

# PREFACE

The Soccer Goalkeeper is the most important player on the field. He is the last line of defence and the first line of attack. To play the position well requires special abilities, skills and specialised training.

To many coaches, soccer goalkeeping psychology, techniques and tactics remain a mystery. This is especially true at younger age levels, where often coaches have not played much soccer at all, let alone played as goalkeeper. Even experienced field players and coaches may not have much experience with goalkeeping.

The information included in this manual is a compilation of years of research by numerous coaches and goalkeepers including myself. I have not tried to reinvent the wheel as most of the tips and techniques are quite common knowledge to most experienced goalkeepers. Most goalkeepers instinctively know what to do but have trouble passing on their knowledge, as they, like I were never taught the correct techniques but just “learnt on the job”.

What I have tried to do is bring together all of this information, my own knowledge gained from over 40 years in the sport as well as the knowledge passed on to me from some of my coaches, colleagues and friends in this manual.

It is designed to help young goalkeepers and their coaches. It outlines basic soccer goalkeeping techniques and tactics, and also touches on the psychology of goalkeeping and provides an introduction on goalkeeping equipment.

Coaching tips to help get the ideas across to players are briefly outlined. Most chapters conclude with a checklist of pointers as well as common mistakes to watch for.

I hope this helps coaches to better understand and pass on to young goalkeepers the finer points to help them master

*“The Art of Goalkeeping”*.

I commenced playing soccer at quite a late age of 12. Growing up in Tasmania most of the primary schools played only Australian Rules Football or VFL as it was known in the 60's. I spent my early childhood kicking drop punts, torpedos and taking "screamers" like my Carlton idol Alex Jesaulenko (an excellent grounding for any aspiring goalkeeper).

My introduction to soccer came at New Town High School; I started playing this strange game my father had wanted me to play since early childhood. Being an all boy's school with over 1200 pupils in years 7 to 10 gave us an incredible talent pool to select our teams from; most other schools were struggling to field a team in each age division, New Town High had 3 and often 4.



Yours truly "in action 1973"

I played my first four years at right back, at age 16 I commenced playing with Hobart Juventus under 19's. One Saturday we were playing Caledonians and trailing 3-0 just before half time when our goalkeeper suffered a broken collarbone. Not having a reserve our coach asked if anyone would like to take over, me being young and keen accepted the challenge, we ended up winning the game 4-3, and as they say in the classics the rest is history. Since that day I never came out of goals and now 35 years later I still play Futsal (see Appendix 5) as well the occasional game of outdoor soccer.

The Photo to the left was taken at the South Hobart soccer ground and appeared on the back page of the Saturday Evening Mercury on about late August 1973; we were playing the home leg of the State Wide Premiership against Launceston Juventus. We drew the away leg 1-1 clinching the title with a 3-1 home win. The players in the photo are: from left, John Genovese, unknown opponent, myself and Billy Jones our captain coach at the time.

I progressed through the ranks from under 19's to reserves and then into The Southern Tasmanian Premier League, playing with and against many of Tasmania's finest players. Some of my earlier coaches that had a positive effect on my

career were: Karl Sweisenger, Billy Jones (ex Leeds), Peter Brine (ex Middlesbrough & Minnesota Kicks) and Ken Worden, (Former National Soccer Coach of Malaysia, Singapore, & NSL club Melbourne Knights SC).

No Matter what level you reach in your playing career they say you will always remember one great save! The one defining moment in your career when you achieved the unachievable! That one moment that changed your outlook and perspective of playing in goals and indeed of this great game in general. This usually happens at an early stage in your career. It happened to me in 1972; I was 17 and playing for Juventus in the Under 19 competition.

It was the third last game of the season, we were leading the league and on that day our opponents were the second placed side Metro. Just after halftime we were ahead 1-0 when John Vivarelli gained possession just on half way, he left our defence in his wake as he approached the penalty area. I did all the correct things to shut him down, however while I was still coming out he produced one of the most delicate chips I had ever seen.

He thought he had beaten me to score the equaliser and had turned to commence his celebrations. I wasn't going to let our lead slip away without at least an attempt. I took a few crossover steps and dived backwards and somehow managed to parry the ball over the crossbar.

The opposition was shattered, we went on to score another two goals and win the title easily. From that day on I knew I was born to play in this position. I was told later that I was about 4 feet off the ground and horizontal at the time

I was not a tall goalkeeper at 170cm tall it was always going to be a struggle as the trend even then was for goalkeepers to be over 185cm. I stopped playing due to injuries in 1983 and continued played Volleyball for another 18 years, (another excellent sport for Psychokinetic and Kinaesthetic Development), returning to soccer due to my son Thomas' enthusiasm.

They say it must be in the genes Thomas is an excellent defender and although never having trained as a goalkeeper shows exceptional ability, some of the techniques I address in the manual as "advanced" he seems to do naturally.

## A Referees perspective on goalkeepers

Goalkeepers are by nature a different breed, although the reason why is a chicken and egg type of thing.

Goalkeepers must be crazy to want to play in that position; their position is different than field players, it usually involves less running and more physical contact. Now the question most people asks is. "Are goalkeeper's crazy to start playing in that position? Or do they acquire the craziness as a result of continual playing in goals?"

The Laws of the Game say very little about goalkeepers and nothing on how it's played. They state that goalkeepers have to wear different colored jerseys to other players and where the goalkeeper can and can't pick up the ball, as well as the punishments for transgressions of these laws.

But the game for the goalkeeper is vastly different, they're given far more latitude than any field player; they throw their bodies in front of other rushing into them and jump up for balls knowing they're going to run into someone else.

The nature of the game today assumes that goalkeepers will put themselves in vulnerable positions. Therefore, it's the referee's job to determine where the normal insanity ends, and where the protection begins. Goalkeepers **WILL** make contact with field players and they **WILL** get injured if they play it long enough.

The question is "Where do referees draw the line and commence to interfere for the goalkeepers self protection?"

On your classic breakaway at the top of the penalty area, both the striker and keeper rush toward the same point. Law 12 says that even the fingertip of the goalkeeper on the ball constitutes control, which means unless that keeper has the ball, chances are referees will allow that collision, now if the keeper does get control of the ball, that play for the striker ends immediately, and that striker will have a problem with most referees if he continues his attempt on goal.

"But what about where there's no obvious control of the ball?" The Law says that players must be in control of their bodies and aware of their surroundings at all times, (this is the basis for cautioning players for Reckless Challenges), even if that challenge was technically correct). Goalkeepers must observe this as well, but often, most are given some leeway.