

Goal Keeping

Introduction to the Goal Keeper

As all of us know, the goal keeper has one of the most important jobs on the field and yet we don't often find enough time to work with and train them. Consequently the time we do get to work with our keepers must be put to the best use possible. And drills that the entire team is involved with can, and should be used, to train the keeper as well.

Too many coaches limit goal keeper training to kicking a few balls at the keeper followed by using the keeper in the team's normal shooting practice. In my opinion these shooting practices are all too often a waste of the keeper's time.

First, there is no set idea by anyone, coach, keeper, or shooters, about what the purpose of the drill is for the keeper. Is she supposed to work on low balls, high balls, or what? Coaches don't work with field players without an idea of what they expect from the practice, and keepers deserve the same.

Second, the players put the ball everywhere but on net. They kick the ball over, around, and if it were possible under the goal. If the ball is not placed on net, the keeper doesn't get any work. The players should concentrate on getting the ball on net and forget about trying to hit the corners. (Let them work on their own at hitting the corners.)

Related to the above is the desire of the shooters to put the ball where the keeper can not make the save. In order for the keeper to benefit, she MUST be able to make the save. When she doesn't make the save, the coach needs to COACH her by discussing what went wrong. Why did she miss the ball? Was the foot work wrong, was the catching technique poor, was the positioning poor, or what ever. The coach should not let her go back to the goal until the fault has been corrected. This can take a minute or so of time. Of course the shooters don't want to wait and the coach usually doesn't spend the time.

Remember that the goal keeper is the only true specialist on the team. She requires special training to properly do her job. The material presented here is aimed at making sure that the keeper makes the easy save. We don't have anything flashy, but we have tried to provide solid information on training to make sure that the keeper can make the easy save.

Keepers, like all other players, must have excellent field skills. Therefore they should be included in all of your foot skill and pass/receive warm ups. In addition there are several warm up drills that keepers should do to stretch out and prepare for their specialty.