



# International Goalkeepers Academy

## Technical Tip # 17

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### BODY LANGUAGE

One of the most important attributes that all great goalkeepers have is good body language, which instantly portrays the confidence they have in themselves, and inspires confidence in their teammates. This body language and the ability to control our emotions is an important asset as it not only inspires teammates, but is obvious to opposition teams and also to selectors and scouts who may be looking to identify keepers for representative teams or clubs looking to recruit a good keeper.

On the other hand many keepers display poor body language that shows their lack of confidence and control of their emotion which undermines the confidence of their team.

We have all seen the confidence displayed in different sports by the top players and this confidence is built by the belief they have in themselves to compete at the highest level. This confidence is not developed just by luck and natural ability, it is shaped by the foundation work they have completed and the training programs that they have followed to reach the level at which they are competing.

Players who try to assume the confident body language without putting in the hard yards required to build their game are soon exposed as you must be able to back up the confident walk by developing your all round skills. There are no short cuts to the top and we must ensure that we improve all levels of our game to reach our maximum potential.

Poor body language is an area that can be coached if the keeper understands just how badly it can affect their career opportunities. I have witnessed many incidents where keepers have reacted badly to an on field incident and abused teammates, coaches, referees and spectators with academy award winning performances. Many sportsmen do this but keepers seem to develop a unique ability to carry out this process with regular monotony often with causing ongoing problems to their career.

Let's take a look at some of the problems this behavior causes and then concentrate on controlling our emotions and developing good body language that will enhance our career opportunities.

The keeper who reacts badly to an on field situation usually loses concentration and is not focused on their job which of course may then magnify the problem. If more mistakes are made this undermines the keepers confidence in themselves and this may continue throughout the game and contribute to a form slump and possibly being dropped for future matches.

A teammate who has just been abused may not be cooperative in listening to directions from the keeper thus affecting the team's ability to play to their maximum potential. The keeper cannot

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afford to alienate teammates, a good defense that the keeper can organise and who listen to instructions from the back will concede fewer goals and compliment the keeper's ability.

A coach who has a self-destructing keeper who disrupts the team through reacting badly under pressure and obviously lacks confidence will soon be looking for a replacement.

The opposition team will sledge keepers who overreact, and the opposition coach may instruct them to do so if they feel that they can upset your game. The problem becomes worse if you develop a reputation as a dummy spitter as the next time they may try and provoke you from the start of the match as they endeavor to put you off your game.

The referee who is abused by a keeper may not only give you a card at the time but relay his knowledge of your behavior to other referees who will be on the lookout for any further infraction in future games.

Spectators can contribute to undermining your confidence by sledging throughout the game in progress and future games, again contributing to the problem.

Club committees are very much aware of player's behavior that can affect the club and any sponsorship agreements in place and may either cancel or not renew a contract because of poor behavior.

Finally, selectors often do not consider players for representative teams when they feel that either the player's bad behavior or lack of confidence may affect the player's performance.

I have seen keepers have great matches where they literally saved the team from defeat but reacted badly to a decision or goal against them and their outburst was all that was remembered after the match.

This type of reputation is easy to acquire and hard to live down we must develop strong body language which indicates self-confidence and control our emotions at all times if we are going to reach our full potential.

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