



**Important tips about the position:**

At the recreation level any player who wants to try the goalkeeping position should get that chance. They should be introduced to the basic rules and practice the position before putting them into this position in a game. In fact, as long as the player is not terrified of the position it is very beneficial for them to experience this position to understand how difficult goalkeeping is. Rotating goalies in the younger age group is a good practice.

Whether the player is going to specialize in goalkeeping or not, they must be good with their feet as well. It is extremely important for all goalkeepers to practice the same foot skills that the field players are practicing.

Soccer is a team sport and giving up a goal is not a direct reflection of the persons ability in the goal. The ball had to get down the field somehow in order to get a shot on goal. It is important for the goalie and the team to not blame the goalkeeper for a goal. Keep it fun and get every player involved.

**Basic rules to know:**

- A goalie can use any part of their body to play the ball inside the penalty area. This area may vary in size at different levels. It should be clearly marked so there is no confusion between the goalie and the field players. As long as the ball is inside this area the goalie can use their hands or any other part of their body to play the ball.
- Once the goalie has possession of the ball in their hands they have 6 seconds to distribute the ball back into play. The goalie can kick or throw it to one of their teammates. You may also drop it at your feet and dribble or pass the ball but you cannot pick the ball back up once you drop it and play it with your feet.
- If one of your teammates intentionally passes the ball back to you by kicking it, you cannot use your hands to play the ball. You can however play it with your feet (like a field player). If the ball deflects off any player and is not intentionally played back to the goalkeeper, you can use your hands to play the ball.

**Teach:**

- Try to punt, throw or kick the ball to the outside of the field.
- Take your time when distributing the ball to your teammates.
- Call for the ball when you are going to pick it up.
- Stand near the top of the penalty box when the play is at the other end of the field to be ready to play the ball if needed.

**Goal keeping stance**

A soccer goalkeeper should always stay square to the ball with hips and shoulders turned toward the shooter. In the event of a loose ball, always keep it in front of you and be ready to react. When a shot is taken, the soccer goalkeeper should be square to the shooter with the knees bent slightly and on the balls of the feet. Arms should be at their sides with the hands outstretched and the torso should be leaning forward ready to spring into action.

**Goal keeping footwork**

A good soccer goalkeeper is always moving. They should be shuffling or bouncing on the balls of their feet, ready to spring into action. A soccer goalkeeper who plays "flat on their feet" is going to get beat more often, so always be in the "ready" position. Use the shuffle step to move back and forth in the goal area. This will keep the goalkeeper square to the ball and help prevent tripping. The key here is not to cross your feet as you move from side to side.

**Goal Keeping positioning**

Keep an eye out as to how you are positioned in the net. Occasionally glance to each post and adjust your position accordingly. Depending on the pressure you're under, you'll want to give the shooter the least amount of open net to shoot at. Never stand directly on the goal line. This will give the shooter a large part of the net to shoot at.

**Goal keeping Recovery**

A successful soccer goalkeeper recovers quickly from a save. They get on their feet and keep their hands free to be prepared for another save. Practice getting up quickly without the use of the hands.

In the beginning of the season I would suggest going over these important tips and the basic rules with the team as a group. Explain the rules near the goal with visual examples.

After a good overview is given to the team ask for your first couple of volunteers to be goalie for the first game. It can be 2,3, or 4 players depending on how many you want to rotate each game. Pick your goalies for the week, and use them in the shooting drills included in each weeks practice plan.

If you have an assistant coach have them work with your "weekly" goalies for about 5-10 minutes before the shooting drills begin. I have included a few basic drills to help the goalies get started.

### **Catching the ball**

The goalkeeper should reach up as high as possible to grab the ball out of the air. If they are unable to catch the ball they can try to knock the ball to the side or out of bounds.

*Drill-* have the coach throw the ball to the goalkeeper at all different heights. Make them move from side to side while catching the ball also. The goalkeeper should shuffle their feet while moving side to side.

### **Getting in front of the ball**

When a ball is shot on goal try to get your entire body in front of the ball. Similar to fielding a baseball, your body is there to protect from a bad bounce or misplay.

*Drill-* have the coach roll the ball slowly to the goalkeepers left and right so they have to move to pick up the ball. Teach them to move to get the ball and not reach for the ball. The ball should be rolled slowly so the goalie has enough time to move in front of the ball.

### **Stopping a ball to the side**

Diving to the side is sometimes the only way to save a ball from going into the net. It is very difficult at a young age to teach the proper diving technique. Just let the goalkeeper know that they can dive with their hand to one side or the other to save a shot. You will find some players will try it and some will not.

*Drill-* have the goalie go on their knees on the goal line. The coach should roll the ball slowly to their right or left just far enough so the goalie has to dive for the ball from their knees. Because they are on their knees they are closer to the ground and are more likely to try to dive for the ball.

### **Clearing a ball near the penalty box area**

If the ball is near the line at the edge of the penalty box area the goalie should play it with their feet to clear it away. If there is ever a question if they can use their hands or not—use your feet to be safe.

*Drill-* Have the goalie start on the goal line. Roll the ball slowly towards the top of the penalty area (with the ball coming towards the goal). The goalie must run off the goalline and kick the ball to the side. Repeat this a number of times.

### **Distributing the ball to a teammate**

When the goalie gets possession of the ball they should immediately run to the top corner of the penalty area (with the ball) and look to throw the ball to a teammate who is not in the middle of the field.

*Drill-* Kick balls into the penalty area and have the goalie gain possession of the ball and run the top corner of the penalty area and throw the ball to a target (a coach or a few cones can be used).

### **1 V 1 What do I do?**

Breakaways or 1 against 1 should be met with an aggressive goalie trying to make the opponent lose the ball. Goalies should rush out to an on coming player but should be under control. Many times the player with the ball will not control the dribble and the ball will end up in the goalies hands.

*Drill-* simple 1V1 drills with the teammates.

### **Goal kicks**

Goalkeepers can or cannot take goal kicks. This is up to the coach.

*Drill-* practice goal kicks with the goal keepers. Make sure they kick them to the side and not in the middle of the field.

Make sure the basics are covered with the entire team and there is some practice time spent with the players that are going to play goal in the next game. An unprepared goalkeeper does not put them in a situation to succeed.

If there is any hesitation by the player about playing goal, move on to the next volunteer and maybe in a few games the player will want to try the position.