

## NET EDGE NEWS

THE GOALKEEPERS NEWS LETTER



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## DEALING WITH THE BREAKAWAY (PART ONE)

Whether it is a through ball behind the line with an offensive player running on or a player who has broken through the defensive back line and is dribbling in at you, the one thing in common with these situations is you are the only thing between the player with the ball and the goal. The other thing both of these situations share is that it requires you to come off your line to deal with the player and the ball. Lets talk about both of these in their simplest terms. You have three basic choices:

- Make the save before the ball is shot.
- Make the save as the shot is taken.
- Make the save after the shot is taken.

These choices are in order of preference

Shutting a play down when feasible before the shot is taken is always the best choice. Having said that, your first considerations is can you win the ball before the approaching player? Or can you win it off a poor touch? If so you need to attack and smother the ball quickly and decisively.

Determine the speed and distance of the attacker, you will need to "close them down" by taking space, try to match the pace of the attacker as you come out. Rule of thumb is to take as much space as you can when the ball is off of the players foot.

Avoid "no man's land" that is where you find yourself not close enough to the player to influence the shot and too far from the goal to make the save, usually, an easy chip shot over the head.

You want to match the angle of approach and cut down that angle effectively as you come out.

You must be in good control of your body:

- Weight balanced
- Hands low, wide and in front of your body
- Be sure your feet are not so far apart you can be "nutmegged"
- Do not over commit. Once you commit you better make sure you

come up with the ball in your hands

- Do not anticipate or over commit, a good striker can read you. If you start to "cheat" they will see that and take the ball another direction or shoot the other way
- Be as big as you can, you want to present the largest possible barrier by using your hands low, and wide and your shoulders square.

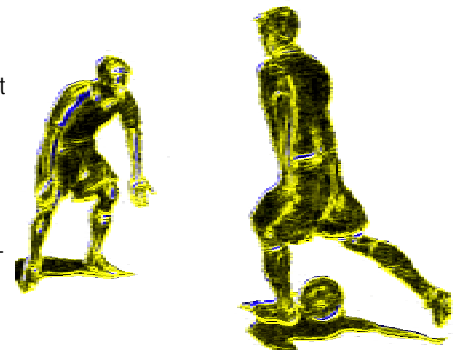
Delay the attacker as long as possible giving defenders a chance to recover.

That is the breakaway in its simplest form. See part two for more advanced considerations.

## WHAT'S COMING?

- More Striker/Keeper Training Series summer of 2007
- Look for our 2007 Striker/Keeper Series coming to a Division 1 University near you!
- Learn how to goal tend indoors off the boards!

See back page for all details



## DEALING WITH THE BREAKAWAY (PART TWO)

This section we'll look at additional techniques and tactics for dealing with the breakaway. There are 3 techniques that are all tools for the keeper on a breakaway, each one is suited for a different situation.

1. Coming out under control, previously discussed on page one
2. Sliding save
3. Modified sliding save

We discussed at length in part one the considerations for coming out under control, this is used when the attacker is in solid control of the ball.

Let's revisit our first choice of "making the save before the shot". Often in a breakaway this requires a "Sliding Save". As the name implies this is a save made while moving forward and sliding on the side of your body, hands first towards the ball. This save requires timing and toughness.

Considerations to perform a sliding save:

- Hands to ball first, do not slide feet first, your objective is to not only win the ball but hang on to it.
- Your last step should be long and low to get you quickly to the ground. I like to use the analogy of

landing a plane... a fast and low approach.

- Once your hands reach the ball the rest of your body is coming in and squaring up to create a large barrier. (See photo below)
- Slide with your head to near post, feet central. Should you mishandle the ball this position improves the chances of it being pushed wide and not in front of the goal.
- Remember you have advantage, the ball is rolling towards you! A ball that looks 50/50 or



Sliding save made by Flowers on a breakaway

even 60/40 is really your ball.

A modified sliding save is the same in almost all respects to the sliding save. The difference here is the hands and upper body. This save is used for choice number two from the first section "making the save as the shot is being taken". If you can visualize

getting to the attacker just as the ball is being struck or a fraction after. Your consideration now is to make yourself large as you are sliding in to the ball. Shoulders square, coming in with the central part of your body, arms a bit more above the head, hands cupped over elbows bent to help contain the ball.

Your chances of success using any of these techniques will improve with a correct starting position. Which means if you are moving with the flow of the game and not just sitting on your line, then you may gain a step or two advantage in 1v1 events.

Last but not least..... You have tactical considerations these require an ability to understand and "read" the game. You need to be aware of where your defense is in relation to this breakaway play/ through ball you are dealing with.



Can your defender recover in time to head the player off? Is there a player who can come across and intercept the ball/player? If so are they in a better position than you to make the play? Can you combine with your defender to "pinch" the player out of optimal scoring position? By this I mean that a defender giving chase should take up a goal side position and force the player wide while the keeper cuts the angle working in tandem with the defender; this usually results in a poor shot or bad touch by the player giving the GK the opportunity to make the save.

All of these considerations both technical and tactical take lots of practice and game time. When you are working at game speed you don't have time to think about your choices they need to be automatic, and this only comes from repetition in the proper form.

## THE CARE AND FEEDING OF GOALIE GLOVES

I often get questions about which are the best gloves for keepers. I usually avoid a direct recommendation since so much of it is personal preference.

Here are a few tips about gloves in general.

- I am not convinced that the higher priced gloves (100 and up) necessarily result in a better quality glove, but I do believe you need to purchase above the middle price range for a glove that is going to do the job.
- Look for better grip vs. durability. Durability is nice but grip is the larger concern.
- Even the best glove made is useless if not properly cared for. Care is most important for the life and performance of any glove. Hand wash every few games (indoor may require less frequency) in warm water and a very, very little bit of clothing soap, rinse well with water and wring out the excess. Repeat until water is free of dirt and soap, wring out the excess and let air dry. This prevents their clogging with dirt and losing their "stickiness" (DO NOT put your gloves in the dryer)
- During a match you see keepers spit on gloves to moisten; moistened gloves do work better, but use plain water to moisten; the frequent use of saliva overtime ends up clogging the pores of the glove and actually ruins their gripping capabilities.
- Size, this goes to personal preference. Your hand size may drive you to a tighter fitting glove or maybe one that's bigger. I have small hands and prefer a glove with a larger surface area and snug but not tight fit.
- Don't use your match gloves for training but do take the same care of your training gloves. Retire your worn old match gloves and use them as training gloves.
- Gloves do not replace good technique but like any sport the quality and condition of the equipment can make the difference. In this case the difference of a caught ball vs. a dropped ball.



"To some challenges are exhausting. To others, they are opportunities in waiting"

-Tony DiCicco

## MENTAL TOUGHNESS

All athletes need to be mentally tough, the nature of any game is to overcome challenges and to come out on top of your event. Many positions require more mental strength than others due to particular pressures inherent in that position; goalkeeping is one of these positions.

Mental toughness is a quality that separates Great goalkeepers from the rest. We

can write a book on this subject and there are many out there, but we will boil it down into 3 main qualities.

Confidence, composure and passion are the key elements:

The confidence to meet any challenge and to even relish the more difficult games. It is the unquestionable belief in your abilities. To thrive on

pressure.

The composure to work on delivering the perfect game, yet understand mistakes happen and goals happen, learn from it and put it immediately behind you. Composure also involves the ability to block out negative influences.

Last but not least a passion for the position and the sport.



Love of the game creates the energy that drives a goalkeeper (or any player) to train and play incredibly hard, to achieve peak physical, mental condition, to hone their skills to precision and to leave it all on the pitch every game.

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Catherine Gordon is the Founder and Director of Net Edge Training, LLC. Since 1999 Net Edge Training has specialized in goalkeeping training for youth players of all ages.

As a former USL W-League goalkeeper for the New Jersey Wildcats, Gordon has over 25 years experience between the pipes. A graduate of Purdue University, she was a four-year letter winner in four varsity sports during high school. She played basketball in college for Ft. Lewis College and concluded her collegiate career playing soccer for the Boilermakers during her senior year.

Gordon is a Division I Goalkeeping Coach for the Fairleigh Dickinson University Women's Soccer team, with primary responsibilities for goalkeeper training and development. Gordon holds a USSF "C" License and a NSCAA Advanced National Goalkeeping Diploma. She also serves as a goalkeeper evaluator for Olympic Development Program (ODP) tryouts and has recently been selected as a Certified Trainer for Positive Coaching Alliance (PCA).

"I've had the opportunity to play with some outstanding players, and learn from excellent coaches, including Tony DiCicco, Tony Waiters and Peter Mellor. My goal is to bring the best practices, strategies, and enthusiasm from these varied sources to today's Goalkeepers, giving them the opportunity to develop and excel in their position."

#### Turf City Wayne NJ. Indoor goalkeeper training. 4 sessions

Over U15 every Monday Starting 11/27 from 6-7 pm

U12-14 every Tuesday starting 11/28 from 5-6pm

U 9-11 every Thursday starting 11/30 from 5-6pm.

\$145 for all 4 sessions

Low keeper to coach ratio. Improve your goalkeeping skills on at the newly re-turfed facility in Wayne NJ. Also learn how to play the goalkeeper position indoors off the boards, a fast and exciting game. Go to our GK training page to download an application.

**2007** Our ever popular annual Striker/Keeper Series will be moving to a Division 1 School for 2007 watch our website in January for more information and dates.

**2007** Net Edge Training has partnered with "Edge of the Box" Striker training. To bring you 2 Striker/Keeper camps for all ages. Our 2006 Striker/Keeper Series was so successful we have added 2 more for the summer. Get the best training from trainers who specialize in position specific training. Peter Wilson former Coach of the USL "W" League NJ Wildcats and a former professional Striker in England will join Catherine Gordon for this unique and highly effective training. Watch our website in January for Dates

## SPORT VIDEO SERVICES



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We would like to thank Head Coach Renee Montana from Fairleigh Dickinson University in Teaneck for her contributions to our newsletter. Coach Montana provided insightful perspective to our column on Mental Toughness. For more info about FDU athletics Division 1 go to [www.fduknights.com](http://www.fduknights.com)