

Richard has held roles with various elite youth teams and has authored four FIFA-endorsed books. For more info head to [www.pacificsoccer.com.au](http://www.pacificsoccer.com.au)

## GOALKEEPING - CATCHING A HIGH BALL

**G**reat teams will always have a goalkeeper who dominates crosses in his penalty area.

To successfully take possession from any crossed ball the goalkeeper must have good technique, an understanding with his defending players and a great deal of courage.

Technique is most important as it creates a foundation for tactical development.

For crosses the goalkeeper should always position himself in the middle or back third of the goals when facing the ball.

The theory here is that it is much easier to run forward to catch the ball than to run back for it and be out of balance.

Before the goalkeeper makes a move to catch the cross he must get his body in line between the ball and the goal, assess the pace of the ball and anticipate the amount of swerve or dip expected from the kick.

He must be in a position to view players through 180 degrees.

Once the above has been assessed the goalkeeper then must make a decision to go and attack the ball.

The goalkeeper must move late, quickly and take the ball at the highest point.

He should never move before the cross is taken.

If there is any doubt about getting first to the ball the goalkeeper must stay on his line.

When the goalkeeper decides to go he must shout "keeper" so that his team mates stay out of his way.

To give no instruction and run out and and collide with players is a bad mistake as the goal is not defended and the ball is loose.

The crossed ball should be caught at the greatest possible height.

This will be achieved by a one footed take off. With a two footed take off less height is achieved and balance becomes much more difficult.

Before the one footed jump the last step should be extended to lower the centre of gravity with the upper body leaning slightly backwards.

This allows the forward force to be directed vertically.

The arms are outstretched and the catch should be made in front and above the head.

When contact is made the hands should be to the side



and behind the ball with the fingers spread and slightly flexed.

Once the ball has been caught it should be secured as quickly as possible into the body.

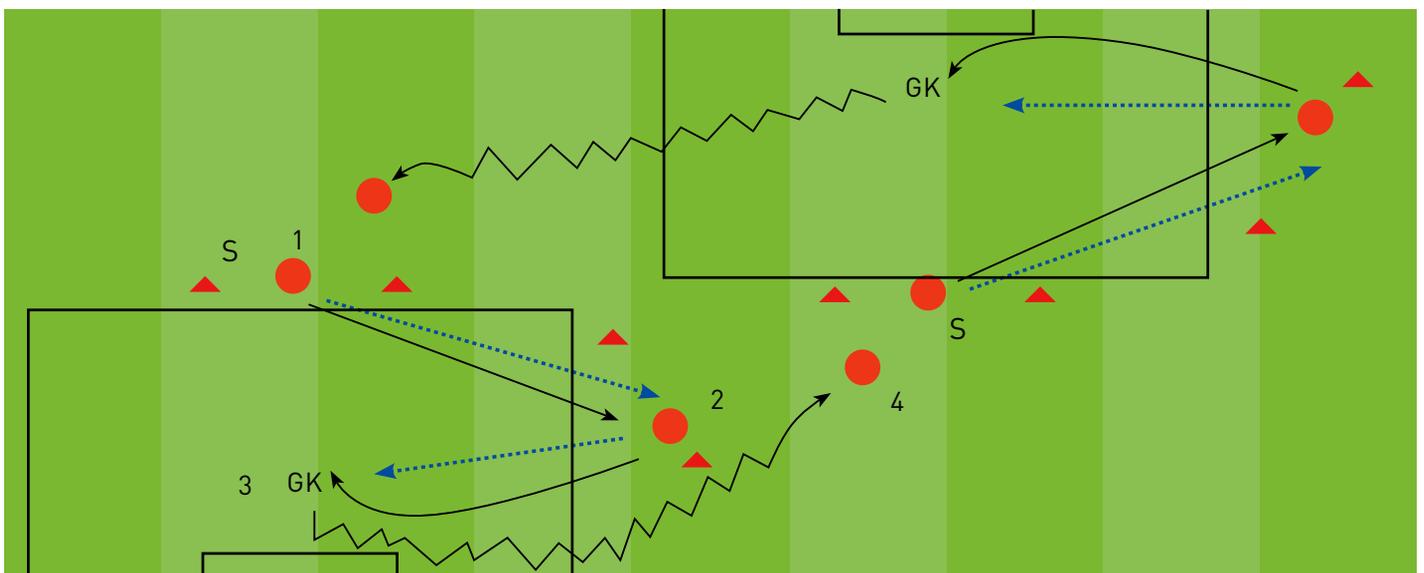
The eyes, until contact is made, are fixed on the ball.

### COMMON FAULTS-CORRECTIONS

1. The last step before the jump is not extended.
2. The crossed ball is not caught at its greatest possible height.
3. The catch is not made in front but behind the head.
4. The eyes, until contact is made, are not fixed on the ball.
5. The position is not in the middle or back third of the goals when facing the ball.
6. The goalkeeper decides to go for the ball and does not shout "keeper".



The following is an example of catching a high ball that I use in coaching sessions for Level 4 goalkeeper students:



The ball is thrown high from goalkeeper 1 for goalkeeper 2 to catch.  
 The ball is then thrown high by goalkeeper 2 into the penalty area for goalkeeper 3 to catch.  
 After the catch goalkeeper 3 dribbles the ball and takes up a position behind goalkeeper 4.  
 The exercise continues from both sides with the goalkeepers rotating positions.

**LEGEND**

- Player.....●
- Coach.....X
- Flag.....▲
- Markers.....▲
- Movement of ball.....→
- Movement in possession.....→
- Shot at goal.....→
- Start of exercise.....S
- Movement not in possession.....- - - - ->