

# 5

# SIMPLE RULES

# for

*young  
goalkeepers*

**SoccerCoach** 

*...and their coaches*

# *goalkeepers' rule no. 1*

**BE BRAVE**  
**BE DOMINANT**  
**STAY AWAKE AT**  
**ALL TIMES**

## *Coaches' Notes*



*what to say to your goalkeeper*



*what to think about*

- “Goalkeeping is about putting your body on the line.  
The goal line”
- “That takes bravery. Sometimes you risk looking foolish. Every goalkeeper makes mistakes”
- “But goalkeepers are special. And part of your special skills, is the ability to dominate, on the ground, or in the air, every inch of that 18 yard area”
- “The core of that dominance is that you never “switch-off” ”
- “Stay alert at all times. Especially for that long-range shot from outside the box with just two minutes to go...”
- Most young goalkeepers will not be over six foot and weigh over 13 stone. But they need to act as if they were.
- Goalkeeping is one of the hardest and harshest jobs on the pitch.
- Goalkeepers have to be tough mentally and physically.
- They need good hands and good feet – and a sense of humour, to deal with the knocks, both real and imagined, they are going to get.

## *goalkeepers' rule no. 2*

**TURN DEFENCE  
INTO ATTACK**

**KICK WELL AND  
THROW ACCURATELY**

### *Coaches' Notes*



#### *what to say to your goalkeeper*

- “Make it a matter of personal pride that you can kick longer and higher than most goalkeepers your age”
- “Kicking out of hand is fairly easy to master, but goal kicks with a stationary ball, are the true test”
- “Consistently launch a goal-kick high over the half-way line”
- “Quickly throwing or rolling the ball to your full-back or one of your defensive midfielders is a great way to turn defence into attack”
- “Just perfect your throwing with your players in training. So that it's no surprise in a real match”



#### *what to think about*

- Make it a matter of professional pride that your goalkeeper doesn't gift the opposition the ball at goal-kicks.
- Instead, your goalkeepers should consistently put the opposition under pressure with long, and high, goal-kicks.
- Like the other players, goalkeepers need to develop their timing.
- Coach your keeper about when to speed things up and when to slow things down. This way they really can help turn defence into attack.

## *goalkeepers' rule no. 3*

**BE THE EYES,  
EARS AND MOUTH  
OF THE DEFENCE  
MAKE YOURSELF HEARD**

### *Coaches' Notes*



#### *what to say to your goalkeeper*

- “As well as being the shot-stopper, your other job is look-out for the defence”
- “The job of a look-out is to give clear warning to the defenders about what is happening directly in front of you, but that may be outside of their field of vision”
- “You must SHOUT your instructions so your players CAN HEAR YOU”
- “You especially need to make yourself heard at set pieces – free-kicks and corners”



#### *what to think about*

- Most young players don't talk enough during the game.
- Some young goalkeepers never say a word from the first whistle to the last.
- Which is a waste of a goalkeeper's unique vantage point. They don't have to give a running commentary. They certainly shouldn't be “crying wolf” or just blaming others.
- But they can really blunt their opponent's attack by the right word, the clear warning at the right time.
- This helps them join in the game more, and work as part of the overall defence, not just in isolation.

## *goalkeepers' rule no. 4*

# **GOALKEEPERS: PART GYMNAST, PART GLADIATOR**

**YOUR MOTTO:  
"STRENGTH AND AGILITY"**

## *Coaches' Notes*



### *what to say to your goalkeeper*

- "Let's start with the gymnast. You should aim to be the strongest and most flexible of all your team mates. Strong hands, strong wrists and strong legs"
- "You need functional, flexible strength to allow you to jump higher, stretch further, and react more quickly than the average player"
- "As for the gladiator part, well, sometimes things can get a little rough"
- "You will get bumped and barged. You also risk getting kicked. These things can't always be avoided. So don't be surprised, be resilient. Tough it out when you can"



### *what to think about*

- Goalkeepers are sometimes left behind in training.
- They're not always asked to run as much, sprint as much, or put as much effort into their training. After all, they're only standing between the sticks for 90 minutes or less.
- That sends out the wrong signals to the rest of the team.
- Get your keepers involved in training whenever possible. Get your goalkeepers out-sprinting and out-running some of the outfield players.
- That's great for a goalkeeper's confidence, and a timely reminder for the other players.

## *goalkeepers' rule no. 5*

**TRAIN OFTEN AND  
TRAIN WELL  
BUILD YOUR  
CONFIDENCE AND  
YOUR SKILLS**

### *Coaches' Notes*



#### *what to say to your goalkeeper*

- “You are unique amongst your team of seven or eleven players”
- “There is no more technical role, no more specialist role, on the football pitch than that of a goalkeeper”
- “If you are really serious about being a goalkeeper, then you may have to consider taking lessons from a professional goalkeeping coach. In such lessons you can practise and learn under the eyes of an expert”
- “You’ll be in the company of other, young, aspiring goalkeepers. So that while goalkeeping can be lonely, you can be at least sure of one thing: you are not alone”



#### *what to think about*

- Train your goalkeepers, but train them with variety and a touch of panache.
- Encourage them to participate in a wide range of other sports, particularly those which call for good hand-to-eye co-ordination.
- From table-tennis to ten-pin bowling, from basketball to cricket, there are lots of other sports that can improve their speed of reaction and help them get stronger and more flexible.