

Pre-season: The goalkeeper

By Tony Carr

When your goalkeeper returns from the summer break, you should get him back to basics and the most basic thing for a goalkeeper to do is catch the ball.

I know from last season that if you don't get them to practise, when they try and catch in the first match of the season it takes three or four goes before the goalkeeper gets it right.

serve →



Make sure the hands form a "W" when catching.



Practice catching at various heights and speeds in pairs.



Goalkeepers score points by catching the ball in this game.

Start by getting your goalkeepers to think about where they are in relation to the goal and to get in line behind the ball.

They first raise their hands together to form a "W" behind the ball with thumbs and forefingers upright. They then spread their fingers and watch the ball into their hands.

Drills to practise

- Each player bounces the ball repeatedly from around chest height to the ground and catches it on the way back up.
- Keeping their feet planted, players now twist their torsos to the left and bounce the ball, twist back to the centre for a second bounce, then twist to the right for a third bounce.
- Players continue rotating back and forth.
- Increase number of bounces in each position and then the speed.

How to advance it

In pairs, players stand opposite each other about three to five yards apart and gently throw the ball to each other. Service should be varied, including using one hand or two, underarm, overarm and throw-in techniques.

The ball should be directed straight at the player as well as slightly to the left and right of them. Balls should also be thrown anywhere between chest height and above head height so they have to jump.

Game situation

Play 1v1 in an area 15 yards long by 10 yards wide with goals at each end, although distance is dependent on the age and ability of the players. Players take turns to attempt to score by using any goalkeeper kicking or throwing technique.

If a goalkeeper makes a save, they take their turn to score from the spot they collected the ball. Narrow the goal width using poles if each goalkeeper is spending more time practising deflecting rather than catching skills.