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WSYSA's Play On  
"Between the Posts"  
For April Publication

## PF Flyers: Run Faster, Jump Higher

When I was a kid, there was a commercial, "wear PF Flyers, the shoes that will make you run faster and jump higher." I owned a pair and while on the first day or two I felt like I could fly through the air, I soon learned some valuable information about "truth in advertising." After the "newness" wore off the shoes, I was the same old earth bound me. If only you could buy a product that would allow you to automatically run faster and jump higher. Oh, it is not to be.

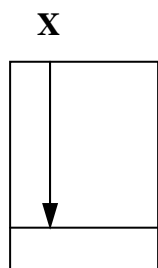
Last month, I discussed some of the essentials of goalkeeping fitness. Particularly, dealing with sprinting, and jumping. Not the kind of sprinting and jumping imagined in a Madison Avenue advertising agency, but in the real world of youth soccer goalkeeping. Much of the information I dealt with stemmed from a talk given by strength and speed guru Verne Gambetta at a meeting at the National Soccer Coaches Association of America Convention in January. To review, here are some important principles:

- Training should reflect the movement and distance that a goalkeeper routinely deals with in the game (7, 12, 18 yards).
- Sets of any given exercise should last no longer than 60-80 seconds (and can often last for 30- 40 seconds).
- Adequate rest needs to be given between each set, goalkeepers should start out working at a 1:2 or 1:2.5 work to rest ratio.
- Work needs to involve quality sprinting, jumping and movement that uses the body's own resistance against itself.

### **Sample Exercises**

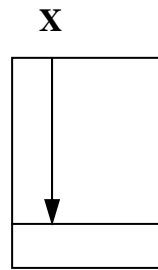
The exercises below are meant to be performed at "top-speed." It is important that a goalkeeper be warmed up and stretched out prior to exerting him / herself using any of these exercises.

#### **1. Full Squat Jump and Sprint**



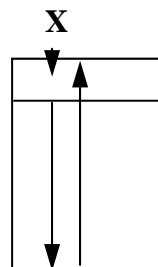
In a grid (6 yards wide x 10 yards long) the goalkeeper begins this exercise by putting his / her hands behind her head and squatting down to the ground. Once the goalkeeper is at a "full squat" he or she drops their hands from behind their head and jumps upwards in one powerful motion. Once the jump is completed, the goalkeeper sprints forward 7 yards, slows, jogs back to the starting position, rests 10 seconds and repeats the jump and sprint. 2 sets of 6 repetitions is recommended to start.

## 2. Full Squat Jump, Long Jump, Quick Jump and Sprint



In the same grid as #1, the goalkeeper begins this set with a full squat jump (as above) followed by an unassisted jump (a jump that is quick, and doesn't rely on too much momentum from the arms or bend at the knees). As soon as the unassisted jump is completed, the goalkeeper sprints forward 7 yards, slows, jogs back to the starting position, rests 10 seconds and repeats the jumps and the sprint. 2 sets of 6 repetitions is recommended to start.

## 3. Full Squat Jump, Long Jump, Sprint and Back peddle



In the same grid as in #1 & 2, the goalkeeper begins each repetition with a full squat jump, then bends at the knees and "long jumps" to a point several feet (try 3.5 to 4 feet) in front. Immediately upon landing, the goalkeeper sprints to the back line of the grid, then backpeddles at full speed back to the starting point. After resting 15 seconds, the repetition is repeated. 2 sets of 6 repetitions is recommended to start.

### Hints & Recommendations

These three examples are part of a larger whole. One footed jumping can easily replace the full squat. The distance covered can be changed to 12 yards or 16. Sprinting and getting "set" and then sprinting again can become a part of a routine. Obviously a set can have 1 or 2 more repetitions added to it. The important element is to have quality in jumping and sprinting throughout. Form must come before function.

Additionally, a player's age (and therefore physical make-up) is important too. Younger goalkeepers (say 14 years old and below) should not forsake technical training for this work. However, young goalkeepers should spend 1-2 "sessions" a week sprinting, jumping and working against their own body weight. Team training or goalkeeping training time does not have to include this work (it can be done at the end of a practice or as homework).

Older goalkeepers should spend 2-3 "sessions" per week working on this program. Depending on where an individual's goalkeeping and physical development needs lies, this work can be individualized to meet the goalkeeper's own developmental requirements. There must also be an emphasis on stretching, before, during and throughout this training.

## **Truth in Advertising**

Just as there is no shoe that can make every kid "run faster and jump higher," there is no one way to get more out of a goalkeeper physically. Right along with strength training there really needs to be a technical emphasis on goalkeeping skill. In time, a goalkeeper's vertical jump can be extended. However, if good technical performance does not match a goalkeeper's physical growth, I think everyone ends up just a little bit more disappointed than they ought to be. In the final analysis, technical performance should match physical growth. So, the truth doesn't lie in advertising, but in the doing (and doing it well). That's a guarantee.