

next level training



established 2002

# **Developing Basic and Advanced Goalkeeper Skills**

**An at home training guide for 9-12 year olds**

**Written by:  
Andrew Current**

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# Message from the Author

Dear Parents and Goalkeepers,

This set of goalkeeper instructions is designed for 9-12 year olds and their parents. It is my hope that it will reinforce the technical skills goalkeepers learn in their regular specialized training. I would also like to tell you about:

- how to use this manual
- the equipment necessary for these exercises
- what to expect from goalkeepers at this age

Working through this manual front to back follows a basic to advanced progression. Remember to warm-up first and repeat each exercise a minimum of 5 reps times 3 sets. The goalkeeper should work hard going through the footwork and focus on each save. Walking back to the start will develop composure and concentration without exhaustion. Good service is essential for quality repetition. If the server cannot kick a ball accurately (and with the correct pace) feel free to throw or roll the ball to challenge the goalkeeper appropriately. Both parties will enjoy it more!

All you need to train as a goalkeeper is: 1 size 4 soccer ball, 3-5 disc cones, proper shoes (preferably soccer shoes), goalkeeper gloves (encouraged for protection), appropriate clothing (long sleeves and pants to prevent scrapes), and enough space to throw yourself around. Soccer stores carry most equipment, however, big box sporting goods stores such as Big 5, or Dick's Sports carry reasonably priced equipment that works great for this age group. If you have more than one soccer ball, fantastic! Additional balls will allow you keep training without chasing.

A wise coach once said, "If the player's enjoy what they're doing, they'll keep coming back." I firmly believe in promoting fun and enjoyment at this age. Celebrate when a player makes a great save or consistent basic saves and they will love being a goalkeeper. Encourage the 3 C's when appropriate. **Commitment** means focusing on the training and getting better. **Consistency** emphasizes using the correct technique all the time and not sporadically. Lastly, **Competition** brings out the best in people. Notice I am not saying winning, but competing against yourself and those around you to be your best.

Now it is up to you to get out there and push your limits. Goalkeepers are a special breed because they are willing to work harder than anyone else on the team. Use this manual as often as possible and feel free to visit [www.CoreSoccer.com](http://www.CoreSoccer.com) for more information on goalkeeper camps and curriculums.

Sincerely,

Andrew Current  
Core Goalkeeper Academy

# About the Author



Born and raised in Colorado, I moved away to play collegiate soccer at NAIA William Jewell College in Liberty, Missouri. I received a B.S. in Finance from Metropolitan State University of Denver in 2004. After graduation, I played semi-professional indoor with the Ft. Collins Fury in the PASL and with the Boulder Rapids Reserve PDL team.

From 2008-2012 I was the assistant coach for the Metropolitan State University Women's Soccer team. During that time Metro State posted a winning record of 80-21-12 including an NCAA Division II Final Four appearance in 2008. I successfully implemented a goalkeeper curriculum that developed the best goalkeepers in the Rocky Mountain Athletic Conference and the nation.

Also in 2008 I began coaching for Core Goalkeeper Academy. Recognizing the need for quality goalkeeper training in Colorado, Chris Sharpe of the Colorado Rapids, and the rest of our staff began what is now the premier goalkeeper training program in the region. Every year we train hundreds of goalkeepers (ages 8-24). We implement age specific curriculums at our academies, and in clubs, in addition to providing individual instruction to players of all abilities.

As a student of the game my goal is to enable every player to achieve their best potential. The game has taught me many lessons about hard work, discipline, friendships, and having fun. It is now my responsibility to enable players to develop the specific skills required of the goalkeeper, in a safe environment, on their own.

I received my US National C-License in 2010 and my NSCAA Level II Goalkeeper Diploma in 2009.

# Understanding the Icons

## Icon Used



## Definition

### **Coaches Point:**

Provides helpful tips on technique and reasons to use it

### **Correct:**

Demonstrates correct technique

### **Incorrect:**

Demonstrates incorrect technique

### **Frustration Point:**

Illustrates common areas of frustration for goalkeepers

### **Footwork Path:**

Shows the path of footwork in certain illustrations

# Gathering the Equipment

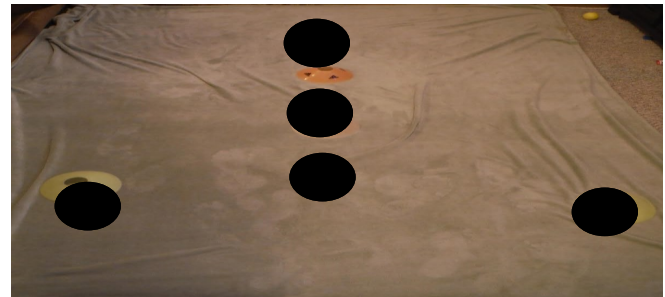
**Goalkeeper gloves and shoes (soccer shoes preferred)**



**One size 4 soccer ball (use more if available)**



**Setup 5 disc cones as shown**

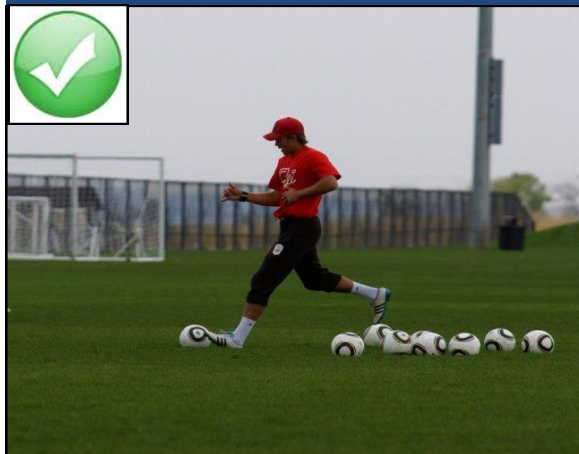


**Appropriate clothing includes long sleeves (pants and/or head protection is optional)**





# Serving the Ball Correctly



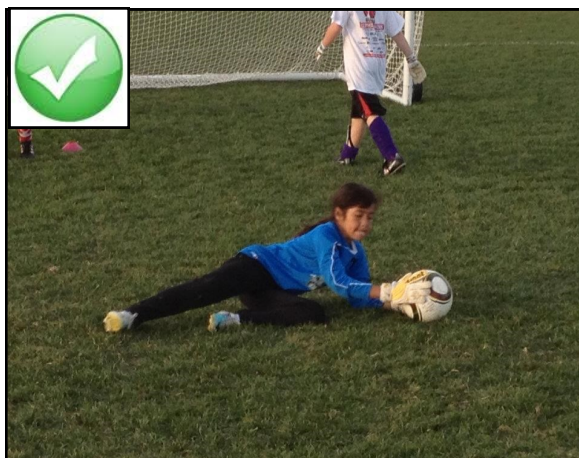
## Correct:

- The pace/weight of the service should be age appropriate.
- Challenge the goalkeeper as they progress.



## Correct:

- Accurate service is ESSENTIAL to practice techniques.
- Throwing the ball will help with accuracy.



## Correct:

- Practice saving a stationary ball to execute proper technique.



## Incorrect:

- Shooting the ball too hard at this age group can lead to injury.
- This is an MLS coach striking balls at professional players.

# Warming Up

## Get Your Heart Rate Up:

A great warm up for ages 9-12 is a jog around the field. Whether you think it is a long or short distance doesn't matter. It gets your heart rate up and pumps blood to the body. Try to go around the field without stopping and maintain a consistent pace.

## Stretch Dynamically: Moving across 10 yards

- Side shuffle both directions
- Rapid high knees
- Controlled butt kickers
- Raise knees straight up and open outwards
- Raise knees outside and swing inwards
- Straight leg kicks (under control)

## Get Your Feet Moving: Using a line of 5 cones

- Place 2 feet in each moving forward
- Shuffle through the cones in a slalom
- Move sideways through the cones
- Jump with 1 foot between each cone (right and left leg)
- Two footed jumps between each cone

## Loosen Up:

- Make small and large circles with your arms straight out
- Pull your ankle behind your butt to stretch the front of the leg
- Bend at the waist with straight legs to touch your toes
- Bend straight forward with feet wide apart to stretch your groin

## Move Explosively:

A total of three times jog for 5 yards and sprint for 10 yards. Do this consecutively and stretch again as needed.



**Warm-Ups should be focused and increase in intensity. Try to get your body coordinated so the movements during training are sharp.**



# Handling Shots Above the Ribcage

- Move through the footwork quickly with hands starting waist high and good body shape.
- Shuffle your feet to get behind the ball if it is off to the side.
- Aim the service at the chest and head of the goalkeeper.

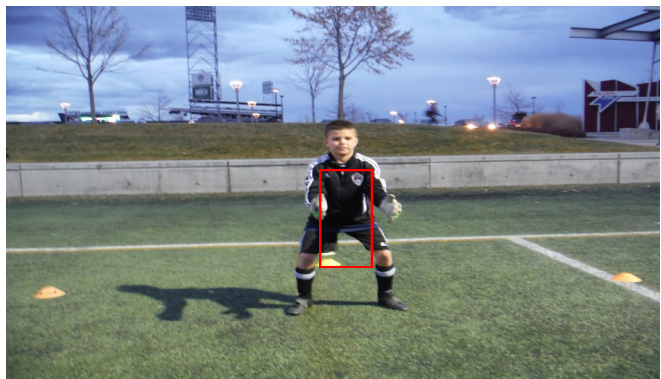
1. Move through a set of 3 cones/rings as quick as possible by placing 2 feet between each cone/ring.



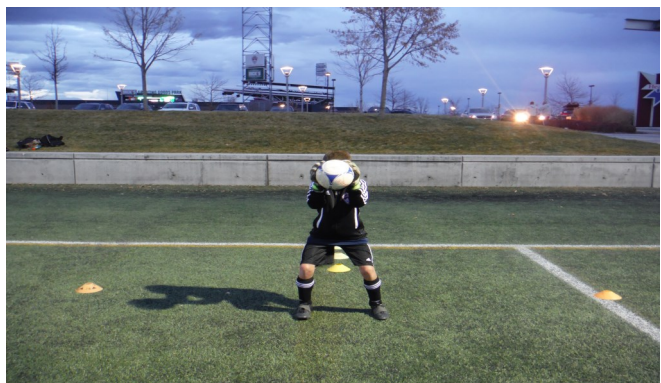
2. Get into a set position before the ball is struck or thrown.



Notice the red square demonstrating the players body shape facing the shot.



3. Raise your hands up behind the ball and squeeze it tightly OR control it to the ground directly in front of your feet.



# Shaping Your Hands for a Catch



**Correct:**

- Hands in a “W” shape and slightly curved behind the ball.
- Wrists straight and locked.



**Incorrect:**

- Hands underneath or in front of the ball.
- Bent or floppy wrists.



**Correct:**

- Palms against the ball with fingertips wrapped firmly around it.



**Incorrect:**

- Hands on the side of the ball will allow a hard shot to go straight through.



# Handling Shots Below the Ribcage

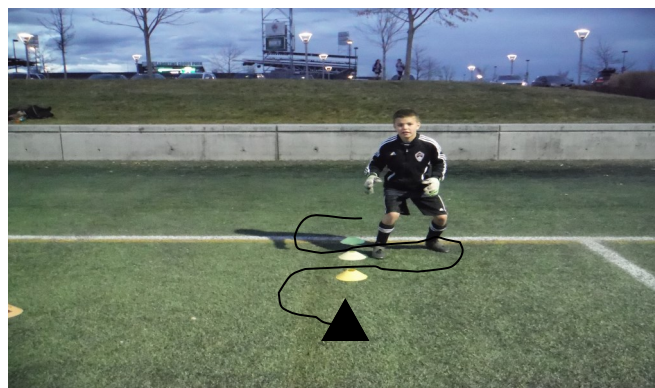
- Move through the cones quickly with hands starting waist high with good body shape.
- Keep your feet balanced to stay low behind the ball.
- Serve the ball on the ground at the goalkeepers feet.

**1.** Shuffle side to side through a set of 3 cones as quickly as possible.

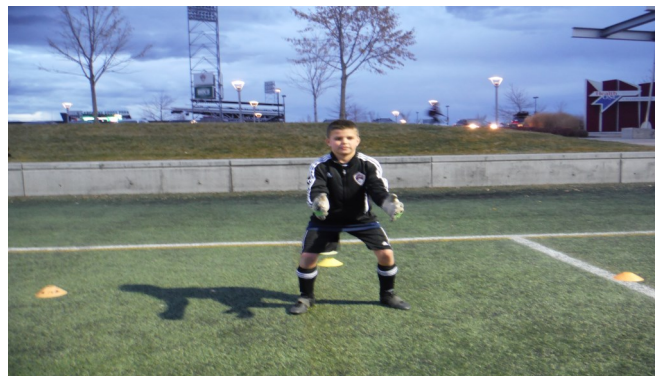
- Similar to a slalom shuffle.



Keep good body shape by avoiding unnecessary movements.



**2.** Get into a set position before the ball is struck or thrown.



**3.** Take a slight step towards the ball on a forward angle.



**4.** Lower your hands behind the ball with your fingertips pointing towards the ground.

# Handling Shots Below the Ribcage (continued)

- **Avoid putting your knees on the ground causing immobility.**
- **Focus your eyes on the ball throughout the entire save.**
- **Service should roll into the goalkeeper on the ground.**

**5.** Scoop the ball into your chest with your arms and hands firmly wrapped around it.



**6.** Continue to fall forward onto the front of your forearms.



**7.** Keep your hips and legs close to the ground behind the ball.

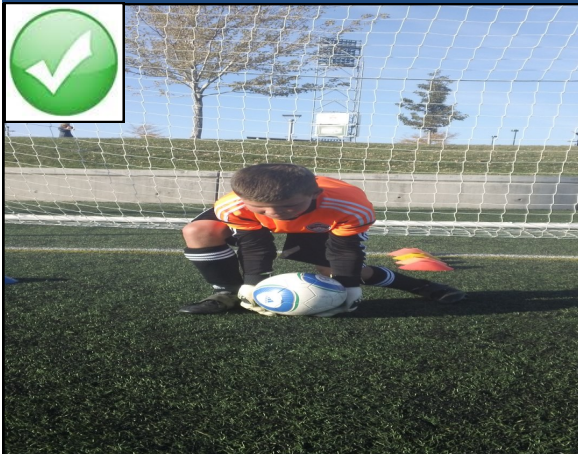


If the ball goes through your arms it will get trapped underneath you.





# Shaping Your Body for Lowballs



**Correct:**

- Back knee is tucked behind the arms to prevent ball from going through the legs.
- Properly handled and ready to roll into chest.



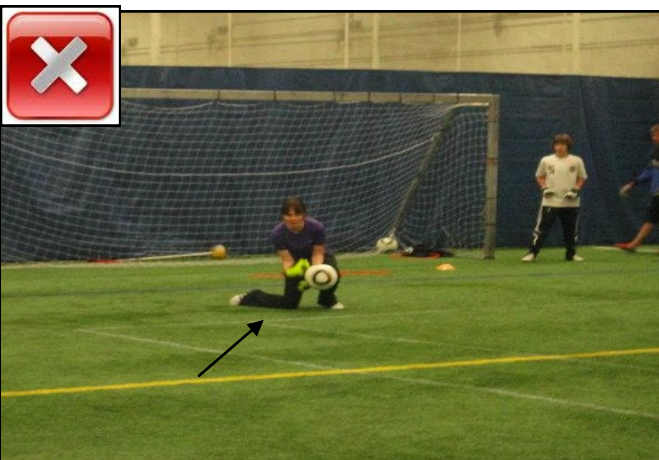
**Incorrect:**

- There is nothing behind the ball if it goes through the hands.



**Correct:**

- Body shape should lean forward on the balls of the feet to attack the save in a forward direction.



**Incorrect:**

- Maintain balance and mobility by keeping your knee off the ground.

# Making Low Diving Saves

- Move through the cones quickly with hands starting waist high and good body shape.
- Explode off your plant foot to dive as far as possible.
- Serve the ball on the ground 2-3 yards wide of the goalkeeper.

1. Move sideways through 3 cones by placing two feet between each cone.



2. Take a stagger step and lower your body towards the ground.



Try to attack the ball on a forward angle.



3. Shoot your bottom hand low and behind the ball.

- Your upper body shape should stay square with your top hand following the bottom hand to make a catch.



Keep your upper body shape square to the ball with the top hand following the bottom hand to make a catch.





# Making Low Diving Saves (continued)

- **Push the ball to the side if it cannot be caught properly.**
- **Treat all rebounds as live and get up after them quickly until the ball is secured in your hands.**

- 
- 4.** Finish the save by landing on your side facing the direction of service



## Frustration Point!

- Finish diving saves by landing on your side with your hands facing the ball. If the ball is going underneath you, use your power step to get down faster.



Notice how the correct diving posture is similar to catching a ball above the rib-cage...except laying on the side of your body.

# Shooting the Bottom Hand for a Save



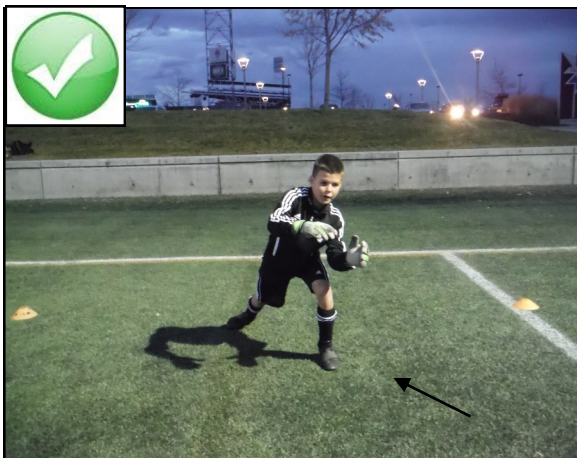
## Correct:

- Bottom hand shoots low and towards the ball.



## Incorrect:

- Hands are out of position and have a long path from up high to save a ball down low.



## Correct:

- Good balance on a plant foot and a strong push will give you more power and distance on dives.



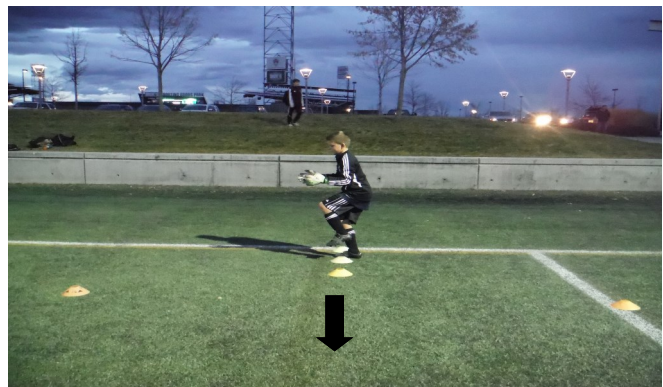
## Incorrect:

- Jumping off the back foot and falling short of the save.

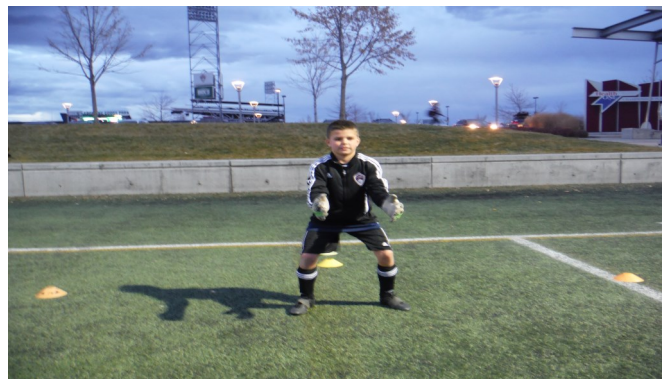
# Making Waist High Dives

- Move through the footwork quickly with hands starting waist high and good body shape.
- Keep your body square to the server.
- Serve the ball waist high 2-3 yards away from the goalkeeper.

1. Side shuffle, quickly, through 3 cones by placing 2 feet between each cone.
  - Move sideways through the cones.



2. Close down the angle and get into a set position before the ball is struck or thrown.
  - Turn to face the shooter square on.



3. Take a stagger step on a slight angle towards the ball.



Stagger step=Power Step

- This allows for a strong jump for farther dives.





# Making Waist High Dives

- Increase distance of service to stretch goalkeepers range.
- Increased repetition will dial in technique and avoid unnecessary movements like jumping too high or falling too short of the save.

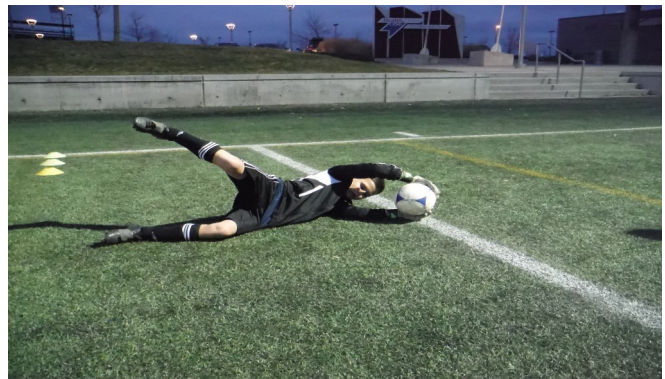
4. Push off your leg closest to the ball and stretch out your arms towards the ball.



Attack the ball on a forward angle.



5. Finish the save by landing on the side of your body and holding the ball securely.



## Frustration Point!

- 👉 This is a very advanced save. If you find yourself diving and landing on your stomach, it will take more repetition to get used to landing on your side. REMEMBER if your body is facing the shot you have a better chance of catching it and holding on to it.

# Catching High Balls

- **Maintain balanced footwork.**
- **Keep your eyes on the ball for better timing.**
- **Time your jump so you jump early, catch the ball at the highest point, and land late with momentum carrying you forward.**

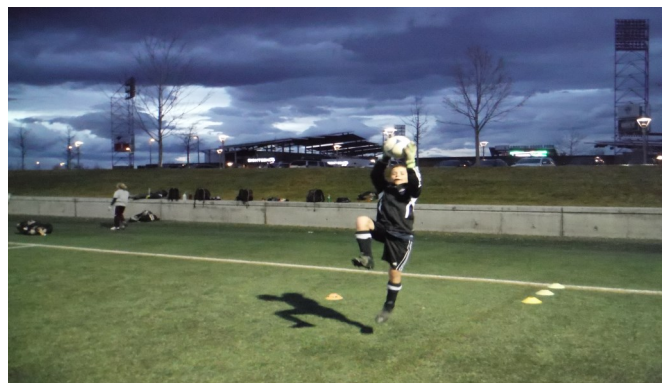
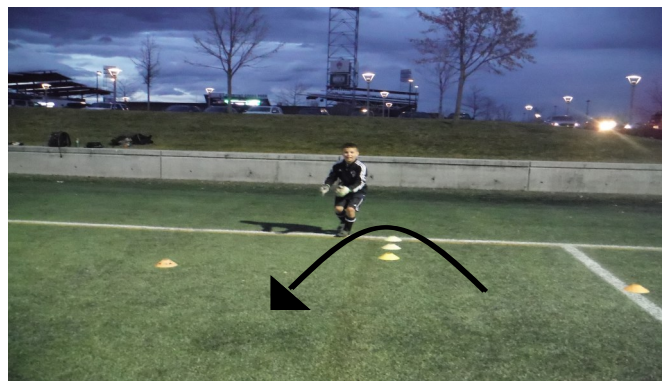
**1.** Start in a set position on the top left of 3 cones.

**2.** Move quickly around the back of the cones as you are judging the flight of the ball.

**3.** Time your jump to catch the ball as high as you can and in front of you.

**4.** Raise up one knee for protection and additional height.

**5.** Carry momentum through the save and hold the ball securely in your arms.



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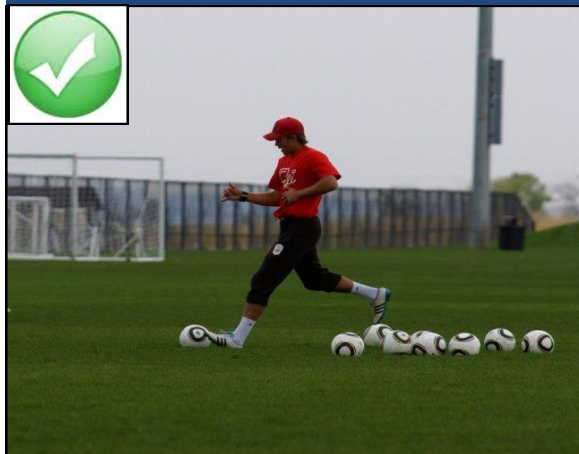
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# Troubleshooting

## Techniques to Avoid and Fixing Common Mistakes



# Serving the Ball Correctly



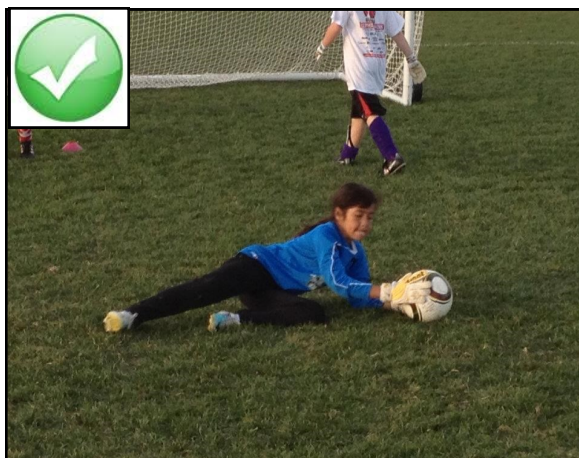
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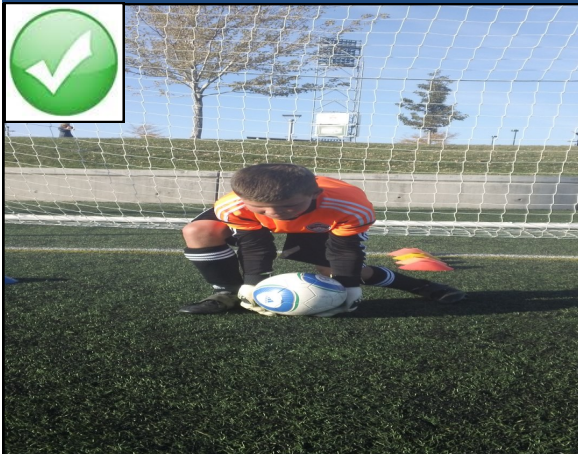


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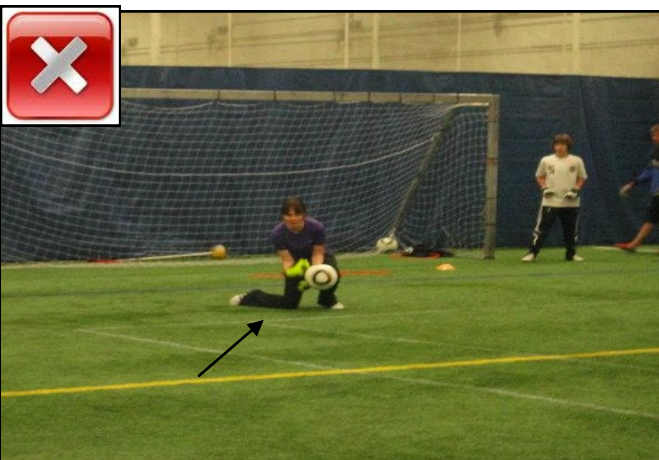
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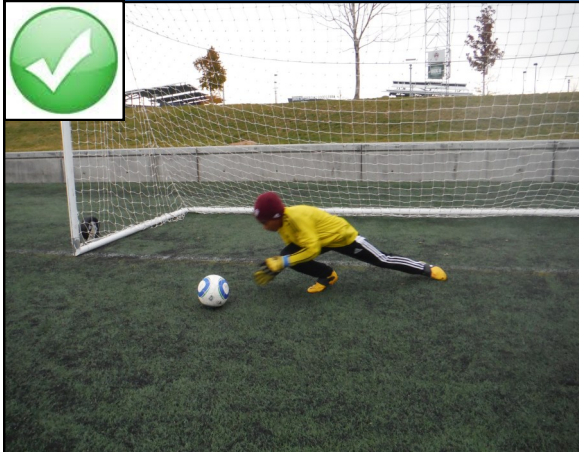
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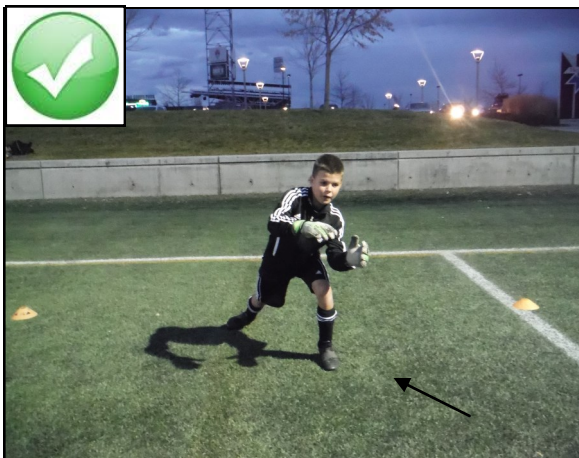
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# Acknowledgements

Thanks to all of the U11-U12 goalkeepers from the Colorado Rapids Academy and Burgundy teams. These kids train extremely hard for 10 months out of the year and their effort shows in their technical ability and in the saves they make during games. They had good fun taking the pictures and breaking down the curriculum for this project. Thanks guys!

Thanks to Chris Sharpe whom I get to share expertise with on a daily basis about how to make each individual player achieve their best potential. He has made me a better coach, mentor, and person. Let's keep building the best goalkeeper program in the nation!

Also a special thank you to Select Sport America for sponsoring Core Goalkeeper Academy.

