



YOUTH GOALKEEPER CURRICULUM



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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this curriculum is to establish a foundation for our Academy goalkeepers as they progress from Under-11 to Under-18 and with the hope of developing into a professional goalkeeper. All goalkeepers will not achieve the professional level, but the following curriculum will provide the optimum platform to reach his maximum potential.

The goalkeeper plays a highly specialized position and requires a unique skill-set different from the outfield players. There are four (4) areas of concentration for goalkeepers to master in order to excel in the position. They must be proficient technically, tactically, physically, and psychologically. In order to work on these areas, a specific goalkeeper training environment needs to be established. In addition to specific goalkeeper training, the goalkeeper must be integrated in the daily team training (match related scenarios) which will assist in the development of the goalkeeper's skill-set. Tendencies, habits, cohesiveness, etc are also established with the outfield players through daily team training.

Lastly, the curriculum outlines what the expected goals are for specific age groups. These are targets that should be reached as the goalkeeper continues from year to year in his "playing career".

AREAS of CONCENTRATION

TECHNICAL

The Goalkeeper must master the technical skills required for the position through quality training, repetition, and effective coaching. Like outfield players, the goalkeeper needs these variables in a controlled environment (goalkeeper training) to master his technical skills. Technical areas of concentration are:

- Footwork
- Set Position
- Catching



- Diving
- Crosses
- Distribution

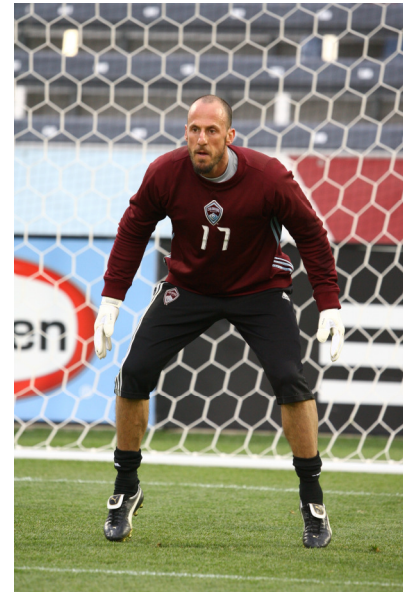
FOOTWORK– The goalkeeper’s ability to cover the goal area (lateral and off his line) is vital to saving the ball. Footwork gives the goalkeeper the ability to get in line with the shot, get set for the shot, deal with a crossed ball, cut off the angle of the shot, etc. This should enable the goalkeeper to make saves easier and retain the ball at a higher consistency.

SET POSITION - The relationship between the goalkeeper’s body parts (feet, legs, arms, hands, shoulders, and head) is fundamental to a successful catch. The moment the ball is struck by the attacking player, the goalkeeper needs to be stationary, well balanced, and have proper body shape. This is referred to as the “set position”. Your feet, knees, hips and shoulders should be in alignment. Too far apart of the feet or too narrow of the feet will affect the goalkeeper’s balance and ability to save the ball. The body should be in a slightly curved or concave shape with the shoulders facing the ball. The arms and hands work together, bent and relaxed to absorb the shot. Accomplishing the proper set position allows the goalkeeper to catch the ball.

CATCHING - When catching the ball, the goalkeeper needs to incorporate proper footwork and get in the “set position” prior to catching. He must also have good concentration and hand-eye coordination while dealing with the ball. The four (4) types of balls the goalkeeper can face are:

- Ground Balls / ‘Scoop’
- Mid-section / ‘Cup’
- Head Height / ‘W’
- Above the Head

Ground balls are caught by using the “Scoop” technique. The goalkeeper will collapse at the knees (knees DO NOT touch the ground but get low enough to prevent the ball



Set Position



from going under your legs) and attack the ball with hands and arms which will bring the body forward. The palms are open and facing the ball with the fingers facing down towards the ground. Once the ball makes contact with the palms and arms, the goalkeeper will scoop the ball into his chest.

Mid-section balls (knees to waist) are caught using the ‘Cup’ technique. The goalkeeper will use the similar technique as the ground balls, but does not require the legs to collapse low to the ground as the ball is off the ground. Proper footwork is still necessary to get the body in front of the ball.

Head Height balls are caught by using the “W” technique. The shape of the hands is commonly referred as a “W” as the fingers and palms look like the letter “W”. The hands need to be approximately the width of the ball apart with elbows slightly bent to absorb the pace of the ball.

Above the Head balls require the fingers to be angled slightly down towards the ground in front of the goalkeeper to rebound the ball down in front of the goalkeeper in case of a catching error. The previous types of balls can be secured by getting the body behind the ball in case of an error, but not so when the ball is above your head.

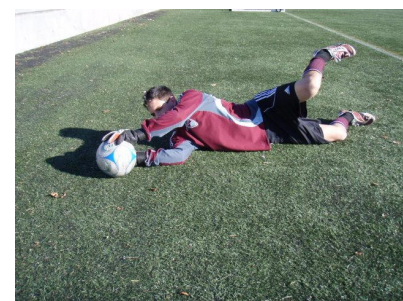
Lastly, once the ball has been caught, the ball should be brought into the goalkeeper’s chest and securely held to prevent balls being dropped or put back into play.

DIVING – When the ball is to the side of the goalkeeper’s body and he is not able to incorporate any of the four (4) types of catching techniques, a dive is necessary to make the save. The four (4) types of dives are:

- Collapse Dive
- Low Dive
- High Dive
- 1v1 Dive



Head Height Catch



Diving

The collapse dive is used when the goalkeeper cannot get his entire body behind the ball, but is never in the air. The ball is at the goalkeeper's side and close to his legs. The legs simply collapse to the side and the hands are positioned behind the ball to make the catch/save.

The low dive is used when the ball is away from the body and the goalkeeper must use footwork to attack the ball. The goalkeeper must use proper footwork, leg push, and attack the ball at roughly a 45 degree angle. Upon catching the ball, the body weight of the goalkeeper is absorbed into the ground at the side of the body and shoulders.

The high dive uses the same technique as the low dive but the ball is at or above the goalkeeper's chest.

The 1v1 dive is used when the goalkeeper encounters an attacking player who is dribbling free in on goal at him. The goalkeeper must decide when and how far to come out and encounter the player. The goalkeeper needs to cut down the angle of the shot to make the goal as small as possible, delay the attacker from shooting and ultimately save or deflect the shot. The goalkeeper needs to dive at the attacker's feet with his chest facing the ball and making his body into the biggest "barrier" as possible to block the ball. Timing, technique and bravery are keys to making the 1v1 save.

CROSSES – Crossed balls are delivered from different angles on the field into the penalty area. The goalkeeper must make a split second decision and come off of his line to "intercept" the ball by taking the quickest route to the ball. Proper and quick footwork (drop step, crossover step, and stutter step) enables the goalkeeper to produce the fastest route. The goalkeeper should jump off of his inside leg (leg closest to the goal) for protection and reach the ball at the highest point possible. The technique used for balls above the head will come into play when catching a crossed ball. Decision making on whether to catch or punch the ball is dictated based on securing the ball, crowded area, too far to catch with 2 hands, etc. The goalkeeper's aerial control of his penalty area is very important.



Collapse Dive



Crossed Ball

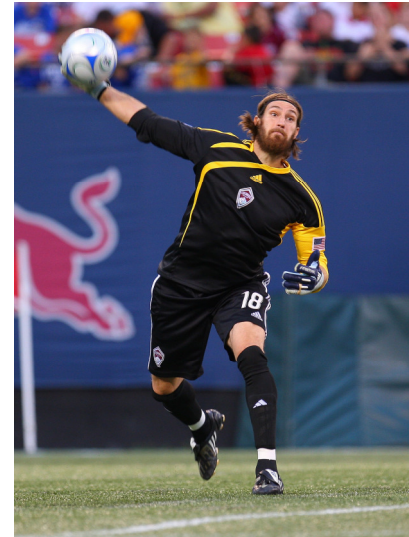
DISTRIBUTION – The goalkeeper is the first line of attack once in possession of the ball. An accurate throw or kick can penetrate the opposing team and initiate his team’s attack.

Throwing of the ball is generally used for quick and accurate passing to his teammates. Three (3) different techniques are:

- Bowl – used for short distances and the ball is rolled along the ground to feet using an underhand motion
- Sidarm – used for medium distances and the ball is thrown in the air in front of a teammate to progress forward up the field
- Overhand – used for longer distances to bypass players (over their heads) and get the ball into the opponent’s half and safely to a teammate

Kicking of the ball is generally used to distribute the ball over a greater distance than throwing, but accuracy of the kick needs to be heavily emphasized. Five (5) different techniques are:

- Dead ball / Goal Kick / Free kick – Ball is stationary on the ground and no opposing player may contest the ball. The goalkeeper has ample time to place the ball and prepare for a proper kick.
- Punt – Ball is released from the goalkeeper’s hands and struck before it hits the ground.
- Half Volley – Ball is released from the hands and struck as it hits the ground. The flight of the ball is lower than a punt and is beneficial when the wind is quite strong.
- ‘Sidewinder’ – Flight of the ball is more horizontal than a punt or half volley and is easier to control by your teammate.
- Back Pass - Due to the rules of the game, when a ball is kicked to the goalkeeper from his own team, the goalkeeper may not use his hands. The goalkeeper



Overhand Throw



Dead ball / Goal Kick

needs to be comfortable and proficient in using both feet. This enables his team to be an added outfield player and keep possession of the ball.

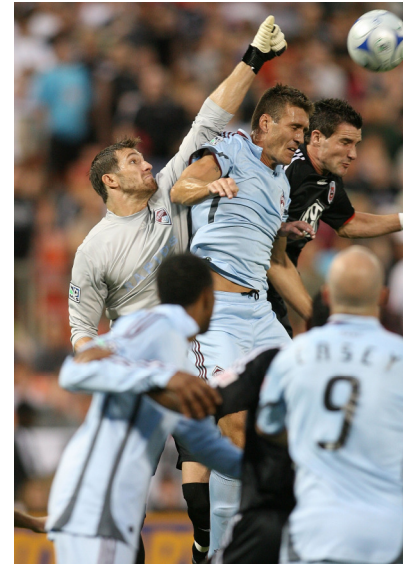
TACTICAL

Two main areas that encompass “tactics” in regards to goalkeeping are:

- Decision Making
- Command of the Penalty Area

Decision Making – Decisions need to be made in a split second without hesitation. Making a wrong decision more often than not results in goals being scored as the goalkeeper is the last line of defense.

- Distance off of line – The goalkeeper needs to have a good relationship and balance between the back line and himself in order to intercept balls, either with his feet or hands, when balls are played in behind his defense. The starting position of the goalkeeper is determined by the location of the ball on the field and who is in possession of the ball (your team or the other team).
- Angle Play – The goalkeeper needs to position himself between the ball and the middle of his goal. This will allow the goalkeeper to cover as much of the goal on either side (left or right) of him. Next, the goalkeeper needs to position himself off of his goal line in order to cover both sides within a few steps and using a dive if necessary. The further away from the goal line will cut the angle down and make the goal look smaller, but allows for shots over the goalkeeper’s head. Too close to the goal line enables the goalkeeper to cover more space above his head, but will leave too much of the goal open for shots. There needs to be a balance of how far out to go without compromising shots over the goalkeeper’s



Decision Making



Angle Play

head. This is determined by the goalkeeper's size, capability, and experience.

- Reading the flight of the ball – Once positioned correctly, the goalkeeper needs to determine the flight or trajectory of the ball. Questions the goalkeeper must ask and decipher in a split second - Is the ball too far away to reach? Is the ball travelling too slowly to reach? Can I reach the crossed ball before the attacker does? Is the ball going to bounce over a player's head?
- Shot Stopping – As the ball is shot on goal, the goalkeeper must make a decision on which technique to use to save the ball (i.e. "Scoop", "Cup", collapse dive, etc). The next decision needs to be catch or punch/deflect. Is the ball travelling too fast to catch it safely? Is it only possible to get 1 hand on the ball thus punching/deflecting it? Can the ball be caught safely with no rebounds? Securing the ball either with a catch or by putting the ball in an area on the field that will cause the least amount of danger are decisions that need to be made instantaneously.
- Game Management – Many situations come about throughout a game and season that will dictate what is necessary for the goalkeeper to do when he is in possession of the ball. Is your team behind a goal and needs the goalkeeper to speed up goal kicks or play quickly out of the back? Is your team ahead with 5 minutes to play and playing out of the back would be too dangerous? Is your team playing away from home and needs a draw to advance to the next round of a competition? These are a sampling of questions and situations that need to be evaluated by the goalkeeper to facilitate the flow of a game.



Flight of Ball



Shot Stopping

Command of Penalty Area - The goalkeeper is the "leader" and "eyes" of the team as the entire field (your team, opposing team, and ball) are all in front of the goalkeeper. He can evaluate and "control" situations with proper

communication that will eliminate many potential dangerous situations. Two (2) key factors of communication are:

- Tone/Voice – Strong, loud, concise and decisive instructions given to teammates.
- Types of Commands – Examples include: “away”, “keeper”, “push-up”, and “close the ball”. Situations that arise, such as, crosses, setup for restarts, tracking of runners, etc will make it necessary for the goalkeeper to use the correct command that his teammates are familiar with and understand the purpose of the command.



Command - Voice

Enhancing your decision making and command of the penalty area can be achieved through small sided games (5v5), larger scale games (8v8), and full size games (11v11).

PHYSICAL

The goalkeeper clearly is a different type of athlete compared to the outfield players. He runs far less distances and covers a much shorter area of the field compared to the outfield players. The goalkeeper must possess quick reflexes, be very agile and rely on explosive movements to do his job effectively. In addition to these attributes, he must train his body to endure the “beating” from shot stopping, diving, collisions, and crosses. Lastly, the height of the goalkeeper is a factor due to the dimensions of the goal. When evaluating youth goalkeepers, you must consider the “growth potential” of a player and think about the following:

- Current attributes - height, weight, coordination, athleticism, etc.
- Parent’s attributes – Are the parents tall, good size, athletic, short, etc?
- Birth date – What month is the goalkeeper born? Is the goalkeeper one of the youngest on the team for his age group? Does he need more time to mature?



- Teenage years – Has the goalkeeper hit puberty yet? Is he still growing into his body? Is his coordination poor due to “growing pains”?

Smaller but technical goalkeepers need to be evaluated based on the above information. Taller/bigger but not as technical goalkeepers need to continue to concentrate on techniques. This approach will ensure both types of goalkeepers are progressing at the appropriate timeframe for when he reaches his maximum physical attributes.

Beyond the evaluation of the “growth potential”, the goalkeeper must possess the following:

- Athleticism
- Explosiveness
- Strength
- Power
- Speed
- Quickness
- Endurance
- Mobility
- Coordination
- Flexibility
- Stretching

PSYCHOLOGICAL

The goalkeeper position is a very isolated and lonely spot on the field. The majority of the game is spent by himself observing what is going on and not being involved very much with the run of play. The time the goalkeeper is involved usually is the difference between a goal being scored or not. If mistakes are made by the goalkeeper, they are magnified



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as his errors usually result in goals. The goalkeeper needs to deal with these stressful situations with composure and confidence. Characteristics of a successful goalkeeper consist of:

- Motivation – Desire to play the position
- Confidence – Self-belief and faith in your ability to excel
- Leadership – Manage and guide the team
- Concentration – Eliminate distractions and focus on task. Staying focused during long periods of no physical action
- Positive Outlook – Forget mistakes, recover quickly, and move on within the game and the next games
- Courage/Bravery – Disregard for bodily harm to save ball (dive at feet, collisions, etc)
- Competitive – Striving each day to win every activity (training exercise, small sided game, 11v11 game, league game, tournament, etc)

GOALKEEPER TRAINING ENVIRONMENT

In order to maximize the most out of each goalkeeper and achieve the four (4) areas of concentration, the goalkeeper training environment needs specific attention. The training environment consists of:

Goalkeeper Equipment –

- Gloves
- Long sleeve shirt or padded shirt
- Long pants
- Compression shorts
- Molded cleats/studded cleats



Concentration

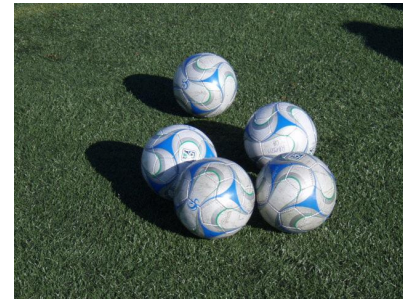


Courage/Bravery



Coaching Equipment –

- Soccer balls (inflated and proper size)
- Cones
- Foot ladders
- Hurdles
- Poles
- Mannequins
- Weighted balls
- Rebounder



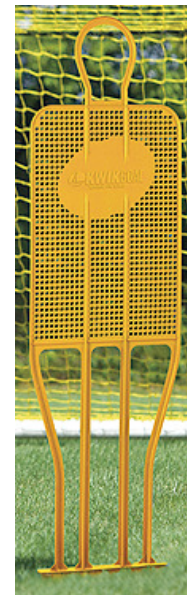
Purpose of Daily Training –

- What are you trying to specifically accomplish today?
- Can you incorporate technical, tactical, physical, and psychological demands?
- Can you reproduce “match-like” situations?
- Can you incorporate whatever the team is working on into your goalkeeper training (i.e. crossing and finishing for team so goalkeeper will work on crosses in specific goalkeeper training prior to joining team training)?



Organization of Training –

- Promptness to start time
- Specific topic
- Proper warm-up
- Specific exercises - easy (successful) to hard (challenging and expected failure)
- Integration with outfield players/team training
- Cool down



How do Goalkeepers Learn?

- Regular, specific, structured training
- Playing with and against better players
- Playing small sided and full-size games
- Listening and acting upon constructive feedback from coaches
- Watching games on television or in person
- Watching other goalkeepers train
- Ask questions
- Challenge yourself – technically, tactically, physically, psychologically
- Emulate top level goalkeepers
- Learn from mistakes



AGE SPECIFIC GOALS

Under 11 - Under 12

TECHNICAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Basic understanding of all goalkeeper techniques• Footwork exercises• Set position• Catching balls within arms reach• Basic diving – collapse, low, 1v1• Crosses – lofted or thrown balls for footwork pattern and timing of jump (unopposed)• Distribution – bowl, overhand to targets• Distribution – dead ball/goal kick, punt, back pass with both feet to teammates
TACTICAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Role of the goalkeeper• Play off of goal line to support defenders and stay connected with team• Basic angle play• Shot stopping – try to catch as much as possible• Introduction to game management• Basic verbal commands and introduction of how to organize defense
PHYSICAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parents' attributes and goalkeeper's month of birth date• Introduction of flexibility, mobility, and stretching• Athleticism and coordination
PSYCHOLOGICAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Experimenting with the position (not full-time position) but shows signs of courage, bravery, and competitiveness• Detail specific with training, preparation, games• Introduction of training habits, game day preparation, diet, off-field activity

Under 13 - Under 14

TECHNICAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to master goalkeeper techniques • Footwork exercises incorporating all directions • Set position – constant readjustment for shot • Catching – all techniques including balls above the head • All diving techniques with power/explosion in step • Crosses – from the foot / unopposed and with pressure from attackers • Distribution – All throwing techniques • Distribution – Dead ball, punts, back passes with pressure from attackers / Introduction of half volley and “sidewinder”
TACTICAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay connected with team / proper distance off of goal line / provide support • Strong awareness of angle play and location in goal • Reading flight of ball / depth perception improving • Shot stopping – introduction of deflecting or punching of ball if catch is not possible • Understand situations in game and how to act accordingly • Communication / organization of defenders, tracking runners, anticipation of breakdowns, set pieces
PHYSICAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current attributes, parents’ attributes, and goalkeeper’s month of birth date • Flexibility, mobility, and coordination • Introduction of high intensity, explosive exercises with short repetitions • Athleticism and coordination
PSYCHOLOGICAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary position and emulating top flight goalkeepers • Detailed routine of training habits, game day preparation, diet/nutrition, off-field activity • Handling pressure of position, mistakes, and ability to respond positively

Under 15 – Under 16

<p align="center">TECHNICAL</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refine goalkeeper techniques • Footwork exercises incorporating all directions and goalkeeper specific • Set position – constant readjustment for shot • Catching – all techniques • All diving techniques with power/explosion in step and multiple steps leading to explosive dive • Reaction training to make “unconventional” save • Crosses – from the foot / Pressure from attackers and collisions • Distribution – All throwing techniques • Distribution – Dead balls, punts, back passes with pressure from attackers / half volley and “sidewinder” with accuracy and proper weight of pass
<p align="center">TACTICAL</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay connected with team / proper distance off of goal line / provide support • Understanding of pressure on and off of ball and how it relates to starting position • Playing further off of line to narrow angle of shot • Reading flight of ball / depth perception • Shot stopping –Catch if possible / deflecting or punching of ball to safe areas on field if not able to catch • Grasp of game management and different situations in game(s) • Understanding of attackers’ movements and how teammates can deal with runs on and off of ball • Communication / organization of defenders, tracking runners, anticipation of breakdowns, set pieces
<p align="center">PHYSICAL</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current attributes, parents’ attributes, and goalkeeper’s month of birth date • Has puberty occurred yet? • Flexibility, mobility, and coordination

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High intensity, explosive exercises with short repetitions and short recovery • Introduction of strength training • Athleticism and coordination
PSYCHOLOGICAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full immersion into position • Detailed routine of training habits, game day preparation, diet/nutrition, off-field activity • Increased pressure of position, mistakes, and ability to respond positively • Exudes confidence, controls penalty area, team leader • Dialogue with coach/goalkeeper coach on performances (positive and criticism) • Consistent match performances • Regional, National and “Elite” team selections • Track record of being a winner

Under 17 – Under 18

<p align="center">TECHNICAL</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Master all goalkeeper techniques • Footwork exercises incorporating all directions and goalkeeper specific • Set position – constant readjustment for shot • Catching – all techniques • All diving techniques with power/explosion in step and multiple steps leading to explosive dive • Reaction training to make “unconventional” save • Crosses – from the foot / Pressure from attackers and collisions • Distribution – All throwing techniques • Distribution –All kicks with accuracy, proper weight of pass, and distance
<p align="center">TACTICAL</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay connected with team / proper distance off of goal line / provide support • Full understanding of pressure on and off of ball and how it relates to starting position • Playing further off of line to narrow angle of shot • Shot stopping –catch if possible / deflecting or punching of ball to safe areas on field if not able to catch • Full understanding of game management and different situations in game(s) • Understanding of opposing team’s movements and how teammates can deal with runs on and off of ball / anticipation of play • Communication / organization of defenders, tracking runners, anticipation of breakdowns, set pieces
<p align="center">PHYSICAL</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current attributes – height, weight, arm wing span • Has puberty finished yet? • Flexibility, mobility, and coordination • High intensity, explosive exercises with short repetitions and short recovery

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strength training • Athleticism and coordination
PSYCHOLOGICAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Future sights on playing collegiately or professionally • Detailed routine of training habits, game day preparation, diet/nutrition, off-field activity • Pressure of position, mistakes, and ability to respond positively • Exudes confidence, controls penalty area, team leader • 2-way dialogue with coach/goalkeeper coach on performances (positive and criticism) • Consistent match performances over course of full season • National and “Elite” team selections • Track record of being a winner