

**CRAWLEY TOWN**

**Richie Barker**  
**Crossing for keepers**

**Overview:**

This is a session for goalkeepers that coaches them in the basics of anticipating crosses and dominating their area. Having a trustworthy, proficient keeper positively influences the mindsets and playing abilities of all players in front of him, so this is a vital position in any team. Against Oldham Athletic this season, we asked our keeper to put himself in a more advanced position than normal given that we were dealing with a tall opposition striker. His actions relieved the pressure on our centre-backs.

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**CROSSING FOR KEEPERS**

**SET-UP**

**AREA**

95x40 yards

**EQUIPMENT**

Balls, cones, goals

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS**

Up to 5v5 plus keepers

**SESSION TIME**

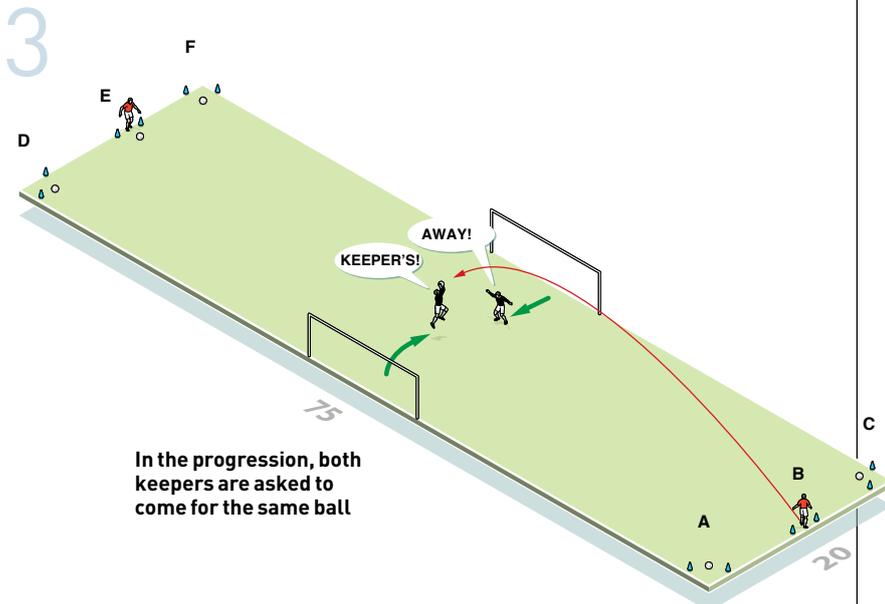
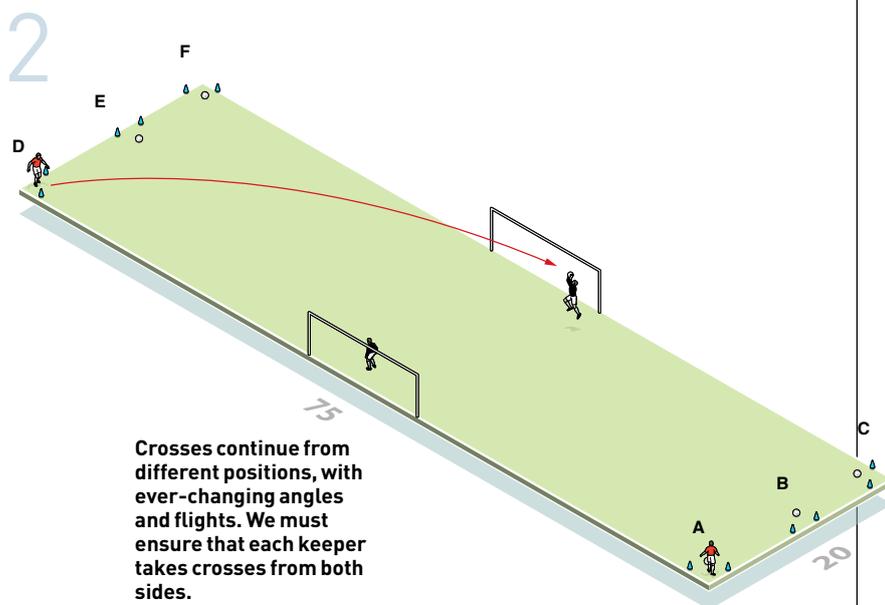
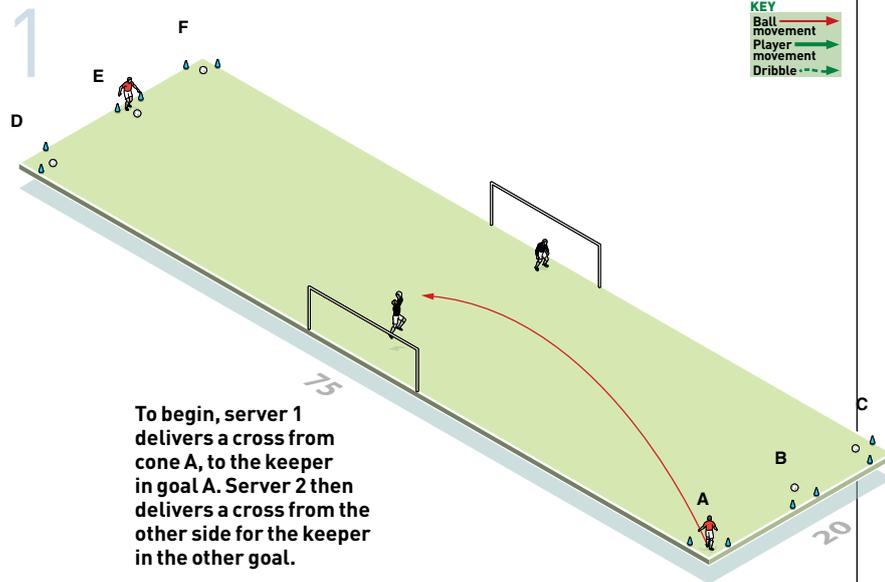
Session 25mins, development 20mins, game 15mins

**What do I get the players to do?**

We begin with a basic crossing set-up, as shown, with a goal placed centrally on each 75-yard line. Crosses from each side are delivered from any of three points on the 20-yard touchline (1/2), and should be hung in the air giving the keeper time to assess and adjust the flight of the ball.

**How do I progress the session?**

In the first progression, when a keeper catches a cross from one server he must throw the ball out to the other. Next, only serve from one side with both keepers challenging for the same ball (3). Now both have a decision to make - do they come to catch the cross, or call 'away'? Also vary the crosses, from high balls to low centres. Finally, add attackers so crosses are opposed (4).



**KEY**  
 Ball movement →  
 Player movement →  
 Dribble →



**Richie Barker  
CRAWLEYTOWN**

In the 2012/13 season Richie Barker steered Crawley Town to their highest ever league finish – 10th in npower League One. The 38-year-old manager joined the ambitious Sussex club after a successful stint at Bury, for whom he had achieved promotion from League Two. Indeed, he had risen up through the ranks at Gigg Lane, from youth team manager to caretaker boss.

As a player, Barker turned out for a number of clubs – most notably Brighton & Hove Albion, Macclesfield Town, Rotherham United, Mansfield Town and Hartlepool United, and scored 123 career goals.

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**CROSSING FOR KEEPERS**

**What are the key things to look out for?**

The keeper needs to be facing the ball with his weight centred, ready to take off. Next, how far from goal does he start? Is he able to get to crosses 6-9 yards from goal, or could the crosser potentially score directly from a cross?

Feet should be adjusted as soon as he has assessed the flight of ball, and discourage big strides because these can be awkward to adjust.

The keeper should catch the ball at a high point, looking to prevent an attacker from getting in front of him.

Good communication is key also, and if staying ‘at home’, he’ll need to get back into a good position to prepare for a potential shot.

**How do I put this into a game situation?**

Set up as shown, 3v3 in the middle with both teams having a player in the attacking half of each wide area. He is two-touch to encourage quick and frequent crosses, and teams can only score from a ball that goes out to the wide areas (5).

The small-sided game brings in the use of defenders and aids communication skills (6), as well as cementing other practised elements. ■

