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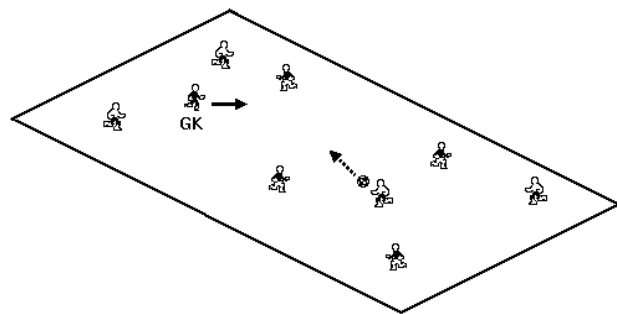


Functional Training of the Goalkeeper

By Anthony Latronica

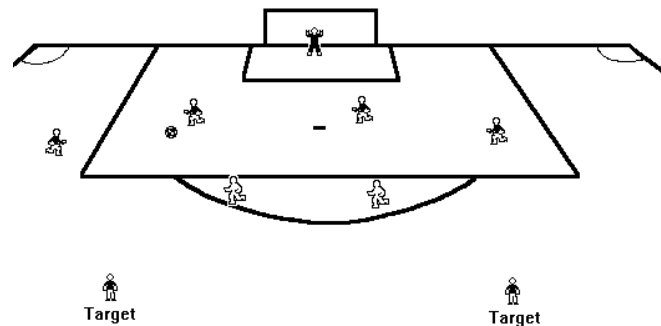
Objective: To provide a training environment for the goalkeeper that offers ample opportunity to practice and improve on his/her defensive and attacking roles...last defender, first attacker, connection with team on both sides of the ball and appropriate & commanding communication.

1) 4v4+1 Neutral Player (15 minutes): In an 18 yard x 44 yard grid (size of penalty box) play a 4v4 game. Include a goalkeeper in the game as a neutral player (plays for the team that has possession of the ball). Both teams compete for possession of the ball and attempt to maintain possession through good ball movement and movement “off” the ball. The goalkeeper, as neutral player, provides for a “numbers up” situation for the team in possession. Teams are awarded a point for 8 consecutive passes or playing the ball through the goalkeeper to another teammate. Version 2: 2-touch restriction.



Coaching points: Focus on the goalkeeper’s foot skills, passing and receiving technique and decision making (to pass or to dribble, angle and distance of support, etc.). Concentrate on the goalkeeper’s confidence in taking responsibility for the ball.

2) 5v2 to Big goal and 2 or 3 Counter-Attack Target Players (15 minutes): Use half of the field. The 5 players (in blue) are the goalkeeper and the back four who are protecting the Big Goal and trying to pass to one of the 2 targets located at the midfield stripe. The 2 players (in yellow) are the opposing attacking forwards who are trying to score on the Big Goal. The activity is started when the coach or another player, who is located in the center circle, serves a ball into the defensive third. The yellow team is awarded 5 points for scoring a goal; the blue team is awarded 1 point for successfully passing the ball to one of the targets.



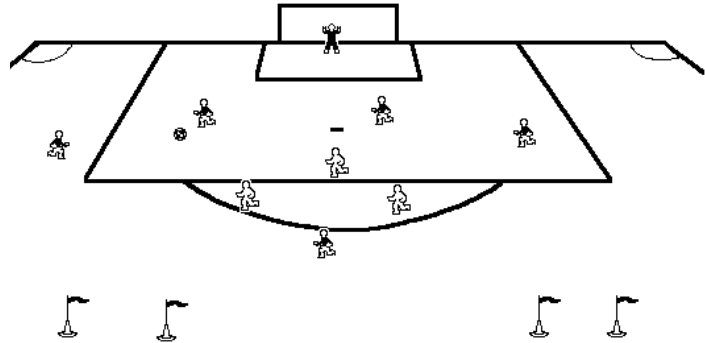
Coaching points: Focus on the goalkeeper’s ability to organize the back 4 players when they are defending and when they are attacking. This will require the goalkeeper to communicate appropriately and confidently with the back 4 players. This means that when they are defending, the goalkeeper must direct players by name to pressure the ball, cover appropriately and balance the defensive action (track players away from the ball so that there are no surprises); to keep the back 4 players connected in a somewhat flat shape; to anticipate dangerous through balls by the yellow team. When they are attacking, the goalkeeper must stay connected to the back 4 players (not leave a large gap between himself and the back 4; to be part of the attack by initiating the attack with good distribution or being available as a supporting player.



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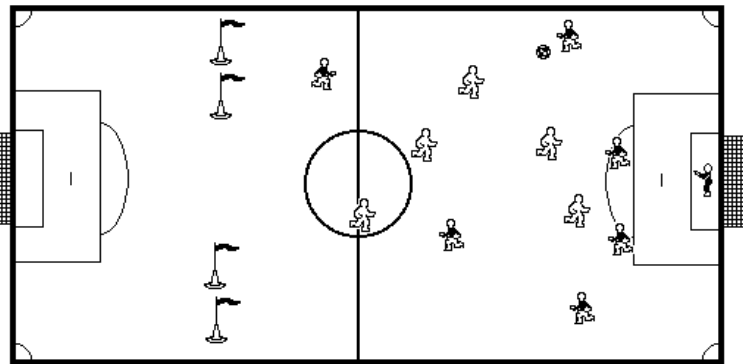
3) 6v3 to Big goal and 2 Counter-Attack Goals (15 minutes): Use half of the field. The 6 players (in blue) are the goalkeeper, the back four and one central midfielder who are protecting the Big Goal and trying to pass the ball through one of the 2 counter-attack goals located at the midfield stripe. The 3 players (in yellow) are the opposing attacking forwards and one central midfielder who are trying to score on the Big Goal. The activity is started when the coach or another player, who is located in the center circle, serves a ball into the defensive third to the blue team or to the yellow team. The yellow team is awarded 3 points for scoring a goal; the blue team is awarded 1 point for successfully passing the ball through one of the counter-attack goals.



Coaching points: Reinforce all of the coaching points made in activities 1 and 2 above. As players are added to the activity, the environment becomes more chaotic and complicated, so the goalkeeper must concentrate even harder on his organizational & communication skills.

4) 7v5 to Big goal and 2 Counter-Attack Goals (15 minutes): Use 2/3 of the field. The 7 players (in blue) are the goalkeeper, the back four and two central midfielders who are protecting the Big Goal and trying to pass the ball through one of the 2 counter-attack goals located at the midfield stripe. The 5 players (in yellow) are the opposing attacking forwards and three midfielders who are trying to score on the Big Goal. The activity is started when the coach or another player, who is located in the center circle, serves a ball into the defensive third to the blue team or to the yellow team. The yellow team is awarded 2 points for scoring a goal; the blue team is awarded 1 point for successfully passing the ball through one of the counter-attack goals.

Coaching points: Reinforce all of the coaching points made in activities 1 and 2 above. As players are added to the activity, the environment becomes more chaotic and complicated, so the goalkeeper must concentrate even harder on his organizational & communication skills.



5) 9v9, 10v10 or 11v11 game (30 minutes): Play soccer with no restrictions or incentives.

Coaching points: Reinforce all of the coaching points made in activities 1 and 2 above. As players are added to the activity, the environment becomes more chaotic and complicated, so the goalkeeper must concentrate even harder on his organizational & communication skills

6) Cool-Down (10 minutes): 2 players per ball, about 3 yards apart. One player serves the ball underhand so that the partner can volley it back to the server's hands. Alternate feet each time. After 15-20 repetitions, partners change roles. Repeat using inside of foot and instep. Finish cool-down with static stretching of the major muscle groups.