



Goalkeeping

Tags: `individual-technical` `standalone` `goalkeeper`

Kicker: The goalkeeper appears in every single session this club runs — always as a distribution outlet, splitting the back line, starting the attack. Not one of those sessions ever coaches the goalkeeper. This one does.

Session Overview

FIELD	VALUE
Session theme	Goalkeeping — Shot-Stopping, Handling and Commanding the Box
Short summary	Four stages building the technical foundation no team session can reach: unopposed handling technique, shot-stopping footwork and technique, commanding the box on crosses, and a closing live scenario that puts all three together under real pressure. This is specialist technical work — the goalkeeper's equivalent of every outfield technical session the programme has never quite had room for either.
Total duration	52 minutes across four practices
Goalkeeper requirements	Central to the entire session — ideally both club goalkeepers attend and work through every practice.
Area layout	Goal and penalty-area working space throughout, widening into a fuller area for Practice 3's crosses.
Equipment	A generous supply of balls, cones, a crossing target zone marker.
Contingency — only one goalkeeper attends	Shorten the rep count in each practice to protect their legs across the full session, or split time with an outfield player learning the fundamentals for the second half of each practice.

PRACTICE 1 — HANDS FIRST (ARRIVAL)

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

Tactical purpose: Unopposed handling repetition — no shots, no pressure, no decision-making. Purely grooving clean catching technique and basic footwork before either is tested live.

Organisation: Each goalkeeper works with a serving partner throwing or rolling balls at a gentle, predictable pace from short range.

Walkthrough: The server throws or rolls the ball at a range of heights — chest, head, low to the side — and the goalkeeper catches with a consistent "W" hand shape, absorbing the ball into the body rather than stabbing at it, then returns it and resets.

Rules: No shots — this is catching technique only, at a pace the goalkeeper fully controls.

Coaching points:

- *Technical:* a consistent "W" hand shape behind the ball on every catch, absorbing it into the chest rather than catching with hands alone.
- *Psychological:* treating every repetition with full focus, even at walking pace — sloppy habits here become sloppy habits under pressure.

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 — SET AND SAVE (SHOT-STOPPING)

Duration: 15 minutes • **Training load:** Moderate

Tactical purpose: Builds the core shot-stopping technique — set position, footwork into the shot, and diving technique — against strikes of increasing pace and variety, the technical foundation every save depends on.

Organisation:

- **Pitch dimensions:** full goal and penalty-area working space
- **Players:** goalkeeper, a rotation of 3–4 outfield shooters
- **Goalkeeper involvement:** the entire practice is built around them
- **Team sizes:** one goalkeeper working through a queue of shooters
- **Neutrals:** none
- **Equipment:** a supply of balls at a marked shooting spot
- **Starting positions:** as shown in the diagram
- **Ball supply:** reset at the shooting spot after each attempt
- **Restart:** next shooter steps up immediately
- **Coach position:** side-on to the goal, able to see the goalkeeper's set position and footwork on every shot
- **Rotation method:** each shooter takes 5 shots before rotating out; if two goalkeepers attend, they alternate in goal every 10 shots
- **Direction of play:** always toward the same goal

Practice walkthrough: Shooters take turns striking from a marked spot just outside the box, starting with straightforward, central shots and progressing to shots low to either side, then higher into the corners. The goalkeeper resets to a balanced set position before every strike, moves their feet to get their body behind the ball where possible, and uses correct diving technique — leading with the near hand, collapsing rather than jumping — when a save requires it.

Rules: Shooters call out roughly where they intend to place the shot before the first few repetitions, so the goalkeeper can focus purely on technique before decision-making is added; this is removed once technique is established.

Coaching points:

CORNER	POINT
Technical	A balanced, ready set position before every shot, with correct diving technique — leading hand, collapsing the body — when the ball is out of standing reach.
Tactical	Reading the shooter's body shape and approach for an early cue to likely direction, without committing too early.
Physical	Explosive, controlled footwork to close the distance to the ball rather than a standing, flat-footed save attempt.
Psychological	Recovering instantly after a goal is conceded — the next shot demands exactly the same focus as the first.
Communication & leadership	A clear, calm call to any nearby defender or rebound-covering player about where a parried ball might fall.

Tactical roles: Goalkeeper — resets to a balanced position and reacts to every shot with full technical commitment.

Shooters — provide genuine, varied strikes at increasing difficulty, not just easy service.

Decision-making triggers: a shot standing height and central is a routine, standing save; anything low, wide, or powerful is the trigger to move the feet and commit to a dive.

Communication language used: *Set* (the goalkeeper's own cue to themselves as they reset position), *Away* (called to defenders when a save is parried into a dangerous area).

Guided discovery questions:

1. What did your set position feel like on the shots you saved cleanly, compared with the ones you didn't?
2. What's the difference between diving and collapsing, and why does it matter?
3. What told you which way to move before the shot was even struck?

Progressions:

1. Reduce the shooter's distance from goal, cutting the goalkeeper's reaction time.
2. Add a rebound rule — any parried save must be dealt with again immediately by a second shooter arriving live.

Regressions:

1. Increase the shooter's distance from goal, giving more reaction time while technique is still being grooved.
2. Return to Practice 1's slower, thrown service if diving technique is breaking down under live shooting.

Common problems and corrections:

PROBLEM	WHY IT HAPPENS	COACH RECOGNISES BY	STOP OR FLOW?	INTERVENTION	RESTART
The goalkeeper stands upright and reaches rather than moving their feet to get behind the ball	Comfort with a standing save rather than committing to footwork	Saves made one-handed or off-balance on shots that were reachable with better positioning	Stop	Freeze-and-correct: rehearse the footwork pattern in isolation, then reintroduce the shot	Resume
The goalkeeper jumps rather than collapses on low, wide shots	Instinct to gain height rather than cover ground along the floor	The goalkeeper leaves the ground upward on a shot that needed lateral coverage instead	Stop	Freeze-and-correct: demonstrate the collapsing motion at walking pace	Resume

Coach interventions used in this practice: freeze-and-correct for flat-footed reaching and for jumping instead of collapsing on low shots.

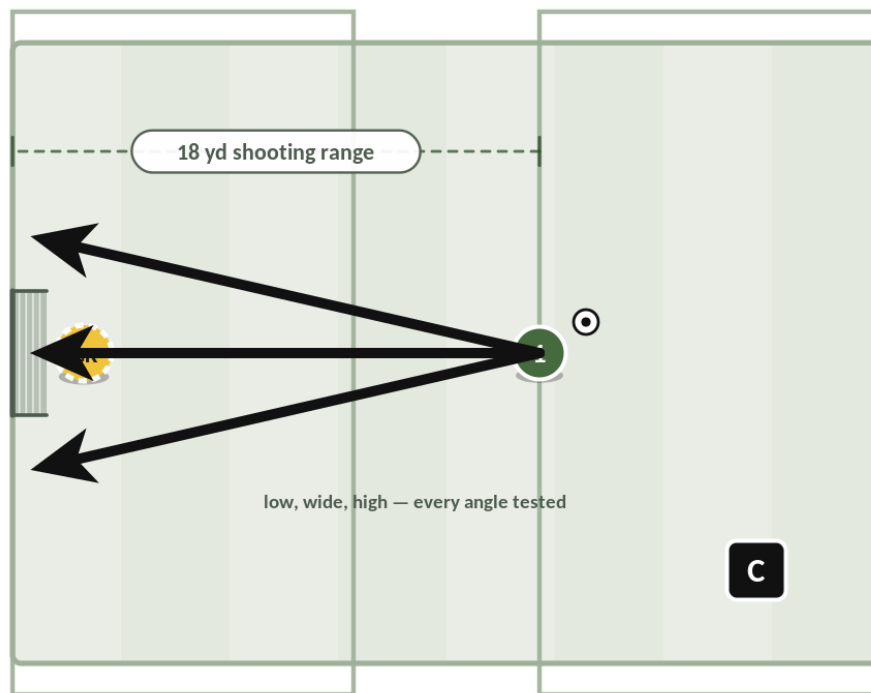
Success indicators:

- A consistent, balanced set position before every single shot.
- Footwork visibly closes distance to the ball before any dive is attempted.
- Diving technique leads with the correct hand and collapses rather than jumps on low shots.

Coach's eye: technique holds up more easily on the first shot of the practice than the twentieth — watch for fatigue-driven shortcuts creeping in as the rep count climbs, and intervene before they become the habit.

TC1.2 SET AND SAVE — Shot-Stopping Technique

Goal and box • footwork and diving technique against varied strikes • 15 minutes



● Shooters (rotating) ● Ball ➔ Strike on goal ▲ Shooting spot

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PRACTICE 3 — CLAIM IT (COMMANDING THE BOX)

Duration: 15 minutes · **Training load:** Moderate

Tactical purpose: Builds the goalkeeper's ability to read, decide on, and claim crosses into the box — commanding their area with confidence and clear communication, rather than being a passenger while the ball is delivered around them.

Organisation:

- **Pitch dimensions:** full box plus a wide delivery area either side
- **Players:** goalkeeper, 2 crossers (one each side), 3–4 attackers and defenders contesting the box
- **Goalkeeper involvement:** the entire practice is built around their decision-making and claiming technique
- **Team sizes:** small mixed group contesting crosses, goalkeeper working continuously
- **Neutrals:** none
- **Equipment:** a supply of balls at each crossing position
- **Starting positions:** as shown in the diagram
- **Ball supply:** reset at the crossing position after each delivery
- **Restart:** next cross delivered as soon as the box is clear
- **Coach position:** central, able to see the goalkeeper's decision-making and the resulting contest
- **Rotation method:** crossers and box players rotate every 4–5 deliveries; two goalkeepers alternate every 8–10 deliveries
- **Direction of play:** always toward the same goal

Practice walkthrough: Crosses are delivered from both sides at varying heights, pace, and depth into the box, with a small group of attackers and defenders contesting each one. The goalkeeper reads each cross early and decides — come and claim it, come and punch it clear, or stay on the line and let the defence deal with it — communicating that decision loudly and early enough for their own defenders to react to it.

Rules: Once the goalkeeper calls for the ball, no defender may challenge for it — the call must be committed to and backed up by a clean, confident claim.

Coaching points:

CORNER	POINT
Technical	A confident, two-handed claim at the highest comfortable point, or a firm, two-fisted punch when a claim isn't on.
Tactical	Genuine judgement between coming for the ball and staying — a goalkeeper who comes for everything is as much a liability as one who comes for nothing.
Physical	Strong, decisive take-off through traffic, unafraid of physical contact inside a crowded box.
Psychological	Full commitment once the call is made — a goalkeeper who calls for it and then hesitates is the most dangerous version of this decision.
Communication & leadership	A loud, early, unmistakable call that the whole box can hear and react to in time.

Tactical roles: **Goalkeeper** — reads, decides, and commits with full conviction. **Crossers** — deliver genuine variety in height, pace, and depth. **Box players** — contest realistically without deliberately targeting the goalkeeper unfairly.

Decision-making triggers: a cross the goalkeeper can reach ahead of the nearest attacker, with a clear path, is a claim; heavy traffic or a cross behind the goalkeeper's best reach is a stay-and-cover decision instead.

Communication language used: *Keeper's!* (the claim call), *Away!* (the decision to punch clear rather than catch), *Line!* (the call confirming the goalkeeper is staying and the defence must deal with it).

Guided discovery questions:

1. What made a cross a "come" decision versus a "stay" decision for you?

2. What happened on the cross where you hesitated after calling for it — what would you do differently?
3. How early does the call need to be made for the defence to actually benefit from it?

Progressions:

1. Add a second, near-simultaneous cross from the opposite side to sharpen decision speed.
2. Increase the number of contesting attackers to test claiming confidence under greater traffic.

Regressions:

1. Reduce to one crosser and fewer contesting players while the decision-making habit is being built.
2. Slow the delivery pace to give more decision time before adding full-pace crosses.

Common problems and corrections:

PROBLEM	WHY IT HAPPENS	COACH RECOGNISES BY	STOP OR FLOW?	INTERVENTION	RESTART
The goalkeeper calls for the ball and then hesitates or aborts the claim	Doubt creeping in after committing, often from fear of the physical contact involved	A late flap or a dropped claim after a confident-sounding call	Stop	Freeze-and-correct: rehearse full commitment through the claim at reduced pace	Resume
The goalkeeper stays on the line for crosses that were genuinely claimable	Caution outweighing the judgement being trained here	A cross drops in the six-yard box uncontested by the goalkeeper when a claim was clearly on	Stop	Freeze-and-correct: replay the cross and name what made it claimable	Resume

Coach interventions used in this practice: freeze-and-correct for hesitation after a claim call and for over-cautious staying on the line.

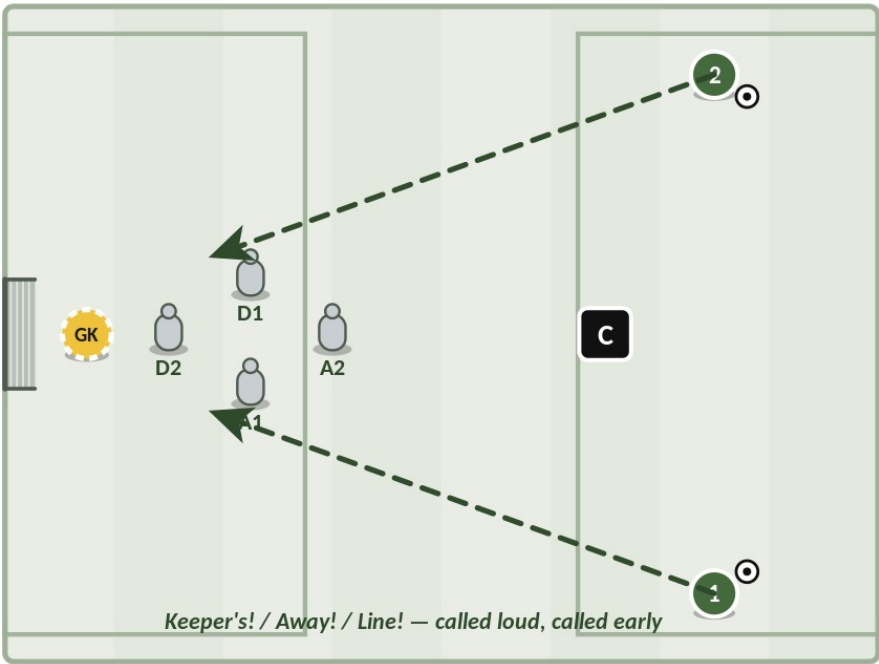
Success indicators:

- Every claim decision is communicated loudly and early enough for the defence to react.
- Claims are committed to fully, with no late hesitation.
- The balance of come-and-claim versus stay-and-cover decisions reflects the actual picture, not a fixed habit either way.

Coach's eye: the technique matters, but the real skill this practice trains is the decision itself — a goalkeeper with perfect technique who reads the situation wrong is still a liability.

TC1.3 CLAIM IT — Commanding the Box

Crosses from both sides • read, decide, communicate • 15 minutes



●

Crossers

⦿

Box contest (attack + defence)

⦿

Ball

➡

Cross delivery

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PRACTICE 4 — THE KEEPER'S TEST (CLOSING LIVE SCENARIO)

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

Purpose: Closes the session with a live, realistic scenario combining shot-stopping, handling, and commanding the box all at once — the true test of whether tonight's technical work holds up under match-like, unpredictable conditions.

Organisation:

- **Pitch dimensions:** full box and surrounding attacking-third area
- **Players:** goalkeeper(s), a rotating group of 6–8 outfield players providing shots, crosses, and phases of play
- **Goalkeeper involvement:** continuously tested throughout, with both keepers rotating through if two attend
- **Team sizes:** small group of attackers working phases against the goalkeeper and any available defenders
- **Neutrals:** none
- **Equipment:** a full supply of balls positioned around the working area
- **Starting positions:** open, phase-based play building toward goal from varied situations
- **Ball supply:** continuous, restarted immediately after each phase
- **Restart:** a new phase begins immediately after each shot, save, or claim is resolved
- **Coach position:** mobile, observing the goalkeeper's decision-making across every phase type
- **Rotation method:** outfield players rotate roles continuously; goalkeepers alternate every 8–10 phases
- **Direction of play:** always toward the same goal

Practice walkthrough: A continuous sequence of unpredictable attacking phases — a shot from distance, a cross into the box, a one-on-one breakaway, a deflected effort — tests the goalkeeper across every technical element covered tonight, with no advance warning of what's coming next. The goalkeeper must read each situation as it develops and apply the correct technique and decision without a reset between phases.

Rules: Phases run continuously with minimal stoppage, exactly as a real match would present them — no advance signal of what type of phase is coming next.

Coaching points:

CORNER	POINT
Technical	All three technical elements — shot-stopping, handling, claiming — hold up under unpredictable, continuous pressure.
Tactical	Correct decision-making across every phase type, applied instantly without a chance to reset first.
Physical	Sustained sharpness and explosiveness across a longer, continuous sequence rather than isolated reps.
Psychological	Full recovery and reset between phases, regardless of the outcome of the one before.
Communication & leadership	Clear, loud communication maintained throughout, including organising the defence during open phases of play.

Tactical roles: **Goalkeeper** — reads and reacts across every phase type with the full technical and decision-making toolkit from tonight. **Outfield players** — provide genuinely varied, realistic phases without artificially targeting weaknesses unfairly.

Decision-making triggers: the same triggers established in Practices 2 and 3, now applied without warning and in rapid succession.

Communication language used: the full set from tonight — *Set, Away, Keeper's!, Line!* — used together under realistic conditions.

Guided discovery questions:

1. Which phase type tested you the most tonight, and why?
2. What did recovering between phases feel like compared with the isolated repetitions earlier?
3. What's one thing from tonight you want to take into your next match?

Progressions:

1. Increase the phase frequency, reducing recovery time between situations.
2. Add a specific defender working alongside the goalkeeper, testing organisation and communication under the same conditions.

Regressions:

1. Slow the phase frequency, allowing a full reset between situations while confidence builds.
2. Return to isolated shot-stopping or crossing reps if a specific technical element is breaking down under the combined pressure.

Common problems and corrections:

PROBLEM	WHY IT HAPPENS	COACH RECOGNISES BY	STOP OR FLOW?	INTERVENTION	RESTART
Technique from earlier practices breaks down under the combined, unpredictable pressure of this practice	The added cognitive load of not knowing what's coming next	A goalkeeper who was technically sound in isolation now reaching rather than moving their feet, or hesitating on claims	Let it flow, address after	A private word after the phase, referencing the specific technique from Practice 2 or 3	Continue
The goalkeeper's communication drops off as fatigue builds	Physical and mental tiredness reducing the energy available for organising others	A goalkeeper who was vocal early in the practice going quiet later on	Let it flow, then a natural stoppage	A direct reminder that communication matters most exactly when it's hardest to produce	Resume

Coach interventions used in this practice: a private, delayed conversation for technique breaking down under combined pressure; a direct reminder for fading communication.

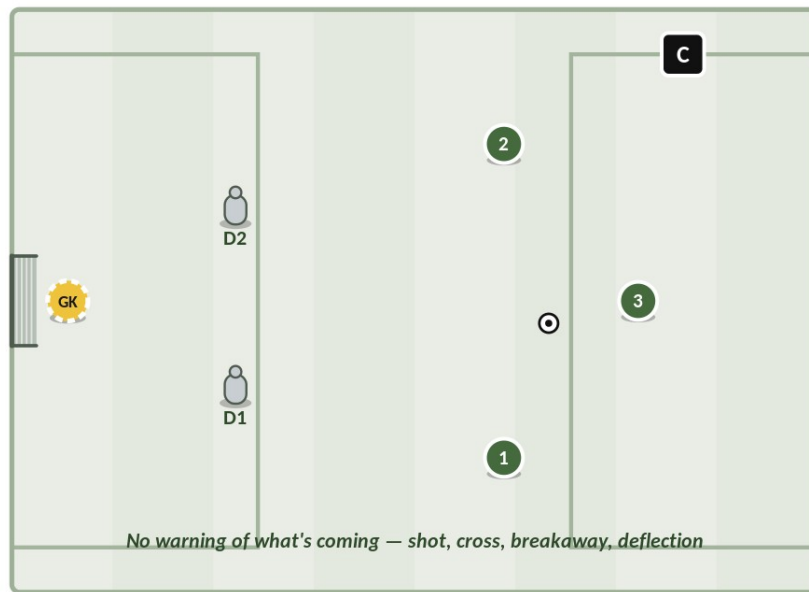
Success indicators:

- Technique from Practices 2 and 3 holds up recognisably under combined, unpredictable pressure.
- Decision-making stays correct and fast across every phase type.
- Communication remains clear and loud throughout, not just in the opening phases.

Coach's eye: this practice is the real answer to the question this whole session exists to ask — not whether the goalkeeper can catch a ball in isolation, but whether tonight's work actually holds up when nothing is predictable.

TC1.4 THE KEEPER'S TEST — Closing Live Scenario

Full attacking third • continuous, unpredictable phases • every element combined • 14 minutes



● Attacking phase players ● Defenders ● Ball

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