work on the run up and ball drop first. I would then move on to some of the other points after some comfort level is attained.

This is why we like to distribute with a throw. :-)

Date: Fri, 17 Apr 1998

From: Dave Teetz

Great post. Having punted in both sports, I'll try to dissect this a little more with what I have learned through time. When active in the gridiron football, I attended several 'punting' camps, which were very informative.

While gridiron punting is not limited by the number of steps, it is limited the amount of time available. Having thundering pads running at you is a great incentive to get rid of the ball.

This punting is also more linear, meaning the punter travels in a straight line. A GK can vary to a less linear approach and not be adversely affected. The goal of a punter is to put a spiral on the ball to attain the greatest distance (lord knows I can punt a spiral, but die trying to throw one). The linear approach aids in this result.

I think the comparisons between the two are more related than perceived. A GK is trying to hit a target, where a punter is trying to avoid a target. Both are attributed to accuracy.

Technically, the way the hips are facing is the way the ball will go (as in other kicking techniques). The difference is in leg swing. As stated before, the GK doesn't have to be as linear, just smack the ball squarely. I've purposefully altered my leg swing to see the results. The results are that I get poor results using the linear approach. By using a more side-on swing, a soccer ball seems to travel farther. This side-on swing is attained similarly to that of striking a ball on the ground. I teach an approach from say between 7 and 8 o'clock for right footed kickers.

The height of the drop depends on the desired outcome. Holding the ball low is a great way to get little height and long distance (maybe a quick counter), hence the drop kicks that are common amongst older keepers. This would also be affective for kicking into the wind. But, holding the ball a little higher will result in a higher punt, which, with the wind coming from the kicker's back, carrying the ball farther down field.

On the gridiron, hang time is used to allow players to cover under the ball. This is a concern for soccer as well. A higher ball will allow more players to get under

the ball. Though, for keepers with a weaker kick, I'd suggest getting the ball into the air, with the wind behind them. If the ball is away from the goal, it is less of a threat.

Finally, use the hips. Simply swinging the leg and getting the lower leg to extend from the knee is not as affective. The hips must rotate forward for greatest power. I don't know how to best explain this, but imagine the pivot point of the pelvis is the top of the pelvis at the lower back at the spine. Push the lower-front part of the pelvis forward when contact with the ball is made. This will introduce more power into the kick. As a side note, this will also increase power on kicks with the ball on the ground especially shooting.

Drop Kicking vs. Punting

Date: Sat, 18 Jul 1998

From: Joe DeMay

The difference between volley punting and drop kicking is flight path of the ball. The punt generally travels higher in the air meaning it takes longer for the ball to get where it's going, giving the defense more time to get to the spot and challenge for it. It is also generally more difficult for the receiver to control, requiring support from another player to maintain possession. Drop kicks generally have a lower trajectory and reduce many of the problems associated with the punt. Tactically speaking, it really depends on what you're trying to accomplish with your GKs distribution off of the punt. A team that is strong in the air or has a decided height advantage will often use the punt, for instance. You also may hear people saying drop kicks are more accurate and travel further, but punting can be just as accurate and travel just as far if the right technique is used, so my opinion is that's all bunk.

As far as "walking before you can crawl," I don't think that is necessarily true in this case. Like yourself, I have found players who find it easier to drop kick, kids who could barely get a punt out of the penalty area (so I'm exaggerting, but you get the point). Again, punting is all about timing, and the timing of the drop kick might be the trick for your GK. The one teaching point I would stress would be to make sure the knee is bent upon striking the ball. Many GKs who try drop kicking for the first time often fully extend the leg upon contact and end up sending it higher then a punt;).

Date: Sat, 18 Jul 1998

From: Dan Roudebush

I, and many others teach drop kicks as part of the buildup for the instep drive. It helps with getting the ankle locked down. So if she can do an instep drive (does she take her own goal kicks) then she should be able to drop kick.

Goalkeeper Punting

Date: Sun, 12 Jul 1998

From: Gary Rue

The further out in front of her body, the less power. The higher the ball is off the ground, the less power. If the leg is too straight and rigid through the leg swing, the less power.

One of the first things to watch for is her release. If it's tossed in the air--bad; it should be dropped from knee height. Is she leaning back after she hits the ball--bad; she should be moving forward into the kick (even landing on her kicking foot).

Though the timing is a little different for the release and the steps, you still may want her to practice half-volleys to get the feel of kicking a low ball and being over the ball when she kicks. Also, she should feel as if she is driving her thigh and knee through the kick, as opposed to the foot. Hopefully, this will relax the lower leg enough to swing freely and with speed through the ball.

Date: Mon, 13 Jul 1998

From: Joe DeMay

Unfortunately there is not quick fix for this problem. I used to think that punting was all about perfecting a very specific technique in order to achieve maximum accuracy and distance. Nearly 8 years of being a GK trainer has drastically changed my mind. About the only 100% for certain statement I can make concerning technique is that the run up, or approach should always start at an angle, much like one would approach a dead ball for a shot or a goal kick. Other than that everything is relative.

Ideally you would like the ball to be dropped directly from the hand with no toss or "air" put under the ball prior to kicking it. The "release hand" should be the hand opposite the foot the GK uses to punt. The maximum distance the ball should be dropped away from the body is as far as the release arm extends across the body and out to the kicking foot (boy, that really sounds like crap.....trust me, it would be better if I could demonstrate:)). The ideal striking point is somewhere around 6 to 12 inches from the ground. All that said, only about 1/2 to 2/3 of the GK I have ever trained could effectively put this technique into practice.

I've had the experience of training GKs who dropped the ball with the same hand as their kick foot, dropped the ball with two hands, tossed the ball insanely high, tossed the ball with spin, and, believe it or not, went "around the world" with the ball at his waist before tossing it. If I made an effort to improve their punting technique the invariable result was far less effective punts. What I do with GKs

who have poor punting ability is to gather as many balls as I can possibly find, send out another GK to midfield to shag balls (as well as practice his/her own punts by sending them back down) and intently study the GKs current technique. Often the GK has used poor technique for so long that it is what is most comfortable. I will try to have them use proper technique to see how that goes. If they don't start becoming comfortable after 10 or 15 minutes, I will try and work with what they already have. As Gary said, timing is the key, and sometimes a little toss in the release is exactly what a kids needs. Other times, they need to eliminate a toss. It can be a somewhat time consuming process, but eventually the punts will start coming around.

Two other points to this already too long post. Make sure you have the GK train with the punts from the actual penalty box and kicking out onto the field. It's sometimes difficult to get a feel for the distance and accuracy of the punts in an open, unmarked area and this can discourage a keeper because they don't feel their punts are going all that far when in reality they are. The second point is, since she can't punt well at the moment, make sure she can throw the ball well. It may sound a bit stupid, but many GKs don't use this distribution technique well enough or often enough. Not to mention, if she doesn't punt well, at least she'll have one way of distributing the ball out into the attack effectively:).

Date: Mon, 13 Jul 1998

From: Richard Brown

Gary gave you some good advice, she should practice all the longer kicks every day at practice and by herself against a fence or a wall or with a friend or teammate.

In your practice, I am sure you have two keepers they should practice every part of the keepers game using each other.

Work on accuracy as well as distance on these kicks lets try to keep them away from the touch lines (hate to see these things go out of play), and always have at least two players facing your receiver in support positions at angles (targets for the receivers to play to). We want to keep possession.

I like the keeper to throw the ball as Dan said. It is more accurate and a lot faster then punting, good to start a counter attack.

Plus until she gets good at punting, she should take her steps and throw. If she can only throw close and everyone is covered, waive everyone back as if to punt, then the closest players should check back to the keeper then other players fill in that uptop space. Now she may have a choice of players to throw to the check back player if uncovered, and the player filling in behind the check back player for the longer throw or the half ass punt.

GK Punt and Goal Kick Training

Date: Wed, 24 Feb 1999

From: Gary Rue

Timing and relaxation during the punt are key elements and are difficult to diagnose as a coach. In a relaxed state, the leg swing is so much faster.

The GK should strike the ball when he is "over" it. That is, at strike time, the kicking knee should block the ball from view as the last step is beside the ball. All too often a "volleyer/punter" will don't allow the ball to drop close enough to the ground and play the ball out in front of the support foot. The leg swing has used up much of its power and inertia by then. This is why so many GKs go to half volleys.

The sideways on run is usually because the hand opposite the kicking foot is holding the ball very low, so the drop is already close to the ground and the kicker can time the ball position better. By leaning over with the opposite hand puts the kicker in a turned position.

The difference between a (pointy) football punt and a GK volley distribution is that the punter wants more height than is desired for the average GK distribution. A ball kicked higher off the ground and in front of the kicker puts more premium on height.

The follow through discussion is interesting. The key is that the GK needs to go through the ball. I personally recommend landing on the kicking foot, but if a GK can go forward and land on his support foot, more power to him/her.

Most GKs I try to train, rarely are able to kick for distance immediately, as the technique is a little strange from natural.

Date: Fri, 26 Feb 1999

From: Ron Tremper

>> 2) follow through - usually not much and on balls on the ground the keeper never lands on the kicking foot. In soccer, good follow through ends with the kicking foot landing on the ground, this equals good weight transfer.

>Is the follow through you're detailing only for the punt? I have always taught that on a hard clearing kick, the player should be forced to land on their plant foot, since the kicking foot should be following through and will pull them forward and they will be lifted off the ground, landing on the original plant foot.

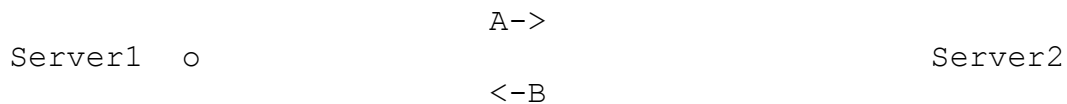
> don friedel jr.

My understanding is that the "new" approach is to always land on the KICKING foot, just kick the ball in stride and keep on moving. This gets hips squared to target and encourages players to move instead of just standing there watching their kick.

How to Handle Punts, Goal Kicks at an Early Age

Date: Thu, 27 Sep 2001
From: Dennis Mueller
Ken,

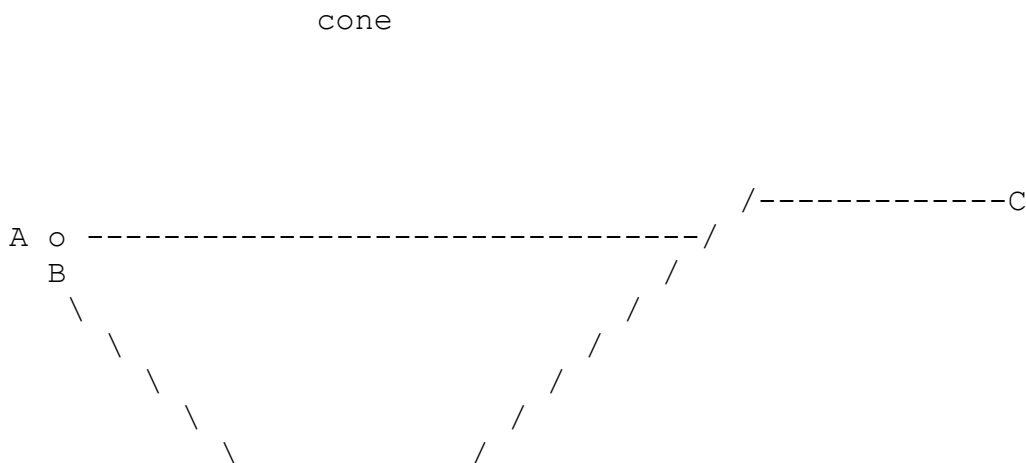
Anson Dorrance uses a drill wherein two players go against each other vying for air balls served by 2 others in the following setup.



Server 1 strikes a ball to be head high for A and B to contend for. A tries to flick ball to server 2, B tries to return ball to Server 1. When A is successful, Server 2 serves the ball. Or you can have extra balls and have server 1 and Server 2 alternate. (In Dorrance style, he has A and B keep score of who wins the most balls.) This can give lots of repetition in battling for air balls in a relatively short time. (Half the players are working hard, so switch servers and battlers frequently.) With 12 players, you would have 3 sets going.

For U-10s, the services will be pretty poor, so you may want to have the servers either throw the balls or punt them out of their hands. Work on the services separately.

Another Dorrance drill uses 3 players like so:



\ Cone /
\ _ /

A starts with ball, B runs around cone and diagonally forward to receive pass from A in air, settle it and pass to C. C receives ball, leaves it still for B to run to while C begins run around cone. B serves to C who passes to A who makes run, etc. No opposition here, does give lots of chances to make good services to running teammate and lots of chances to receive ball out of the air. At U-10, it will look pretty ragged, but a few kids will make it work part of the time.

In general:

If your team is always losing the air battle, the keeper should try to distribute short passes quickly on the ground as much as possible (this will draw the opponents forward and open up space behind them for the longer kicks).

At U-10, the other team's goal kicks are always an opportunity to score due to poor passes from goal kicks. (An example, always hitting the ball as long as one can straight up the field means everyone on the field knows where the ball is most likely to go, so it is easy for the defense to outnumber the offense with little risk is at least a poor choice.) Also mis-kicks are rampant at U-10 so a player or 2 up near the 18 poaching weak kicks is a smart tactic.

Finding players who can take the goal kicks and make accurate placement of the ball into areas of the field where your team has numerical superiority quickly enough that the opponents can't get there while the ball is in flight (read no high punts) should be a priority.

There is no answer to this one save better skills both at kicking and receiving and better awareness of all of your players to make the most productive and least dangerous play.

Date: Thu, 27 Sep 2001

From: Gary Rue

I don't know how well this translates to a U10, but one of the key factors to handling 50-50 balls such as a goalkick or volley kick (punt) is to provide support between the receiver and kicker. Following is a nice three man combo exercise to reinforce this support.

Setup: Player A and player B are apart the appropriate distance for long kicks. Player C is in the middle. A plays a long ball to B; C moves off to a slight angle as B plays to C; C returns the pass to B who plays a long ball back to A as C supports A.

The exercise is really designed for the end player to one touch the long pass to the middle player. The player kicking the long ball should two touch, preparing the ball for the long kick with his first touch.

THROWS

Getting Distance on GK Throws

Date: Fri, 9 Jun 2000

From: Gary Rue

If your goalkeeper isn't getting as much distance on throw distributions as expected, check out the shoulder of the non-throwing arm. The non-throwing shoulder should be as high as possible, as long as possible, through the throwing motion. As the shoulders turn into the throw, the off shoulder will drop a little; however, if it drops too soon, the goalkeeper will lose a lot of body leverage needed to make a strong throw.

One suggested tip for the goalkeeper is to raise the elbow of the non-throwing arm above the shoulder and leave it up there as long as is natural through the throwing motion. Generally, when the shoulders move from a position almost parallel with the target to one that is square (or perpendicular) to the target, the elbow will come down naturally. The important thing is that the off shoulder stayed "tall" until then.

DEFENDING CROSSES

Dealing with Crosses and Shots Opposed

NSCAA 1999 - Goalkeeping Coaching Session

Dealing with crosses and shots opposed

The crossers must vary the technique of the cross (e.g., drive ball in low; loft ball into goal area; vary speed and height of cross; play cross in early behind defenders and go to play cross in and turn back on oneself, delaying the cross). By doing this, defenders and attackers will, generally, now be stood in the Goalkeeping area, whereas, playing the cross in early, Goalkeepers will, generally be attacking the ball in space, knowing that attackers will be making their runs fast and late.

Key Factors

1. Position in relation to defenders and the ball
2. Communication with defenders

3. Technique of catching/punching cross or shot
4. Attacking the ball late and fast
5. Positive attitude
6. Expect the unexpected (e.g., Expect your defenders to miss the ball)
7. Give confidence to your Goalkeeper. It is far better to make a positive mistake than a negative one; for example, to go after a cross and miss is far more positive than to stay on one's line frightened of making the mistake
8. Take the fear away
9. Encouragement, stimulation and enthusiasm are great assets in coaching Goalkeeping
10. Goalkeeping is very much about being confident/positive

GK and the Low Cross

Date: Wed, 29 Sep 1999

From: Gary Rue

Note: The "low cross" discussed below is defined for this topic as a ball that is played from the side near the opponents goalline and below head height.

One of the biggest problems for a GK is the low cross, especially if the cross is angled back away from the goal.

This type of pass is difficult to the GK for a couple of reasons. First, the GK is often trained to make the diving save across the goalmouth. On a low cross, the save must be made away from the goal, which takes the GK off his line.

The next big problem is the cross itself. If the cross is moving away from the goalline, the GK must make the save on a ball moving away from him. This requires good timing, absolute commitment, and courage.

To complicate matters, the GK has to deal with attackers that approach the ball at different angles to the GK. Normally, the GK faces the attacker(s). With the low cross, the attacker comes from the side or more often from behind the GK. A well timed near post run will usually beat a GK trying to guard the near post to the ball. The GK must be aware of and assess these runs in his decision to go out after the ball.

Not only are opponents a problem, but also the GK's teammates can get in the way. Many own goals have resulted from the low cross.

Training to save this type of cross should start with the GK at the near post (NP). A server should play low hard balls from near the goalline. The server position should fluctuate from wide of to close to the NP. The angle of the cross should be from parallel to the goalline to a spot on the six extended from the NP (coach

should decide the maximum angle). It is important that the GK see many different serves to assess which saves can be made and which can't.

Technically, the GK should be near the NP on a line from the NP to the center of the goalmouth, 3-4 yards out. The GK's body should be in alignment with this line--in other words, he should not be facing the server, but slightly open to see both ball and as much of the field as possible. If a GK faces the ball, then he will be blind to the runs behind him.

On the save, the GK should go out to meet the ball as its earliest point. This is very important on angled crosses as the later it takes the GK get to the ball, the further away the ball will be from the GK.

If the GK cannot make the save, he needs to adjust his movement to the ball, being at the 3-4 yard center mark as the ball crosses the center of the goal. Footwork to recover into a ready position is very important as the GK may take a quick step or two out before deciding the cross is unsavable.

Progress the session to sending in near post runs from in front of the NP (where the GK can see the attacker). Then add NP runs from behind the GK across the goalmouth. Add defenders at the NP and on the six that are to deflect the ball if they get a chance or until the GK calls them off. Lastly, add marking defenders on the NP attacking runs.

The low near post cross or back angle cross is a killer ball to a defense and it is important that a GK is trained to recognize savable balls and to make the save.

Exercise of the Day--Wing Crossing to GK

From: Gary Rue

Date: Tue, 6 Aug 2002

The exercise provides excellent functional training for wing forwards or wing halfbacks that will be making crosses from the touchline. It is also real time training for the GK dealing with numerous crosses.

Setup: half field, 2 goals with GKs, at least a pair of wings on each touch about mid way between goals

Procedure: each GK distributes a ball to a wing on their right (or left) side; the wing takes the ball down and crosses into the area in front of the goal for the GK to make a play on. If the ball is not within the GK's reach, then the GK retrieves an extra ball from the near the goal and distributes to the next wing. After several crosses by each wing, the direction of the distribution is reversed.

Coaching Points: GK always distributes to the opposite side of a ball served into the area. Crosses made from near the goalline should be angled back away from the goal. GKs should cover the near post, with an open body position (i.e., facing the field) as the wing brings the ball down the touch. As the wing gets closer to the goalline and a cross is imminent, the GK can move slightly away from the near post, however, s/he must be concerned about the near post run and not give away the near post. On the high cross, the GK must try to get behind the ball, so s/he can move forward into the catch, making the catch at maximum height. If the cross is low, the GK must make the catch as the earliest moment (i.e., go to ball, don't wait for it).

Progression: Wings cross into the area from different spots on the touch. Wings should dribble to and along the goal line, looking for a low back angle pass. Add multiple groups of 3 or 4 players that make runs on each goal. After making runs on one goal, they will in turn make runs on the other goal.

Defending Crosses (dr035)

- *Equipment:* 10' rope, lots of flat discs, 2 tall cones + 1 goal; 5 red bibs; balls.
- ***Objectives:*** Teach proper ball handling fundamentals, positioning and angles, vocabulary and tactical direction of defense, distribution technique and judgment
- *Warm Up:* single with ball; roll between legs, turn & scoop; 2. pairs toss ball high and leap to receive at highest point;

Handling:

Demonstration: ground scoop, low ball in air, high ball in air, shuffle, fast to side

Teaching Progression: two lines - one line rolls hard to other, who scoops, then throws hard to other line; switch each time

Diving:

Demonstration: from knees, bottom hand behind ball, top hand on top of ball, ball hits ground 1st, NOT elbow; land in OPEN position; kick ball in hands as lay on ground

Teaching progression: pairs on knees, then squat, then step & dive; step foot points up field to keep side open position

Positioning and Angles; Vocabulary, Distribution:

Demonstration: rope around goal posts; show change in position as shooting point moves; should be able to dive and reach either rope; move from one yd in front of goal line to position just outside post as point moves. 'KEEPER!' or 'AWAY!'

Teaching progression: start just with goalie, and throw crosses; then add one A, then add near/far post A's then add one D; then add second goal with allies for wings, 3v3 in front of each goal;

ALTERNATE: set 6-8 discs on arc around 18 yd box. Position shooters behind each cone; in turn, each takes one touch then shoots at goalie, who fields ball and distributes to one of two outlet targets beyond corners of 18 yd box; in all drills, have two distribution targets for goalies to roll, throw, or boot to.

Tactics and Directing Defense:

Demonstration: goalie should be vocal in directing the defense, adjusting coverage, timing of attack on 1st attacker. Show this in 5v5 + G drill

Teaching progression: beyond 'KEEPER!' or 'AWAY!' goalie must direct fullbacks especially to cover far-side runs, support each other, etc. Use near game-condition drills such as 4v4 or 5v5 to coach this responsibility

Summary:

Teach proper ball handling fundamentals, positioning and angles, vocabulary and tactical direction of defense, distribution technique and judgment; goalie must be vocal in directing the defense

DEFENDING SET PIECES (DK, IFK, CK, GK)

Covering Served Balls (dr031)

With the GK at the near post, serve ground balls from the side. Add an attacker, being sure that the GK can get to the ball first. Gradually, add pressure on the GK by allowing the attacker to get closer prior to the serve or serving slower balls. Emphasize quick reaction to the serve and running through the ball on the pickup. At a higher level of GK, working on putting the support foot down between the attacker and the ball at pick up time can be emphasized.

Two keepers together, serve lofted balls. Both keepers should try to catch the ball initially. Later, allow the GK who can't make the catch try to punch the ball away from the other keeper. Of course, more than two GKs can be used in this "Animal Ball" activity.

Thanks to: Gary Rue, KY HS and Select

Set Play Drills (dr034)

Equipment: regular goal, 6 red bibs

Objectives: organize defense to IMMEDIATELY get set for direct kicks, corner kicks, other team's goal kicks

Corner kicks:

Demonstration: set 4D + G at proper spots (near post, far post, on 6 yd line at near post, on touch line as close as ref will allow to corner); direct all remaining players but one fwd to mark up; if too many A's, sacrifice set spots to mark in this order: close to kicker, far post, 6yd corner

Teaching Progression: set 4D + G; practice "KEEPER! AWAY!" against corner kicks, w/ clears to targets at corners of 18 yd box; gradually add attackers until have 4D+G vs 6A

Direct Kicks:

Demonstration: show change in # in wall as go from side angle & 1 in wall, to center with 5 in wall, to center/close with all on goal line, goalie in front; show goalie how to line up wall to cover one side, set self to cover remainder; Sweeper to cover 6 yd corner, remainder to mark up; wall MUST NOT break up until ball is kicked

Teaching Progression: 1st practice picking # & setting the wall; then add attackers and practice defending

Summary:

- In all cases, must organize FAST!
- On corner kicks, must cover 4 spots & mark up; clear to safety zones.
- On direct kicks, must set and hold wall at goalie's direction FAST, hold wall until kick, keep concentration.

PENALTY KICKS

See penaltykick.doc.

KEEPER COMMUNICATION

Listen to the Keeper!

Date: Sun, 29 Nov 1998

From: Ken Gamble

Lincoln Phillips, director of Top Flight Goalkeeping Academy, at one of the weekend clinics that he puts on. Coach Phillips feels strongly that the keeper be involved with the team during practice and not just working by himself.

a.. Have all the field players spread out and pass the ball back and forth to each other in front of their own goal. The keeper than calls out loudly "KEEPER!" as he runs out and gathers up the ball. Once he has collected the ball he calls out an exercise which all players including the keeper must do - for example - ten push-ups. Once the exercise is completed the keeper calls out loudly "OUT!", which is the command for his fullbacks and mids to go wide and downfield for an outlet pass. Once the ball passes midfield the players start the drill over by passing the ball around.

b.. The exercise gets the goalkeeper to talk to his field players. It puts the keeper in charge.

c.. It also gets the field players to listen to the keeper. They learn the two main commands of "Keeper" and Out" and they also learn to listen to the exercise commands the keeper gives which translates into listening to the keeper during games.

Yelling "Keeper"

Date: Tue, 28 Dec 1999

From: George Gehrig

One glaring omission from the keeper sites I have surfed to is a simple drill that has had a big impact for the teams I have coached:

- All, or part, of the team in the penalty box.
- Keeper on the goal line.
- Coach standing outside the penalty box at various points.
- Coach rolls/throws/bounces ball into the goal box.
- Keeper yells "Keeper!" and moves to get the ball.
- Everyone else gets out of the way.

This drill has saved more goals than I can count...

Preventative Goalkeeping

Date: Tue, 10 Nov 1998

From: Shawn Kelly

Communication and Team Defensive Shape

by: Mick Darcy - SoccerPlus Camps Director 1-800-KEEPER-1

www.soccerpluscamps.com

To be a good goalkeeper you must possess many skills. Most keepers start off in goal because they are good shot stoppers or because they have good hands. The more they play in goal they develop their technical and tactical skills. They recognize threats to the goal and deal with them effectively. The highest level of

the position is preventative Goalkeeping skills. These are often difficult to see and there are no stats kept except for the most important, Goals Against.

Preventative Goalkeeping skills deprive the opposition of quality scoring opportunities. The most effective way to do this is to prevent the opposition from possessing the ball in your final third. Obviously as a goalkeeper you are physically limited by the confines of the goal so you must verbally direct your teammates to perform the tasks at hand.

There are five steps to improve your preventative Goalkeeping skills.

#1 Know the Game

Young goalkeepers should become students of the game of soccer in addition to being players. Check with your local state association and see when you can take your USSF "E" or "F" coaching license. You could also volunteer to be an assistant coach of a younger team. These experiences will offer you a different perspective on the game and help you understand the roles of individual players and their responsibilities on the field.

#2 Know Your System of Play

What style of defense does your team play? Do you have a sweeper or do you play flat at the back? Do you play man to man or do you play zonal? At what place on the field does your team start to pressure the ball? Do your outside midfielders force attackers inside or outside? Do you use an offside trap? Where is your restraining line to defend set pieces from 50 yards, 35 yards? How does your team defend corner kicks and long throw ins?

These are all basic tactical decisions that your coach has decided upon and your team should play accordingly. However, theory and practice are different and players will have to be reminded constantly throughout the game. If you do not know what is supposed to be going on you cannot properly direct your teammates.

#3 Know Your Teammates

No two players are alike. Your two outside full backs will probably have the same responsibilities but they will not play alike. Learn their strengths and weaknesses. One defender may be particularly fast and therefore not have to mark his man very tight because he can recover quickly. However, if he leaves too big a gap he may not be able to catch up. If you think the gap is too big let him know. Your other defender may not be as fast and prefer to mark tightly. But there may be times in the game when he will need to drop off a little and provide some depth.

Know which midfielders are good at tackling. Those who are not should be encouraged to delay the player on the ball until there is adequate cover. You should not ask your teammates to do something that they are unable to do. One player may be able to switch the point of attack by driving the ball from one side of the field to the other, whereas another player may not have the strength to do

so. The more you know about your teammates the better information you will be able to provide.

#4 Recognize and Correct Problems

This is where your improved knowledge of the game will become an advantage. Most people can look at the replay of a goal and tell you where the breakdown occurred that led to the goal. They are as helpful as Monday morning quarterbacks. You can really help your team by recognizing problems as they are happening, do something to avert the danger and then make the adjustments so that it doesn't happen again. You may think that's the coaches job and it is. However, players on the field can often spot problems first and no-one is in a better position to do so than the goalkeeper.

Recognizing the problem is difficult but correcting it can often be harder. In these circumstances some advanced thinking can help. In the days prior to a game try to anticipate some of the things that could go wrong. If your team is playing with an offside trap but the opposition is getting in behind your defense do you abandon the trap or look to see why it is not working as well as it did in your other games. Maybe your midfield is not putting pressure on the ball. That can be corrected. Maybe one of your defenders is slow stepping up. That can be corrected. Maybe the referees assistant is having a bad day. Abandon the trap.

The key here is to prepare yourself for as many contingencies as possible. This is one of the reasons why professional goalkeepers are older than most of their teammates. The more experience you have the easier it is to identify and correct problems. They may not be as strong and as quick as their younger counterparts but their anticipation and on field coaching make up for any physical deficiencies.

#5 Post Game Evaluation

Not every issue can be corrected in the game. When a game is over you should take a little time to reflect on how you played and how the team performed. Jot down any issues that need to be addressed and discuss them with your coach so that you can correct them as a team on the practice field. Caution! Always remember that thinking like a coach does not make you the coach. You may disagree with your coach on some issues and that's O.K. as long as you make your points in a constructive manner and accept the coach's decision as final at the end of any tactical discussion.

The amount of communication required will depend upon the ability level of your teammates and your system of play. In the traditional sweeper system you will talk mostly to the sweeper and he will direct the defense from his position. In a flat back 3 or 4 the goalkeeper is required to communicate a lot more directly with all his defenders. A man to man defense is fairly simplistic in that every player knows their role and it is easy to see if a player is not doing his job. A zonal defense is a lot more complicated and the goalkeeper must help out his defenders as forwards are passed on from zone to zone. You may also find that

one of your central defenders is the team captain and he is very vocal. If someone else on the team is giving the same instructions that you are thinking there is no need to repeat the message.

As you can see the art of communication is simple in principal but complex in execution. The keeper must have the confidence to direct his defense and the knowledge to give the right information. He must also know what tone of voice to use with different players and when to talk and when to be quiet. The goal of any goalkeeper is not to concede any goals. There will always be an incredible amount of satisfaction by shutting out a team and making 6 or 7 brilliant saves but you will learn to equally enjoy the pleasure of shutting out a team by shutting down their offense with solid preventative Goalkeeping skills.

GOAL KEEPER TRAINING

Thoughts on Training Goalkeepers

Date: Tue, 8 Sep 1998

From: Les Sparks

With the new season starting, many coaches are faced with having to train new goal keepers. For what they're worth, here are a few thoughts on keeper training.

The coach and the team must have a clear idea of what they expect from a keeper. I feel that the number one thing you want from your keepers is that they make 100% of all the easy saves. For a young keeper, or an inexperienced keeper at any age, the easy save is often limited ball kicked directly to the keeper. So this is your starting point as a coach. Work with your keepers to make sure that they can deal with 100% of the balls kicked directly at them. Use the various catching and boxing drills posted here on my web site to achieve this goal.

The second thing you need to do is expand the definition of an easy save for your keeper. This is where the various positioning and footwork drills come in. So what you want to do in your practice sessions is mix catching and footwork/positioning drills to make sure that your keepers can make the easy save and that they can expand the zone of the easy save. You should be able to find 15 minutes or so in every 90 minute practice session to work with your keeper on these two areas. As you work to extend your keeper's range, be sure that the keeper always enjoys success. If the keeper is unable to deal with less than say 50 to 60% of the balls served during a drill, you're probably moving too fast. If the keeper can save over 90% of the balls during a drill, you're being too easy.

Note that you must know the limits of your keepers. If they miss an saveable ball that is out of their easy save range, don't get upset. Figure out what needs to happen to move that ball into the easy save range and work on it in practice. If your keeper blows an easy save, don't yell and scream, figure out what happened and correct the error in practice. See my web site for some ideas on what leads to blown easy saves.

Finally be positive with the keeper. Keeper errors are very obvious because they lead to goals. Errors made by the other 10 players are hidden and expected. Make sure that the team doesn't blame the keeper for the goals your team allows. Everyone needs to remember that if the other 10 players were perfect, the keeper would never have to make a save.

One final thought, don't stick the keeper in goal for shooting drills and expect a lot of saves.

Date: Wed, 9 Sep 1998

From: Bryan L. Pinn

I keep a notebook describing every goal that went in: angle, distance, height, speed... my position... my response... even ground and weather conditions. He also suggested recording "good saves" in the same way. I soon stopped recording saves, but I kept notes on goals well into my adult career. Over the years, I've known several other GKs, and read of more, with the same habit. Even as a youngster, I could see when the same sort of goal was being scored... and begin to figure out why. (It was all self coaching back then.) Now I open the book for the memories of games and faces... but that book (and its successors) helped me learn my weaknesses and correct them.

Training Very Young (U9 or 10 and younger) GK

Date: Sat, 5 Sep 1998

From: Les Sparks

I think that questions regarding training very young keepers are important and deserve their own thread. Here's my first shot.

First let's define the age group as U9 or U10 and younger. I don't think that any kid this young should play full time keeper. All the kids should get some keeper training. This training should first go over the rules for keepers: where they can use their hands and how they are allowed to get rid of the ball (for example a local rec league allows the keepers to run to the top of the area and get rid of the ball, another league enforces the 4 step rule more or less.)

Specific training should be aimed at teaching proper catching technique. Forget diving and all the advanced stuff.

For the upper limit of the age group (U9) you can begin to teach positioning. Stress importance of protecting near post, cutting down angle, and moving across the goal mouth as the ball moves across the field. You can teach them to come off the line for free balls in the area where they can handle the ball. (You can begin this at U7 probably)

Spend time on what to do after the keeper gets the ball. Teach the kids not to panic. Lots of kids in this age (and older too) want to get rid of the ball as soon as possible. Teach them to catch the ball, take a deep breath, let the traffic clear, and then get rid of the ball. U8 and younger you probably want to kick, throw, or whatever the ball as far up field as possible. Advanced U9 you can probably start adding other options, if the field players have sufficient skill to retain control of the ball after the keeper gets it to them. If the field players lack skill, then its still best to blast the ball upfield.

The team should buy a couple of jr keeper gloves (2 sizes so that all the kids can use them) that are form fitting and provide a dimpled surface. (These gloves cost under \$10) Avoid the big gloves. As anyone who has coached young kids baseball can tell you, young kids can barely control their bare hands. So don't even think about any of the large modern gloves.

At U8 or so, you may find a kid who is more serious about being a keeper and will come to practice with a pair of big gloves, just like the big kids use. I suggest you don't let him use them because of the kid's inability to control them. Talk to the parents and explain why you're not using the big gloves. (Better yet have a meeting before the \$ are spent)

Assuming that practice time is limited, I would suggest a few sessions as follows:

1. For the whole team go over the rules for keepers.
2. For the whole team demonstrate proper catching. Divide the team into pairs and let them practice catching. Walk around and make necessary corrections.
3. Above is probably 5 to 10 minutes.
4. Set up shooting/keeper drills and rotate all kids into the goal. Keeper teaching points are catching technique and what to do after the ball is caught.
5. During scrimmages emphasis on what keeper should do with ball after the save.

First key point for training young keepers: Don't blame keepers for giving up a goal.

Second key point for training youth keepers is that the coach **MUST** stay calm when the keeper has the ball. Too many coaches panic and start screaming "GET RID OF THE BALL." If the coach panics, there is no way to expect the kids to stay calm.

Third key point is remember that young kids have a short attention span and may be studying the bugs on the field while the ball is headed for the back of the net. Don't let this bother you. Enjoy it.

U8 Goalkeeping Practice Session

From: Bernie Hayden

We started the practice by reviewing the dribbling/juggling skills we'd worked on the previous practice. This allowed some of the late arrivals to wander in:

Dribble in place, inside to inside - quick touches

Dribble If inside-rt outside, rt inside-lf outside (continuous)

Instep juggle; kick and catch w/ "W" (intro last week to laces kick)

Introduced "takeovers", leave ball with outside - collect with inside

S T R E T C H

We try to do most of our stretching with a ball.

Roll it in a figure 8 around and between legs,

Roll around legs and back in sitting position.

Talk about "W" hand position for catching balls

Toss from kneeling position and catch (hand position)

Toss from kneeling position, stand & catch:

Reinforce hand position and show why hands s/b away from body. Have player throw the ball <AT> you while you are kneeling (to be at their height). Demonstrate that hands close to body will result in deflection up and back where hands out make it easier to absorb impact and any deflections will be down and forward where you have a better chance of recovering.

Break into two lines and roll the ball to partner:

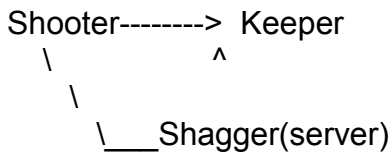
Show technique for dropping to one knee and "hugging" ball to body. Show that thigh in front of ball will act as back stop and prevent ball going between legs. Emphasis <ROLLING> the ball on the ground. This is the preferred method for distributing the ball QUICKLY after a save. A bouncing ball is more likely to be mishandled. Throws to the middle often result in a quick goal against you. Punting skills are not well developed at this age.

Progress to GK rolling and return push pass.

Reinforce that good roll to the feet makes possible a controlled return pass.

Set-up lines for "Shooter, Keeper, Shagger"

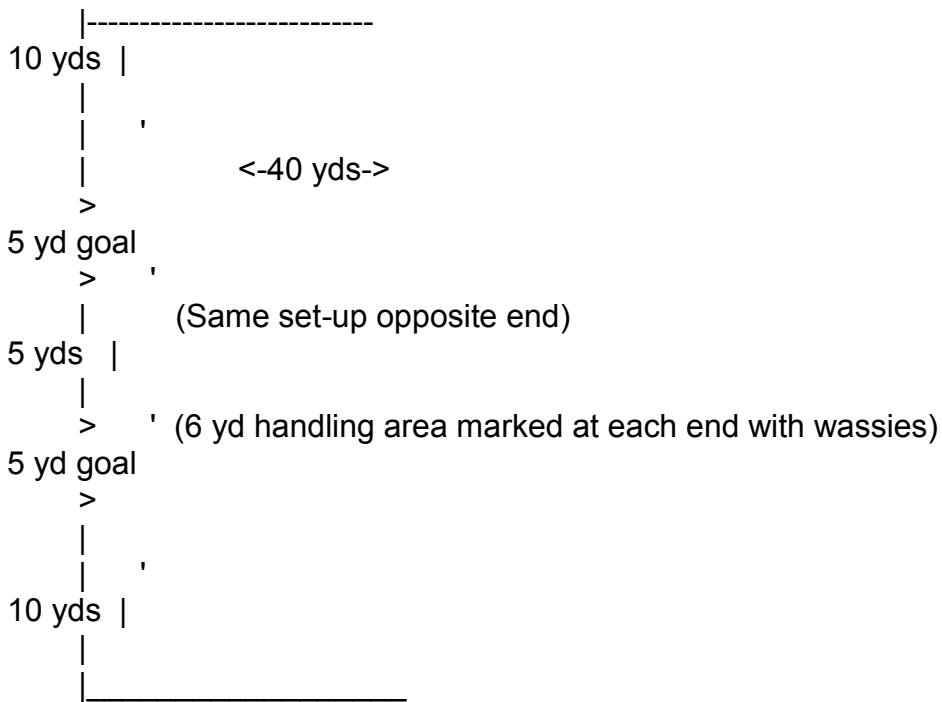
^



Line up the team behind the Shooter and the Shagger. We did this with 6 players and put two at Shagger and three at Shooter (6th is the first GK). With more people set up two lines of Shaggers so the ball can be served from alternating sides. The first Shagger rolls the ball to the person at the front of the Shooter line. The Shooter takes a shot on goal and must follow the shot because they immediately become the next Keeper. The previous GK goes to the back of the Shagger line (hopefully with the ball but in this case the coach did a lot of shagging to assure that there was always someone there to serve the next ball). After serving to the Shooter the Shagger rotates to the back of the Shooter line. With a larger older group this should run non-stop by itself. With U8s doing it for the first time it required one coach retrieving errant shots and an assistant working as "traffic cop" to keep things rolling. As the kids catch on the Shagger should serve the next ball as the new keeper is still running to position.

Practice Scrimmage (2v2 + GKs)

I set-up a shortened field with 2 goals at each end.



This set-up challenged the GK mentally and physically. It provided lots of shots on goal, dramatically showed the value of spreading the defense and rewarded the keeper who played up (punishing anyone who tried to camp between one set of flags or the other). Rotate the kids through goal every 3-4 minutes. 20 minutes of this and even U8s go home tired :-)

Point that was missed. Communicate! We tried to work on this with takeovers at the start of practice. GK should get in the habit of yelling "keep" if he wants the ball or "away" if he wants defender to clear it. Communication is one of the major goals for the year. Coach missed a perfect opportunity here - 5 laps next practice!

Keeper Training

Date: Tue, 4 Jan 2000

From: Robert C. Christensen

Ethan,

First, you should know that I coach Jr. High (Middle School) teams (grades 7-9, I was coaching a 7th grade team last fall). I knew that I needed to work with (or actually develop) a keeper because the one player who actually called himself a keeper at the start of the season had only limited rec experience and some obvious bad habits that were not only dangerous in the sense of allowing goals, but actually physically dangerous to himself!

OK, my format was 1.5 hours once a week (on our only "off night" from regular practice). I usually had 5-8 players attend, which is a good number. It is enough to do some tactical stuff, but not enough to take away from the necessary one-on-one technical training.

First, I had them warm up. I had them do some different stuff from a traditional field player warm up. One was to have them pair up and move up the field, distributing the ball in an underhanded roll up the field to their mate, who was moving. Then, as the mate got into position to make the "save", the original distributor sprints up field himself, to become the next target. This continues all the way down a full size field and back. Stretch, including more shoulder and arm stretches than field players.

Another good one that gets them accustomed to the goal mouth is to have them side step from post to post without crossing their legs, and as they get to each post, jump up and touch the upper corner of the crossbar. After touching both corners, they sidestep and touch the low corners, where the post meets the ground. They continue to side step and alternate between jumping for the

crossbar corners and touching the lower post corners for about a minute (this is a long time, or at least seems like it). I make it a contest, with each player keeping track of how many touches they can get in a minute.

Now, I needed to work technique very badly with my players, so we devoted at least half of each session to different ways to catch and distribute the ball. Normally I have them pair up and work one-on-one with a partner. I like them about 10 yards apart, but some pairs tend to wander farther apart and others tend to gravitate closer together. I allow that as long as the technique is still being worked.

I teach them the proper technique for low collections (both bending at the waist and one knee lowered), waist-chest high collections (both hands and arms) and high collections (hands). At first, all the balls should be straight at the keeper so that they can concentrate on the proper hand/arm/body positioning without having to worry about getting in position too much.

Then, I teach how to dive safely and effectively for the ball. This is where many players who I coach have dangerous (to themselves) technique. I teach them the proper hand and arm positioning so that the ball actually takes most of the force of the fall. I start them on their knees with stationary ball at the proper distance and have them work this way until they have the technique down (or at least passable). This usually takes about 20-30 minutes for most players, which can seem like an eternity, but some quickly are ready for a slowly rolled ball.

After the players have the general idea, proceed to a slowly rolled ball. Pair them up again and position the partners about 5-8 yards apart. Have them slowly roll the ball to a point where their partner must fully extend to get to the ball. At first, tell them to keep their knees (at least the knee closest to the ball) on the ground. This will force them to work on the technique, and not simply launch themselves to swallow up the ball with their arms. If the players are having trouble judging and delivering the ball to the proper distance from their mate, use flat cones positioned straight alongside each player at the proper distance. This will also help the keepers come out at an angle to meet the ball, and not just launch themselves sideways.

Later, have them speed up their delivery and finally show them how to do this save from their feet, still using the ball to cushion their fall. The proper technique for this is needed before you move on to dynamically rotating the body to get the hands down for a save. Actually, I have only reached this stage of training with one keeper in the last year, an 8th grade girl who had never played keeper, but was a natural and took to it like a fish to water!

Like I said, the 1st half of the practice (or more) was devoted to technique. The 2nd half (or so) was devoted to tactics. I include position with respect to the goal as part of tactics. We go over the angles (I do not use a rope to show the angles,

but this would work well....it just takes too long for me to set up). We go over how to cut down the angles.

I also teach them the proper technique for coming out after the ball. I usually include this in tactics instead of technique since it really requires a lot of tactical savvy timing and deciding when to come out after the ball. This is another technique that I really stress since poor form can be extremely dangerous to the keeper. Time your take off at a long touch on the ball if possible. Once committed DO NOT change your mind (even if you have seen Scurry do it ;~) Time your dive properly so that your body is horizontal when meeting the ball. Go down with the upper leg protecting your gut. Absorb the shock of the ball (if being struck) with the gut, and with the body relaxed (yeah right ;~) Etc.

We also go over redistribution, rolling, basketball throw, and punt. When each is most appropriate, proper technique, etc. Also changing the point of attack after a save (always go to the weak side of the defense if you cannot bypass them with the throw or punt). I also like to work on defending corners and on PK defense, but I do not dwell on these since our time is very limited. I DO go over the keepers role in support of the attack (back passes), and as the Keeper/Sweeper on defense when the ball is deep in the opponents half (since this is how I like my keepers to play, YMMV).

Well, you get the idea. I move from pure technical stuff to pure tactical stuff in each session, mainly because there are new players showing up for my sessions each week (I had 9 of the 14 players on my team show up for at least one session, and about 6 from other teams, including a HS player who wanted to try goal, and even a special olympics keeper who was already dog-gone good). So I repeated the sessions while changing the tactical bent each week.

This is getting too long, but I hope that you get a fairly good idea of how I structure my "keeper kamps". I made these sessions completely voluntary (they were on Wed afternoons, when catechism is held, so they could not officially be part of the teams training regimen ;~) But I also told the prospective keepers that they WOULD NOT play in goal during games until they demonstrated that they could do so safely and effectively. So there was some pretty strong incentive to come to the sessions. BTW, I played 6 different keepers during the season. The players loved the sessions. I even had a (self proclaimed) striker come "just so he could see how to beat the keeper better". And fun was had by all. But I did sometimes come away with some lumps and bruises from my "less than perfect" form during my demonstrations ;~)

The Difference between Goalkeeper Training and Coaching

NSCAA 1999 - Goalkeeping Coaching Session

Date: Sat, 17 Apr 1999

From: Gary Rue

Goalkeeping Coaching Session
The Difference between Goalkeeper Training and Coaching
Gary Walker, Manchester City FC.

<From the Convention Program Notes>

The practice/coaching session begins with a structured routine with and without the ball. The routine provides the Goalkeeper with a full warm up. The Goalkeeper has now had an array of shots, which he has had to deal with. This is an unopposed technique practice, which many Goalkeeper coaches use. This, in my opinion, must not be taken as Goalkeeper coaching. To actually coach Goalkeeping, we must now introduce outfield players, both defenders and attackers. As you are aware, Goalkeeping is about making decisions, when to come for the ball, when not to etc. Throughout the session I now add outfield players and coach the Goalkeeper, not only technique, but also positional play, communication with defenders and decision making.

Routine (basic technique). For ease of practice, the routine lasts 30 minutes.

1. Warm-up without the ball
2. Warm-up with the ball
3. Balls to feet
4. Balls to middle
5. Balls to head
6. Balls over head
7. Collapse save
8. Stretch save
9. Bouncing ball, to feet, to side, to stretch
10. Unopposed crosses

Key Factors

1. Start position
2. Head steady, concentration, eye on the ball
3. Movement of feet
4. Technique of save

Now the Keeper is ready to be coached!

NSCAA 1998 -- Goal Keeper Training Games

Christopher C. Ducar - National Director, SoccerPlus Goalkeeper School

Chris has his clinic session posted on his web site at
<http://home.earthlink.net/~cducar/98clinic.html>

This page is a mere copy of Chris's web page. Thanks to Chris for this information right from the clinicians mouth. Please don't settle for this copy, go over to Chris's web site at <http://home.earthlink.net/~cducar/> to see all the other cool stuff offered there. The only thing we've added is page numbers. There are at least 9 papers offered at Chris's site. You can contact Chris at the following addresses:

SoccerPlus

Personal

1-800-KEEPER-1

E-mail: spgs4@aol.com

E-mail: cducar@earthlink.net

Web: <http://www.goalkeeper.com>

Web: <http://home.earthlink.net/~cducar/>

North Carolina: 919-918-7733

The focus on this session was tactical. It was assumed that the keepers had a solid foundation of breakaway related technique and positional skill.

Goalkeeper Training Games

Team Possession Warm Up With Goalkeepers

Emphasis: Include goalkeeper in routine warm up, field skills, distribution decisions, handling

- One goalkeeper per team.
- X number of passes equals a goal.
- Restrictions: Must go through goalkeeper at least once.
- If ball is played to keeper in the air, it must be caught (a drop is a turnover)
- If ball is played on the ground, keeper must use feet only
- If other team is in possession, keeper can win ball breakaway style or intercept passes with hands.

Breakaway Related Training

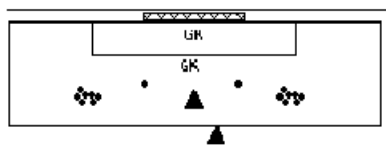
House of Pain

Emphasis: Patience versus aggression/decision making, field skills, fitness

- Duration: 1-2 minutes In a 12 x 12 yard space
- Play 2 v 1 or 2 v 2 + 1
- Goalkeeper not in possession must win the ball and switch to possession team.
- Team in possession at the end of time wins.
- Loser does a "special" exercise.

In Your Face

Emphasis: Smothering the shot, change of direction/balance, concentration, reaction speed



[bmp picture above]

- Set up: one goalkeeper in goal. one out near the penalty spot and one or two strikers about 13 yards away
- Two balls, one placed one step in from the post equal with the 12
- Striker starts with back to goal and turns to shoot on goal.
- First keeper must save/smother the shot. If he/she cannot, second keeper must keep the ball out of the back of the net.
- Replace kicked ball with one from ball pile.
- Three saves and the keeper is out

The Challenge

Emphasis: Decision making, smothering, point blank shape, transition to attack, field skills, fitness

- Large goals 18 yards apart
- Balls in each net, 2 goalkeepers
- Initially one keeper acts as striker. Ball is in the center of the field. Both players are facing each other. The "striker" is bent over at the waist with one hand on the ball. Keeper is in his crouched ready position and is positioned one "big" step away from the ball.
- Once the "striker" removes the hand from the ball, the game is live.
- Striker tries to score Keeper attempts to get possession If keeper gains possession, he/she must place ball on ground (to show control) and then may attack opposite goal if striker misses, keeper gets ball at midfield if keepers saves and it goes out of bounds, keeper gets possession if goal is scored, keeper becomes striker
- Game is played until one keeper scores 3 OR With more than two keepers, play winner stays on.

"MLS" SHOOTOUT

Emphasis: Decision making, reading the speed and touch of the striker, getting comfortable coming off the goal line

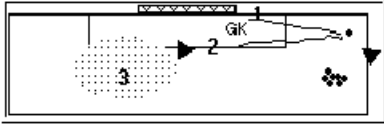
- Great team competition game
- One team attacks, Goalkeepers rotate after each shot
- One on One, striker v. goalkeeper
- Striker starts 35 yards away from goal with ball.
- On coaches signal, player heads to goal. Ball must be shot within 5 seconds or it does not count.
- Each striker gets one try.

Positional Considerations for balls inside the 18

Three Goal Situation (Three Priorities)

- First Goal is the actual goal the GK must be patient and remain at the near post in case of a direct shot

- Second Goal is the "goal" defined by the near post to approximately the six yard box the GK is looking to intercept the pass across the 6 to the oncoming striker
- Third Goal is the space behind the GK from the center of the goal to the far post the GK must recover using footwork into this space



[bmp picture above]

OTHER

Solutions to Some Keeper Equipment Problems

Date: Mon, 14 Sep 1998

From: Gary Rue

From the July/August 1996 edition of "The Keeper's Line," here are some creative ways to take care of equipment problems, especially for goalkeepers:

- * Jersey comes untucked - wear sliding shorts and tuck your jersey into them
- * Socks fall down - hold up with elastic (the kind found in a waistband, not a rubber band)
- * Shinguards fall down - hold up with athletic tape or tie your laces from your shoes around your ankle
- * Glove wrist enclosure comes undone - use tape or sweatbands
- * Jersey slides up your arm - tuck cuffs into gloves or use sweatbands
- * Shoe laces come undone - tie in a double knot and tuck extra into shoes
- * Sun is in your eyes - wear a soft brimmed hat or wear black-out
- * Dry gloves - make damp from water, some like to chew gum and use saliva to make gloves extra sticky, keep a damp towel in the goal
- * Freezing hands - wear thin gloves with no fingers (to keep the feel) under your keeper gloves
- * Hot days - bring water bottle into the net with you before the half
- * Rainy days, wet gloves - keep hands in a fist so the palms are not exposed to the rain

Working Your Two Keepers plus Strikers

Date: Mon, 21 Sep 1998

From: ront

There are those that are confounded by trying to work BOTH their keepers PLUS their strikers at the same time. Try this.

X Y
X Y
X Y

 K1
Z

|____K2____|

Ball pool with either Y line. First Y strikes a ball at K1 (can designate type, e.g. ground, chip, driven, etc. but must be one that K1 can handle). Both X and Y then run towards the goal. K1 distributes by bowling (or other specified technique) to X who goes in on K2 for shot with Y as clean-up. If K2 saves, distributes by specified means either up to Y line or to a designated coach who is roving about the field somewhere. Switch lines. Switch direction of distribution. Switch K1 and K2.

Z is like the imaginary spot or a flat cone on the ground at which the attacking striker will receive the distribution from the first keeper. The idea is that the first keeper "saves", then distributes nicely in a manner approximating a through ball to onrushing striker who either finishes one time, dribbles and shoots, crosses to other striker, or, probably most likely, trips over own feet and falls on butt.

Game for Including Goalkeeper in Field Player Work

Date: Thu, 6 Sep 2001

From: Michael O'Leary

I heard about a game that is meant to get kids to follow up their shots, but also has a role for goalkeepers, and I'd like to ask if this sounds like a good idea. In the game, three players stand out in front of the penalty area, about ten yards apart, with one ball. A goalkeeper stands in goal. One player passes to another player, who immediately takes a shot. If the shot goes in, the three are done, but they should start far enough away that this first shot should be one that the goalkeeper can get his hands on. If the goalkeeper catches the ball, he rolls it into the penalty area and the nearest player takes another shot. If the goalkeeper

blocks the shot, the nearest player shoots from where the ball bounces to. (A time limit may be need to be set so players shoot within a couple of seconds or so of when they get to a ball.) The three field players continue shooting until they score or the ball goes out of bounds. This sounds like a good game for both field players and the goalkeeper in terms of getting lots of action, but I wonder about the mental impact on the goalkeepers, since the game is structured for them, ideally, to lose every time. Is this an acceptable game for a BU-11 team? Anyone have any suggestions for improving how this game runs?

Date: Thu, 6 Sep 2001
From: PETER V GRATTON

To make it possible for the Keeper to WIN the game, add points to the mix. Anytime the keeper makes a save of any kind [touches the ball] 2 points to the keeper. Attackers get one point for a score and ZERO for out of bounds or shots that don't score. You can adjust the points based on skill level. Say two points for a keeper controlled save and one point for a parry/knocked away shot.

Date: Fri, 7 Sep 2001
From: Roy Henninger

A game my U-11's love that gets 2 goalkeepers involved is called. I think, "flying changes". Anyway, you get two goals facing each other 20 yards apart with a keeper in each goal. The rest of the team line up with a ball on the left corner of each goal. Since the goals are facing each other, the lines are diagonal from one another. This is a very fast game and the kids are not in line long. Designate a player to defend initially and have the player opposite come out with the ball and try to score. There is no right or left boundary lines, but if the ball goes over the end line, either in the goal or not, the 1st player in line on that side comes out immediately with a new ball and tries to score. The player on the field that was from the other side tries to defend. Its a transitional, think-fast kind of game, lots of shooting, lots of work for the keepers.

Seven Byes GK-Striker Heading and Volleying Game

Date: Tue, 10 Nov 1998
From: Stephen McNab

Another game we used if our friends mummies kept them in the house after tea and we couldn't get enough people to pick sides was a game we called "Seven Byes". Usually one or two strikers plus someone to cross the ball and a keeper. Keeper scored if one of the strikers put the ball over for a "bye kick". Strikers scored on volleys and headers only. First one to seven goals won and if the keeper won he got to pick the next keeper otherwise he stayed in again. You could even play this game with two if you set up your goal near a building with a

slanty roof, striker knocks it up onto the roof and waits for it to bounce back to him for a volley or header.

What to Do Against a Super Keeper

Date: Wed, 18 Nov 1998

From: Gary Rue

As in the outdoor game, I am a firm believer in creating a shot by playing a ball that moves away from the keeper. In indoor, this could be the ball that rebounds off the wall near the GK. The GK must follow the ball to the wall and possibly would be off balance as the ball bounds away from him.

As in outdoor, if a player can get to the back wall and lay a ball back. I call this a "back angle."

The other thing a team must take advantage of is GK deflections off hard shots. Attackers must always look for and react to a deflection for any GK, but especially a good one. A good GK will save a ball an average GK wouldn't, but often that save is not a catch.

As one last point, shoot low and about a foot wide of the GK. This is the toughest area for a GK on a low shot.