

GOALKEEPING CURRICULUM

Developed by

James Flynn

in accordance to guidelines set forth
by the FIFA Youth Football Manual



Playing Experience



Universitat d'Alacant
Universidad de Alicante



Coaching Experience



Mission

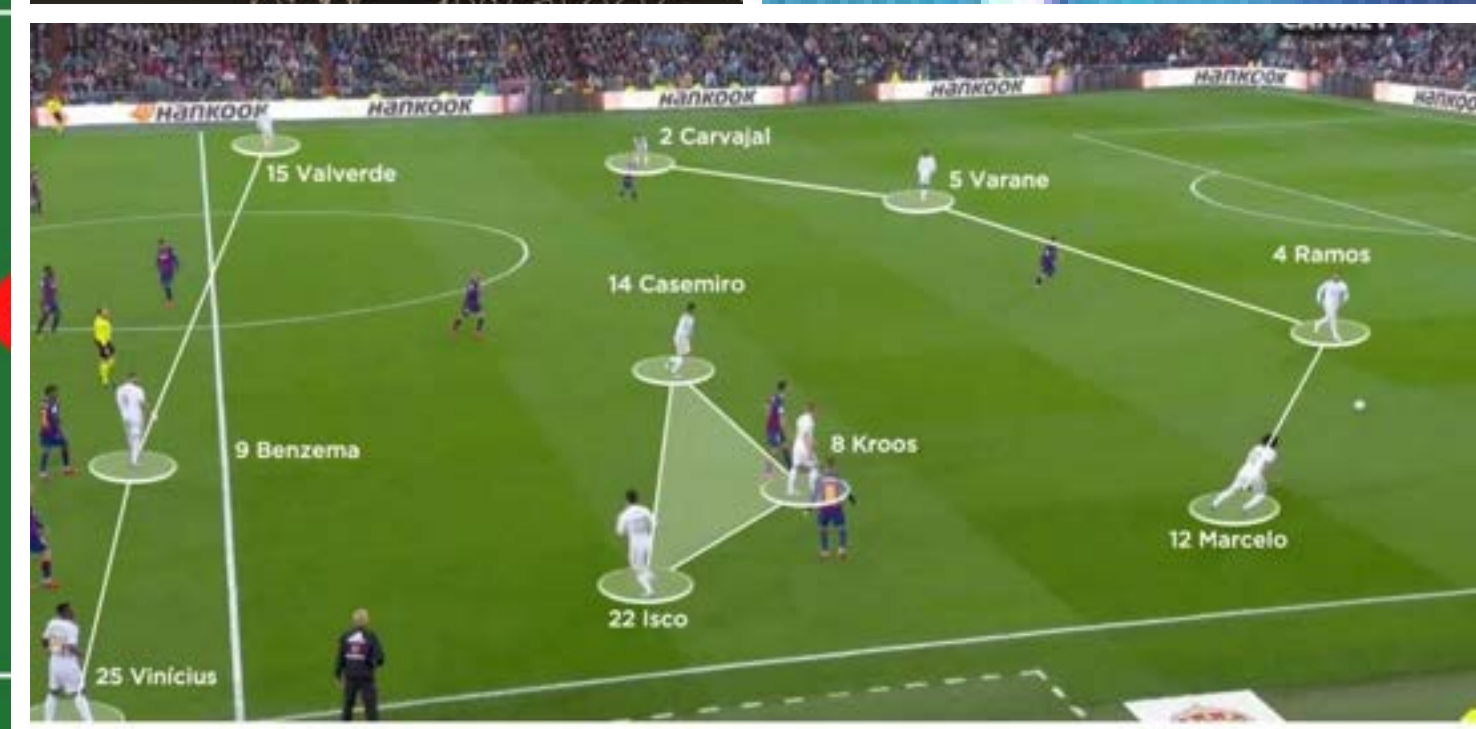
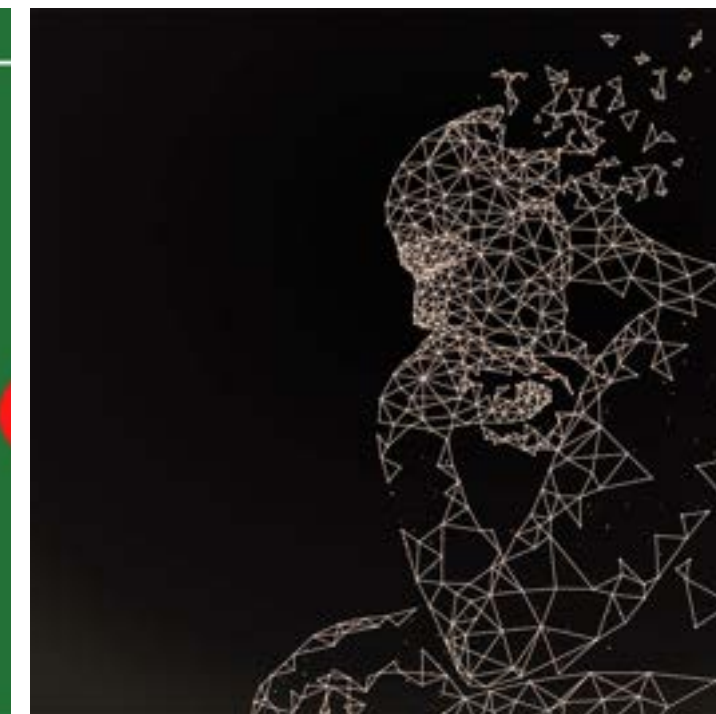
To develop players so they are able to play at the highest level of their interest while having fun.

Understand that having fun is a sliding scale. For the youngest/least experienced players is going to be engaging them any type of activity that incorporates at least one aspect of football. For the oldest/most advanced players, having fun comes from pushing themselves and being pushed to compete at the highest level of their abilities.



Philosophy

My goal is to help players develop as people first and footballers second. By focusing on attitude, communication, flexibility and overcoming adversity, we will maintain integrity and character. All players will walk away more prepared to move forward both on and off the pitch. This is achieved through an exciting and engaging environment because growth is driven by passion.

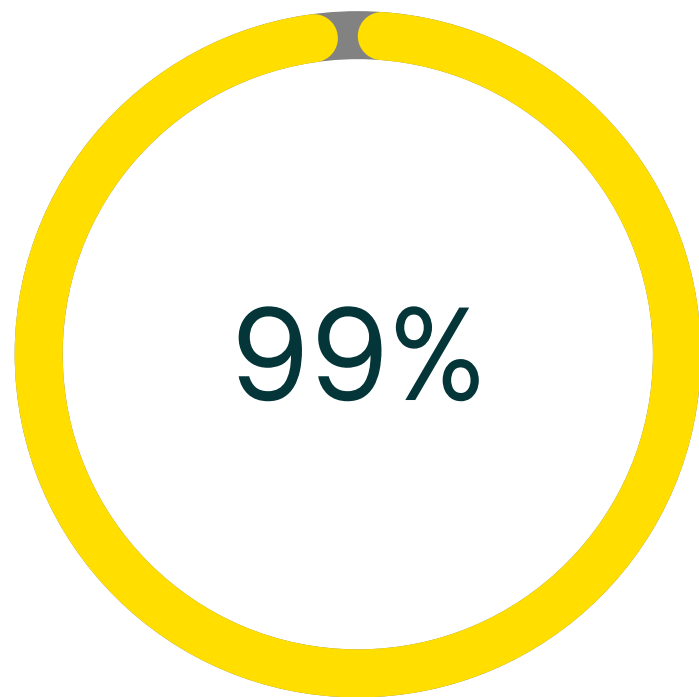


COMPONENTS OF GOALKEEPING



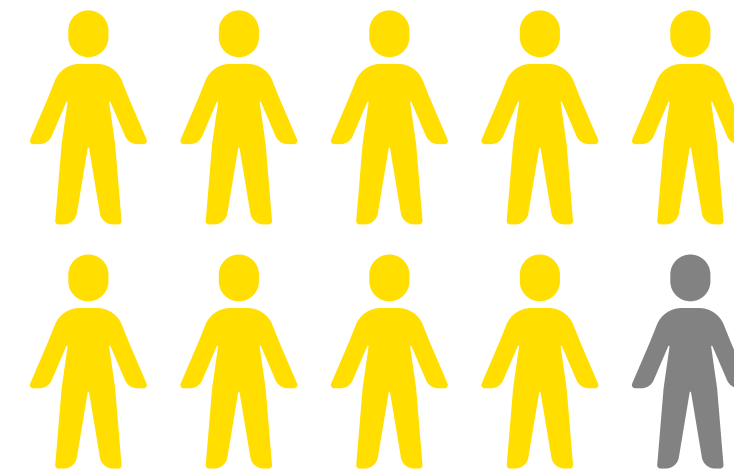
Breakdown

Key Components of an Effective Training Session:
Organization - Repetition - Coaching - Game Like - Challenging



Theory of Specificity

Any training should be relevant and appropriately replicate the task at hand. Failure to do so will not produce the desired effect. In short, you must train a skill in order to get better at it. To become a better goalie, you must train skills that a goalkeeper uses.



Train everything in front of goal, as often as possible. Having a feel for where the lines are and the goal is will reinforce positioning, depth and proprioception.

Small skills training (i.e. hand shape, diving form, etc.) should not be overused or made to be the sole focus of a training session.

Theory of Specificity

To improve shot stopping, players must face shots.

A rolling shot over stationary shots will also have more skill relevance unless the training is specific to set pieces or PKs.

Exceptions to these rules should be conscious and deliberate design choices.

Psychology

The psychological aspect of Goalkeeping is the most important due to the demands of the position. Goalkeeping technique and skills can be taught but psychology is next to impossible to change. Goalkeepers are off their rocker. Who else in their right mind is going to sign up to dive into an attacker's feet or save a driven shot with their face? Having a couple screws loose is a facet that must be embraced and channeled correctly.



Courage

Goalkeepers must display courage more than any other position. They must be willing to sacrifice their body in order to make a save and not be scared to dive at an attacker's feet to win the ball.



Leadership

Goalkeepers have to be leaders to do their job effectively. Because of our position on the field, we are afforded a unique view of the field and must take advantage of that to be able to lead and direct not only the defense, but the whole team.



Composure Under Pressure

Goalkeepers must always keep a cool head. It is imperative that they are ok with being the last line of defense and an uncomposed keeper is a liability.

Psychology



Mental Fortitude

No matter the events that lead up to the goal, the perception will always be that it is the Keeper's fault. Whether the blame is due or undue a Goalkeeper must accept that and be ready for the next play.



Confidence

Because of the leadership component of this position a Goalkeeper must be confident in their abilities. Nothing sinks a team quicker than a Goalie that is unsure of themselves.



Attitude

Getting scored on sucks. It makes no difference whether it means losing a championship game or in a blowout when it will not affect the outcome. Getting scored on sucks. Goalkeepers must be able to not dwell on the goals that are allowed and always be ready and prepared for the next shot.



Motivation

No other position has a bigger impact on the team. Goalkeepers must be highly motivated because the demands of the position are higher than other positions. The Goalie will set the expectation for the rest of the team whether good or bad.

Footwork & Footskills

Footwork and footskills are sometimes segments of Goalkeeping that get left out. However, to be a top quality Goalkeeper and to perform at the best of their ability a Keeper must have strong footwork and strong footskills.



Quick Feet

Even though everyone loves to see a long stretched out dive, diving is a last resort. Quicker feet allow for Goalkeepers to stay on their feet more and improving diving when it is necessary.



Ball Control

Just because a Goalkeeper uses their hands does not mean they do not need their feet. Goalkeepers must have good ball control to be an effective support option.

Distribution

Along with being the last line of defense a Goalkeeper is also the first line of offense. Good distribution is a fundamental ingredient to being the first line of offense



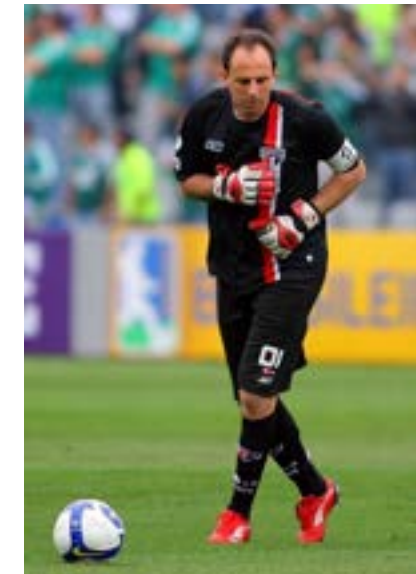
From Hands

Goalkeepers must be able to distribute from their hands. A well placed throw or roll that allows the team to keep possession in a key position can be instrumental in quick counter attacks.



From Feet

Goalkeeper must also be able to distribute from their feet. A quick drop-kick down field into a defense that has not transitioned quickly enough or being a support option while in possession, these are vital skills for a Keeper.



Goal Kicks/Free Kicks

Playing/Building out of the back can be difficult. A Goalkeeper who cannot take their own goal kicks or free kicks has one fewer option and is more susceptible to a counter.

Understanding of The Game

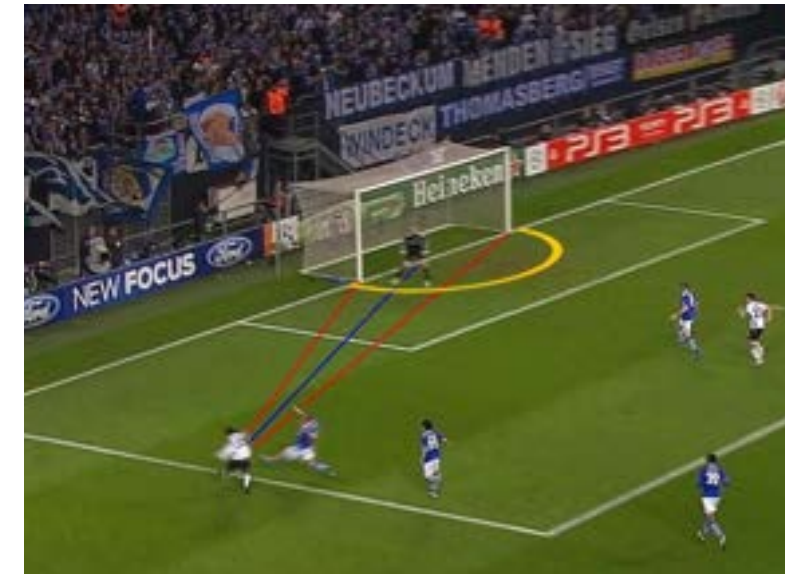
A Goalkeeper is the link between the coach and the rest of the team.

Without a complex understanding of the game and the coach's tactics they will not be able to perform.



Composure/Shape

Goalkeepers are responsible for the composure of the defense. Better Goalkeepers are responsible for the composure of the whole team. In order to direct the team effectively they must have an elevated understanding of the game.



Tactics

Similar to composure and shape Goalkeepers must have an advanced understanding of tactics. Because of their position on the field they need to be on the same page so they can effectively be a tactical voice on the field.



Set Pieces

As the leader of the defense a Goalkeeper must be able to communicate and organize against a free kick quickly and effectively.

Understanding of The Game



Support Positioning

Without a Goalkeeper who can be a strong support player it is the same as playing a man down.



Decision-Making

Rarely does a poor decision from a field player directly lead to a goal. For a Goalkeeper this is the norm. It is vital that Goalkeepers are expert decision makers. Goalkeepers must also understand that once a decision is made they need to commit. Nothing leads to a goal quicker than an uncommitted Keeper.

Shot Stopping

The most obvious responsibility of a Goalkeeper is their shot stopping ability. This is what coaches look for and expect in a Goalie.



Diving Technique

Diving is an essential part of a Goalkeeper's job. Without proper technique their saves will be sloppy and they will not be able to make saves that require them to leave the ground.



Drop Step

American Goalkeepers do not backpedal. Drop Step is a superior technique that allows Keepers to cover more ground quicker and is a competitive advantage.



Positioning/Angles

Understanding angles and positioning is of the utmost importance to a Goalkeeper. Good footwork and good positioning allows for Goalkeepers to leave their feet less and cover more ground when a dive is required.

Shot Stopping



Safe Hands

Once the ball makes it to a Keeper's hands it must be secured. A Goalkeeper who does not make clean saves is an opportunity that strikers relish. A bobble at an inopportune is an easy way to give up a tap in.



Second Shot

If a Goalkeeper has to make the second save the defense has let them down. However, it is an inevitability that a Goalkeeper must be prepared for.

Commanding the Box

The box is a Keeper's home and must be treated as such. A Goalkeeper that allows opponents time and opportunity in the box will face more shots and thus allow more goals.



Communication

A leader who cannot/does not communicate well is inept and ineffectual at best. A Goalkeeper must be able to communicate well.



1v1

While only a small portion of a Goalkeepers responsibility in terms of time accounted for in a game, 1v1s are still an inevitability. Playing well for 89:50 minutes of a game means nothing if a poorly played 10 second 1v1 leads to a goal or a sending off.



Balls in the Air

Whether it is a ball played over the top or a cross the box is a Goalkeeper's home. A Goalkeeper must minimize the time an opponent spends in front of goal and cutting out a ball in the air is essential in defending their home.

Commanding the Box



Directing the Defense

Numerous components go into being able to direct the defense well. Stopping a play before the opponent has a chance for a shot is a key part of keeping the ball out of the net.

Physicality

Physical ability and being fit is essential for any sport or position and Goalkeeping is no exception. These are the requisite pieces of athleticism for a Keeper.



Stength

Goalkeepers must be strong. They must be able to hold their ground against field players who are trying to knock them off the ball.



Agility

So many skills required of a Goalkeeper can be improved or diminished by agility. Navigating through players who want the ball is vital to a Goalkeeper's success.



Speed

Once a decision is made it must be executed quickly. Quicker Keepers allow fewer goals.

Physicality



Reaction Time

A quick decision means nothing if a Keeper cannot react quickly. An unexpected deflection or shot is a sure goal for a Goalkeeper who does not react quickly.



Conditioning

All players must be in shape to do their job effectively. Proper conditioning for a field player and a Goalie are not the same. Goalkeepers need to be able to perform at extremely high intensity in short bursts.

TRAINING THE PLAYER



Introduction to Goalkeeping

The concepts of goalkeeping are best introduced early on game days in the academy environment.



Essential Concepts of Goalkeeping

Players should be rotated in and out of goal during games so they get a chance to experience a different position. At this point you can judge their level of interest and understanding of the position to introduce concepts gradually and not all at once. Players with stronger technical skill, understanding and interest should be provided additional training opportunities.

The best way to introduce goalkeeping is in addition to the academy curriculum. At this age soccer in general is a new concept and specializing too much too early can turn players off.

Handling the Ball

The ball can only be handled inside the box (18 vs. the 6).

Goalkeeper can still play the ball with their feet.

The only time the ball cannot be handled in the box is when there is an INTENTIONAL pass-back with the FOOT.

Positioning

The Goalkeeper is not and should not be glued to their line.

Introducing angles and moving following the play inside the goal mouth.

Moving up with the team to support and moving back into the goal when defending.

Stance (Getting Set)

Have Goalkeepers begin to think about how they are standing to face a shot.

Feet set, weight on the balls of the feet, knees slightly bent, arms in a comfortable position, hand open and ready to make a save or catch.



Beginner Goalkeepers

Points of Emphasis

- Introduce techniques, possibly in stages.
- Introduce roles and responsibilities of the position.
- Constant verbal cueing. Don't allow too much time between drills or turns in goal.
- Players must remain active throughout session.
- MUST see live shots - like anyone else they need to see shots which will remove fears and increase efficacy. Law of Specificity.

Tendencies

- Have virtually no understanding of the 'role'
- Lack Confidence
- Smaller, often nervous to rely on hands, diving.
- Weaknesses
 - Technical abilities
 - Fear to dive and tackle
 - Serving balls.

APPROACH BY AGE

Ages 8 & Under

At this age, players can not be pushed into the position. Rather, players must be introduced. It is crucial at this level to develop hand-eye coordination and not neglect foot skills. The goalkeeper position physiologically challenging. An introduction of ball handling, wearing gloves, and bright color jersey will bring love and interest to the position. Coaches should refrain from choosing a goalkeeper and allow them the opportunity to explore the aspects of the position. In academy style goalkeeper training programs, introduce the basic fundamentals and build a foundation of love for being a Goalkeeper.

Ages 9 - 13

From ages 9 to 11, proper technique, decision-making, and learning to compete must be emphasized. The implementation of a positive training environment in combination with building skills and confidence is essential to success. Areas of focus should include foot skills, footwork, being set, catching techniques, distribution, communication, and leadership skills. At this age, provide feedback using guided questioning. By using guided questioning, players will think and learn how to problem-solve. Quality repetition is essential and must be in combination with frequent feedback and positive reinforcement . Although bad habits at this age may be hard to break, it is vital that goalies understand "why" they are doing something incorrectly and rectify their respective misunderstandings. The goal is to drive players to understand a broader view of the game as a whole, and not just hyper focus on the 'entertaining' aspects of the position. This will allow players to understand the game of football and the goalkeeper position as part of a collective entity. Goalkeepers should be leaders, problem-solvers, great decision-makers, and the "anchor" of every soccer team.

Ages 14-16

When developing goalkeepers at this age group, emphasize the importance of mastering skills and technique. The development of key skills and crucial techniques directly impact success. At this level, cultivate a deeper understanding of both attacking and defensive principles and how to communicate them on a consistent basis. As a result, the goalkeeper begins to view the position as both a defensive entity, and a means of attack. In goalkeeper training sessions,emphasize the development of a strong mindset that understands all aspects of tactics and being a field player. Goalkeepers often tend to be perfectionists, and players should view mistakes as learning opportunities. Often the best learning takes place from errors.

Ages 17 - Collegiate

Goalkeepers should have a mastery of skills and techniques. Players can apply what they have learned directly into gameplay and can anticipate specific scenarios and situations before they occur. Nothing is more game-like than a game. At this level, the game is the best opportunity to hone and push skills & techniques.. As a result, game situations must be implimented with the intention of pushing the goalkeeper to recognize key moments of the game. It is essential to develop leadership, decision-making, organization, and problem-solving/critical thinking. The goalkeeper is one of the most stressful positions on the field and players must have the knowledge, confidence, and skills necessary to achieve on a higher level.





Female Goalkeepers

As female players start to hit puberty their muscle mass and psychological tendencies make it so that it is no longer in the players' best interest to train them long term with their male counterparts.

1

Internalize

2

Smaller Muscle Mass

3

Uncomfortable Yelling at or
Directing Teammates

Tendencies

- Strong listening skills.
- More consistent attendance/effort and coach-able.
- Weaknesses: Crossing, Size, Speed
- Less Strength -leads to poor kicking and extension diving

Points of Emphasis

- Must have textbook technique.
- Crosses.
- Use scenarios to eliminate common fears.
- Work strength exercises into handling drills or leverage session strength workouts.



Male Goalkeepers

As male players start to hit puberty their muscle mass and psychological tendencies make it so that it is no longer in the players' best interest to train them long term with their female counterparts.

1

Externalize

2

Going too fast without
regard to technique

3

Confidence Surpasses
Ability

Tendencies

- High Confidence, Low Quality Decisions
- More muscle mass and speed.
- Need to be pushed because of their physical abilities.
- Weaknesses
 - Attention to detail
 - Coach-ability
 - Decision Making

Points of Emphasis

- Incorporate drills that test their physical limits.
- Keep entertained/active.
- Don't allow for too much time between drills or turns in goal.

Breakdown of a Session

Warm-Up 5'

Just like field players or any other athlete, regardless of age, goalkeepers need to warm up in preparation for exercise. This reduces chance for injury and establishes good long-term habits.

Cones can be used to address coordination.

Make sure the warm-up includes dynamic stretches. As a goalie be sure to focus on the hands and upper body as well.

Technical Warm-Up 5-10'

Every session should also include warming up the player's hands.

Keepers should vary throwing and kicking the ball to each other gradually increasing difficulty using proper goalkeeping distribution techniques.

Used to “wake up” the mind and get attention and focus of the kids.

May include hand shape drills for younger players, easy reaction training, diving form or coordination drills with a teammate

Catching & Footwork 15'

Any drill we can design to create movement, specifically changes in direction, with the addition of a catch.

Work on catching both high balls and ground balls.

Younger keepers may not have ability to volley, so allow for throwing.

Older/more advanced keepers should use the opportunity to work on serving balls. If they are unable, throwing is ok as to not take away from other keepers’ training.

Work in groups no larger than 4.

Don't be afraid of your imagination when creating new drills, it is essential.

Breakdown of a Session cont.

Shot Stopping 20'

Be creative.

Employ players as servers or shooters because it cuts down on players standing around and works on foot skills.

Shoot from different angles, whether it be drill to drill or practice to practice.

Be deliberate with shots and take shots that allow chances for success. It is imperative to adjust shots to the skill of the goalkeeper.

Test and push more advanced players while going easier on novice players.

When possible pair players of varying ability. Start with a 'base' drill and add restrictions or steps to increase difficulty and allow for simultaneous variations of the same drill.

Crosses, Kicking, Distribution Final 5-10'

Crossing, kicking and distribution are the most common areas that need to be trained and improved.

Tossing high balls is great for volume, footwork and jump timing but won't see significant gains until live crosses are incorporated.

Most players are not good enough to serve these balls for one another and we, as coaches, can't hit enough crosses for 10-20 kids in a session to make an impact.

Use servers when we can, kick crosses when groups are smaller in size and use tossing drills when appropriate.



Volume & Intensity

1 Pre-Season

- High Volume & Low Intensity
- Young players may be under-trained; lacking technique and confidence. Higher volume drills will allow for focus on individual skills & techniques.
- Low intensity drills will allow players to gradually ease back into exercising.
- 10 to 12 repetitions per drill.

2 In-Season

- Lower Volume & Increased Intensity
- Lower volume may allow the time for a wider variety of drills.
- Players fitness should be adequate which lowers concern of higher intensity training.
- 8 to 10 repetitions per exercise.

3 Off-Season

- Low Volume & Low Intensity
- Off-season is a time for rest and recovery.
- Any training should be focused purely on technique and skill retention.
- 4 to 8 repetitions per exercise.