

**SUNDERLAND**  
**Gus Poyet**  
**Clever  
keeper  
distribution**

**Overview:**

This session is about keeper distribution and retaining possession by building play from the back. It mimics short passes to centre-backs and midfield players, low driven and chipped passes to full-backs and wide midfielders, and longer passes to centre-forwards and wide attackers (through half-volleys and volleys).

At Sunderland, the keeper is deemed to have a major involvement in the style of football we try to play, so practices directly involving him in team attacks are very important. While prompting outfield movement, the session quickly improves the keeper's technical skill, widens his range of passing ability, improves awareness and lessens the risk of him losing possession. We'll rotate keepers throughout the session.

**CLEVER KEEPER DISTRIBUTION**

**SET-UP**

**AREA**

¾ of a pitch

**EQUIPMENT**

Balls, cones, poles, variety of goals

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS**

3

**SESSION TIME**

Each drill 15mins,  
Progression 10mins,  
Game 20mins

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

**Small goals practice**

We set up as shown (1) and begin with a pass into keeper 1. The practice is maximum three touches and the ball cannot touch a mannequin or the practice is restarted.

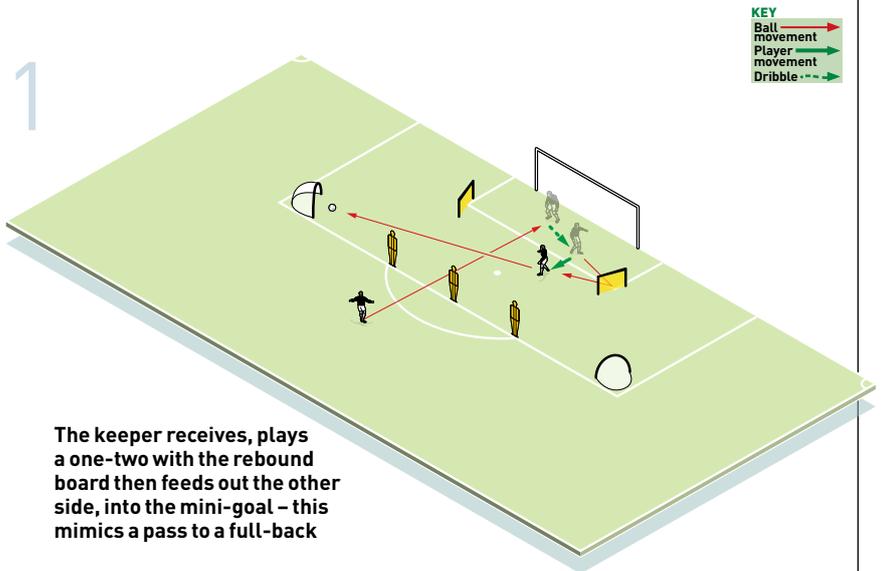
The keeper plays a one-two with the first rebound board, then passes into the small goal in the far corner of the 18-yard box. We now repeat this process six times ensuring the keeper switches between left and right sides (thus left and right feet).

**How do I progress the session?**

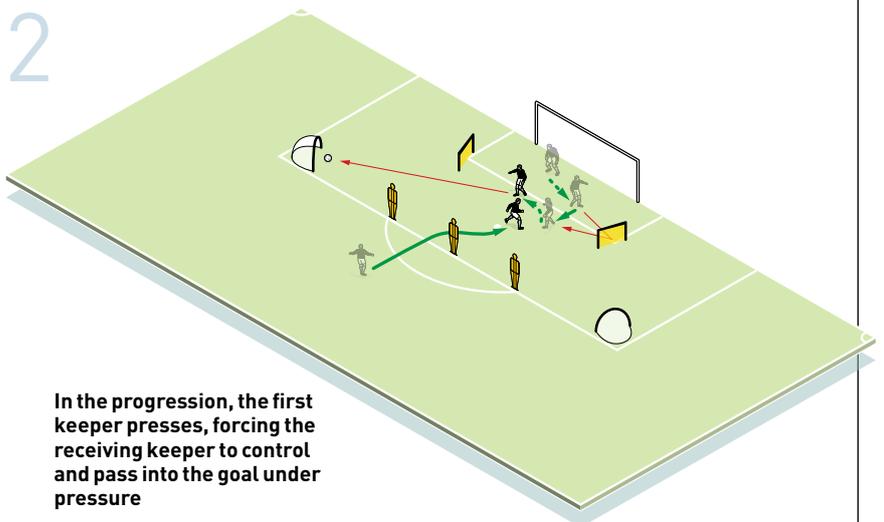
To progress we'll ask keeper 2 to press the receiving keeper after the one-two with the rebound board (2). Keeper 1 must still look to find space to pass into the small goal.

**Five-a-side goals practice**

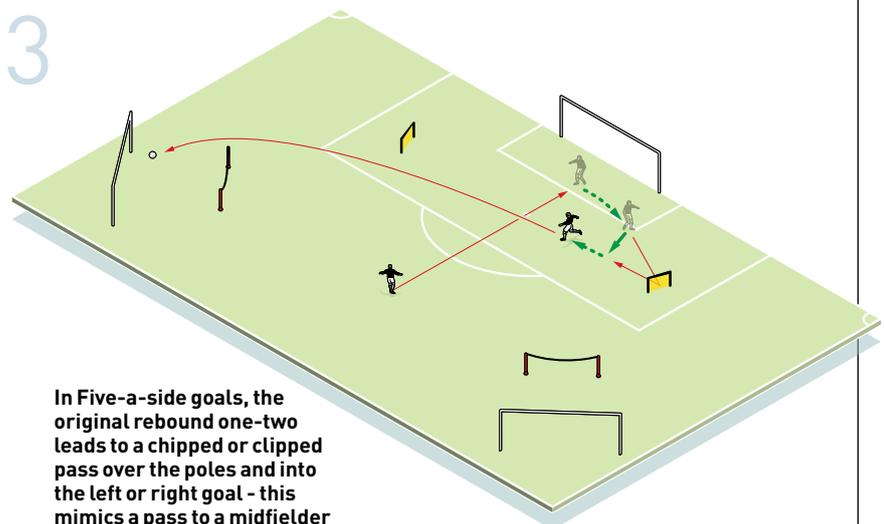
Now we change the set-up (3). The receiving keeper plays a one-two with the rebound board, then chips or clips a pass over the poles and into the half-size goal.



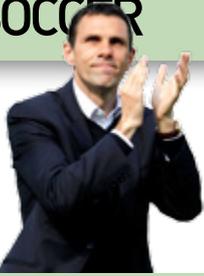
The keeper receives, plays a one-two with the rebound board then feeds out the other side, into the mini-goal – this mimics a pass to a full-back



In the progression, the first keeper presses, forcing the receiving keeper to control and pass into the goal under pressure



In Five-a-side goals, the original rebound one-two leads to a chipped or clipped pass over the poles and into the left or right goal - this mimics a pass to a midfielder or winger



**Gus Poyet**  
**SUNDERLAND**

Gus Poyet is first-team manager of Sunderland, and oversaw his side's incredible run of form towards the tail end of the 2013/14 campaign that meant the Mackems retained their Barclays Premier League status.

The club had already made it to the Capital One Cup final, where they led Manchester City for 45 minutes, but in the closing month of the season saw off Chelsea, Cardiff City, Manchester United and West Brom to justify the board's decision to bring the former Brighton & Hove Albion manager into the club in October 2013.

Poyet, a midfielder, arrived in England in 1997 with Chelsea, before moving on to Tottenham Hotspur in 2001. He'd previously played for Grenoble, River Plate and Real Zaragoza, and in total made 26 appearances for Uruguay.

“The most common fault is over-hitting passes (either too hard or too high), and panicking under pressure.”

**CLEVER KEEPER DISTRIBUTION**

Again, repeat on both sides (4).

**Three-quarters pitch**

Bringing in a third keeper, the one-two with the rebound board leads to the ball being chipped to keeper 3, who is positioned the other side of the poles. This keeper dribbles down the line and sends over a cross that the working keeper has to catch (5a).

He now moves to the edge of the penalty box, rolls the ball out onto the floor, then distributes by using a side volley/half volley into the full goal, which is positioned beyond halfway (5b).

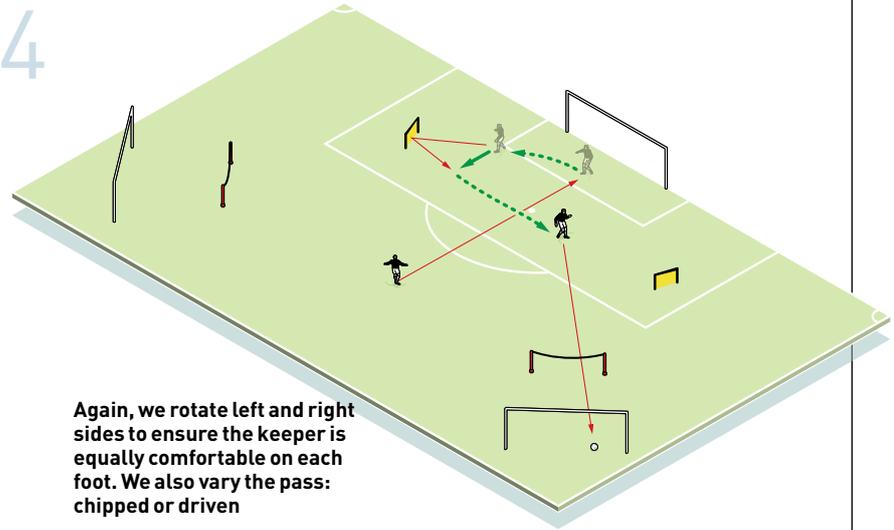
**How do I progress the session?**

Adding in extra interplay is a good way of progressing, and we'll also limit the time and touches for keeper 1.

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

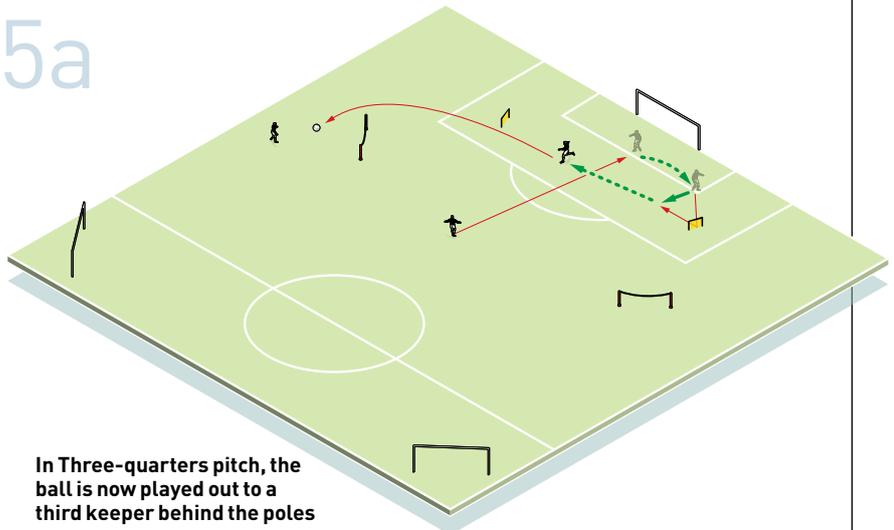
The keeper must remain calm and composed in possession of the ball at all times, even when being closed down – this can be practised in a small-sided game situation with the keeper conditioned to using his feet as much as possible and involved in building play from the back. Weight and accuracy of pass – in receiving and feeding out – are imperative, as is good playing technique. The most common fault is over-hitting passes (either too hard or too high), and panicking under pressure. ■

4



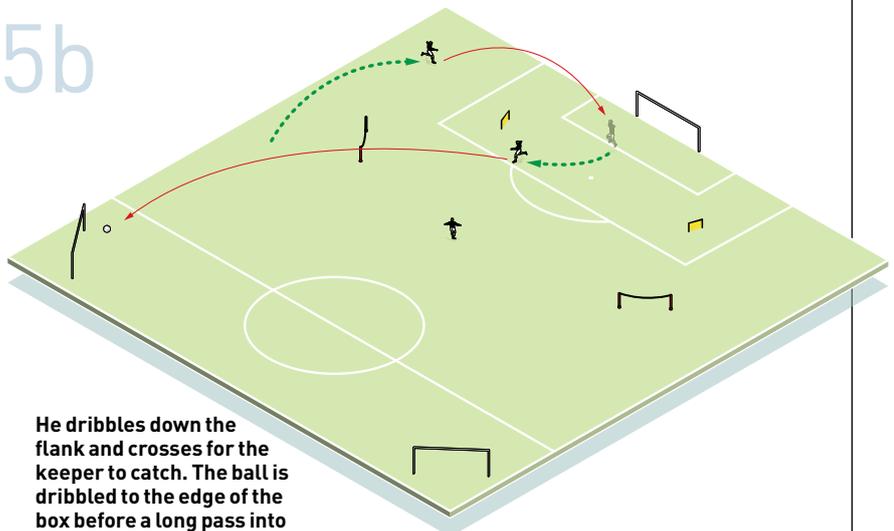
Again, we rotate left and right sides to ensure the keeper is equally comfortable on each foot. We also vary the pass: chipped or driven

5a



In Three-quarters pitch, the ball is now played out to a third keeper behind the poles

5b



He dribbles down the flank and crosses for the keeper to catch. The ball is dribbled to the edge of the box before a long pass into the full-sized goal – this mimics a long pass to an attacker

**KEY**  
Ball movement →  
Player movement —  
Dribble - - -