



COLORADO STORM SOCCER ASSOCIATION

Goalkeeping Program Description

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The Colorado Storm Soccer Association Goalkeeping Program Description is designed to provide basic guidelines for the development of boys and girls goalkeepers through the ages that Colorado Storm sponsor teams.

The mission of the Colorado Storm Goalkeeping Program is to develop goalkeepers in a positive, professional, and personal environment in order to help them achieve their goals as an athlete. Our method will be to use training exercises and coaching points that reflect an adherence to USSF and NSCAA coaching methodology, while also allowing the Goalkeeping Staff to impart their vast experience as players and coaches on our goalkeepers.

It is important to note that an individual player's growth in the goalkeeper position may dictate a faster or slower progression through the curriculum, and every player must be assessed on an annual (or semi-annual) basis to determine his or her ability to meet the "benchmarks" or considerations proposed by the curriculum. These evaluations should reflect development in the four pillars of the position: Technical, Tactical, Psychological, and Physical.

A gradual introduction to skills required of a goalkeeper at an early age is critical to goalkeeper development. Ignoring the skill set necessary to be a goalkeeper will result in a lack of a capable goalkeeper "pool" within the club for our USSF Developmental Academy and ECNL Programs and will do a disservice to those who are more inclined towards the position. Introductory goalkeeper training at young ages will expose players to the position, inspire involvement, and increase overall understanding of all positions of the game.

The positive development of Colorado Storm Goalkeepers must be a club effort, inclusive of Goalkeeper Trainers, Team Coaches, Club Director(s), Parents, and Teammates. Coordination of all of these support personnel will ensure the proper identification, preparation, evaluation, and retention of Colorado Storm Goalkeepers. Positive feedback from teammates, coaches, and parents (especially at a young age) will reduce goalkeeper attrition.

Below are some of the ways that Teammates, Coaches, and Parents can influence the development of goalkeepers within the Colorado Storm Soccer Association:

Teammates:

- **Step up and give it a try** – many goalkeeper's teammates have never stepped foot in the goal so they have no appreciation for the position and it's unique challenges.
- **Applaud effort** – teammates must be a part of the reinforcement network, praising great saves in the same way they celebrate a scored goal.
- **Be inclusive** – goalkeepers often feel isolated from the team due to the nature of the position, so a conscious effort to include the goalkeeper in team activities, practices, and games is critical.



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Team Coaches:

- **Educate yourself** – Coaches should find a local NSCAA GK 1 & 2 course, pick up a GK training book, or browse some YouTube clips or goalkeeping websites. Team Coaches who are familiar with the position at a basic level can reinforce the fundamentals and provide specific feedback when the GK Trainer is not around.
- **Patience is key** – there is a reason why the best goalkeepers in the world are in their 20's and 30's. The goalkeeping position is an acquired skill which takes many years of experience to master. At the youngest ages, even the motor skills necessary to catch a moving ball are still being developed. Don't rush the process.
- **Expose your players to the position** – Especially at the younger ages, Team Coaches must demand that everyone gives goalkeeping a try, whether it's a training session, half of a game, or part of a season.

Parents:

- **Being the goalkeeper is emotionally challenging** – As is being a defender, midfielder, or forward. However, the impact of being the “hero” or the “goat” in any particular game can take a toll on young goalkeepers. Be sure to reinforce the positives, “Catch Them Being Good!”, and don't focus your conversation on what goals they gave up or the result of the game, but rather what they learned from particular moments in the match.
- **Help them be a student of the game** – Is there a soccer game on TV? Is there a local college team? Is there a nearby pro game? Exposing goalkeepers to what is done at higher levels will expedite their development and provide role models.
- **Make sure they understand the commitment involved** – if you have a competitive level goalkeeper, he or she should be spending a significant amount of training time with the goalkeeping staff. The Colorado Storm will offer two sessions per week at each age group, and goalkeepers at the competitive levels should make efforts to attend at least one, preferably both, every week.

Player Identification

Goalkeeper identification and evaluation will be conducted throughout the season and also during scheduled tryout dates in accordance with Colorado Soccer Association, ECNL, and USSF regulations. Additionally, goalkeepers from outside the club may periodically be invited to Storm GK training sessions when permitted by CSA, ECNL, and USSF timelines. For returning Storm Goalkeepers, performance at tryouts is not the only factor in goalkeeper placement, but rather a small piece of the overall consideration. Consistency over time, demonstrated commitment to the team and the position, and player growth are critical factors in team placement. Goalkeeper placement and identification is a collaborative effort between the Storm Goalkeeping Staff and the Team Coaches.

Age Considerations:

The following pages present guidelines and expectations for goalkeepers within various age groups. It is important to note that not all goalkeepers will follow a linear progression through the benchmarks mentioned below. Some players may advance more quickly while others will need more time with the fundamentals. It is the responsibility of the club, the director of goalkeeping, and the team coaches to identify areas of strength and weakness in order to develop and challenge every individual.



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Ages 6-7: “The Beginner Phase”

Ball Size: 3

GK Training Session Length: N/A (No specialized GK Training at this level)

Technical Considerations:

- Catching a moving ball at various heights (services should primarily be from hands)
- Rolling a ball to a target (bowling)
- Basic foot skills (Passing, Receiving, short and mid range)

Tactical Considerations:

- Basic team principles of play (not goalkeeper specific)
- Rotate positions, everyone plays every position. Learn from the game.

Psychological Considerations:

- FUN!
- Training sessions should always involve games which reinforce elements of the position but are not focused solely on the goalkeeper.

Physical Considerations:

- Fun games involving movements (run, stop, shuffle, backpedal, jump)
- Basic motor skills (hand eye coordination, i.e. throw and catch)
- Balance and coordination.



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Ages 8-9: “The Learning Phase”

Ball Size: 4

GK Training Session Length: 30 min (max.), introductory training sessions

Technical Considerations:

- Fundamental set position (feet set, balanced body weight, hands forward)
- Intro Catching Technique (Low Scoop save, Basket catch, Contour catch). Thrown service.
- “Falling” technique (low dives, intro to controlling a “fall” and getting back up)
- Footwork (shuffle, drop step, crossover, accelerate, decelerate, jump)
- Passing and receiving with both feet. Serving volleys in training environment.
- Rolling (bowling) over short distance and throwing over mid-range distances.

Tactical Considerations:

- Playing on small goals
- Understanding positioning (staying connected with the play as it moves)
- Rotate positions, everyone plays every position. Learn from the game.

Psychological Considerations:

- FUN!
- Games that focus on soccer 1st, goalkeeping 2nd. Rotate players through outfield and GK position.

Physical Considerations:

- Basic dynamic stretches (teaches warm-up/cool-down as well as reinforces balance/coordination)
- “Burst” – short sprints, relay races, get down and get up.
- Hand-Eye coordination, visual “tracking” of an object



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Ages 10-12: “Foundational Development Phase”

Ball Size: 4

GK Training Session Length: 60 min (max.)

Technical Considerations:

- Set position 2.0 (loading energy into the legs, weight forward, shoulders rounded)
- Footwork (crossover, drop step, sprint, backpedal)
- Catching Progression (high contour, side contour, front smother/forward dive).
 - o Kicked & thrown service.
- Intro to diving (collapse & reload). Dead ball, thrown, and kicked service.
- Basic 1v1 technique (controlled environment – thrown service or dead ball repetition)
- Striking a still ball with the laces
- Passing/receiving in one and two touches.
- Volley from hands with BOTH feet
- Throwing (bowl, side arm, overarm) to targets.

Tactical Considerations:

- Ball Line Positioning (stay on the imaginary line between the ball and the center of the goal)
- Vertical positioning (how close or how far from the goal?)
- Connection with team (don't stand on goal line, move up and back with the team unit)

Psychological Considerations:

- The fundamentals are CRITICAL
- Competition against yourself (races: how many _____ can you get?)
- Explain the why? behind techniques and actions
- Quality over Quantity
- Mental Focus for a half or a full match
- Challenges of being a “back-up”, managing split time in the goal

Physical Considerations:

- Flexibility and movement
- Warm up and Cool down
- Build a “relationship” with the ball. Cross-training is encouraged (basketball, volleyball, tennis)
- Body weight resistance training
- Nutrition and hydration



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Ages 13-15: “Youth Development Phase”

Ball Size: 5

GK Training Session Length: 75 min (max)

Technical Considerations:

- Set position (set and re-set)
- Handling techniques at all heights, kicked service.
- Cross Management: techniques of catching, parrying, boxing.
- Diving 2.0 (extension dives, parrying, power step)
- All throwing techniques (bowl, side arm, over arm, baseball throw)
- 1v1 Techniques 2.0 (three situations: 60/40 for goalkeeper, 50/50, 60/40 for attacker)
- Increase range of passing. Increase availability for back pass.

Tactical Considerations:

- Distance from unit and organization of defense (connectivity). “Preventative goalkeeping” – through organization, prevent a goal scoring opportunity before it arises.
- Communication (clear, concise, and direct)
- Defenders affect angle play
- Intro to full size goal, field markings, familiarize with space.
- Functional training that involves decision making and game-related situations
- Intro to set piece organization/positioning

Psychological Considerations:

- Specialization: Identification of a “full time” goalkeeper
- Managing selections (try-outs, starter vs. non-starter)
- “Coachability” – how to deal with praise and criticism
- Preparation (general lifestyle, pre-game/pre-training ritual, warm-up)
- Student of the Game – terminology, principles of play, team objectives
- Courage and effort. “Put yourself out there, be brave.”

Physical Considerations:

- Height/weight
- Nutrition
- Speed and Explosiveness in varied directions
- Jumping (vertical and lateral)



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Ages 16-18 “The Prospect Development Phase”

Ball Size: 5

GK Training Session Length: 90 min (max.)

Technical Considerations:

- Shot stopping/Reaction saves (make a play on the ball)
- Multiple shot saves (save, recovery, save)
- All diving techniques, from low to high: forward dive, collapse, extension, parry, back to bar.
- Cross management under pressure from varied angles
- Back passes under pressure. Varied surfaces (driven, bending, wedged)
- Increased range of throws
- Distribution from feet: volley, half-volley, side volley, goal kick

Tactical Considerations:

- Narrowing the angle (technical and tactical considerations).
 - o Small adjustments as the ball moves in/around the goal.
- Purposeful communication:
 - o “Your communication is effective if what you ask to happen, happens”
- Understand the strengths and weaknesses of system of play. Recognize and organize.
- Understand basic scouting report (set pieces, opponent’s strengths, team objectives)
- Distance of support: GK should be responsible for 2/3 of the amount of space from the goal line to the back line. (Deal with through balls, step out of box to clear or tackle)
- Organization on set pieces and corner kicks

Psychological Considerations:

- Increased competition: both internal (compete for minutes/a position on your team) and external (better opponents, more difficult situations)
- Coping with success/failure (short, yet conscious, memory). Don’t forget, but don’t dwell.
- Self-assessment. Evaluate own performance. Evaluate in comparison with peers.
- Understanding own weaknesses (hide weaknesses, play to strengths)
- Lifestyle/discipline.
- Goal setting. Take control of your “career”.
- The College Search: professional, personal approach to self-promotion and gaining exposure.
- Presence/command of your team
- Confidence
- Training mentality. A “Winning” Mentality.
- Accountability
- Rise to the Occasion or Sink from the Spotlight?

Physical Considerations:

- Strength training (soccer/goalkeeper specific)
- Plyometrics (jumping, hopping, balance, coordination)
- Height/weight ratio
- Nutrition/Diet: Proper fuel, proper recovery.
- Agility (change in direction, stop/start)

Colorado Storm Goalkeeping: Age Considerations

Training Topics	Age 6-7 "Beginning"	Age 8-9 "Learning"	Age 10-12 "Foundation"	Age 13-15 "Youth"	Age 16-18 "Prospect"
Basic Handling	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Distribution	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Psychology	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Connection w/ Team		✓	✓	✓	✓
Footwork		✓	✓	✓	✓
Angle Play/Positioning			✓	✓	✓
Back Pass			✓	✓	✓
Breakaways			✓	✓	✓
Building Out of Back			✓	✓	✓
Diving (short/long)			✓	✓	✓
Fitness			✓	✓	✓
2 & 3 Goal Situations				✓	✓
Advanced Handling				✓	✓
Back to Bar (chip/lob)				✓	✓
Cross Management				✓	✓
Extension Dive				✓	✓
Game Management				✓	✓
Set Plays				✓	✓

Age 6-7, "The Beginning Phase": No goalkeepers in match play, just an introduction to basic soccer skills. Learn from the game. Introduce the roles of a goalkeeper. No formal goalkeeper training at this age.

Age 8-9, "The Learning Phase": Introduction to basic goalkeeping techniques. Emphasis on learning the fundamentals and instilling a love of the game. Focus on mobility, footwork, distribution, and catching.

Age 10-12, "The Foundational Development Phase": More advanced techniques, but in a controlled environment that is realistic to what GK will encounter in a game. Competition, winning and losing, psychology, will play a bigger factor. Still rotate positions, but weekly GK training is acceptable.

Age 13-15, "The Youth Development Phase": Introduction of more tactical elements alongside the technical repetition. Focus on more advanced techniques, game management, and communication.

Age 16-18, "The Prospect Development Phase": A balance between technical and tactical elements. Focus on game management, flank play, and goalkeeper fitness. Goalkeepers demonstrate commitment to the position.