

IT'S C.A.N.I. NOT CAN I?

All goalkeepers want to improve. It doesn't matter what age, level or reason for playing as a goalkeeper, we all want to feel as if we are becoming better 'keepers week on week. That said, it is important to realise that the amount you improve, and the rate of improvement are vastly increased with the more attention you pay towards the various areas of goalkeeping.

To complicate things further it is not simply a matter of spending more time completing goalkeeping drills or other forms of training. Improving your goalkeeping performance is heavily dependent upon the type of preparation you are performing on your game as well as the quality of the preparation you are focusing on.

In this regard it is vital to take a wholistic view whenever you are thinking about bettering your overall performance. Sometimes whenever you encounter a physical restriction/failing in your goalkeeping ability it may not require a physical element in order to correct it. There is always the possibility that a non-physical element may cause a physical gain in performance.

Whenever you are evaluating your goalkeeping abilities with the purpose of furthering their improvement, it is an important practice to get into the habit off by using a multitude of various sources/elements. These elements should give you valuable feedback, statistics and insights into you the goalkeeper as a whole and should not just focus on your physical attributes.

Some of the elements you will use will be from Primary sources i.e. – yourself. You will know your own body better than anyone and if you can learn to be totally honest with yourself, without positive or negative bias, you can become the most important tool in your evolution as a goalkeeper.

Other sources will be Secondary in nature meaning you will use other people's opinions, statistics, advice and/or experiences to influence your decisions on how to progress your goalkeeping ability.

Here are some elements you can use in order to improve your performances:

Self/Peer Appraisal – by keeping your own training diary you can record your thoughts, goals and expectations of both training and matches. As well as this you can also include any comments you wish to make regarding your own personal performances. With the 'Ink It Don't Think It' method it allows you to revisit previous notes and comments far easily than working off memory alone. It also allows you to note any other comments from other players/coaches/management/supporters that you feel may be of use to you in attempting to improve your performance.

I myself have created a model that goalkeeper's can use to specifically improve their performance. The Morrison School of Goalkeeping Model allows goalkeepers to see what areas of their game are lacking by using my own eleven goalkeeping principles. This allows goalkeepers to better focus their training and allows them to create a periodised training plan consisting of a higher level of quality.

Planning/Goal Setting – although two separate areas the two are very much interlinked. Whenever you are designing up your periodised goalkeeping training plan for the day/week/month/year, it is important to include what goals/outcomes you wish to have by the end of that stage. It is also important to note what your non-outcomes will be i.e. – what you will deem as a goal not being reached or how close a goal was to being reached. Your goals should include matchday, training, gym, skills, mental and miscellaneous goals that should also be reviewed systematically.

Mental Growth – this is an important area as a goalkeeper. It is important to prepare properly for the intense psychological pressures that are accustomed to the goalkeeper position. Training your mind to become more resilient and learning how to deal with mistakes correctly are vital tools to learn from a young age. Visualisation and What If scenarios are also great for helping a 'keeper improve their game management ability and decision-making capabilities. The most important reason for mental growth surrounds the goalkeeper's own personal mental health. It can be a very lonesome position to play at times and unless the goalkeeper is mentally strong or has coping mechanisms in place it can have negative effects on their wider mental health. Remember no matter what level you play at; it is only a game and fun and enjoyment is number one on the reason list for being a goalkeeper.

Training Methods – as a goalkeeper in order to better your physical performance it is important that you source the optimal training drills, equipment concepts and methods you feel will give you the best chances of improving. No matter your age/level start to keep a library of drills and ideas that you can regularly call back on and update when you are creating your training plans for the season. It will also help you whenever you want to focus on specific areas of your game and in this sense, it will be important to know what each drill is improving when you do it.

Analytics – used in conjunction with your goals to tailor your periodised training sessions the goalkeeper can use various statistics recorded at training or on match days to influence their decisions on training focus. How you interpret the data is important because misinterpretation can lead to incorrect training plans being created or over focus on certain goalkeeping areas. As well as statistics goalkeeper's can use videos of both matches and training to improve their performances. Matchday videos can be used to evaluate performance and to suggest area to focus on for the next game. Training videos can also evaluate performance but can also be used to highlight/correct flaws in technique. There are a number of different downloadable apps available for mobile phones nowadays that can be fantastic training aids especially for techniques correction.

Physiological Habits – it is amazing how much this area still gets overlooked by goalkeepers. To be at your optimal performance, whatever you want that to be, it is vital that you have good dietetic, hydration, Sleep, Sickness Prevention and Rehabilitation habits. Through my own experiences I have found by improving these areas either collectively or individually, it has a positive effect when looking to improve performance. They are areas that require the smallest attention but the highest discipline and for this reason, in my opinion, is why they are always lacking. Correct these and you will feel the benefits.

C.A.N.I. means Constant And Never-ending Improvement and as always by rephrasing your wording it changes your mindset. If you are looking to improve your goalkeeping performance then remember, **'its C.A.N.I. not Can I?'**