

# Goalkeeping Edition 73

Welcome to the Goalkeeping Newsletter. The subject that I get the second most emails about is punting (by far the subject with the most questions is communication). Unfortunately, I have never been very effective teaching people how to punt so I believe we are fortunate that one of the subscribers has offered to share his views on how to teach punting.

Don Williams is the keeper coach for the Bay Area Seals of the A-League and is also a nationally licensed coach. Below is his contribution. Thanks Don

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This is a subject I get asked allot about and one which keeper coaches have many different opinions about.

If you watch professional keepers, you will see many varying styles of punting. One keeper will whip his leg around from the side, another will drop the ball two handed, another will drop the ball with the hand on their same side as the foot they kick with.

After much observation and experimentation, I have found that if we follow the same rules for punting, as when we teach field players how to strike a long ball, that keepers get the most consistent results. Let's review these rules:

1. A long last step is crucial. Observe that when a player takes a long last step when striking a ball, that the kicking leg automatically cocks fully back before striking the ball and therefore the player gets a maximum full swing of the leg.
2. The kicking foot must remain pointed down and the ankle firmly locked out throughout the strike and the follow through.
3. The kicker should strike the ball with enough force as so to lift the plant foot off the ground.
3. The hand opposite the kicking leg should extend out in front of the ball. For a keeper punting, this means that the ball should be released with the hand opposite the kicking foot. Again although you will see varying styles among professional players, when teaching youth players, releasing the ball with the left hand when kicking right footed, follows the natural way our body works when kicking a soccer ball over distance off the ground. I believe that if we teach one style of kicking off the ground and then can carry this over to punting, that keepers will catch on quicker.

Lastly, I would like to address the release point. I teach that the lower the release point, the easier it is to strike the ball cleanly. I teach keepers to drop the ball about knee height. Young keepers will often want to toss the ball up. Teach them to drop it instead and they will have more success early on.

Keepers need to practice punting allot in order to achieve success. I have my youth keepers punt into the net every session after warm-ups and stretching as part of their daily routine.

One last note about punting. The great Frans Hoek, formerly of Barcelona and Ajax. told me that Edwin Van Der Sar of Holland punts only 1 1/2 time per game on average. This is because many times a punt becomes a 50 /50 ball. We need to not only teach our keepers how to punt, but when to punt.

Thank you to Lawrence for allowing me to share with all his subscribers.

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Have a great day

Lawrence

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