



From The Desk Of Peter Mellor

THE FOUR COMPONENTS THAT MAKE UP A GOALKEEPER

Often coaches and Goalkeepers ask, what qualities should we look for when identifying goalkeepers for our youth, state regional, professional and National teams?

Here are four main areas that will assist when analyzing the demands of the goalkeeper's position:

Technical:

Many teams are putting a greater emphasis on good collective defending which results in low scoring games. It has become more than ever important for the goalkeeper to be technically sound. One mistake or breakdown can lose a game. Coaches must spend more time on learning the breakdown of goalkeepers techniques'. Once the breakdowns are recognized, the correct techniques can be coached. There is no difference coaching the technique of heading for a field player then catching or diving for a goalkeeper. All it takes is investing sometime studying this "strange and mysterious" position.

Tactical:

The tactical role of the goalkeeper is constantly changing, so much so, that the goalkeeper must be more tactically minded than ever before. The goalkeeper must always be prepared to not only be the goalkeeper but the eleventh player at all times. With the different systems of play a goalkeeper must be able and ready to adjust their tactical role not only to a 4-4-2 or 3-5-1 but to accommodate the team's needs, including its strengths and weaknesses. It is very important that the goalkeeper is introduced into team training. Most coaches will stand on the halfway line or midfield to coach the defensive unit from out to in. We must give time, devoted to coaching the defense from in to out by standing at or behind the goal.

Try to coach through the goalkeeper position, building the defensive unit with the goalkeeper, back line and even midfield. Goalkeeper coaches should coach the goalkeeper and defensive unit. This is why we need to have a goalkeeper coach who has played and or studied and has coached the position in depth. The coach can then "feel" whether the goalkeeper is tactically correct in their positioning and making smart decisions by relating their own experiences.

Psychological:

In the 60's and early 70's very little attention was paid to the psychological makeup of the goalkeeper. The goalkeeper was either playing well and in the team or if not, they were replaced and had to deal with rejection...in most cases dealing with it on their own. With the added importance of the goalkeeping



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position there has been a need to pay special attention to this component. Goalkeepers do not get physically tired but mentally tired during the course of their game. Goalkeepers must be trained to be psychologically strong and be able to deal with whatever comes their way, on and off the field. The higher the level of play, the more they must be able to deal with this component.

Fitness:

There are changes in the ideas around fitness training for goalkeepers. In the early years, goalkeepers would just run laps and do the same training as the rest of the team. Sometimes the goalkeeper should do the same fitness training as the rest of the team, for cardio vascular needs, unity and discipline - goalkeeper should be doing specific workouts relevant to goalkeeping. For example,

- Recovery saves (down and up)
- Footwork (dancing, being alert and alive)
- ply metrics (leg strengthening exercises for vertical leaps)
- Short sprint work (done in the penalty area, using the lines to reproduce coming off the line for through balls.

Fitness for the goalkeeper should never be incorporated into where you are using the ball and asking the goalkeeper to execute goalkeeping technique of the position as well. The reason is quite simple. While a field player can get physically tired during the course of a game and still has to sometimes find that extra strength to perform with good technique. The goalkeeper is never in that position. Therefore, never sacrifice quality technique in training. Always be prepared to stop when you see technical breakdowns due to fatigue.

Presented By:

Peter Mellor *U SL National Technical Director,
U S Soccer National staff Instructorl.*