

Managing the expectations of young Goalkeepers

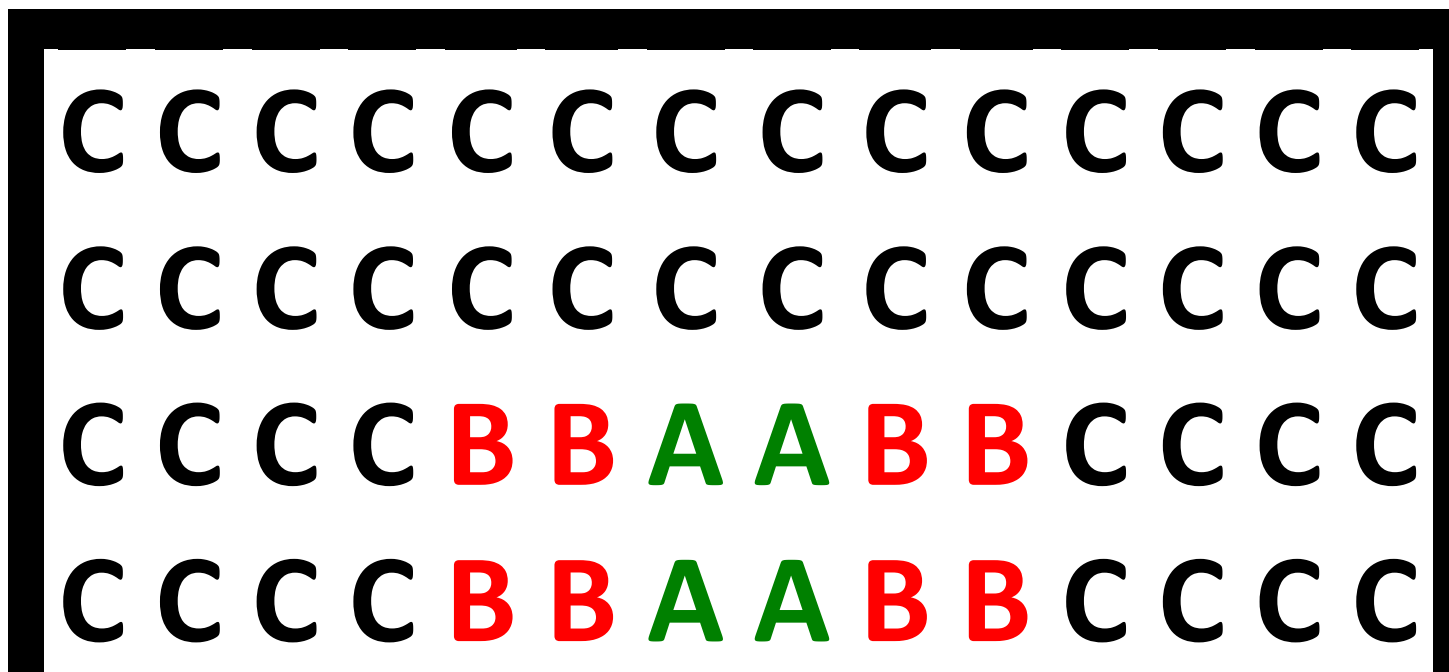
As young goalkeepers develop, it is vital that they are provided with opportunities to train and play in a learning environment without any pressure upon their performance. Unfortunately, too often young keepers face criticism and even ridicule when goals are conceded. This criticism comes from coaches, players and parents alike.

However, the reality is that in most cases the size of the goal is far too big for the child to effectively protect.

This document is designed to provide more realistic expectations of young goalkeepers; clear visual reference points are given in order to allow coaches, and others, to accurately assess the areas within the goal where saves should be made. By using the correct age group guide, a coach can empower the goalkeeper to identify during games in which area of the goal they have conceded goals, and understand whether a save could have or should have been made.

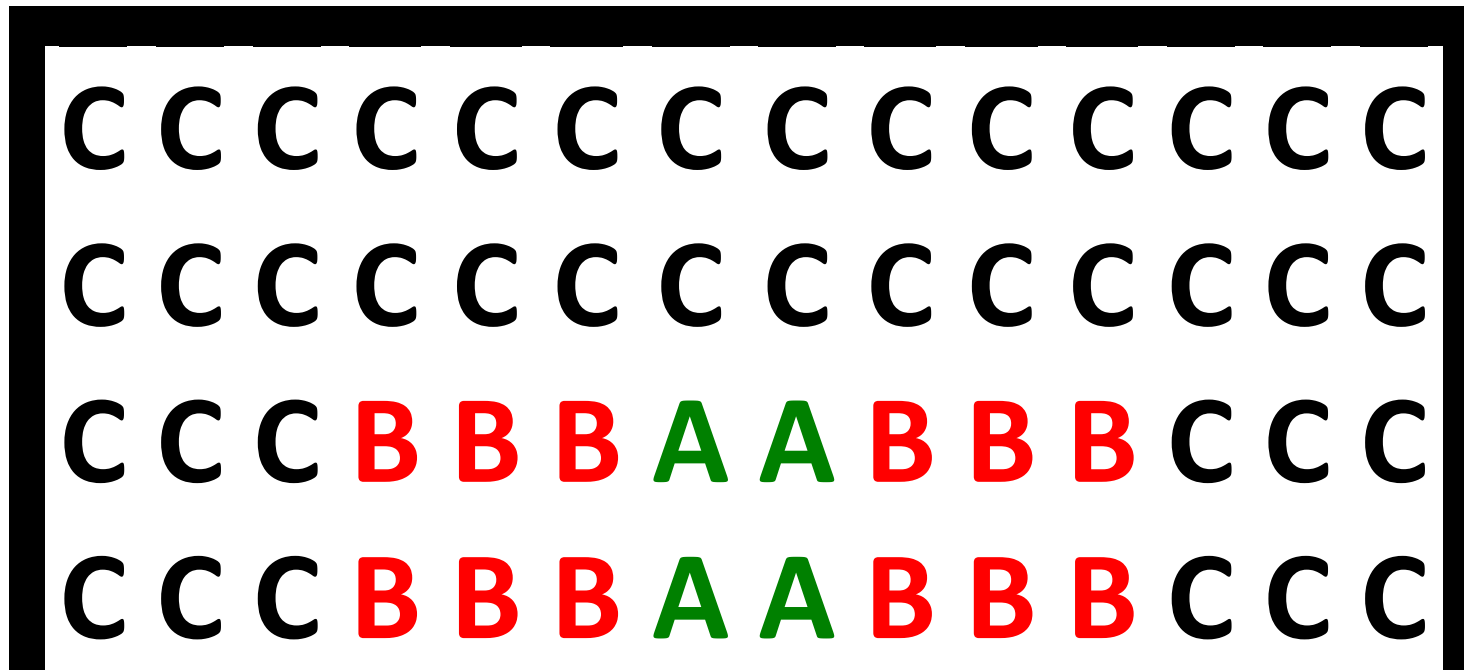
Example: an U12 team has lost 4-1. Team-mates and parents alike may blame the goalkeeper for conceding four goals. But using this guide, it is identified that three of the goals were conceded in area C, so in the mind of that young goalkeeper the score would really be 1-1. Additionally, the keeper may have made a great save in area B which the Coach can highlight, and therefore have a positive psychological effect on that young goalkeeper.

Goalkeepers 6 – 8 Years old



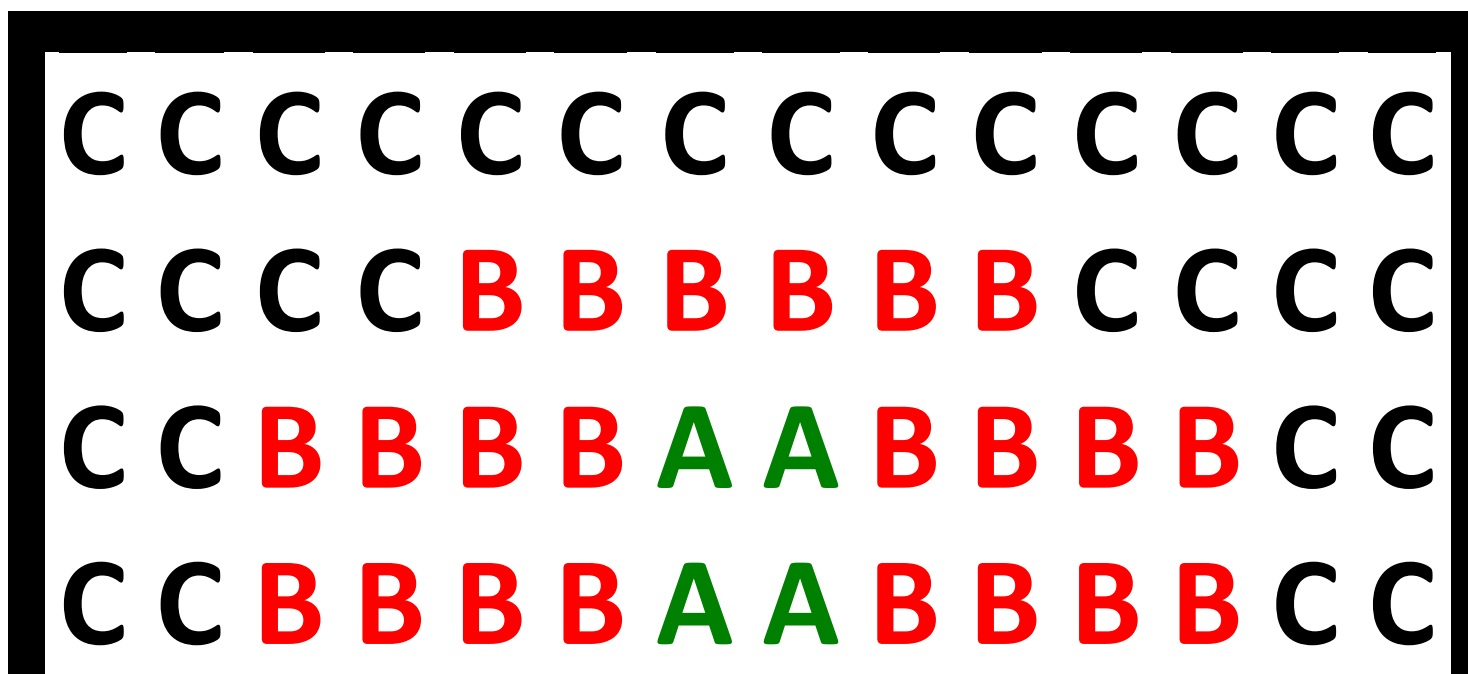
At this age, the goalkeeper should demonstrate the ability to make saves in area **A** and some saves in area **B** with improving technique and motor skills. No expectation for attempts or saves in area C.

Goalkeepers 8-10 Years old



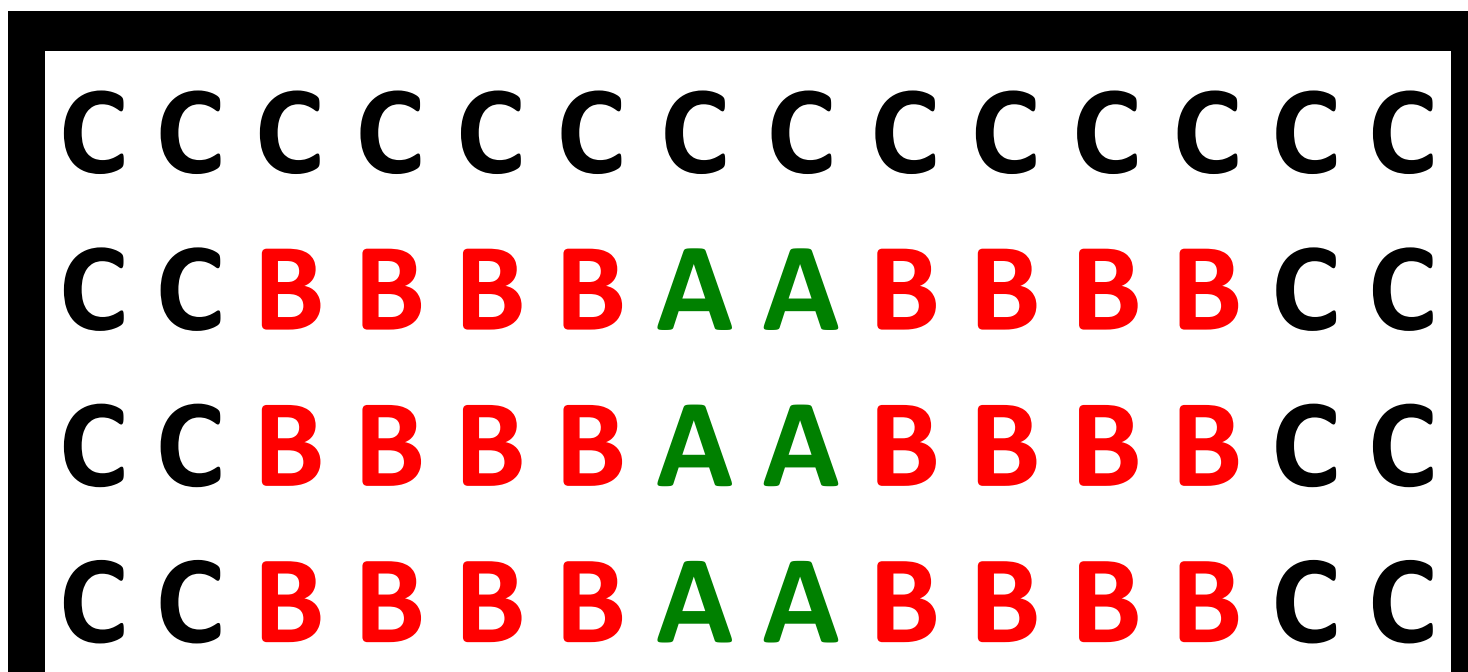
At this age, the goalkeeper should make technically correct saves in area **A**, and be successful with some saves in area **B** with improving technique and good motor skills, leading with the hands, taking off the correct foot, etc. No expectation for attempts or saves in area C.

Goalkeepers 10-12 Years old



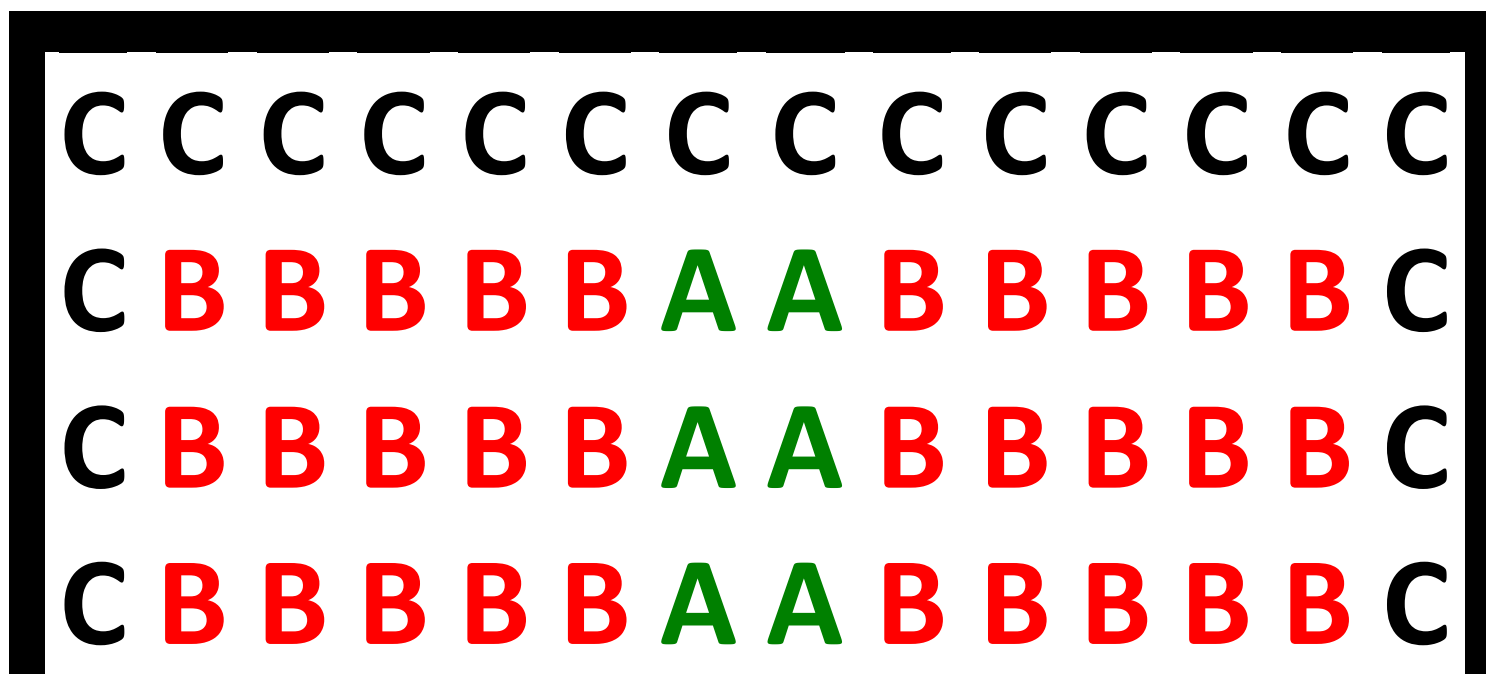
At this age, the goalkeeper should consistently make saves in area **A**, with a good success rate of clean saves in area **B**, with technique, good motor skills and leading with the hands. Goalkeeper should now be stepping into the save. No expectation for saves in area C.

Goalkeepers 12-14 Years old



At this age, the goalkeeper must be consistent in making saves in area **A**. The keeper should aim for more clean saves in area **B**, demonstrating good technique and good motor skills, leading with the hands, and stepping into the saves. Improved agility and quick feet will even lead to occasional successful saves in area C. However, saves in Area C are not to be expected.

Goalkeepers 14-16 Years old



At this age, the goalkeeper must make saves in **A**. The Goalkeeper should aim for more saves in area **B**, by demonstrating a good level of game sense and a high level of technique. Also, good motor skills, leading with the hands, and stepping into the save. Identified Goalkeepers (NTC/AIS) would at times be able to make match-winning saves in Area C.

Goalkeepers 16-18 Years old



At this age, the goalkeeper must be consistent in making saves in **A**. Saves in area **B**, should be successful with sound technique and good motor skills, including double-stepping and power-step into save. The accomplished keeper makes hard saves look easy at this age, demonstrating excellent game sense and positioning in relation to the ball.

Do not expect a goalkeeper to make saves they are not physically capable of making.