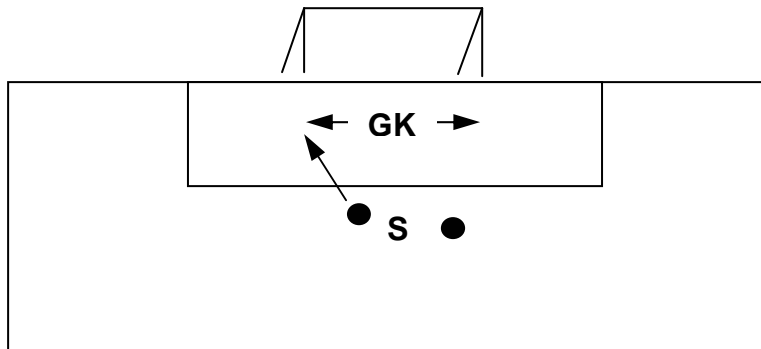


Rob Walker
"Between the Posts"
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Five Favorite Goalkeeping Practices That do the Trick

Several coaching journals have begun to publish "my 5 favorite practices" in easy to follow articles. So, this month, 5 of my favorites; each forming a building block to good goalkeeping. This particular set of 5 don't involve a "team" atmosphere, but do involve several people: a goalkeeper (there can always be more than one) a player or two and even a coach!

Practice #1: Side to Side & Side to Side with a Change



This practice has two phases. In the first, the goalkeeper shuffles from one side to the other. The Server plays (with a sharp throw or pass with the foot) a ball to the side of the goalkeeper. The server plays a total of 6 or 8 serves to the goalkeeper who continuously moves from one side to the other (the serve is played each time the goalkeeper moves from one side to the next).

- Service should cover the basics; on the ground, mid-body, chest and above the head.
- The goalkeeper should keep his / her feet throughout this exercise.
- The goalkeeper should stay out in front of the goal posts as he / she moves side to side.
- After catching each ball, the goalkeeper should return it sharply to the server (this activity uses one ball through the set).
- Repetitions should be kept short, 6 or 8 serves are appropriate; generally one set for service on the ground, mid-body, chest etc.

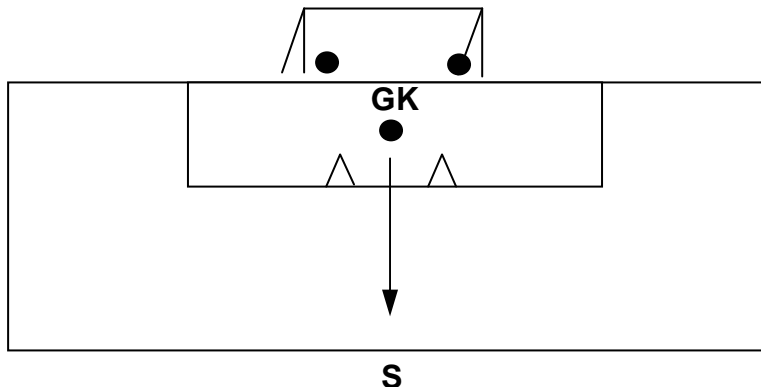
The second phase to this practice is done similarly to the first. Except:

- At random points, the server changes the movement of the goalkeeper by saying "change" and the goalkeeper changes direction in the side to side pattern.

- The server should pause momentarily after saying "change" to allow the goalkeeper to use his / her agility to go in the opposite direction.
- The server must mix up the side to side and the "changes" within the set.
- Repetitions should again be kept to 6 or 8 repetitions.

In both activities, the goalkeeper should have adequate rest to recover for the next set (can be passive or active--i.e. juggle between each set).

Practice #2 The Roll Out

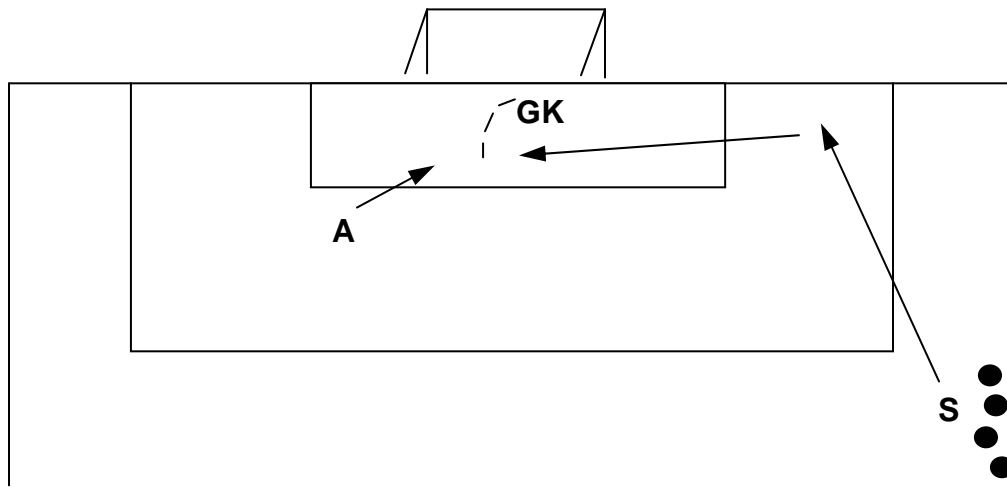


This activity comes from Bill Irwin at the University of Portland. The Activity starts with the goalkeeper standing centrally in goal with both feet on the end line and a ball in hand. The goalkeeper begins the activity by rolling the ball out to the server and then the goalkeeper sprints out to the smaller goal marked centrally (4 yards wide) at the top of the goal area.

- As the goalkeeper arrives at the goal area, he / she must decide when to get "set" in order to deal with the shot from the server (standing outside the penalty area, but ready to move inside towards the goalkeeper).
- The goalkeeper must attempt to save the shot from the server at the top of the goal area (from ground level to the cross-bar level).
- The closer the goalkeeper gets to the ball and the closer the server gets to the goalkeeper, the less time for the goalkeeper to react.
- The goalkeeper's movements must be sharp: barriers must be present; the goalkeeper's posture must be upright and balanced.
- Extra soccer balls should be stored in the goal so that the goalkeeper can receive 6, 8 or 10 shots in a set.

This activity can also be done from right and left sided angles. Again, the goalkeeper starts on the end line and advances out on an angle to make saves from the server. The goalkeeper should be responsible for covering a smaller area on the angle of the serve. The near post should be the priority in this Practice.

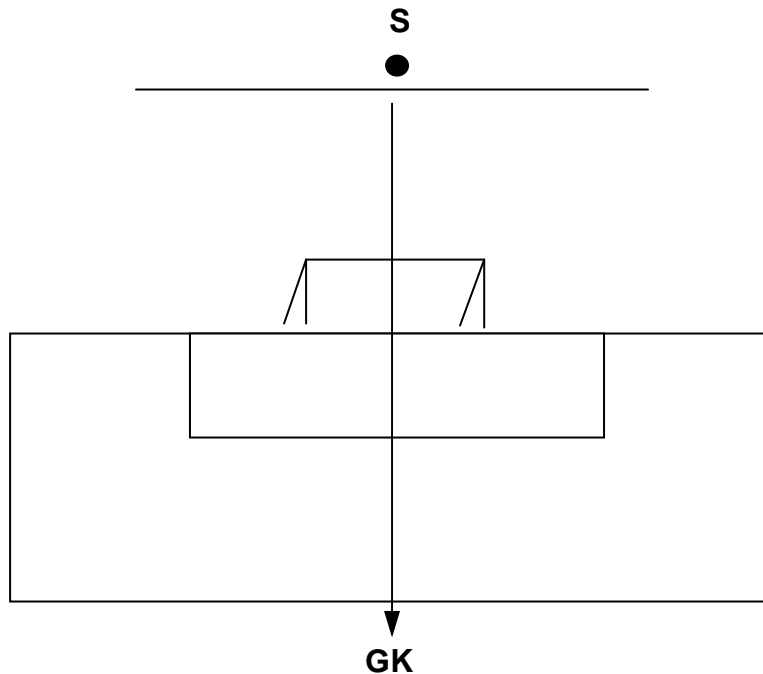
Practice #3: Crossing with a Little Pressure



In this practice, a server sets up outside the penalty area with a supply of soccer balls as shown. The server provides a series of crossed balls towards the goalkeeper from different areas (both early and late crosses). The service should come from a quickly moving ball (and a quickly moving server). An attacker (A in the diagram) should put pressure on the serve.

- The goalkeeper must "hold and assess" the pace, height and trajectory of the serve.
- When the goalkeeper determines where the ball "is going," he / she must come for the ball or "track with it" to get to the serve.
- The goalkeeper must shout "KEEPER" or "AWAY" when coming for the ball.
- The goalkeeper must determine whether to catch or punch when coming to the ball and dealing with the attacker.
- After catching the cross, the goalkeeper should give the server a strong "competitive" throw back to the server.
- Crosses should be worked on from both the goalkeeper's right and left hand side.
- The server should be prepared to provide near post, mid-goal and far post crosses.
- The Attacking player can increase the amount of challenge on the goalkeeper as the practice progresses.
- This practice can be built up by adding additional attacking and defending players.

Practice #4 Kicking and First Touch



This practice involves the goalkeeper and a partner (S in the diagram). The objective of this practice is for each player to play the ball over the crossbar to the partner positioned as shown.

- Each player plays "2 touch," making sure to receive the ball smoothly on the first touch and prepare for the long pass in that touch.
- Each player should be prepared to play the ball in the air on both the right and left foot (the serve should not be "run around" from the "weak" side to the "strong" side).
- Strong instep passing is critical to this exercise.
- This practice should be turned into a game, where each player scores points through the practice.
- Each serve must be behind a designated line in order to "score."
- Extra soccer balls may need to be kept handy to keep this practice moving.

Practice: Long Distribution (Punting / Drop Kicking)

The goalkeeper is positioned a long distance away from a goal. The goalkeeper's objective is to punt or drop kick the ball directly into the goal, or deliver the ball to the goal in one bounce. The goalkeeper's partner, (S) receives errant service and returns the ball to the GK.

- The distance away from the goal is determined by the goalkeeper's ability. A young goalkeeper (13 or 14 years of age) might be 25-35 yards from goal. An older goalkeeper with more technical expertise and strength could be 50 yards (or farther) away from goal.
- This activity can be done by two goalkeepers with portable goals for each to play into.
- As with the kicking practice, this practice should be made into a competition where points are kept (5 points for a serve played straight in, more points for a serve that hits the crossbar etc).
- Having an extra supply of soccer balls will help keep this practice moving.