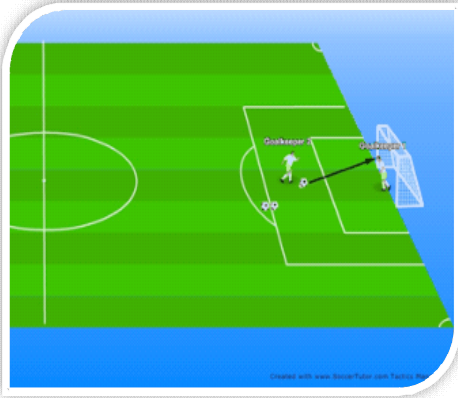


varies the release point for the cross; the second (cover) ball is rotated around the area, or multiple balls are available to cover.

5-8: Penalty Kicks



5-8 Penalty Kicks. While goalkeepers tend not to enjoy dealing with large numbers of penalty kicks in the course of team training, they do often like taking a few and challenging each other. In this context, it is useful to give them a few minutes to experiment with their technique in defending penalties. It is important for the coach to frequently remind goalkeepers that they are at a tremendous disadvantage in penalty situations, and that they are to focus on finding preparation, technical and tactical habits that help them to save *some* penalties. Some general focal points: The goalkeeper should take advantage of the opportunity to move back and forth along the goal line before the shot. Specifically, many advanced goalkeepers will take a heavy step to one side during the shooter's approach and then hope to force a shot in the other direction or a mistake. Advanced goalkeepers also learn to take a late step off of their line just before the ball is struck to give them a chance to reach a bit further in cutting the angle. Some goalkeepers like to read the shooter's plant foot (it is difficult to point the plant foot in one direction and then shoot to the other side). This is a very specialized skill and favors quick goalkeepers who can react late and still get to the spot in time to save. Finally, it is *not* recommended that one guess. Particularly at the youth level, many shots will be within reach to the goalkeeper who maintains her composure and reacts. Diving on a guess will not offset in saves the number of misses on balls that can be reached by holding one's ground. In fact, it is useful to have the goalkeepers designate a shot zone when training each other (i.e. straight on, left, or right) to help build their confidence. Goalkeepers should change roles after every shot, as this helps prevent mental fatigue in particular and is in rhythm with a penalty shootout.

5-9 : Goalkeeper Challenge



5-9: Goalkeeper Challenge. Using two full-sized goals (or smaller cone goals) placed 18 yards apart, this is an outstanding environment for goalkeepers to learn to deal with 1v1 situations. Each restart begins with the attacking goalkeeper with one hand on the ball at the center of the area and the defending goalkeeper standing two yards away. As soon as the attacker removes her hand from the ball, play is live, as the attacker attempts to score and the defending goalkeeper attempts to secure control of the ball. This exercise creates coaching and learning opportunities in the areas of angle play, closing down, blocking, covering, shot-stopping, recovery, fitness and more. Moreover, by playing the attacker, goalkeepers develop an advanced understanding of the attacker's mindset, options and challenges in these situations. When the ball leaves the area, a goal is scored, or the defending 'keeper gains control, a restart results with the goalkeepers changing roles. Variations: Play is live off of turnovers. This rule change speeds up play but also detracts from the structure and focus gained through the set restart.

5-10: Goalkeeper Wars



5-10 Goalkeeper Wars. This is the most popular pairs training game for goalkeepers, and it is a very good coaching environment as well, as the technical concepts introduced in many of the earlier exercises can be tested here without specific prompt. The general set-up involves two full-sized goals placed 20 yards apart (use age-appropriate goals and distance). Place two cones 6 yards from each goal line (represents both a 6-yard box line for defensive purposes and a limiting point for advancing before shooting). Goalkeepers take turns throwing, shooting or punting (or drop-kicking) at each other's goals. Angle play, footwork, handling, diving and reactions are all tested. Variations: Remove or discount the cone at each end, allowing free play between goalkeepers. This rule change creates more opportunities for closing down and dealing with a larger variety of shooting situations. Another interesting variation is to add a third player who plays between the two cones, attempting to tip shots and pounce on rebounds.

The goalkeepers can shoot or play the middle player. If that player is a goalkeeper, rotate her every time she scores. Finally, requiring a certain type of shot (i.e. a chipped shot with the goals 25-30 yards apart, or a driven low ball with the goals at standard distance) can help the goalkeepers focus on a particular type of save.

Sources and Suggested Reading

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