

# COACHING GOALKEEPERS

TECHNICAL MANUAL





# INTRODUCTION

Over the past few years the profile of the goalkeeper in grassroots football has raised significantly. Players now want to be the main goalkeeper and are not just being forced to as they are not the best defender or not the best striker in the team. It has now become a highly desirable position to play.

Many goalkeepers in the British game have brought new techniques and styles of play ~ Peppe Reine and the side-winder, David de Gea and his blocking, Hugo Lloris playing as a sweeper keeper ~ all bringing new and exciting developments to the goalkeeping role!

As coaches we should spend more time developing the goalkeepers in their specialist position and not just send them to "Compost Corner" to warm up in sessions and then invite them back when the strikers want to practice shooting or its time for a game – goalkeepers need dedicated training and development.

Within this manual are the core fundamental techniques to the role of being a goalkeeper – the one job you have is to keep the ball out of the net, but that will not define how good a goalkeeper you become.

Mastering these techniques will make you a better goalkeeper, and choosing how, where, and when to use them.

Have fun and Happy Keeping

Joe

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## TECHNICAL INFORMATION

This technical manual accompanies structured Goalkeeper Coaching and provides the core information for all the positions, actions and decision making that goalkeepers should be performing.

Goalkeepers should use this information as the foundation for their practice and actions during a match, refining and adjusting, according to their own needs, abilities and physical stature.

Continuously reviewing and refining your performance and actions against these core foundations will help you become a better goalkeeper and ultimately a better football player.

***“Most kids dream of scoring the perfect goal.  
I always dreamed of stopping it...”***

*Iker Casillas ~ Goalkeeper for Spain and Real Madrid*



# THE “SET POSITION”

## Things to Consider

- Your **feet** should be approximately shoulder width apart
- Your **weight** should be on the front half of the feet ensuring a balanced position
- Your **body weight** needs to be slightly forward leaning
- Your **knees** need to be slightly flexed with the **hips** square to the ball
- Keep the **head** still and keep your **nose in front of your toes**
- Your **elbows** need to be narrow with the chest facing the ball
- Your **hands** need to be in front of your bodyline and approximately ball width apart.
- **Prepare your hands early**



These are general guidelines.

Questions will be posed as to what is considered to be the correct hand position.

The Goalkeeper will naturally hold the hands in a position that he/she feels comfortable. Hand positions will vary e.g. palms down – thumbs up – tucked in to the waist – fingers down (as above) etc.

As a general statement: “If the goalkeeper’s handling is good and consistent and the goalkeeper feels comfortable then it should not be a problem. On the other hand if the goalkeeper’s handling techniques are inconsistent then the hand position may need changing.

The “Set Position” will obviously alter slightly due to the physiological make up of the goalkeeper. The taller goalkeepers’ feet will probably be slightly wider apart, but generally the principles remain the same.

# THE “SCOOP” TECHNIQUE

- Collapse at your **knees** to the “K” position
- Open your **palms** up to face the ball with the **fingers** spread
- Lead with your **hands** which brings your **bodyweight** forward
- Keep your **head** still and your **eyes** focused on the ball
- Bring your **shoulders** forward over your hands
- Your **elbows** need to be slightly flexed to cushion the impact of the ball
- **“Soft hands – Strong wrists”**
- As your **palms** make contact with the ball, scoop the ball into your **chest** whilst bringing your bodyweight forward and **“Complete the save”**
- **“Recovery saves”** to gather the ball if the ball comes off the goalkeeper
- **“Recover lines”** to defend the goal if that is the better option

## Key Points

- ❖ Check goalkeepers’ starting position in relation to the ball
- ❖ Movement into line of the ball
- ❖ The Set Position as the ball is struck
- ❖ The assessment as to which technique will be most appropriate





# THE “CUP” TECHNIQUE

- Once the ball has been struck avoid as little body movement as possible
- Whilst in a balanced “Set Position”, your **footwork** may need to be adjusted slightly laterally as the ball travels towards you
- Keeping your **chest** square to the ball your **hands** need to be brought forward in front of your bodyline
- “Prepare the hands early”
- Your elbows need to be tucked in with the **palms** facing up and your **fingers** spread
- “Soft hands – Strong wrists”
- Your **feet** now need to be planted solidly in preparation for the catch
- On impact the ball is taken into the midriff with your palms securing the ball

## Key Points

- ❖ The goalkeepers’ starting position in relation to the ball
- ❖ Movement into the line of the ball to intercept
- ❖ The “Set Position” as the ball is being struck
- ❖ The assessment as to which technique will be most appropriate

## Common Problems

The goalkeeper jumping up as the catch is made or the goalkeepers’ bodyweight going backwards therefore they become unbalanced as the catch is made.



# THE “W” TECHNIQUE

- Your **hands** from being in front of the line of the body need to be brought into the line of the trajectory of the ball with your **chest** square
- Your hands should be prepared with your **palms** facing the ball with your **fingers** spread and your **thumbs** forming the “W” shape (see image)
- Your **elbows** need to be slightly flexed to act as “shock absorbers” when your hands make contact with the ball
- Your contact with the ball needs to be made approximately “15 – 18 inches” in front of the body
- “Soft hands – Strong wrists”
- “Keep your eyes on the back of the ball”

## Key Points

- The goalkeepers’ starting position in relation to the ball
- Movement into the line of the ball
- The “Set Position” as the ball is being struck
- The assessment as to which technique will be most appropriate

## Common Problems:

The goalkeepers’ head is not still and their head retracts as the catch is made, thus making the goalkeeper unbalanced

The goalkeepers’ elbows are not flexed enough, which “flattens” the hand shape, which often leads to the ball catching the end of the goalkeepers’ fingers



## THE “COLLAPSING SAVE”

This technique is used when the ball is played down the side of the body but close to the feet. If the goalkeeper does not have the time to move into line and use the “Scoop” technique, then this is the most appropriate way to deal with this type of ball.

- The goalkeeper needs to collapse at the **knees** at the same time as ensuring that the nearest or leading **hand** goes behind the line of the ball (in the example below the nearest or leading hand would be the left hand)
- Your hand nearest the ball would lead and your other hand would follow ensuring that the **bodyweight** comes forward in preparation for contact with the ball – for example, as shown in the picture below – the left hand goes behind the ball with the right hand securing it on top – “**Soft hands – Strong wrists**”
- Your **bodyweight** now follows naturally in behind the ball to make a second barrier
- In the ideal situation the contact with the ball would be made in front of the body with your **elbows** slightly flexed and tucked in
- Your head is then placed in behind the ball with the **eyes** focused to ensure the ball is secured
- In the event of the ball coming off the goalkeeper is there a “recovery save” or the goalkeeper making a “recovery line” to defend the goal

### Key Points

- ❖ The goalkeepers’ starting position in relation to the ball
- ❖ Movement into the line of the ball
- ❖ The “Set Position” as the ball is being struck
- ❖ The assessment as to which technique will be most appropriate





## THE “LOW DIVING SAVE”

Once it is determined that the ball is struck wide of the goalkeeper the decision needs to be made as to whether the goalkeeper has the opportunity to move his / her feet to get into line of the ball. If this is not possible then this technique needs to be implemented.

- You should take a “step” towards the approaching line of the ball with your nearest **foot**
- By making the initial step it brings your **bodyweight** slightly forward in preparation to make the save
- With your lead **leg** slightly flexed and your bodyweight transferred onto it, you should now have the power to dive to the side whilst bringing your total bodyweight forward and in the direction of the dive
- As your weight is transferred to your lead leg, your hands and your bodyweight should follow fluidly
- Your **hands** should be approximately a ball width apart (“**Handcuffs**”) with your **fingers** spread and moving together towards the line of the ball with your fingers spread in the “W” formation
- If the ball arrives along the ground, your leading hand needs to go behind the ball with your other hand securing it on top - in the photograph below the left hand is the leading followed by the right
- Your **elbow** needs to be tucked in to ensure that the ball is secured safely and to avoid injury
- All impact is taken on the side of your **body** and your **shoulders**
- Your **head** then follows in behind the hands
- Deflecting to safe areas – **Strong wrists / Big palm**
- Recovery saves to gather the loose ball / Recovery lines to defend the goal

### Key Points

- ❖ The goalkeepers’ starting position in relation to the ball
- ❖ Movement into the line of the ball
- ❖ The “Set Position” as the ball is being struck
- ❖ The assessment as to which technique will be most appropriate



# THE “HIGH DIVING SAVE”

Once it is determined that the ball is struck wide of the goalkeeper the decision needs to be made as to whether the goalkeeper has the opportunity to move his / her feet to get into line of the ball. If this is not possible then this technique needs to be implemented.

- You should take a “**step**” towards the approaching line of the ball with your nearest **foot**
- By making the initial step it brings your **bodyweight** slightly forward in preparation to make the save
- With your lead **leg** slightly flexed and your bodyweight transferred onto it, you will now have the power to dive to his / her side whilst bringing your bodyweight forward
- As your weight is transferred to your lead leg, your hands and your bodyweight follow fluidly
- Your **hands** should be approximately one ball width apart (“**Handcuffs**”) with your **fingers** spread and moving together towards the line of the ball with your fingers spread in the “W” formation

- Your **elbows** should remain flexed to prevent injury during the jump
- Your **eyes** should be focused on the ball and if possible, catch the ball securing it on impact as your **body** hits the floor
- The technique of “Deflecting” to safe areas – “**Strong wrists – Big palm**”
- The techniques of “Parrying” to safe areas
- Recovery saves to gather the ball
- Recovery lines to defend the goal

## Key Points

- ❖ The goalkeepers’ starting position in relation to the ball
- ❖ Movement into the line of the ball
- ❖ The “Set Position” as the ball is being struck
- ❖ The assessment as to which technique will be most appropriate





# ONE v ONE: DIVING AT FEET

## Key Points

- ⚽ The goalkeepers' starting position in relation to the ball:
  - Priority 1 – Defend the **goal**
  - Priority 2 – Defend the **space** between the goalkeeper and the defenders
- ⚽ Is there pressure on the ball?
- ⚽ The goalkeepers' stance in anticipation of the through ball – being on the front foot
- ⚽ Assessment of the through ball – Advance or Defend the goal?
- ⚽ If the decision is to advance – be positive – safety first – clear the lines

## Defending the goal

- ⚽ Put pressure on the attacking player
- ⚽ Make forward movements only when the ball is out of the attackers' feet
- ⚽ **“Delay and Stay Big”**
- ⚽ Force the attacker wide if possible
- ⚽ Communication – role of recovering defender

## “Smothering” or “Diving at feet”

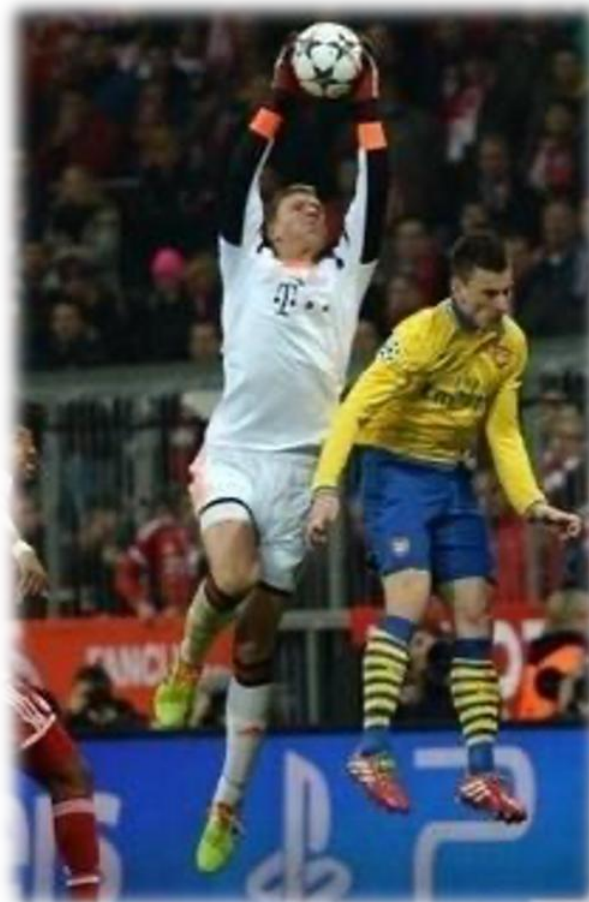
- ⚽ Lead with the hands taking the bodyweight forward
- ⚽ Tuck the head in behind the hands
- ⚽ A big barrier – “Physical Courage”



# DEALING WITH CROSSES

## Key Points

- ⦿ **Starting position** in relation to the ball and the goal:
  - Priority 1 – Defend the **goal**
  - Priority 2 – Defend the **space** between the goalkeeper and the defenders
- ⦿ **Stance** and **body language** of the goalkeeper needs to be “**Positive**”
- ⦿ **Assessment** of the flight of the ball
- ⦿ **Decision** of whether to come for the ball or let the defenders deal with it
- ⦿ **Communication** of the goalkeepers decision “**Early, Loud, clear, calm and concise**”



## Keeper

- ⦿ **Angle and speed** of the goalkeepers’ approach – quickest and shortest route
- ⦿ **Timing and angle** of the goalkeepers take off – take off inside leg if possible
- ⦿ Technique of **catching** at the highest and safest point – “**elbows slightly flexed and see the ball into the hands**”
- ⦿ If the goalkeeper needs to **punch** the ball – “**height, distance and width**”
- ⦿ Two fisted or one fisted – “**through the bottom and the middle of the ball**”
- ⦿ **Recovery lines** to defend the goal – appropriate **footwork**.
- ⦿ The roles of the **defenders**: “**Depth, Communication, Protection and Covering the goal**”

## Away

- ⦿ Goalkeeper **recovers** to defend the goal.
- ⦿ **Communication** to defenders – Pushing out/marking positions.



# DISTRIBUTION: THROWING

## Standardisation of Terminology

### Roll

- Used over short distances
- Lower the **body**, and with the **arm** extended roll the ball underarm at a low trajectory
- It ensures that the ball arrives quickly and accurately and easier to control for the receiver

### Javelin

- Used over medium distances and very effective at getting to the receiver quickly
- Wide **base** ensures that the throw arrives with good pace
- Good **upper body** strength is needed to use this technique effectively
- The ball is thrown from the **chest** with the **elbow** flexed and then extended quickly

### Side-Arm

- Often used when throwing into wide areas over longer distances
- A wide **stance** with the ball travelling at a lower trajectory than the javelin throw
- Often used to throw to the space in front of players

### Over-Arm

- Used to by-pass players i.e. to throw over midfield players and into the strikers
- Used over longer distances to exploit spaces behind and down the side of the defenders
- A wider **stance** is now needed to give you the "**base**" to propel the ball over long distances
- Lead with opposite hand and with a bowling technique release the ball at the top of the follow through



# DISTRIBUTION: PASSING

## Standardisation of Terminology

### Drill

- Used to pass the ball over distances between 20 and 40 yards
- The ball is **drilled** just off the ground arriving at the receiver below the shins

### CLIP

- Used to by-pass players over the same distances
- Ideally the ball now needs to be **lofted** so arriving at the receiver without bouncing

### Drive

- Used to pass the ball over the **longest** distances e.g. passing long diagonals
- Goal kicks etc

### Volley

- When the ball is thrown from the hands and struck in **front** of the body prior to it hitting the floor
- Used to play over long distances but lacks accuracy

### Sidewinder

- Favoured by the Latin and South American goalkeepers
- Volleyed from **outside** the line of the body similar to how an outfield player would volley the ball
- Goes at a flatter trajectory and easier for the receiver to control when played over the longer distances

## Half Volley

- Delivered from the hands and the ball is struck as it "**hits the floor**"
- Often used when passing long especially when playing into a strong wind. The benefit of using this technique is that the trajectory is lower than either the volley or the side-volley
- An accurate technique and the flight is true therefore easier to control for the receiver

## Dribble and Drive

- The goalkeeper once in possession and decides to **dribble** the ball out of the penalty area and **drive** the ball over longer distances
- Often used to exploit the opposition if they are poor headers of the ball
- The most accurate and probably the most favoured technique used by today's' goalkeepers





We only  
do  
positive. 😊



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**FOR**  
**ALL**