



GOALKEEPER DEVELOPMENT CURRICULUM



➤ U6 and U8

*Using goalkeepers is not recommended for these two age groups.

*In today's game, goalkeepers must be able to control the ball with their feet and pass as well as a field player. In these young age groups, while developing skills, we want all children to be field players, focusing on their foot-eye coordination. Another important fact to keep in mind is children love playing the game and scoring goals. By having players stand in the goal during an entire match, they are not participating in the game and having fun.

➤ U10

*When training goalkeepers at any level, it is very important to keep in mind the work to rest ratio. Many times there are very few goalkeepers during a training session. Just as with field players, it is more important to obtain quality repetitions, even if it may be less than planned, in comparison to goalkeepers practicing poor technique when making a save.

*Introduction to the use of goalkeepers

Goalkeepers should be introduced to:

Three basic catches utilizing proper body shape:

-*Low ball scoop*: Hands together, fingers pointing towards the ground (pinky's together) (like a shovel scooping into the body)

-*Basket Catch* (waist and below): Hands together, fingers pointing towards the ground (pinky's together)

-*Contour Catch* (waist and above): "W" or Diamond shape with hands

- When catching the ball, the hands always lead, keeping the body moving forward
- Body shape should be feet square to the body, shoulders square to the ball, knees bent, arms out to sides and slightly forward with elbows slightly bent, on the balls of your feet

Collapse Dive to both sides.

-Starting first with a still ball, then a rolling/thrown ball, then a slow kicked ball.

- Use proper footwork, staying on the balls of your feet, to get into position to dive
- Always take a leading step forward to meet the ball, leading with the hands, not feet
- Catch the ball in a W grip with one hand on top and one hand behind the ball
- Land on your side (hip and shoulder) with opposite knee driving across body for more power and protection.

- Eyes on the ball, one hand on top, one behind, elbows slightly bent and top leg up for protection

Three basic throwing techniques:

-*Bowl*: ball must be cupped, GK stepping forward with opposite foot from serving hand, low body posture, release the ball low so the ball rolls smooth on the playing surface.

-*Roundhouse*: ball cupped in hand straight back behind GK, bring hand with ball up over your head with elbow locked and shoulder going forward then release the ball as hand comes up over the shoulder. Release early for a high service, or late for a low service.

**Introduce the roundhouse throw at this age level, but a majority of players might not be able to perform the skill just yet. As the players grow and become more comfortable with the ball in their hands, they will be able to grip it with one hand, using their forearm for support.

-*Baseball*: ball in palm of hand besides head and is thrown straight forward as GK steps into throw, let ball roll off fingertips, backspin will help settle ball quicker

Goalkicks: approach the ball at an angle, plant foot next to the ball, knees slightly bent, lean back slightly with body, hit bottom third of ball to get some height, strike with instep, follow through to target

Basic positioning in the goal using proper footwork.

- Quick lateral footwork to get body behind the ball and limit diving. Not crossing the feet at this level will help increase the speed of the goalkeepers' lateral footwork and prevent tripping over their feet.
- GK must always try and position their bodies on an imaginary line that runs from the center of the goal to the ball.
- Position bodies far enough off the goal line to cover the angle created by the ball and both posts. Be able to cover either post with a couple of quick steps and a dive.
- At sharp angles, always play outside the near post
- Be aware of balls over the head when too far off the line

➤ U12

***Goalkeepers should be able to consistently make saves from a ball struck with a medium pace using:**

***Three basic catches:**

-*Low ball scoop*: Hands together, fingers pointing towards the ground (pinky's together) (like a shovel scooping into the body)

-*Basket Catch* (waist and below): Hands together, fingers pointing towards the ground (pinky's together)

-*Contour Catch* (waist and above): "W" or Diamond shape with hands

- When catching the ball, the hands always lead, keeping the body moving forward
- Body shape should be feet square to the body, shoulders square to the ball, knees bent, arms out to sides and slightly forward with elbows slightly bent, on the balls of your feet.
- Feet should always be "set" for every ball being thrown or struck at goalkeepers. This means the goalkeepers should not still be moving as the ball is coming towards them, but instead maintaining the proper body shape and be still in order have a quicker reaction time.
- Remember to tuck the ball into the chest after a save is made for protection

***Goalkeepers should be able to collapse dive to either side along with the proper technique to utilize on a breakaway. Teaching Goalkeepers when and how to come out of their goal is essential at the beginning stages.**

- Use proper footwork, staying on the balls of your feet, to get into position to dive
- Always take a leading step forward to meet the ball, leading with the hands, not feet. Goalkeepers should land on about a 45 degree angle with hands first to the ball.
- Catch the ball in a W grip with one hand on top and one hand behind the ball
- Land on your side (hip and shoulder) with opposite knee driving across body for more power and protection.

Breakaways:

- Crouch position-arms down with hands almost touching the ground, palms facing forward, bend knees and shoulders, head and upper body forward
- Explode to the ball with hands and upper body so they are strong. Do not lead with feet
- Hands in a W shape, elbows slightly bent, arm extended out from body. Nose and face should be 6-10 inches away from the hands
- GK should go down to the ground sideways to create a barrier behind the ball
- Stay low-GK should get lower as the space gets smaller between themselves and the attacker
- Close the space between GK and attacker at a controlled speed. Every time the attacker takes a long touch out in front of them is when the goalkeeper should be closing down the space in between with a quick, short sprint, then having their feet set when the attacker gets close to the ball again.
- The GK should always have their feet set before a shot is taken. Read the body language of the attacker by seeing when their non-kicking foot is planted and head goes down.

This is when the goalkeeper should set both feet to give themselves a better chance to react to the shot being taken.

***Introduction of making a high ball save by catching or parrying the ball using appropriate footwork: Including shuffling, crossover steps, and drop step.**

- “W” or Diamond shape with the hands, catching the ball in front of their heads and keeping it above their heads for a second after they catch it, then tucking it in for protection. When tucking the ball in, elbows should be pointing towards the ground, forearms perpendicular to the ground, and hands up towards the chin of the goalkeeper.
- Before using footwork to get your body behind the ball to make a high ball save, hold for a second to read the flight of the ball, and then adjust footwork and react to it. If a GK runs forward right away, this is when the ball tends to go over the keeper’s hands.
- Watch the ball into your hands
- Meet the ball at the highest point, driving your leg up off the ground for power and protection
- Yell “keeper” loud before reaching the ball, or “away” if the defenders should win it
- Shuffling involves moving feet laterally as quickly as a goalkeeper can, covering the mouth of the goal. A crossover step is crossing one foot in front of the other in a lateral motion covering more ground a lot quicker. A drop step is when a keeper is off of their line, squared up to a shot being taken and has to drop either their left or right foot back at a 45 degree angle to get back to the crossbar to make a save. After a drop step is made, either a side shuffle or a crossover step can be utilized.

***Consistently be able to use proper distribution with their hands by bowling, roundhouse or baseball throw to their teammates. An introduction to the sidearm throw and punting should be instituted at the U12 level.**

- *Sidearm Throw:* The arm is extended back slightly behind the body not straight to the side but just below the shoulder level. The ball is delivered with a bit of a slinging motion. Keep the fingers over the top of the ball so it stays low.
- *Punt:* start with ball in both hands, take a short run up at a slight angle, plant foot should point towards the target, drop the ball and kick upwards with the instep of the foot, following through and landing on the kicking foot. Kicking foot should be straight, directly in line with the target and should not swing around the body.

***Goalkeepers should have good understanding of where they are in relation to a ball being struck and know how far to be off of their goal line. In the early stages, being aware of their positioning will further teach the goalkeepers how much ground they can cover as their footwork speed increases.**

- GK must always try and position themselves on an imaginary line that runs from the center of the goal to the ball.
- Position themselves far enough off the goal line to cover the angle created by the ball and both posts. They should be able to cover either post with a couple of quick steps and a dive.
- At sharp angles, always play outside and in front of the near post
- Be aware of balls over the head when too far off the line

➤ U14

***Goalkeepers should be able to consistently make saves from a ball struck with pace using:**

***Three basic catches:**

- Low ball scoop
- Basket Catch (waist and below)
- Contour Catch (waist and above)

Focus on having soft hands in order to hold onto a ball struck with a faster pace. A key part to holding onto a ball struck at a faster pace is catching the ball out in front of you, with bent elbows, in order to have a cushion for the ball.

***Should be able to perform a collapse dive within 6 feet of themselves on the ground or in the air, utilizing proper footwork. Can make a break away save, knowing when to cut down the angle on an attacker coming in at pace. Introduce the front smother or forward dive, which is used on hard, low shots or balls that are going to take a quick, short hop just before the keeper.**

- Move towards the ball, trying to get the ball before it hits the ground if possible
- Catch the ball similar to the technique of a basket catch (hands low and together, in a basket with the feet staggered)
- Bring the ball into a protected tucked position and continue the momentum forward getting low over the ball with the legs stretching out behind. The protected tucked position is the same after making any save. Elbows should be pointing towards the ground, forearms perpendicular to the ground, and hands up towards the chin of the goalkeeper. As the goalkeeper carries their momentum towards the ground, elbows will be tucked into chest, and forearms will become parallel with the ground.
- The back of the forearms should be used to cushion the landing.

***Perform a high ball save (catch or parrying over the crossbar) from straight on. Introduction on how to judge a ball being struck from a cross on the flanks of the field along with how to box/punch on crosses.**

- Use proper footwork (drop step and crossover), staying on the balls of your feet, to get into position to dive
- Use opposite (top) hand on high balls, same side (low) hand on wide balls
- Drive through the balls, meeting it at the highest point
- Before using footwork to get your body behind the ball to make a high ball save, hold for a second to read the flight of the ball, and then adjust footwork and react to it. If a GK runs forward right away, this is when the ball tends to go over the keeper's hands.
- Always take a leading step forward to meet the ball, leading with the hands
- Parry the ball with the tip of the fingertips if that is all that can be done, heel of the hand is preferred
- Let the momentum of the ball do the work, just need to change the direction.
- *Box/Punch:* The hands should form a fist, with the four fingers forming a flat surface, and the thumb pressed firmly against the side of the fist but below the flat surface out of harm's way. The flat surface allows for the most control. Start with hands in, elbows out, and drive through the ball. Try for maximum width, distance and height.

***Proper distribution with their hands as well as punting the ball. Introduce the drop kick at this level along with how to strike the ball on a passback.**

- *Half volley/drop kick*: same as a punt but the ball is dropped to the ground before it is kicked. Kick is timed so the instep of the foot strikes the ball just after it bounces on the ground. Two hits should be heard (ground then foot)
- *Strike*: have an angled approach to the ball, plant foot next to the ball, knees slightly bent, knee over the ball now, hit middle of ball, follow through to target

***Correct positioning in shot stopping, and knowing when to come off their line to cut down the angle.**

***Communication with their defenders, organizing them throughout the game, while still being ready and able to make quick decisions.**

➤ U16

*All forms of handling and distribution including comfort in receiving a back pass from their teammates. Distribution should be accurate and as the goalkeepers strength increases, distance should be increased as well while still maintaining accuracy.

*Collapse dive within 8 feet of themselves on the ground or in the air, utilizing quick footwork. Knows when and how to make a proper breakaway save, making sure they are always attacking the ball, leading with their hands and not falling back on the ball.

*High ball saves from central or on the flanks. Should be able to parry and box, knowing when to utilize both. Focus on catching the ball at the highest point and increasing the range in which the goalkeeper can cover within their box.

*Correct positioning in the goal, having a great knowledge of angle play.

*Organizing their back line of defense as well as giving useful information to the midfielders when necessary. Goalkeepers should have a presence in goal, showing their confidence in themselves and their players which can be shown through their communication being loud and early. They should also have the ability to make quick decisions during a match.

➤ U17 and above

*All forms of handling and distribution including comfort in receiving a back pass from their teammates. Goalkeepers should consistently be able to hold onto the ball and distribute in an effective, accurate manner.

*Collapse dive within 8 feet of themselves on the ground or in the air, utilizing quick footwork. Can make a breakaway save, knowing when to cut down the angle as an attacker comes in 1v1.

*High ball saves from central or on the flanks. Should be able to parry and box, knowing when to utilize both. Goalkeepers at this level need to show confidence in their ability to dominate in their box, being extremely vocal.

*Correct positioning in the goal, having a great knowledge of angle play and covering the near post first.

*Organizing their back line of defense as well as giving useful information to the midfielders when necessary. Being a leader in the back is essential at the higher level which is shown through the goalkeeper's confidence and attitude in the goal. Maintain poise and a positive attitude to lead the team. Having the ability to anticipate and make quick decisions during a match is yet another asset the goalkeeper must have.