

HOW TO COACH GOALKEEPERS



Here are some tips to help you coach your goalkeepers.

CREATE THE RIGHT ENVIRONMENT

This is a great starting point. After all, this helps players feel safe, have fun and fall in love with the game – and goalkeeping. Don't forget that some may find it daunting to go in goal. So, creating an environment which prioritises fun can inspire them to don the gloves.

PROVIDE REALISTIC AND RELEVANT PRACTICES

Just like with outfield players, goalkeepers need to experience practices that are realistic to the game. The more they take part in these activities, the more effective they'll become.

Think of it this way. The game is an exam. To help players revise for it, look at where they need support and create sessions which put them in those scenarios. For example, if they struggle to make a save in a 1v1 scenario, they need to work on it.

PRAISE INTENT OVER THE OUTCOME

When observing your goalkeepers, praise their intent over the execution of an action. Sure, they may concede a goal or give the ball away. But if they're constantly trying the right thing, praise them for giving it a go. This positive feedback will encourage them to try again and build their confidence. And that's more important than focusing on the outcome, especially when working with young players.



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INTRODUCE POSITION, COMMUNICATION AND ACTION

To help your goalkeepers defend the goal, introduce them to the concept of position, communication and action.

Positioning is key. It can be the difference between making a brilliant save or picking the ball out of the net. To work on this, get your keepers to picture an imaginary line between the ball and the middle of the goal. They need to be somewhere on that line. To judge exactly where, they need to scan for:

- where their teammates are
- where their opponents are
- what the attacking move looks like
- the speed of play
- if the forward is shaping to shoot
- if their opponent has taken a poor touch.

Communication is all about instructing teammates to help them prevent shots on goal. A starting point for young goalkeepers might be telling their defenders “right shoulder” or “left shoulder”. These shouts highlight where an opponent is and will help defenders adjust their positioning. As their confidence grows, they could start telling players to cover the near post or far post. Or even to show an opponent inside or outside. As they get older, encourage them to ask their defenders what they want to hear. Whatever instructions they give, challenge them to make sure their communication is early, clear and concise.

Action is everything a goalkeeper does to stop a shot. This may be repositioning themselves or shouting instructions. But it’s also about how they make a save.

