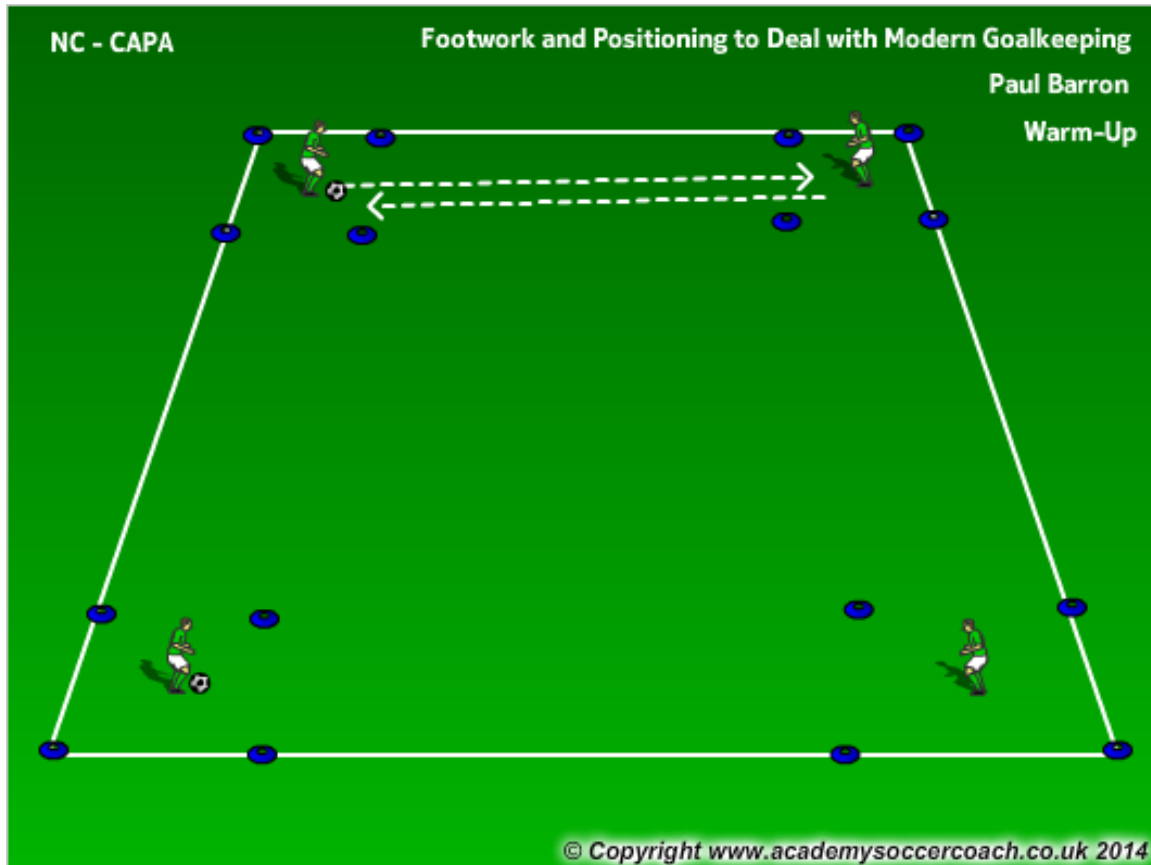


Footwork and Positioning to deal with Modern Football – Paul Barron

Being a former goalkeeper, and having done my share of goalkeeper coaching, it was with great interest that I sat down to watch Paul Barron's field session on modern goalkeeping. Especially as the subheading of his session was, "The myth of narrowing the angle". I must say I was very intrigued by that and was interested to hear what he was going to say about that.

Paul started out with the following exercise:



Goalkeepers play one and two touch passes between each other. If playing with 2 touches, must move the ball to the side (acting like it's away from a defender) before passing with the 2nd.

Progress to volleys from the hands.
Half-volleys after that

Variations

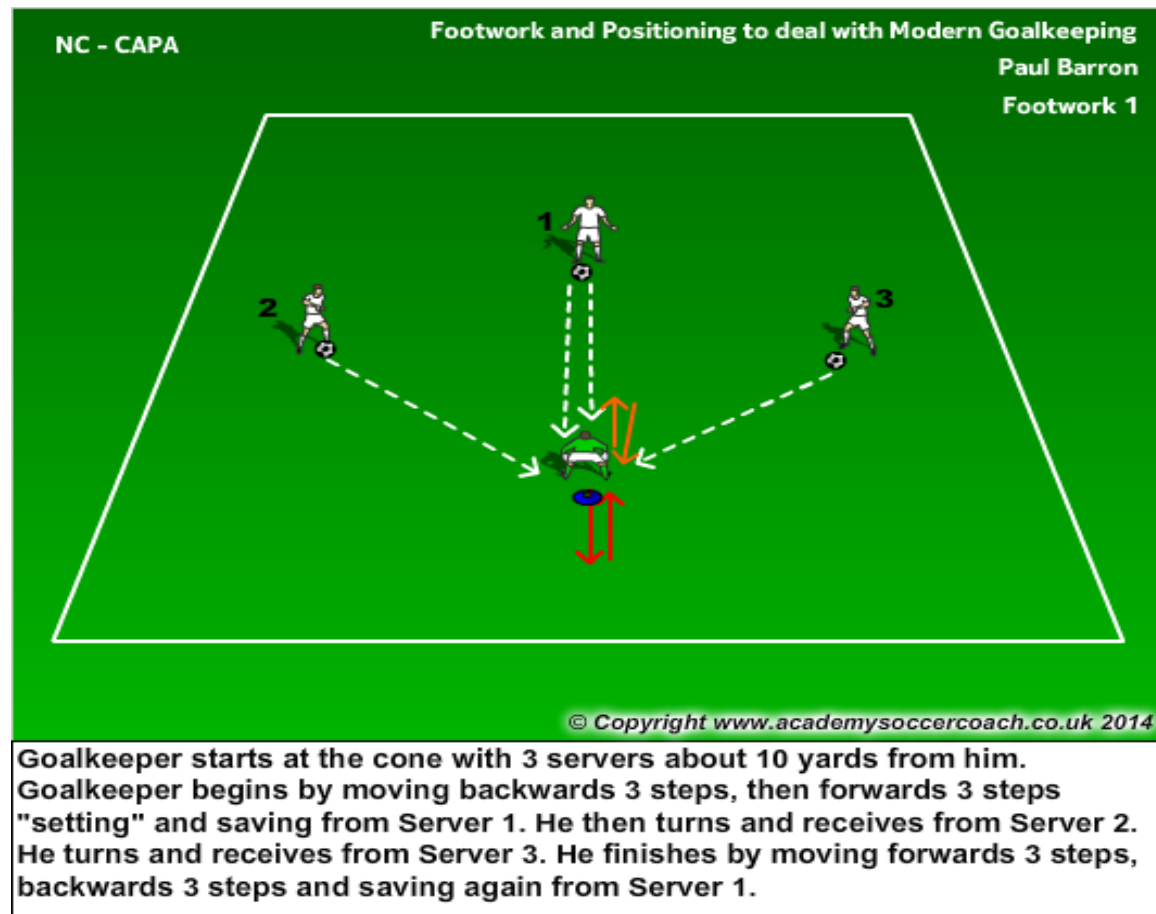
- Put all 4 goalkeepers in the same box. Have them play Table Tennis style taking alternate shots/passes.

A very easy and simple warm-up which worked the first touch and passing of the goalkeeper in being able to deal with “backpasses” over 10 yards. He then progressed to volleys and half-volleys from the hands. In order to make the exercises competitive, he had them play against each other. The game was 1st to 10 passes wins but if they needed to leave their square in order to play the pass, they had to start again at 0. Another way that he added competition was to simply have them play against their partner. When volleying, if they could make their partner drop the ball, they scored a point. They would play first to 3. Paul encouraged them to play within “the spirit of the game” and play in way that gave each other a chance to catch the ball even if they wanted to score points against one another.

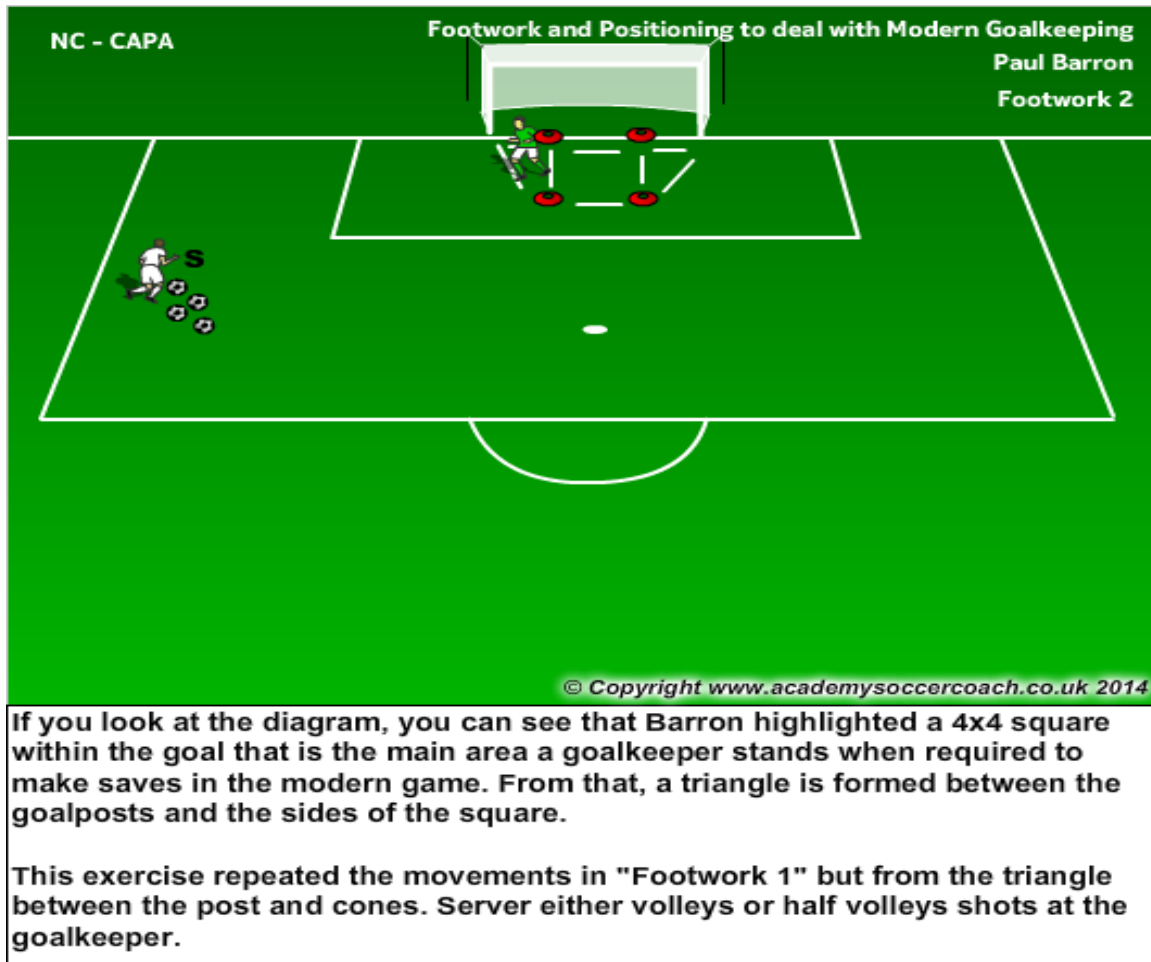
It was during this game that Barron also began to build pressure verbally. He made the point that as a goalkeeper, you have to be able to withstand pressure and maintain concentration. Building pressure verbally allowed them to begin to experience that. He would say things such as “Don’t be the one that makes a mistake”, “The pressure’s building” etc. At this point, one of the goalkeepers dropped the ball.

Barron’s next point was to talk about the drop and how it has the ability to affect a goalkeeper’s confidence. In order to avoid that, he suggested a cue that could be used to get rid of the mistake. One example he mentioned was brushing gloves together to signify that you are “brushing the mistake off”. It was an interesting idea and one that I hadn’t seen before. He also mentioned that, while he was talking, the goalkeepers should “dim their headlights”. He then explained that this was a reference to their concentration levels. He said that concentrating for 90 minutes is too difficult and so keepers should think of their concentration levels as a set of headlights. There would be times when they have their headlights turned off completely, times when they are dimmed, times when they are regular and times when they are on high beam. Recognising situations where they could do each would prove beneficial to them in the future.

The next exercise he had planned was one that would begin to test the goalkeeper’s footwork and handling. The exercise can be seen below. Within the exercise, the goalkeepers are expected to move their feet quickly and into a position where they can make the catch/save. Barron spoke of how training needs to be as game realistic as possible and stated that there are many times within a game that a goalkeeper is moving backwards before getting set to make a save. As he rightly pointed out, that is very rarely worked on so this drill allowed that to happen.



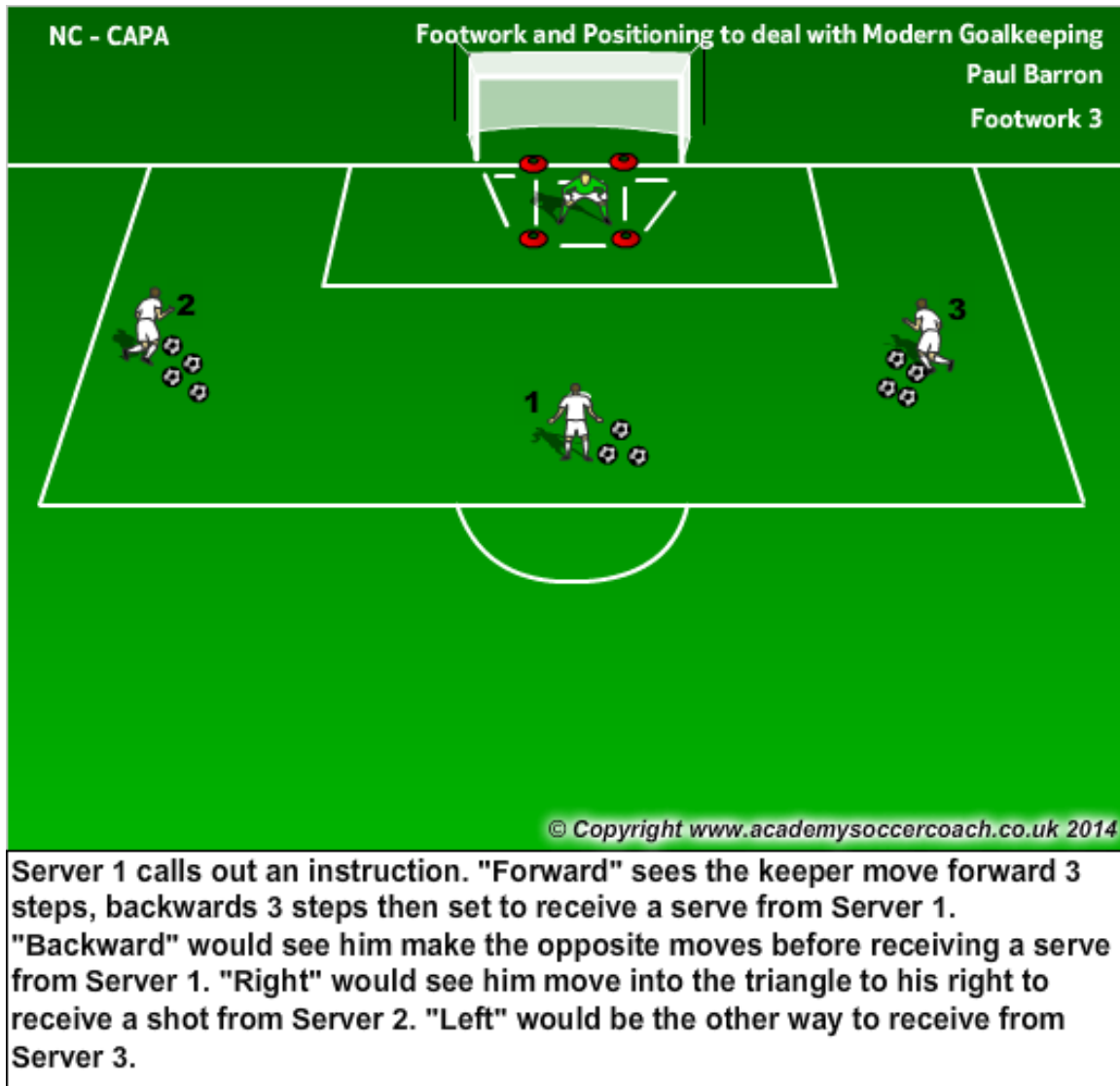
After this exercise, Barron moved into the goal to work on similar movements but with the goalkeeper now being more conscious of the goal behind him and keeping the ball out of the net. The exercise can be seen below:



Another important technical point was highlighted from this exercise. One of the goalkeepers kept moving his hands behind his body so Barron gave him a ball to hold in front of himself. As Barron volleyed the ball, the keeper dropped the ball he was holding and caught the one that Barron shot. The act of holding the ball meant that the keeper didn't have time to take his hands behind his body before catching the ball served. Barron used the quote **"See your hands. See the ball. Catch the ball"** to describe what he wanted to goalkeeper to do.

The next exercise used the same space on the field but required more movement from the goalkeeper. The exercise returned to having 3 servers. Now, Barron controlled the movement of the keeper. If he would shout "Forward", the keeper would move forward 3 steps, backwards 3 steps then make the catch. If he shouted "Backward", the keeper would move backwards 3 steps, forwards 3 steps and then make the catch. "Left" meant the keeper moved into the left triangle. "Right" meant he moved into the right triangle.

The exercise is found below:

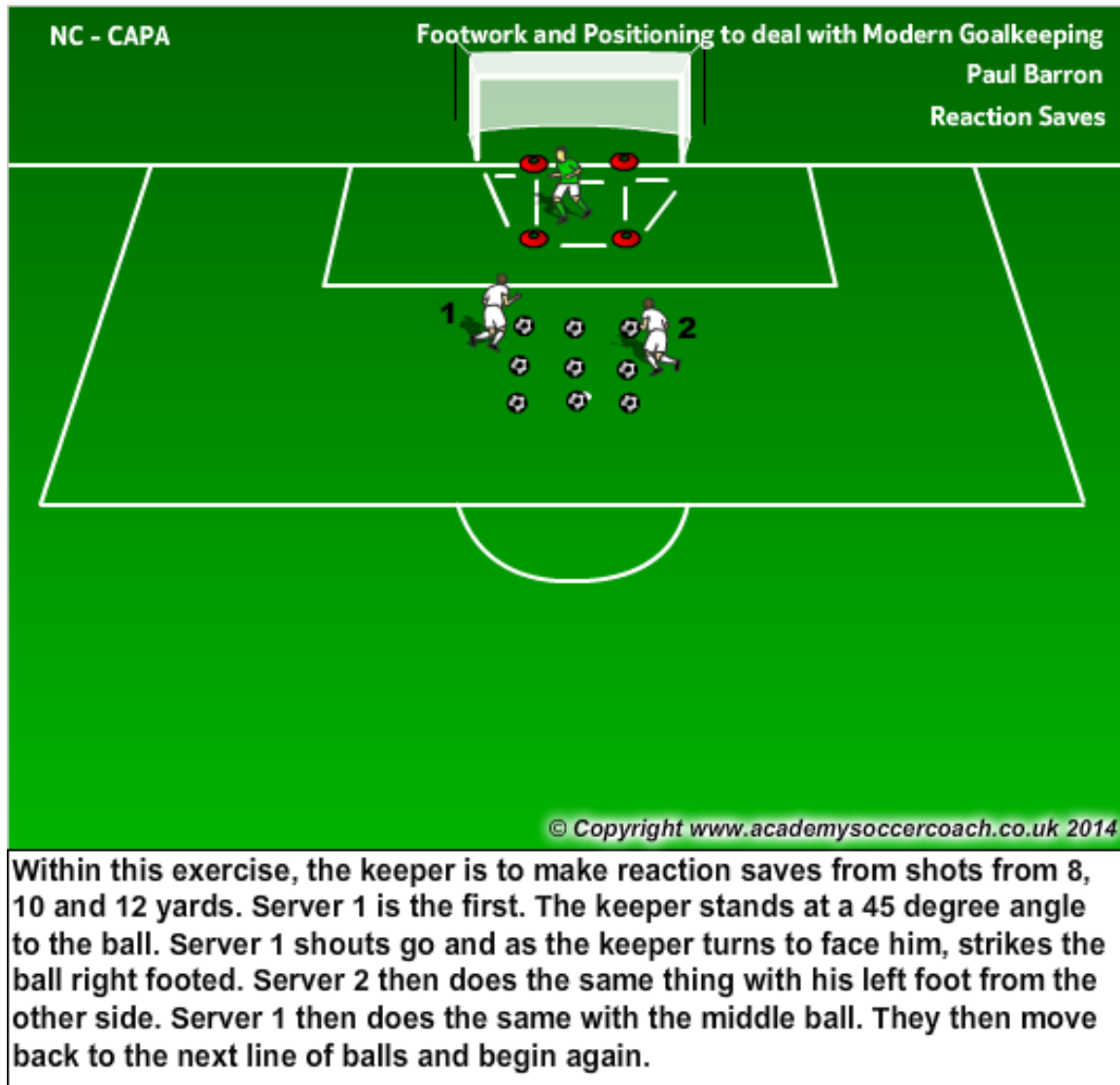


During this drill, Barron gave more technical points that he wanted the goalkeepers to focus on. The most important of these technical points was the one that he made to the keeper about moving to position within the triangle. Rather than cut the corner, he wanted the keeper to get into position before narrowing the angle. He used the phrase **"Get in line. Then move up the line if you can"**. Another keeper was a little unbalanced so he used the phrase **"Nose over toes"** to focus the goalkeeper on maintaining good balance. Another would catch the ball away from his body before dropping it and catching it in the basket position. Barron made the point that he shouldn't **"catch and recatch. Only catch the ball once."** As players are no longer allowed to barge goalkeepers once they have possession of the ball, the need to secure it at their chest is not as important as it once was.

The final exercise Barron did was one that focused on how most goals are scored in modern football, from an area where most goals are scored. This meant that the

keepers were facing 9, 1 touch finishes from 8, 10 and 12 yards out. They were then to react and make the saves they needed to to keep the ball out of the net.

The exercise can be found below:



Again, Barron was forthcoming with important technical points highlighting that the goalkeeper must keep their weight forward over their toes. Once they begin to lean back, when they make the save, the ball is parried into areas that are easier to score from for players following up. With their weight forward, parries and deflections are usually sent away from the goal to a safer area.

Overall, Paul Barron's session was excellent. It was a little disappointing that he didn't really explain what he meant by the myth of narrowing the angle but it was alluded to when he spoke of dominating the 4 yard square in the middle of the goal. He mentioned numerous times that if you can stop goals being scored in that 4 yard

square, you would be a very good goalkeeper. Obviously this is not the only part of being a goalkeeper, and there are many more aspects that are required within the modern game but if a keeper can master this, they have a much better chance of being successful than if they don't.