

Functional Goalkeeper Training in the Team Setting: Intensive and Realistic Exercises and Progressions

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Description: A daunting challenge for coaches is building functional team training around the goalkeeper. Instead of the common strategy of combing the goalkeepers into phases of team training, this session will present high-level, fun, creative and realistic exercises and games where the technical, tactical and fitness training of the goalkeeper is the primary focus of a team training session.

Exercise#1: Dutch Goalkeeper and Team Warm-up.

Area: 25x20 yard area with central goals and ample ball supply.

Description: Goalkeepers work out of each goal. Field players are evenly divided between the four corner cones. Players on each end alternately shoot and then receive balls back from the goalkeeper on that end. Note that players jog (then do other warm-up exercises, i.e. high knees, high heels, shuffle, jog/backpedal, $\frac{3}{4}$ speed runs) to the opposite end.

Progression:

- Shots on the ground at the goalkeeper. The goalkeeper returns the ball on the ground and does footwork around the cone in front of their goal.
- Shots in the air at the goalkeeper. The goalkeeper returns the ball on the ground and does footwork around the cone in front of their goal.
- Ball passed into the goalkeeper's feet is returned two-touch to the passer, who dribbles to the other end of the grid at speed.
- Ball passed into the goalkeeper's feet is returned one-touch to the passer, who dribbles at speed to the other end of the grid.
- Ball passed into the feet of the goalkeeper who plays first-time into the feet of the other player on that end (both field players run/dribble to the other end of the grid).
- Ball passed from one attacker to the other and then into the goalkeeper, who then passes first-time back to the player originating the sequence (both attackers run/dribble to the far end of the grid and change lines).
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Exercise#2: Triangle Goals Technical Training and Shot-Stopping.

Area: 20x20 yards with a 5x5 yard triangle and ample ball supply.

Description: The goalkeepers move from goal to goal on the interior of the triangle. When they step into a goal, an attacker serves a ball for the goalkeeper to save and return (see variations below). After each shot, the goalkeepers return to the center of the triangle before stepping out into a different goal. Attackers rotate every thirty seconds. Note that the 'resting' attackers perform various technical tasks (i.e. dribble in place, taps on the ball, triangles, 4-touch, juggling, etc.).

Progression:

- Ground serves at the goalkeeper and bowled returns.
- Ground serves to either side of the goalkeeper, who dives to save and rolls ball back to passer.
- Air serves onto the goalkeeper's body, punted returns to settle.
- High balls tossed for the goalkeeper to handle, drop-kick returns to settle.
- Balls passed to feet, goalkeeper plays the passer into space (two-touch) as passer moves to the next line clock-wise (then counter-clock-wise).
- Balls passed to feet, goalkeeper plays the passer into space (one-touch) as passer moves the next line clock-wise (then counter-clock-wise).

Exercise#3: Team Trains 'Keeper

Area: 18x30-yard area with full-sized goal and ample ball supply.

Description: Two teams place three players inside the area, a shooter/passers at the top of the area, and a crosser at one of the corners. The goalkeeper defends the goal against both teams. Restarts are called by the goalkeeper (by calling the name of any of the servers) and the ball is live as long as it remains in the area. Play for three minutes and then rotate goalkeepers and the roles of the attackers.

Exercise#4: 2-Sided Goal Game.

Area: 20x25 yard area with two-sided goal or cone/gate goal at the center.

Description: Divide the group into two teams, and assign one goalkeeper to each team. Teams defend one side of the goal and attack the other. Attacking players cannot enter the box around the goal in the opening stage of the game. When a goalkeeper receives the ball, she must distribute it to her team on their defensive side of the goal.

Progression:

- Attackers can enter the box area with the ball or in pursuit of a rebound.

Exercise#5: 4 vs. 4 game to full-sized goals.

Area: 20x40 yard area with an 18-yard center zone delineated with cones.

Description: Two teams of 3 (plus goalkeepers) play to full-sized goals. In the opening phase, the team in possession cannot progress beyond the center zone before making a back-pass to their goalkeeper. No defending player can leave the center zone to press the goalkeeper in possession. Restarts come from a resting neutral field player on the touch-line.

Progression:

- One opposing player can leave the center zone to press the goalkeeper in possession.
- Play 4 vs. 4 with no restrictions (remove the center zone). At this stage, all restarts come from the goalkeeper.