



SOCCER COACH
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Goalkeeping - Handling Crosses

By Paul Blodgett,

Objectives: To teach the proper technique in handling crosses, to learn one's range off his/her line and to control the box under pressure.

1.) Technical Warm-up # 1 (5 Minutes): Create a small, tight grid (10 X 10 yd grid depending on the number of keepers); each keeper has a ball. Version 1: Have keepers start moving around within the grid bouncing the ball with two hands and catching it. Their movements should be multi-directional (forward, backward, side-to-side, diagonal), their footwork should vary accordingly and they should vary the speed, as well. The coach yells “**Up**” and the keepers toss the ball in the air and go up and catch it using proper technique for balls above the head and yelling “**KEEPER**” **before** they go up to catch the ball. Once they catch the ball, repeat the process. Version 2: Keepers now choose a partner. Have the keepers repeat the bouncing and footwork movements. Coach yells “**Up**” and now the keepers must toss the ball in the air to their partners who yell “**KEEPER**” and catch the ball above their heads, once again using proper technique. Have the keepers stop and stretch throughout the warm-up.

Coaching Points: Be sure that the keepers are changing direction and speed utilizing different footwork throughout, as well as, bouncing the ball firmly. Be sure the keepers do the following: Catch the ball above their heads; catch the ball in front of their heads (not behind it); watch the ball into their hands; keeping the ball above their heads for a second after they catch it; yelling “**KEEPER**” not “Keep”; driving knee/leg upwards; alternating knee/leg. You want the grid to be tight so that the keepers are aware of bodies around them when going up for the ball.

2.) Technical Warm-up # 2 - Shuffle Step – Jump Catch (5 minutes):



Have 2 servers behind the goal each with a ball in their hands; set up 2 cones in front of the goal, 4 yds apart on the goal line; 2 keepers will start out facing the goal. Cones mark the area where the servers and keepers line up for the exercise. Keepers shuffle across the goal mouth to the opposite cone, when they get there, the servers toss the ball up and over the crossbar; keepers jump up using a two-foot take off, catch the ball and throw it back over the goal to their server **BEFORE** they come back down to the ground (called a jump-catch); keepers then reverse direction across the goal mouth and repeat. Do for 30 seconds and then servers and keeper reverse roles.

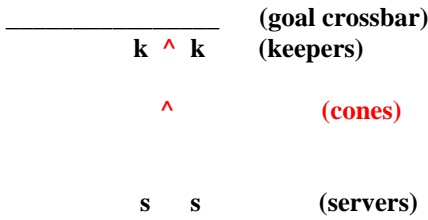
Coaching Points: Keepers are in a good stance as they shuffle across the goal mouth, with their hands in a neutral position. Keepers must jump with a two foot take off. Be sure that they catch the ball in front of their head's – this is also necessary to help them develop the technique of catching and tossing the ball back over the goal while they are in the air. Servers need to jog easily in place while the other keepers are working. Also, the quality of tosses over the goal is essential for proper execution. Communication: Keepers yell “**KEEPER**” when going up for the ball.



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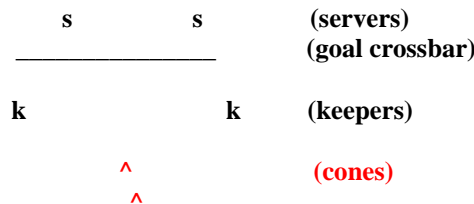
3.) Technical Warm-up #3 (5 minutes):



Cones placed in center of goal, 1 on the line and one placed in front of it 2 yds. off the line. Keepers start on either side of the cone on the goal-line; servers stand about 6 yds. away from the outside cone and are facing the keepers. Keepers start in good stance with their hands in a neutral position. Servers jog in place with balls in their hands. Keepers start moving forward to the 2nd cone using quick up and down footwork, but progressing forward slowly, heads down facing the ground. When they get to the 2nd cone, this is the time when the servers do an underhand toss of the ball into the air to the keeper coming at them. Keepers then look up, find the ball and catch it above their heads yelling “KEEPER” as they go up. The keepers perform a one-footed take off with the leg facing outwards as the one they drive upward for height and protection. Then the Keepers switch sides and repeat. Do 4 reps each side and then switch servers and keepers.

Coaching Points: Be sure keeper’s heads stay down when moving forward to the second cone; this will force them to have to find the ball quickly and to adjust their footwork to drive the proper leg upward. Servers can toss the ball straight on or on angle towards the outside of the goal. Keeper’s feet need to stay active and moving while judging the flight of ball and they must yell “KEEPER” early. Server’s tosses need to be of quality. Keepers must catch the ball in front and above their heads and proper take off leg used. **Variation:** Keepers push on each other, shoulder to shoulder, while performing forward movement and then break off to collect ball. **Variation:** Keepers cross over and receive ball from opposite server.

4.) Technical – Liverpool Drill (10 minutes):



Servers stand behind the goal with balls in their hands. Keepers stand on opposite posts facing each other. Two cones are placed in the center of the goal, one 5 yds off the line, the other 6 yds off the line. Keepers start drill by looking at each other and nodding that they are ready to go (silent communication). One keeper slowly jogs out and goes between the cones, the other keeper jogs out slowly and goes around the farthest cone. **AS** the keepers get to the cones, the servers toss the ball underhand just over the cross bar and the keepers attack the ball, yell “KEEPER”, catch it above their heads and toss it back over the bar before they come back down (jump catch). Keepers must utilize a one-footed take off with the outside leg driving upward. After tossing the ball back over the crossbar, the keepers go directly to the post, face each other, nod and repeat in opposite direction.

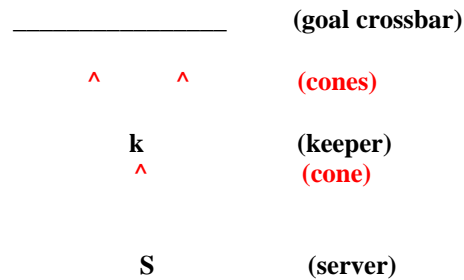
Coaching Points: Keepers who are working must start with eye contact and a nod. When the keepers get to the cones, be sure their foot movement stays active so that they can explode to the ball and drive the proper leg upward for the catch. The tendency in collecting crosses is for keepers to step forward too soon and then get beat with the ball going over their heads. This drill will help them produce the footwork needed to keep the ball in front of them when they go up for the ball. Server’s tosses must be of quality. Keepers working must yell keeper as soon as they get to the cones. (Another problem is that keepers yell “KEEPER” too late and do not give their defenders enough time to react. The call **MUST** be loud, clear and early and always “KEEPER”.)



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5.) Technical – Footwork for catches over the keepers head (5 minutes):



Set up cones in a triangle with the 2 cones 2 yds. off the line and the third cone 8 yds. off the line. Keeper starts on the front cone in a good keeper stance; server has ball in his/her hands. Server slaps the ball, at which time the keeper turns by dropping the back foot and then does a cross-over footwork run back to either cone, curls around the cone and comes forward to collect a ball tossed by the server. Return the ball to the server and then repeat to the other side.

Coaching Points: This is not a game related drill because it is predictable, however, it is essential so that the keepers learn to turn and run properly on balls over their head. Be sure that the first step is not directly backwards. The body turns as the proper foot drops backwards and then the keeper runs backwards on a diagonal using a cross over step with his/her hips turned and their eyes on the ball. The curl run at the end is necessary so that the keeper will be coming forward when collecting the ball. Yelling “KEPPER” is essential as is collecting the ball in front and above the head. Be sure the keeper is driving the outside leg upwards.

6.) Crossing and Shooting with Field players (15 minutes):

2 Flank Servers have soccer balls in wide positions on both sides of the field. One Central Shooter has soccer balls and is positioned centrally at the top of the penalty area. The two flank servers will drive or float balls into the area. The central shooter will try to score. One keeper works at a time. Keeper lines up initially according to the side from which the service is coming. One Server (it doesn't matter which one) starts by serving a driven or floating ball into the area. Keeper collects the cross after yelling keeper, distributes the ball back to the server. The keeper must then get in place to save a shot from the central shooter. Keeper makes the save, distributes the ball back to the shooter. Finally, the keeper sets up to receive a cross from the opposite server. Repeat 2-3 times. Servers and shooters must be patient and allow time for the keeper to get ready for each cross or shot!

Coaching Points: Be sure that the keepers are in a good starting position in the goal on the initial cross. Keepers must collect crosses using good technique, including proper catching, footwork, proper leg up and communication (on both crosses and distribution). On crosses, keepers must react to inswingers, outswingers and balls over their head.

7.) Game Situation – 7v7 Channel Game (15 Minutes):

Set up a 50 by 60 yard field with regulation goals. Along the two flanks, create a 5 yd wide channel the length of the side lines. Divide teams for a 7v7 scrimmage which includes keepers (5v5 on the field and one additional player per team in each channel). Be sure that all players are wearing appropriate colors. Then play. Restrictions: To start, the keeper must distribute the ball into the channel to start the attack; then play with no restrictions. **Points:** 2 points for a goal scored from a cross. 1 point for a regular goal.

Coaching Points: Ball can be played into and out of the channel at anytime. Be sure keeper is properly communicating on all crosses (early and loudly). Observe the keepers footwork and positioning on all crosses. Also, observe if the keeper is driving up the proper leg when collecting a cross to maximize the height advantage, as well as, for protection.



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8.) Full Field Scrimmage, 8v8 (25 Minutes): Full field match, field size: 80 yds x 55 yds. Coach may apply any restrictions that he or she sees fit. Coach should award 4 – 6 corner kicks per side during the match.

Coaching Points: Be sure to observe the play of the keepers throughout, especially their positioning, footwork, technical handling of crosses, communication and leadership abilities. ***The coach should spend time behind each goal to observe and correct the keepers during the match conditions.***

Cool Down (5 minutes): Have keepers cool down by tossing one hand catches back and forth while moving their feet in place slowly. One hand catches may be low or high.