

Goalkeeping basics

By Steve Watson, youth coach

Young goalkeepers need all the help they can get!

Being a 'keeper is a thankless task at the best of times but if a nine or ten year old lets a shot slip through their hands and into the net they are going to feel terrible.

So make sure your goalkeepers know all about the "ready position" and how to catch the ball.



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youth coach

1. The Ready Position

This is the position that goalkeepers need to adopt as they prepare to stop a shot, whether during practice or in a game.

- Feet shoulder width apart
- Knees slightly bent
- Weight on the ball of the foot
- Hands at waist height
- Elbows tucked in
- Shoulder forward "Nose over toes"
- Balanced
- Head steady, eyes on the ball.

2. How to catch the ball

For shots over waist height, the palms of the hand should be facing the ball with the fingers spread in a "W" shape and the thumbs almost touching.

Tip: players with small hands may have to have their hands spread a little further apart than that.

For shots under waist height, the hands should be in an inverted "W" with the little fingers almost touching.

The Ready Game

Set up: four cones are placed as shown below to form a 3x3 square.

How to play

The game begins with the 'keeper adopting the ready position in the center of the square.

The server throws the ball at the goalkeeper who catches it, runs round a cone, goes back to the center and gets ready to "save" another throw from the server.

Change the players over after eight saves.

Watch for and praise correct technique.

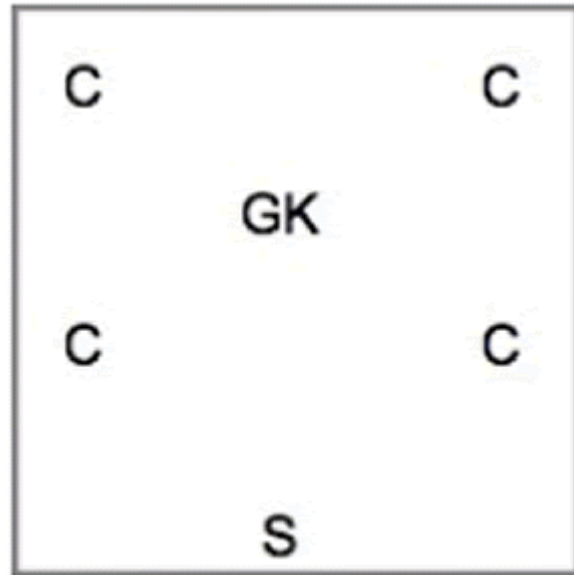
Progression

1. Instead of throwing the ball, the server plays a hard side foot pass / shot at the 'keeper along the ground.

2. Each cone is given a number.

The server shouts a number and the goalkeeper must go to that cone and back to the center before receiving the next throw / shot.

P.S. Get access to an array of goalkeeping drills to make your team more solid by clicking [here](#) or on the banner below.



The goalkeeper starts in the center of the square and a server (the S in the image) stands about six yards away with a supply of balls.