

# COACHES...

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## The Elements of Goalkeeping

Whether you have selected the position of goalkeeper or are "trying it out" for the good of the team, certain elements of the position need your careful thought. The demands of good goalkeeping are different and the skills more varied. There is always the pressure to perform perfectly.

1. **YOUR FITNESS.** The flexibility and agility that you bring to the position is the result of training and dedication. Strength, power and endurance are yours only if you work for them, and in relation to what is demanded of you. Quickness of mind and body, more a natural talent, prepares you for the explosive split-second when you decide on "your move". There can be no such thing as the "unsaveable goal" and only the highest level of fitness, specific for goalkeeping, can give you the tools to save the toughest of chances.
2. **YOUR TECHNIQUE.** Your ability to catch and box balls comes from repetition and careful analysis and coaching of your technique. Demand help from your coach and from fellow goalkeepers. Every movement of your body must be analyzed for maximum effectiveness. Your diving and technical decision-making can only be improved through an understanding of which parts of the body are best apt to handle the demands of the situation. There is a specific technique for each situation. Proper performance of the technique is your best chance at making the save.
3. **YOUR TACTICAL UNDERSTANDING.** It is easy to make decisions, but making the right decisions comes from experience. Ten to fifteen games a year is not enough game experience. If that is all your league plays, then get all the experience you can in practice sessions. Sit behind the goal as a spectator in as many games as you can. Learn about angle play, the ways of distributing a ball, supporting and attacking with your teammates, and how to react to all dead-ball situations in the game.
4. **YOUR PSYCHOLOGICAL MAKEUP.** Can you accept blame? Can you cover for the mistakes of others? If there were no mistakes, would there be a need for goalkeeper? You must be ready for people to point to and at you. Develop a mental toughness which allows you to admit a mistake and not to blame others for theirs, or for yours. While other players may make excuses, you have none. Analyze each situation as to immediate danger (who can score), the secondary danger (who could soon be in a position to score) and as to the location of support players.

You will be required to concentrate on the game's action for long periods of time between touches of the ball. Such concentration is very demanding and will necessitate your being able to develop the ability to relax. This relaxation takes place prior, during, and after the game. At all times you must bring out the confidence of your whole team. Your opponent will notice, and will be intimidated!

\*To purchase the Machnik tapes and/or books onn goalkeeping skills, please call 1-900-MACHNIK