

DEAR SANTA,

My name is Patrick Morrison and I am a goalkeeper for Armagh Harps, and I have been a good little goalkeeper all year. This past year has brought some mixed fortunes both on and off the field, but I always trained hard and any matches I got to play in I always gave 100% to ensure the best performance possible. Unfortunately, we did not win any trophies but hopefully that will change in 2020.

For the new season, I am planning on trying to get myself to my peak performance and improve my goalkeeping abilities as much as I possibly can. Again, I will train very hard but also very smart in the methods that I use and the loads that I complete. I will be setting myself targets over the coming weeks that I will be aiming to complete for the coming days/weeks/months/years, and these will be both measurable and attainable so that I can track my progression/regression accordingly.

I know you are very busy at present trying to get everything sorted for the big night next Tuesday (24th), so I will not keep you any longer. Below is a list of items that I would like for Christmas. It is a list of things that would be very beneficial for any goalkeeper when they are playing and training as well as for other aspects of their game.

GLOVES / BOOTS

Forget about brands, prices, gimmicks or endorsements. The most important point to remember about choosing a pair of gloves or football boots is how they feel when you are wearing them. They must feel comfortable whenever you are wearing them, and they must also support the shape of your hands/feet so as to minimise the risks of injury. When purchasing gloves/boots that you have never worn before always ensure that you can go to a store that you are able to try the gloves/boots on to see how they feel. After this you will be able to order without trying them on for feel.

APPAREL

With the country that we live in having no actual climate or consistent weather system. It is always prudent to ready for any weather in terms of clothing. There is an old Norse saying, "*There is no such thing as bad weather, only inappropriate clothing!*" This is why it is good to have a durable set of winter and wet clothes for training. Expense does not always guarantee the best quality so always inspect/test the stitching in the usual areas that they seem to tear for you. Items to include would be waterproof tops/bottoms, thermal trousers/shorts/tops, hats, thermal under gloves, warm tracksuit bottoms and a good heavy coat for if/when not togged out.

TRAINING DIARY

For my aforementioned goals I will of course need a training diary to record them in. It will also allow me to systematically measure them during the course of the season. My training diary will also allow me to record all sessions that I complete throughout the year as well as being a good source for jotting down any thoughts, quotes, feedback, systems of play, drills etc for future reference. It will also be important for me to record

my own personal mantras as well as my Goalkeeping Principles in my diary allowing me access both pre and post games/trainings.

LADDERS / HURDLES

Having good footwork is paramount to performing well as a goalkeeper whether it be for improving speed, agility, quickness or for sharpening up your footwork techniques having some aids to help this area of your game is important. Speed ladders and agility hurdles of various lengths and sizes are excellent for improving these areas. They can be incorporated into every drill you perform and when used correctly they can accelerate your training gains in every session. They are also very good for using in matchday warmups to activate your leg muscles.

OTHER TRAINING AIDS

There is no better way to learn anything than to teach it to either yourself or someone else. Those who are self-taught or are coaching their goalkeeping trade in some form will always find it easier to improving themselves. Other training aids can come in the form of cones, balls of various shapes, sizes & colours, kicking targets, hula hoops etc. Anything that can be used to better your goalkeeping is worth having. As long as you can use the equipment in a drill that mirrors some part of the game then the equipment is worthwhile.

BOOKS / TRAINING MANUALS

Inspiration can come from anywhere so expand your sources for reading. Whether it be autobiography, training manuals with drills or even just your favourite sports magazine always have your creative hat on and thinking of how what you are currently reading could ultimately assist you in your own performance. Never be afraid to put it into practice as failure is always the beginning of progression.

I know it is a large list Santa, and I understand that I may not receive everything that I have asked for this Christmas. I will be grateful for whatever you do decide to leave me and I promise to use them to better my performance as best that I can. Thank you in advance for my presents and have a safe trip on Christmas Eve.

Merry Christmas.

Paddy Morrison