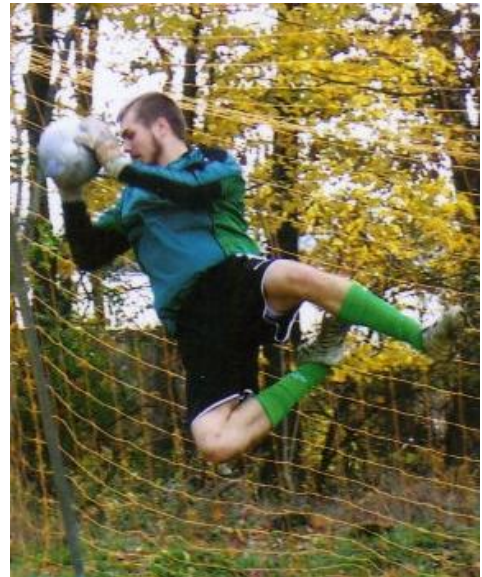




IOWA CENTRAL GOALKEEPING PROGRAM



...”The number one priority for any goalkeeper is to help their team win games. Winning games is what separates good keepers from the ones who just *look good*. Becoming a game winning keeper is accomplished by consistently making good decisions”





Good decisions involve coming out for crosses, coming out to cut off through balls, and being set for and in good position to save shots that impact the outcome of a game. This type of development can be accomplished by coaching the keeper to be able to think. While developing the hands and the feet of a goalkeeper are essential for success, perhaps the most important body part to develop in our goalkeepers is the brain.

Successfully making basic plays is directly related to not giving up “soft” goals, those goals that are the result of poor decisions or lack of leadership from the goalkeeper. This is by far the most important type of training for the goalkeeper to be involved with.

Without a doubt goalkeepers need reaction work. They need to be sharp in order to feel confident. However, once a keeper reaches a certain level of technique, quickness, and agility there is a different type of sharpness that is required. The keeper needs to be the sharpest *thinking* player on the field. Their decision making on plays must be accomplished in a split second. The choices a keeper faces are almost always unique and they require immediate action. This is why such plays must be practiced over and over again in a realistic environment.

Our coaches set up sessions where the “field” players join with them to practice game situations such as dealing with crosses and through balls. They also constantly put keepers in small sided games that require decisions to be made. Simply jumping over cones and reacting to shots from the coach is not enough at this level.





CROSSES

Handling crosses requires split second decision making skills. Our goalkeeper coach has a session set up a twice a week where the keepers take at least 40 crosses in a realistic environment. In all phases of this exercise the keeper must concentrate on their starting position, communication and decision making skills (i.e.: whether to stay or go out for the cross).

Exercises & Drills

1. The keeper should start by having several players with accurate serves on the flank crossing balls into the box. At first there should be no players in the box competing for the ball with the keeper. The crosses should be above the crossbar and should force the keeper to move their feet to test their range and mobility.
2. Next, the crosses should come in with one or two players to contend for the ball with the keeper. The serves should vary in height, speed, bend, etc.
3. There should be two attackers and one defender in the box with crosses coming in at various heights and speeds.
4. Work up to a 5 attackers vs. 3 defenders situation in the box.
5. Work on corner kick situation where the box is filled up with attackers and defenders. With so many goals being scored off of corner kicks it is amazing how rarely they are practiced under game like situations

THROUGHBALLS

Whenever the keeper can come off their line to cut out a through ball they prevent a possible shot on goal. *Preventing* shots on goal is as important as saving them. One of the biggest weaknesses seen in keepers is their ability to make good choices regarding coming off of their line for through balls.

Coaching Emphasis

The keeper must have a good starting point (most keepers start too deep out of fear of being chipped) in order to cut out a through ball.

They must read the opponents intentions and *anticipate* when the ball will be slipped through.

They must know which balls they can get and which balls they can't.

Exercises & Drills

Warm-Up: In a square grid about 15 x 15 yards Player A dribbles around while the keeper tries to take the ball off of their feet while using their hands. This exercise will help the keeper develop the ability to cover up loose balls and to get their hands to the ball first. **DIAGRAM 1**



THROUGHBALLS continued

- 1) Using a set of cones about 8 yards wide Player A starts out about 10 yards away from the keeper **DIAGRAM 2**. Player A has a total of 6 touches to dribble the ball past the keeper and through the cones. Player cannot shoot the ball; he must try to dribble the keeper. This exercise helps the keeper stay on their feet as long as possible when dealing with a breakaway. Using a set of cones to form a channel about 15-20 yards long and 20 yards wide Player A must dribble through the cones past the keeper. Player has 5 seconds to complete this exercise.
- 2) The server (with 1 field player on either side about 20-25 yards from goal) should slip balls through to one of the players. **DIAGRAM 4** The keeper must make an instant decision on whether to come for the ball or stay in goal. Our coaches encourage the goalkeeper to be aggressive with their decisions. ***Keepers will generally break up more plays by being aggressive than being passive.*** Even If the ball played through is 60/40 in favor of the attacker the keeper should come out aggressively and try to cover the ball. If the keeper gets close, instead of standing up they should attack the play and stretch to get the ball. This puts pressure on the opponent and gets the keeper to extend their body sideways which creates a long barrier that the forward usually shoots into. Occasionally, the keeper will make a poor decision in training and not get to a ball that they are coming out to get. This is alright. Our coaches must expose our keepers into making mistakes. It is the only way a keeper will learn their range. *Most of the through balls hit by the server in this phase of the practice should be 50/50 balls.*

Progression: The next phase for this type of training is for the server to do this exercise about 30-35 yards away from goal. **DIAGRAM 5**. After this phase is finished move the exercise back to 45 yards away from goal. In these final two situations the server will now expose the keeper to through ball exercises that might require them to come outside of the penalty area to play the ball with their feet or head. To keep the keeper honest and with a realistic starting point, the server should occasionally try to chip the ball over the keeper.

- 3) The next practice will involve the use of defenders. The server starts about 25 yards from goal with a forward near him and a defender 2 steps behind the forward. The server pushes a pass to the forward with the defender trying to catch him. This exercise exposes the keeper to potential breakaway situations when they have to decide whether to stay in goal (because the defender might catch the forward) or to come out to cut off the through ball. We encourage the keeper to come out closer to the play regardless of whether or not they are going to come out for the ball. Being closer to the play puts the keeper in a better position to make a save or puts them in a good spot to pounce on a bad touch made by the opponent. The keeper must always be aware of whether they should stay in goal or come out to break up a play.



THROUGHBALLS continued

Two factors that influence this decision are:

1. Is the defender going to catch the attacker?
 2. Is the ball in a very wide position so that it would be wise not to leave the goal mouth?
- 4) Finally, the server should hit through balls where the defender is a step ahead of the forward. The defender must either clear the ball or shield it for the keeper. This is an important play to master. *I can't begin to tell you how many times I have seen this play turn into a complete disaster!* **DIAGRAM 7**

*We teach the keepers to read cues (such as the opponents body language, is their head up, etc.) that would indicate an opponent is looking to slip a ball through.

*In addition, any exercise that involves 2v1, 2v2, 3v2, and 3v3 to goal is excellent training for keepers to learn to play off of their line.

BREAKAWAYS

Breakaway situations give the keeper the opportunity to impact a game. Making a save on a breakaway can dramatically turn the momentum of any game. Breakaways should be practiced in the same session with through balls in realistic situations such as section II Part B.

Breakaways can easily be practiced by having the server hit 60/40 balls in favor of the attacker.

Breakaway Exercises DIAGRAM 8

Two goals facing each other 35-40 yards apart. Team O has 5 attackers lined up to the right of the goalpost. Team X has 5 attackers lined up on the right side of the opposite goal. Each team has defenders from the opposing team lined up 5 yards behind them. Both teams attack the opponent's goal with a defender in close pursuit. Attacker gets one opportunity to score the goal. Attackers rotate and become defenders and vice versa.

SHOTS

Exercises and Drills

1. Player A is to the side of the "D" and Player B is on the other side of the "D". The goalkeeper is at the near post **DIAGRAM 9** Player A plays the ball to Player B who controls and quickly hits a shot (or shoots the ball first time). This drill helps the keeper on making decisions as to when to get set while they are moving sideways.



SHOTS continued

2. Player A passes a through ball to Player B **DIAGRAM 10** who runs onto it and shoots it first time. This exercise helps the keeper make decisions on getting set while moving forward.
3. Player A and Player B play 1v1 to goal. This exercise will help create situations where keeper does not know when the opponent will shoot. Many keepers fail to save shots because they do not know when the opponent is going to shoot the ball.
4. Set up two goals facing each other 25-30 yards apart with a dividing line in the middle. Three X players and one O player are on one side while three O players and one X player are on the other side. The team plays 3v1 on one side and look to shoot as often as possible. When a shot is missed or goes to the keeper the game continues on the other side. Players may not cross the halfway line. The three players may also play a ball into their teammate on the opposite side. 1 point is awarded for each goal scored and 2 points are awarded for each goal scored from a first time shot or a shot that rebounds from the goalkeeper. **DIAGRAM 11**

The 3 most important aspects of making a save are

Having your feet set

The ideal situation for the keeper to get maximum explosion off of the ground to save a shot is for the keeper to get a little 1-2 inch hop just *before* the shot is taken. If the keeper is still moving when the shot is taken, they will not get a good dive. They should be balanced and not leaning to one side. The keeper should also get used to having a slightly higher starting point so they don't feel as if they have to cover a lot of ground going forward in order to reduce the shooter's angle.

Having the angle covered

Good positional play is essential to becoming a winning goalkeeper. Good goalkeepers face fewer shots *on goal*. This is due to the fact that if the keeper is in good position, he gives the opponent little or nothing to shoot at. In this situation the opponent usually puts the ball high or wide of the goal frame.

Knowing when the opponent is going to shoot.

Experienced attacking players are tricky and deceptive. Many keepers get beat not because they aren't fast enough but because they don't know when the shot is coming. First time shots, shots bent with the outside of the foot and toe pokes are all perfect examples of shots that catch the keeper not being ready.