

Basic Goalkeeping

The least coached position in soccer is the goalkeeper. A big reason for this is the lack of knowledge and confidence of coaches, so this position is often neglected.

Characteristics of the keeper

Hand/eye coordination

Agility

Confidence

Judgment

Decisiveness

Courage (not craziness)

Strength

Quickness

Ability to take charge and direct

Concentration

Vision

Warm-ups for goalkeepers

Just as field players should use a game related warm-up, so should your goalkeepers. A related warm-up consists of movements that are commonly used in your position.

Three basic skills must be taught to all keepers

1. Positional play
2. Methods of collection
3. Methods of distribution

Positional play

Like field players, the keeper must have an understanding of positional play. Goalkeepers with a sound knowledge of positioning can make the job look easy.

Reflex training

Another area that is neglected in keeper training is reflex training. Keepers must be taught how to react to the ball and we have a few exercises to help in doing this.

Methods of collection

Hand positions

Start with the hands in a comfortable position, about half way up or down. The keeper should try to use the same starting position all the time.

With young players the ball is often too large for their hands. If they try to catch the ball, it will slip through their hands and into the goal.

Teach the “W” for high balls and the “M” for balls below the waist (demonstrate).

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Ground balls

Goalkeepers need to

- Bend at the waist to scoop up low balls
- Keep their legs together
- Always keep their eyes on the ball as it approaches
- Hands form the "M"
- Let the ball run over the hand and up the arms
- Gather the ball to the chest
- Stand up straight
- Put the ball away

High balls

Goalkeepers need to

- Extend the arms and use the hands to take speed of ball
- Use the "W" hand extended
- As the ball hits, bend elbows to decrease the force of the shot
- Put the ball away

Waist high balls

Goalkeepers need to

- Catch with the body
- Catch the ball as it comes into the body
- Let the body collapse to take some of the force away
- Use the arms to make a pocket, not try to catch it with their hands
- Put the ball away

Methods of distribution

Keeper can:

- Punt the ball
 - Volley
 - Half volley
- Throw the ball
 - Overhead
 - Roll it
 - Sling it

Summary

Top goalkeepers combine a proper approach to the game with outstanding physical ability. But, remember you are working with new goalkeepers who also happen to be young children. Take your time and be patient. They will make mistakes but they will learn from their mistakes.