



Goalkeeper Distribution

Tags: `individual-technical` `standalone` `goalkeeper` `distribution` `build-up`

Kicker: Weeks 18 and 19 teach the outfield team four different ways to build past the first line of pressure — a mid-possession switch from a back four to a back three, and three alternative starting shapes (2-3, 3-2, 3-1). Every one of them assumes a goalkeeper who already knows which shape is in front of them and where the ball needs to go. Nothing in the programme has coached that yet. This session does, and closes with the physical-loading picture goalkeeping actually produces — which looks nothing like an outfield player's.

Session Overview

FIELD	VALUE
Session theme	Goalkeeper Distribution — Reading the Build-Up Shape and Picking the Pass
Short summary	Three stages building the goalkeeper into an active build-up participant rather than a passenger who restarts play: recognising and distributing correctly through Week 18's back-four/back-three switch, choosing the right target across Week 19's three build-up shapes (2-3, 3-2, 3-1), and a closing live scenario combining both under match tempo. Pairs directly with `Goalkeeping.md` — that session builds shot-stopping and command of the box; this one builds the goalkeeper's part in the team's own possession structure.
Total duration	48 minutes across four practices
Goalkeeper requirements	Central to the entire session — ideally both club goalkeepers attend and work through every practice.
Area layout	Compact restart zone for Practice 1, a build-up working area matching Week 18/19's own dimensions for Practices 2-3, a fuller half-pitch scenario for Practice 4.
Equipment	A generous supply of balls, flat markers for shape reference positions, bibs marking the two build-up structures.
Contingency — only one goalkeeper attends	Run every practice as planned with the single goalkeeper taking every repetition; shorten Practice 4's phase count to protect their legs.
A note on goalkeeper physical loading	Goalkeeping's physical demand looks nothing like an outfield player's, and Section 7's Tuesday-heavy/Thursday-light wave was written with outfield running volume in mind. A goalkeeper's week is built from short, maximal, explosive efforts — diving, jumping, landing, exploding off the line — not sustained distance, so total minutes trained is a poor proxy for their real load. Use dive-and-landing repetitions as the goalkeeper's own load marker instead: cap live diving-save reps the same way `Goalkeeping.md` Practice 2 already does (5 shots per rotation, not a free-running queue), and make sure `Technical/Injury Prevention.md`'s landing-mechanics stations — Practice 2's single-leg and jumping work especially — are trained by the goalkeeper too, not skipped as "outfield conditioning." Session-RPE in `Training Load Tracker.xlsx` still works for a goalkeeper, but read it against dive-

FIELD	VALUE
	and-impact count for that session, not distance covered — a technically light session can carry a heavy landing load the RPE number alone won't show.

PRACTICE 1 — PLAY THE PICTURE (ARRIVAL)

Duration: 8 minutes · **Training load:** Low

Tactical purpose: Unopposed distribution repetition — rolling, throwing and short passing to a stationary or lightly moving target — grooming clean technique before any picture-reading or pressure is added.

Organisation: Each goalkeeper works with 2–3 outfield targets spread at short range, rotating through rolled, thrown and short-passed distribution.

Walkthrough: The goalkeeper works through each distribution method in turn — underarm roll, overarm throw, short pass along the ground — to a target who checks and receives on the half-turn, then returns the ball and resets.

Rules: No pressure and no decision-making yet — this is technique only, at a pace the goalkeeper fully controls.

Coaching points:

- *Technical:* a low, accurate roll along the ground for the shortest options; a flat, driven throw for mid-range; weight and pace matched to the receiver's first touch.
- *Psychological:* treating restart distribution with the same care as any other pass — it is the first pass of the move, not an afterthought.

No diagram, guided discovery questions, or progressions are attached to the arrival activity — it is deliberately kept simple so the session's teaching time is protected for the three main practices below.

PRACTICE 2 — READ THE SWITCH (DISTRIBUTION THROUGH A STRUCTURAL CHANGE)

Duration: 14 minutes · **Training load:** Moderate

Tactical purpose: Ties distribution directly to Week 18's back-four/back-three switch — the goalkeeper must recognise which shape the back line is currently building in, including mid-possession, and adjust their own position and distribution target the instant it changes, exactly as Week 18's Session 35 already asks of every outfield player.

Organisation:

- **Pitch dimensions:** 40 x 26 m, matching Week 18 Practice 2's own working area
- **Players:** goalkeeper, 4 back-line players (rehearsing the back-four-to-back-three drop), 3 opposition pressers
- **Goalkeeper involvement:** the entire practice is built around their recognition and distribution
- **Team sizes:** 5 (goalkeeper + back line) v 3 (pressers)
- **Neutrals:** none
- **Equipment:** flat markers showing the back line's before-and-after positions, matching Week 18's own reference lines
- **Starting positions:** as shown in the diagram
- **Ball supply:** 2 spare balls with the coach
- **Restart:** coach restarts centrally on any stoppage
- **Coach position:** central, able to see both the structural change and the goalkeeper's response to it
- **Rotation method:** the dropping midfielder role rotates every few minutes; two goalkeepers alternate every 8–10 reps
- **Direction of play:** possession retention, building out from the goalkeeper

Practice walkthrough: The back line builds in a back four, exactly as Week 18 Practice 2 sets up, with the goalkeeper as an active first-line option. On the same cue that triggers the midfielder's drop into the back three, the goalkeeper must recognise the change as it happens — not after it — and immediately adjust: a new distribution angle to the player who has dropped, a different width to offer the widened options, and a body position that keeps every option in the picture rather than committing to the pre-change shape.

Rules: The goalkeeper may not distribute until they have visibly adjusted their position for the new shape — a pass played into the old shape's picture is an immediate stoppage.

Coaching points:

CORNER	POINT
Technical	Distribution weight and angle matched correctly to whichever shape — back four or back three — is currently in front of the goalkeeper.
Tactical	Recognising the structural change at the moment it happens, not a beat behind it.
Physical	Quick, small repositioning to keep the full picture in view as the shape changes.
Psychological	Composure during the moment of transition, when the picture is briefly less settled — exactly the demand Week 18 places on every outfield player.
Communication & leadership	Calling the shape out loud so the back line knows the goalkeeper has seen the change too.

Tactical roles: **Goalkeeper** — reads the structural change and adjusts distribution accordingly. **Back line** — executes Week 18's coordinated drop exactly as taught there. **Pressers** — apply genuine pressure that makes the picture worth reading correctly.

Decision-making triggers: the back line is still in its back-four shape → distribute along the original lines; the drop has happened → the new deepest, widest option is now the first read.

Communication language used: *Drop, Hold, Time* — the same calls Week 18 already teaches, now used by the goalkeeper too.

Guided discovery questions:

1. What told you the shape had changed, before the ball even arrived?
2. What happens to your distribution options in the half-second right after the drop?
3. How does this connect to Week 18's own teaching — you're now the extra option that shape change creates.

Progressions:

1. Remove the coach's explicit cue, requiring the goalkeeper to recognise the change purely from the back line's own movement.
2. Add a second presser specifically closing down the goalkeeper's most obvious distribution option.

Regressions:

1. Slow the drop down and narrate it while the recognition habit is being built.
2. Reduce the pressers to two.

Common problems and corrections:

PROBLEM	WHY IT HAPPENS	COACH RECOGNISES BY	STOP OR FLOW?	INTERVENTION	RESTART
The goalkeeper distributes into the shape that existed a moment ago, missing the change	Focus on the ball rather than the picture around it	A pass played to where a player used to be, not where they now are	Stop	Freeze-and-correct: replay the moment of the drop and name the new picture	Resume
The goalkeeper adjusts position but distributes too slowly, letting the press reset	Hesitation after recognising the change correctly	The picture is read correctly but the opportunity has closed by the time the pass is played	Stop	Freeze-and-correct: rehearse recognise-then-release as one continuous action	Resume

Coach interventions used in this practice: freeze-and-correct for both late recognition and slow release once the change is seen.

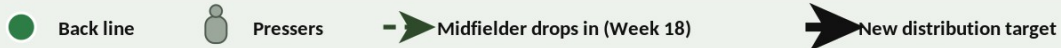
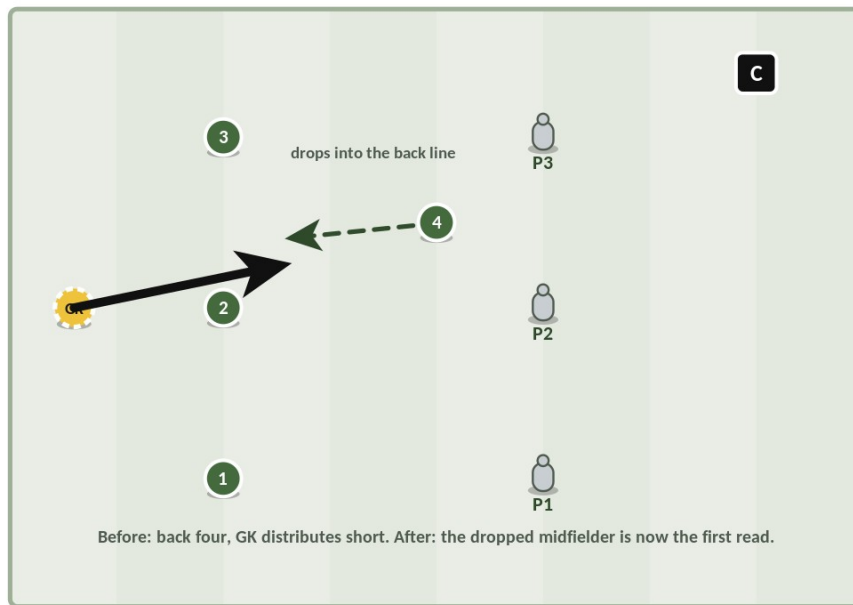
Success indicators:

- Distribution is aimed correctly at the current shape, not the previous one.
- The goalkeeper's own position adjusts visibly and promptly as the drop happens.
- The release happens quickly enough to beat the resetting press.

Coach's eye: watch the goalkeeper's feet in the half-second after the drop — a goalkeeper who is already repositioning before the ball reaches them has genuinely read the picture, not just reacted to instruction.

TC7.2 READ THE SWITCH — Distribution Through a Structural Change

40 x 26 m · goalkeeper adjusts target the instant the back four drops to a back three · 14 minutes



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PRACTICE 3 — THREE SHAPES, ONE PASS (DISTRIBUTION BY BUILD-UP STRUCTURE)

Duration: 14 minutes · **Training load:** Moderate

Tactical purpose: Ties distribution to Week 19's three build-up shapes — a 2-3, a 3-2 and a 3-1 — since each one asks the goalkeeper for a genuinely different first read: width into a 2-3's fuller first line, a choice between two pivots in a 3-2, or the single, tightly-marked pocket of a 3-1.

Organisation:

- **Pitch dimensions:** three stations of 30 x 20 m, one per shape
- **Players:** goalkeeper rotating through all three, 3-4 back-line/pivot players per shape, 2-3 pressers per shape
- **Goalkeeper involvement:** the entire practice is built around their shape-specific decision-making
- **Team sizes:** varies by shape, matching Week 19's own numbers
- **Neutrals:** none
- **Equipment:** flat markers for each shape's reference positions
- **Starting positions:** as shown in the diagram
- **Ball supply:** 2 spare balls per station
- **Restart:** coach restarts centrally on any stoppage
- **Coach position:** mobile between the three stations
- **Rotation method:** the goalkeeper moves to a new shape every 4-5 minutes
- **Direction of play:** possession retention and progression, building out from the goalkeeper

Practice walkthrough: The goalkeeper works through all three of Week 19's build-up shapes in turn. In the 2-3, the read is width — a fuller first line gives more short options, and the goalkeeper's job is picking the least-pressured one quickly. In the 3-2, the read is a genuine choice between two pivots, not a default to the same one every time. In the 3-1, the read is the lone pivot's pocket specifically — the same pocket Week 19 Thursday's Practice 2 teaches the pivot to find — and recognising early when that pivot is tightly marked, so the goalkeeper goes around the back three instead of forcing the pass.

Rules: In the 3-1 station specifically, a pass forced into a covered pivot is an immediate stoppage — exactly the discipline Week 19 Thursday asks of the outfield team.

Coaching points:

CORNER	POINT
Technical	Distribution technique matched to the read — a driven pass into a marked pivot needs different weight than an easy ball into an open wide option.
Tactical	A genuinely different first read in each of the three shapes, not one habit applied regardless of which is in use.
Physical	Quick scanning and positional adjustment moving between shapes.
Psychological	Comfort distributing into the leaner 3-1 shape specifically — trusting a single pivot the way Week 19 Thursday asks the team to.
Communication & leadership	Confirming out loud which shape is in use before releasing the ball, echoing Week 19's own communication language.

Tactical roles: **Goalkeeper** — reads the shape and selects the correct target. **Back line / pivot(s)** — provide the exact picture each shape is built to create. **Pressers** — apply genuine, shape-appropriate pressure.

Decision-making triggers: 2-3 in use → the least-pressured of three short options; 3-2 in use → whichever of the two pivots the press has left open; 3-1 in use → the lone pivot if genuinely open, the back three's outside route if not.

Communication language used: *Hold, Time, Turn* — Week 19's own language, called by the goalkeeper as part of the picture.

Guided discovery questions:

1. What changed about your first read between the 2-3 station and the 3-1 station?
2. What told you the lone pivot was covered, before you'd committed to the pass?
3. How does distributing into a 3-2's double pivot differ from a 3-1's single one?
4. How does this connect to Week 19's own teaching — you're reading exactly the picture the outfield team is trying to create.

Progressions:

1. Remove advance warning of which shape the team has organised into, requiring the goalkeeper to read it from positioning alone.
2. Add a presser specifically assigned to cut off the goalkeeper's most obvious option in each shape.

Regressions:

1. Announce the shape before each rep while the three reads are being learned individually.
2. Reduce to two stations (2-3 and 3-1) if three is too much to build in one session.

Common problems and corrections:

PROBLEM	WHY IT HAPPENS	COACH RECOGNISES BY	STOP OR FLOW?	INTERVENTION	RESTART
The goalkeeper uses the same first read regardless of which shape is in front of them	The three reads haven't yet been separated in the goalkeeper's decision-making	A pass into the "wrong" option for the shape in use — for example defaulting to a wide option inside a 3-1 station	Stop	Freeze-and-correct: name the shape and the read it specifically calls for	Resume
The goalkeeper forces the ball into a covered pivot in the 3-1 station	Over-reliance on the single central option, the same habit Week 19 corrects in the outfield pivot	Passes into the pivot are regularly intercepted despite tight marking	Stop	Short group intervention: "was the pivot really open there?"	Resume

Coach interventions used in this practice: freeze-and-correct for the wrong read, short group intervention for forcing the ball into a covered pivot.

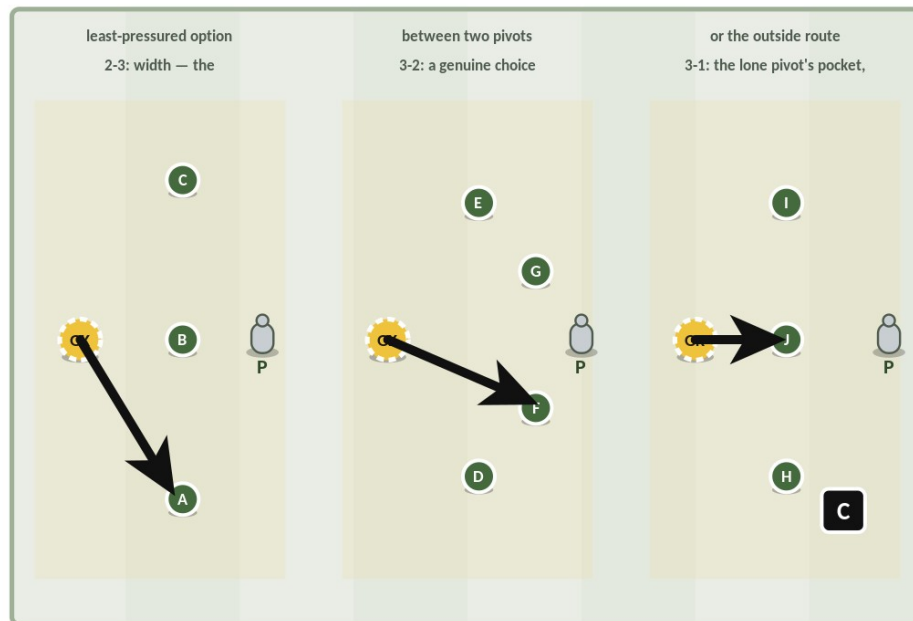
Success indicators:

- A genuinely different first read is visible across all three shapes.
- The 3-1 station's discipline — pivot when open, outside route when not — holds up under real pressure.
- Distribution weight and technique are matched correctly to each shape's specific target.

Coach's eye: watch for the goalkeeper naming the shape before the ball is released — a goalkeeper who can say which of the three pictures they're looking at has done the actual thinking this practice trains.

TC7.3 THREE SHAPES, ONE PASS — Distribution by Build-Up Structure

Three stations, rotating • a different first read for the 2-3, the 3-2 and the 3-1 • 14 minutes



● Back line / pivot(s) ● Pressers ➔ Distribution target ■ Station area

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PRACTICE 4 — UNDER THE PRESS (CLOSING LIVE SCENARIO)

Duration: 12 minutes · **Training load:** Moderate-high

Purpose: Closes the session with a live, unpredictable scenario combining both structural recognition (Practice 2) and shape-specific distribution (Practice 3) at match tempo, with a genuinely varying press — the true test of whether tonight's reading and decision-making holds up when nothing is announced in advance.

Organisation:

- **Pitch dimensions:** 50 x 36 m (half pitch), matching Weeks 18–19's own Practice 4 scale
- **Players:** goalkeeper(s), 8 outfield building in a shape that varies rep to rep, 8 pressing
- **Goalkeeper involvement:** continuously tested throughout, with both keepers rotating through if two attend
- **Team sizes:** 8 + GK v 8
- **Neutrals:** none
- **Equipment:** flat markers for each shape's reference positions, corner cones
- **Starting positions:** varies rep to rep between a back-four build-up, a mid-possession drop to back three, and each of the 2-3, 3-2 and 3-1 shapes
- **Ball supply:** 3 spare balls with the coach
- **Restart:** match-realistic restarts
- **Coach position:** mobile, observing the goalkeeper's recognition and decision-making across every shape and change
- **Rotation method:** goalkeepers alternate every 8–10 phases
- **Direction of play:** standard, building out from the goalkeeper toward the opposite goal

Practice walkthrough: A continuous sequence of build-up phases in which the outfield team varies its shape — sometimes a settled back four, sometimes mid-possession switching to a back three, sometimes starting directly in a 2-3, 3-2 or 3-1 — and the pressing team varies its own numbers and target in response. The goalkeeper must recognise whichever picture is currently in front of them and distribute correctly into it, with no advance signal of what's coming next, exactly as Weeks 18 and 19's own closing conditioned matches ask of the outfield team.

Rules: Phases run continuously with minimal stoppage; no advance signal of which shape or change is coming next.

Coaching points:

CORNER	POINT
Technical	Distribution technique holds up across every shape under unpredictable, continuous pressure.
Tactical	Correct shape recognition and target selection applied instantly, without a chance to reset first.
Physical	Sustained sharpness in scanning and quick, explosive repositioning across a longer, continuous sequence.
Psychological	Full recovery and reset between phases, regardless of the outcome of the one before.
Communication & leadership	Clear, loud calls naming the shape in use, maintained throughout a demanding sequence.

Tactical roles: Goalkeeper — reads and distributes correctly across every shape and change tonight's session covered.

Outfield players — provide genuinely varied, realistic build-up pictures without artificially telegraphing the shape in advance.

Decision-making triggers: the full set from Practices 2 and 3, now applied without warning and in rapid succession.

Communication language used: the full set from tonight — *Drop, Hold, Time, Turn* — used together under realistic conditions.

Guided discovery questions:

1. Which shape or change tested your reading the most tonight, and why?

2. What's the difference between recognising a shape and recognising a change mid-possession — which is harder?
3. What's one thing from tonight you want to take into Tuesday and Thursday's own build-up work?

Progressions:

1. Increase the frequency of shape changes, reducing the goalkeeper's recovery time between reads.
2. Add a defender working alongside the goalkeeper to organise the back line's own recognition of each shape together.

Regressions:

1. Slow the phase frequency, allowing a full reset between shape changes while confidence builds.
2. Return to Practice 2 or 3 in isolation if a specific shape's distribution is breaking down under combined pressure.

Common problems and corrections:

PROBLEM	WHY IT HAPPENS	COACH RECOGNISES BY	STOP OR FLOW?	INTERVENTION	RESTART
Reading and distribution from Practices 2–3 breaks down under the combined, unpredictable pressure of this practice	The added cognitive load of not knowing which shape is coming next	A goalkeeper who read each shape correctly in isolation now defaulting to one habitual read regardless of the actual picture	Let it flow, address after	A private word after the phase, referencing the specific shape from Practice 2 or 3	Continue
Physical sharpness visibly drops through the practice — slower repositioning, later releases	The genuinely different, explosive-effort loading pattern this session trains, compounding across a longer live sequence	A goalkeeper who was quick to reposition early in the practice becoming a beat slow later on	Let it flow, then a natural stoppage	A direct reminder that reading the picture matters most exactly when fatigue makes it hardest	Resume

Coach interventions used in this practice: a private, delayed conversation for reading breaking down under combined pressure; a direct reminder for fading sharpness late in the practice.

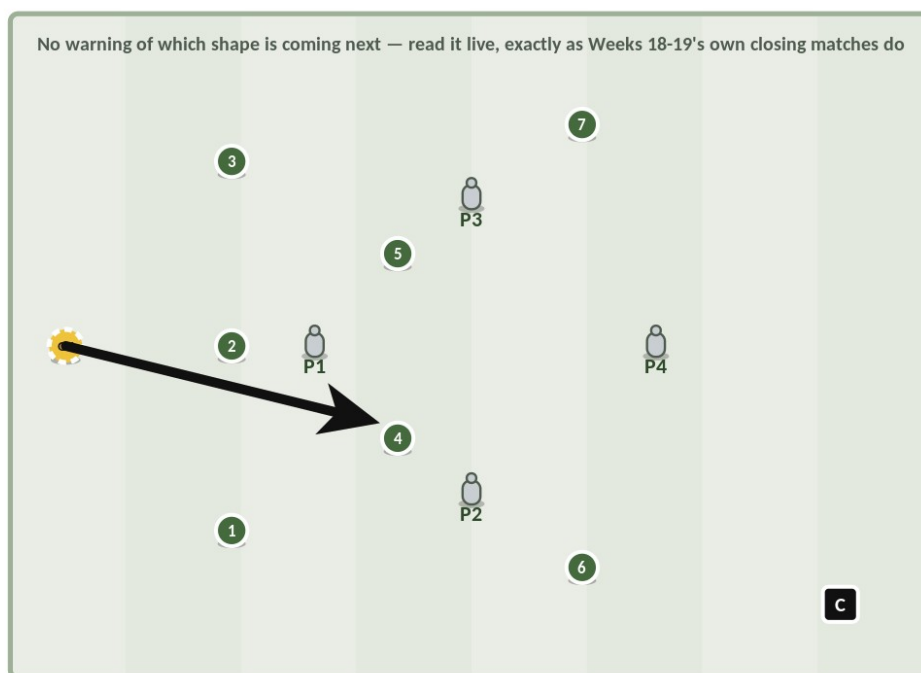
Success indicators:

- Shape recognition and distribution from Practices 2–3 hold up recognisably under combined, unpredictable pressure.
- Decision-making stays correct and fast across every shape and every change.
- Communication remains clear throughout, not just in the opening phases.

Coach's eye: this practice is the real answer to the question tonight exists to ask — not whether the goalkeeper can pick the right pass in a clean, announced picture, but whether that reading survives the pace, fatigue and unpredictability a genuine Saturday actually produces.

TC7.4 UNDER THE PRESS — Closing Live Scenario

50 x 36 m (half pitch) · shape varies rep to rep · read it, then release · 12 minutes



Building team



Pressing team



Distribution under pressure

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