



## **INTRODUCTION**

The old saying goes “If you want to have a good handball team, get a good goalkeeper!” But nowadays it has changed and we say “if you want to have a good handball team get two good goalkeepers!” Why is that? This is because the performance of the goalkeepers has a fundamental impact upon the performance of the team.

The achievement of the goalkeepers can bring the team to a higher level. The score in the EHF Champions League semi-final match between the teams Barcelona and Kiel was 44:37. This game was absolutely played in highest level. The goalkeepers of both teams saved 21 balls each. And saving 21 shots is a very good achievement. If we examine the number of the shots, we get the following results: Barcelona v Kiel 65:58 = 123 shots in 60 minutes. This means one of the best players in the world takes a shot at goal approximately every 30 seconds and the goalkeepers have to save these balls. In my opinion only one goalkeeper is not enough for this high tempo game. So you need two good goalkeepers.

If we study the statistics of the World Championship or European Championship, we see that the teams that at the top of the ranking list have the best goalkeepers. When we look at rest of the teams on ranking list, we see that their performance is not as good as those goalkeepers in the first half of the ranking list.

In this lecture on “Goalkeepers”, I want to express my opinions and point out a few suggestions and I hope all handball friends understand my views.

## **GOALKEEPER**

### **SELECTION OF A GOALKEEPER**

When selecting players, the trainers have an important job to undertake. The selection of the goalkeeper is especially very important for the new and young handball players. How does one determine which player can perform a successful play in which position? How does a trainer know if the selected children will be good goalkeepers? It should be taken into consideration that the number of children who want to be goalkeepers will decrease after some saving exercises. Trainers must give verbal encouragement and offer suggestions that are pertinent and also in order to relax the players; “Only fearless children can be goalkeepers”, another question that can be asked is How can they get used to the pain and how can they get through this stage? This is possible through training that incorporates continuous exercises. If the trainer at the time realises that some of the selected children are not suitable for the position of the goalkeeper then he should try these children out for other positions, for example, playmaker or winger.

How can we recognise that the children that we chose are not suitable to be goalkeepers?

- If the child protects himself and avoids the ball, this is an important clue that shows us they are not able to be goalkeepers.
- If he does not stand in front the ball and turns himself left or right during the shot.
- If he pulls his arms to his chest at the first movement.



- If he protects his hand from the fast shots.
- If he behaves as if he is in pain after a saved shot.
- If he cries after feeling pain.

All these are strong indicators that show us that the selected children are not goalkeeper material.

If negative reactions like this are displayed, we can understand that they cannot be good goalkeepers. On the other hand, we have to place importance on the mental and physical abilities of the children.

### **PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS**

The most important point that we have to observe is how tall the child will be. This can be discovered through scientific study. This is something that the trainers have to know. The players, who are not tall, do not have the chance to become good goalkeepers. If we investigate the national teams' goalkeepers, we will see the women are taller than 1.80m and the men are 1.90m. One of the advantages of being above average height is the length of the arms and legs.

### **CHARACTERISTICS OF MOVEMENTS**

The agility of movement should be at the highest level. This means that the more dynamic the player is, the quicker the player will be. The explosive power should also be at a high level. The explosive power of a player, especially when jumping and in arm and leg movements should be quick. This can be tested by jumping with both legs, or by catching a falling ball from the jump position. At the same time the suppleness is really very important. When a goalkeeper is supple and fast he can also save the balls that are far away from him. The short and inflexible muscles are not enough to reach the balls and there is always the possibility of injury.

### **WHAT ARE THE EXTERNAL COMPONENTS FOR SAVING THE BALLS?**

The goalkeeper always moves sideways, to the front and back and follows the other players by observing the basic position on the goal line. The legs are opened at shoulder width and supinated in the initial stance. The hips are splayed and knees are bent. Hands are opened at shoulder height. The offence movements are always sideways and to the front and back. The goalkeeper should always follow these movements with his eyes and body. He should react to the shots that are taken. One of the basic positions is standing at a right angle. He should stand between both goalposts and the player who is taking the shot.

The goalkeeper should advance closer to the player who shoots at the same time protecting the goal area. In principle, the visual angle to see the goal for the player is reduced as the goalkeeper naturally occupies more space. However, for this reason the shot will be closer and faster, the goalkeeper will have less time to react and save the ball. If he waits on the goal line, he will have more time to react to save the ball, but he will also have more space to defend. In this case, he will not be able to reach the place that he should reach. This means when he stands forward, it is easier to reach the place that he should. The most important point for the basic position is the height of his stance. He should keep his height according to the height of the ball. Here, the position of the knees, hips and ankles is also very important.



## **THE SPEED OF SHOT**

Sport research has confirmed that the ball can travel 30 meters in 1 second, thus 100km per hour. If we calculate this distance and speed with the speed of the reaction of the goalkeeper, he should save the ball from a distance of 15 meters. We cannot use this calculation for a shot that is thrown from 15 meters, so the question now asked is “How can be saved the shots from short distances?” The answer to this is the goalkeeper does this with his foresight. He senses it according to the shot position or the arm of the player and can see where the player will throw the ball. These are the behaviour patterns that are exposed by the exercises done during the warm-up period before the matches.

## **THE BLOCK OF DEFENCE**

Another mission of the defence is to defend the goal from the shots. We can describe this as passive or active. If the ball hits the defence it is active, or if the defence allows the offence to throw it is passive. The goalkeeper, who has good relationship with the defence, knows where to defend. Here, both goalkeeper and defender know and do their job very well.

## **GOALKEEPERS' SAVES**

This can be described in two ways; long distance and short distance shots. Both of these techniques can be described in two other ways. We can save the long distances shots, in two ways by using the “Hampelmann” and the football goalkeeper techniques.

In “Hampelmann” technique, the goalkeeper opens and closes his arms from up to down or from down to up while he is opening and closing his legs to the sideways. (This takes its names from the “Hampelmann” toy that originated in Germany. The toy closes and opens the legs and arms when the rope that is between the legs is pulled). Using this technique, the goalkeeper remains standing after the save.

Using the football goalkeeper technique, the goalkeeper jumps or flies to right or left sides to save the ball. After each saving he falls down knowingly. In last World Championships the saves using this technique proved to be statistically more successful.

## **DEFENDING HIGH BALLS**

The goalkeeper depending on his experiences has information about the shots: the throw technique, speed of the throws, the number of the defence, etc.) He tries to save the balls according to these criteria. He can try to reach with his two hands if he is sure about the corner. If the ball goes to the corner which is farther than he can reach, then he ends his movement by jumping. In other words, he can reach the balls by jumping. His jumping can be with one or two legs. But the jumping with one leg may not be enough for the long distance shots.

Using the football goalkeeper’s technique, the goalkeeper jumps with two legs and tries to cover all area with his body with legs closed or open in the air. If the shots are fast, the goalkeeper can touch and change the direction of the ball like ice hockey’s or football’s goalkeepers. If he cannot send it out, the ball can hit the goalkeeper and the ball can return to the playing area. After these saves the other team can take possession of the ball, leading to a disadvantage for the team. It is possible for the goalkeeper to save the ball with his hands or make it fall down in front of him with slow shots. This can cause a fast break with a pass from the goalkeeper or an organised fast break.



The goalkeeper can lose his position during the shots through jumping from a crouching position if he lets his hands down during the shots for the reason of following the ball. These kinds of shots can surprise the goalkeeper. And also saving these kinds of shots relate to the reflex and the speed of the goalkeepers. In some positions the goalkeepers can save the ball using his head, this however depends on his courage.

### **DEFENDING MID-LEVEL AIMED BALLS**

We describe the level that is lower from the shoulder and upper from the knees as mid-level. To save mid-level shots, the legs and hands are used. In some positions, the arms do not go down often. But if the goalkeeper is not fast and active; the opposite situation will occur. To compensate for the goalkeeper not being able to lift his leg more, the arms should go down more. The “Hampelmann” and “football” techniques have been discussed before. Both techniques have different movements, but the logic is the same. First, the bent knee is lifted then the lower part of leg is moved together at the same time. Here the aim is to defend at hip level, if the ball comes to hip level or further, the body can be bent and the goalkeeper can reach with his hands.

### **DEFENDING LOWER AIMED BALLS**

Here, we also talk about the balls which come from up to down. If the goalkeeper chooses a corner or side, he should know from what height the ball will come. Different throwing techniques (jumping, basic shot from down, etc.) can be used. The goalkeeper’s centre of gravity is different according to the height of each shot. When attempting to save basic shots, the goalkeeper should be in the basic stance. For lower aimed balls, the knees should be bent. Some goalkeepers do not bend their joints; they wait standing to save the balls without bending. This position is incorrect, because the hip level is unprotected.

It is not enough to move the hands from side to side only during the saving of the jumping shots. The goalkeeper should move the arms to the front of the body. He can choose two techniques for the lower shots. One technique resembles the offence technique of fencing. Here the goalkeeper opens his legs with a long step, with the instep of the foot looking towards the shot. The knee is bent at a 90 degree angle and the body is leaning to the side, which lengthens the hand further. The leg, which is the furthest from the ball, touches the floor with the tip of the foot. The knee is bent and in this way while leaning to the side the goalkeeper closes the empty space between the legs. The hand which is close to the ball extends to reach for the ball. The hand which is the furthest away from the ball is kept at head height, to save the balls which bounce.

The Technique of Half Squatting: this name comes from athleticism. It looks like the “Spagat” technique. The goalkeeper tries to defend the goal with his hands and legs together in this position. But hands are more active than the legs. The arms are in the same position that is commonly seen in fencing, the body is in upright position and also bent in a forwards position; if the body is bent backwards the goalkeeper loses his balance. For this reason his upper extremity muscles should be very strong.



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