

LOOK AFTER YOUR GLOVES...

Everywhere I go whenever I am coaching goalkeepers; I am always asked about what gloves I think are the best to use. What is the best make, the best cut, what is the best fit etc. In reality there is no perfect pair of gloves that is best for everyone. Just like every goalkeeper is different, so too will be their glove preference. Goalkeepers both young and old are never really given any solid advice when they want to purchase gloves. In this article I will give a mixture of guidance I have been given as well as learned through experience for both buying and maintaining your gloves.

Whenever deciding upon a new pair of gloves to use unless you already know what glove you like it can be difficult and sometimes confusing to make the best choice for you. The most sensible thing to do is to visit somewhere that will have a large range of gloves available for you to try on. This will allow you to try different brands, sizes, glove 'cuts' as well as allowing you to get more familiar with what type of glove you feel most comfortable wearing.

As all goalkeepers have different shapes of hands, actually being able to try on a variety of different types of gloves is important. Forget about brands, forget about endorsements and forget about prices as these are not always the best indicators for quality and/or suitability. Whenever you go glove shopping the most important factor is comfort. Whatever glove feels most comfortable when you are wearing it is the glove type you should be wearing. Whenever you put the gloves on, they should feel right and when you do find a pair of gloves that are suitable/comfortable you will never forget that feeling.

There are four main glove cuts those being:

Roll Finger – the latex of the glove is rolled around the fingers providing more grip on the ball.

Flat – close fitting glove with mesh gussets and the stitching on the outside of the glove.

Reverse – close fitting glove with mesh gussets and the stitching on the inside of the glove.

Hybrid – a combination of any two of the above three cuts.

Whenever you go glove shopping, I would suggest that you keep the following tips in mind so as to maximise the quality of your purchase.

- 1) Forget about price, brands and celebrity endorsement.
- 2) Try a variety of sizes and as many cuts as possible before making a final choice.
- 3) Make sure the glove fit is snug on your hands and supports your wrists.
- 4) Choose the cut that feels the most comfortable for you to wear.

Now that you have purchased your gloves it is important for you to know how to look after them correctly. This will ensure that they last much longer and stay in their best possible condition thus helping you to maximise your performance. Most gloves will come with an information leaflet which may have a section devoted to glove care for their product so I

would advise that you read this information and follow it. Failing that you can use the following six step guide whenever you are cleaning your gloves:

STEP ONE

Brush any excess dirt and/or grime off all areas of your glove. You can use your fingers or a non-coarse cloth to clean the gloves being careful not to tear the latex palms.

STEP TWO

Soak your gloves in a basin or sink full of tepid water for about ten minutes with the palms of the gloves facing down but not submerged under the water.

STEP THREE

Take the gloves out of the water and gently squeeze the water out of them. Do not twist the gloves as this compromises the latex grip on the palms and fingers.

STEP FOUR

Rinse your gloves under the tap and repeat Step Three until the water coming out of your gloves runs clear.

STEP FIVE

Place your gloves onto an opened towel on the floor, fold the towel over the gloves and stand on the gloves to squeeze any excess water out of them.

STEP SIX

Once you have completed this your gloves should still feel reasonably moist, if they feel wet then you need to repeat Step Five. Now place your gloves into their protective carry case that would have been purchased with them and store them somewhere that they will not dry out completely [kit bag, wardrobe etc.].

If you are storing them in your kitbag always remove your towel as towels are designed to draw out moisture. Also remember that you should never dry out your gloves completely as this compromises the latex grip on your gloves and makes it become weak and brittle and effectively ruins your gloves.

There's an old saying that any workman is only as good as the tools they use.

So, look after your gloves and they will look after you!