

## **MANIPULATE**

In last week's Gaelic Life article, we discussed my sixth Goalkeeping Principle 'Close The Gap.' It involved the goalkeeper rushing the attacker through on goal with the aim of getting as close to them as they possibly can. This hurries the attacker's decision making and in turn increases the advantage to the goalkeeper.

To increase the goalkeeper's advantage even further, the goalkeeper can combine Principle number sixth with my seventh Goalkeeping Principle which is called 'MANIPULATE.' As the name suggests, this principle involves trying to manipulate the shooter's decision making before they shoot for goal.

Human beings are creatures of habit by their very makeup. This means that first they define their habits and then their habits define them. Whenever we find ourselves in danger or times of stress or duress, our decision making tends to become more impulsive and we use past experience as well as what we have been taught to form a reaction.

The same can be said for an attacker that has been played through one v one with the goalkeeper. Once the goalkeeper rushes the attacker their decision making becomes impulsive and in situations like this for the vast majority of times they will revert to type and perform the first action that presents itself. As a goalkeeper you can use this knowledge to your advantage to Manipulate the attacker's options.

A goalkeeper manipulates the decision making of the shooter, with the purpose of reducing the amount of options the shooter has to choose from. By reducing the shooter's options, in a way, it allows the goalkeeper to somewhat predict which option the shooter will take. If the shooter has limited options to choose from then the goalkeeper will have less options to choose from as well when trying to stop the attacker from scoring. Here are three ways in which a goalkeeper can Manipulate an attacker in a one v one situation:

### **COVER THEIR STRONG SIDE**

As you rush the attacker and if you know which is their preferred shooting side, then rush the attacker more on that side than the other. Your ultimate aim here is to force the attacker onto their weaker side which makes it more difficult for the attacker when shooting but is of course dependent upon the attacker's ability. Be mindful that as you rush the attacker on one side more than the other, it does leave an inviting shot as you show more of one side of the goal than the other. If noticed by the attacker, it may entice them to shoot across you to the far corner so always be ready for this shot.

### **SHOW ONE SIDE OF THE GOAL**

A risky strategy but if practiced and perfected can be a very effective way of setting up the shooter for a save. As the attacker nears the goal with the ball, they will always lift their head to take one last look at the goal before shooting. They take one final look to see where the shooting gap for them is to place their shot. What the goalkeeper can do to give them an advantage in this situation is to take a step to one side to open one side of the goal for the attacker to see.

Once the attacker drops their head to shoot the goalkeeper then steps back in the direction, they just came to close the goal off to the shot. This means the attacker has seen the open goal and will aim for the space you have left, but once they shoot you will have moved back across to close off the goal and be in the optimal position to cover the shot while also being in the optimal position to cover a shot to the opposite corner as well.

### **BE VOCAL**

With the attacker bearing down on goal you can also become vocal to them in a bid to influence their decision making. Calling their name, if known, to distract their attention, calling a side for them to shoot to, taunting them to shoot to a certain side or even taunting them about missing will all increase their mental pressure. When you understand that a one v one situation usually last between 1-3 seconds and both the goalkeeper and attacker's decision making is made in real-time milliseconds, you can appreciate that the slightest increase in distraction/pressure can have a large affect. Being vocal can also be used in conjunction with the previous two methods to maximise their effectiveness and give you the best advantage possible to make the save.

When an attacker is bearing down on goal and you are forced to make decisions in such a short timeframe it can feel rather daunting especially if you have never planned, thought or even practiced what you would do in these situations. The best practice is to meticulously replicate these situations in your training sessions and use/try different methods and approaches to see which feels most comfortable for you to bring into game situations. The most important thing to remember it to keep calm and control your thoughts and indecision causes mistakes. Remember don't hesitate...**MANIPULATE!!**