

**Ron DeMarse:** Welcome to the Six-Yard Box, a podcast dedicated to the art, the craft, the science and the study of goalkeeping in the beautiful game. This show is designed for players and coaches of all skill levels and all ages. Anyone who wants to be a better goalkeeper, or better understand the position. Each week, we bring you the keepers who are where you want to be, as well as the experts and the coaches who can help you get there. Whether you call it football or soccer, we'll help you keep it out of the net. Thanks so much for joining me. My name's Ron DeMarse.

I'm really excited to be here today, and to be recording this. This is something I started thinking about over a year ago, and I've been actively working on it for the past few months. And I'm thrilled that it's finally coming together.

So I said it in the opening - the musical ... thing in the beginning. But I don't want to gloss over this. Thank you. Sincerely. Thank you for listening. Thank you for taking the time to check this out. I know there are a million other things you could be doing, and I promise to never lose track of that. I promise to always strive to make this something that's worth your time and your attention. And I really appreciate that you've decided to tune in.

I'm flying solo today, for Episode One, but I will not make that a habit. In fact, it's my intention to never do this again. And we'll get into why in a minute. But moving forward, each show will feature one - or possibly more, I guess. But at least one featured guest.

But for today, it's just me. And that's because I want to use this first episode to sort of lay out the purpose and the direction of the show. And also to invite you to help shape it. After listening to this, if it seems like something that you find interesting, or that you think could be beneficial to coaches and to aspiring goalkeepers, I would love to hear from you. I'd love for you to be involved in making it successful.

And I don't just mean successful in terms of finding an audience - although, that's obviously important. I mean 'successful' in doing the things that it sets out to do. Inspiring and teaching goalkeepers. Helping coaches to better develop and train and integrate their keepers into the team. And I welcome your feedback on those things. Please don't be shy about telling me what's working - what you like about the show. And also what's not working. Or what could be better. Or subjects and discussions that you think we should cover. Guests that you think I should feature.

I'll mention this probably a few times today. But we have a companion website for the show over at [6ydbox.com](http://6ydbox.com). And if you go to [6ydbox.com/survey](http://6ydbox.com/survey), I intend to leave a permanent survey up there. So you can send me your thoughts and suggestions and criticisms. And I promise to read every word.

**Ron:** Now before we get into the format of the show, it's probably important for me to introduce myself. My name is Ron DeMarse. And by trade, I am a professor of broadcasting. I teach college students, mostly the behind-the-scenes aspects of broadcasting. As a student, I attended Iowa State University, and was part of the highly esteemed Greenlee School of Journalism. I got my master's degree in production at the University of Miami, in south Florida. And if we fast-forward to the present, I'm now teaching students those same skills and techniques that I learned and that I used. I'm a professor at Western Kentucky University, in their prestigious School of Journalism & Broadcasting.

If you think about an endeavor like this - like this podcast - there are three really important components. First is the subject matter itself - expertise in the field. In this case, that field is goalkeeping. Second is education. Some shows are purely entertainment, but this show strives to teach and to improve, so understanding education - effective education - is important. And finally, there's the production element of it - building an effective, high-quality show. Like I said, that last part is sort of right in my wheelhouse. I've been working and learning in the field of broadcasting for almost two decades. I won't pretend to be a podcasting expert, and I'll certainly make some mistakes, but I'm experienced in conducting interviews and creating media. And the education part is comfortable too. I've been a teacher for more than a decade.

But what about the goalkeeping? Let me lay out my credentials for you. At the time of this recording, I have an 'E' License from the United States Soccer Federation, and also a Level 1 Goalkeeping Diploma from the United Soccer Coaches, formerly the NSCAA. For those of you familiar with coaching badges, you are definitely not blown away. I don't have advanced coaching credentials, and I'll admit right now, I did not play the game at a high level. In fact, like many Americans, I abandoned it completely as a kid, and moved on to other sports. I didn't rediscover it or fully appreciate it until I was older.

In a way, that's sort of where this show's coming from. I've been coaching for about 10 years, starting at the most basic, recreational level. Now, I'm 6-foot-3, so I've always had a soft spot for the tall, lanky kids that get put in goal. And when I watch games, the goalkeepers tend to be the only people on the field that look like me. So I guess I was naturally drawn to that position. And my kids are tall, so they've gravitated toward the position as well. So for most of these years, I've been working with keepers.

But I constantly ran into situations where I needed help. And I'm a college professor, so research is pretty natural. I've been happy to read everything I can get my hands on, to try to be the best coach I can be. But I've found, a lot of times, it's easier and more effective to pick up the phone. Or send an email. I started reaching out to goalkeepers and to goalkeeper coaches, and asking them directly, for help and for advice.



**Ron:** And what do you think I found? They said, "yes". Almost to a person, everyone I've reached out to has been willing to help. In fact, more often than not, they've been enthusiastic. They've been happy to carve out some time to talk about this position that they care about. Even with someone like me, that they'd never met before.

You've probably heard the phrase before, 'GK Union' - Goalkeeper's Union. Over the past few years, I've definitely found there's truth to it. Maybe because the position is so unique, or because players in other positions don't always tend to understand or relate to it. Whatever the case, there seems to be a bond among goalkeepers. And a generosity in sharing what they know. That's what I found in talking to goalkeepers and keeper coaches, and also what I rediscovered in recording the first several episodes of this show. These are generous people. And also very smart and very articulate people. And true to the stereotype, often eccentric people. Sometimes, very opinionated people. And the broadcaster in me realized, you know what?, these could be the building blocks of a really good show.

And the more I've learned about the game and about the position, the more I've realized that there are plenty of other coaches out there who could use some help. And countless goalkeepers who want to get better, and who could benefit from a show like this. And even coaches who know the overall game well, and who may have played it at a high level - but they may not be experts when it comes to goalkeeping. For those men and women, this show could be the 30 minutes you dedicate each week to helping improve your number one.

So that's where we are. I have a passion for broadcasting, for education, and for goalkeeping. I have a fair bit of expertise in the first two, and this show is sort of a quest for that same expertise in the third. And that's why, each week, you'll hear a little bit from me, but you'll mostly be spending your time with a real expert in the field.

My plan is for each show to feature a single guest - a goalkeeper, a manager, a goalkeeper coach, a conditioning coach, a referee - who knows? Someone with relevant information and advice for developing keepers.

For goalkeeper interviews, my plan is to simply profile the athletes. Where did they come from? What path did they take to reach the level they're currently playing at? What are the important steps and decisions they made along the way, that they think most prepared them for playing at a high level? To what do they attribute their success? And what might they have done differently?

In any field, it's valuable to study the people who are where you want to be. What is it that makes these people unique? What are the common qualities that they share?

**Ron:** What can we learn from them that will help make us - or help make our players - more effective goalkeepers. Better students of the game. Better coaches.

And while it will certainly be fun to interview some high-profile goalkeepers, I suspect that there will be just as much to learn - if not more - from goalkeepers at other levels. Players who may not have been blessed with incredible genetic talent, but who have found a way - through some combination of dedication and smart training and hard work - to get to where they wanted to be.

And along the way, there are plenty of interesting stories and colorful characters. I'm sure that comes as no surprise, right? That goalkeepers can sometimes be quirky or unconventional or just plain weird. But my hope is that these player interviews will inspire you, and hopefully teach you something too.

When it comes to coaches and other experts, this is where I'd really like to get into the nuts and bolts of training and developing goalkeepers. And these might be broad topics. What should keepers be focusing on - and spending precious training time on - at various age levels and skill levels? What does a training calendar look like? For example, if your primary season is in the Fall, what does your ideal training schedule look like for each month? What if you play a secondary season in the Spring? Should you play a secondary season in the Spring? What should the priority be for players that aspire to play in college? How do those priorities change for players with lower or higher aspirations?

One thing that's already come up in several of my early interviews is this distinction between training goalkeepers and coaching goalkeepers. There's definitely a recognition that all workouts aren't created equal. That simply getting some exercise and blocking some shots - while it's probably better than sitting on the couch - it's not necessarily making you a better keeper. So how do we get past that? How do you make sure - as a goalkeeper - that you're spending your time and effort wisely? And as a coach, how can you ensure that your players are truly developing, and not just going through the motions.

I'm also eager to dig in a little deeper, and try to focus episodes on very specific topics and techniques. Throwing, catching, diving, positioning, communication - there's an endless list of precise, fundamental skills and techniques that goalkeepers need to be successful. And far too often, they learn them by trial and error. Of course, there's nothing wrong with learning the game by playing the game. But if we can help players to avoid re-inventing the wheel on a lot of this stuff - or even just finding the most efficient ways to train and to improve - surely, it will be worthwhile. Of course, this requires a special kind of coach and a fair bit of skill from both the host and the guest.

**Ron:** Since a podcast is very much a non-visual form of media, getting those lessons across may not be easy. It may take some time. And maybe the website becomes an important companion to the show, just for those visual elements. Who knows? I'm excited to give it a try, though.

This Spring, I've been reaching out to a fair number of coaches - mostly at clubs and high schools throughout the U.S. - and asking what they'd like to get out of a show like this. How they'd like to see it formatted. Whom they'd like to hear from. And I've definitely used that feedback to build my early interviews and guest lists. One thing that surprised me a little bit - and it was fairly consistent - was related to the duration of the show. Now, I listen to a fair number of podcasts, and most of them range from 45 minutes to over an hour.

But a clear majority of the coaches and players that I surveyed said they wanted a show that was 20 - 30 minutes long. So that's what we're gonna try to do. If I start to feel like we're losing too much good content by trimming the shows to that length, I may change this in the future. But for now, I'll edit each show to no more than 30 minutes. It's already kind of painful for me, and I can't bring myself to throw out the rest of the interviews. So I've started building outtakes from the shows that run quite a bit over the 30 minutes. My plan is to offer those on the website, for anyone that would like to hear more.

For every episode of the show, if you go to 6ydbox.com and then enter a forward slash - the symbol that shares a key with the question mark - and then the three digit episode number - that'll take you to a show notes page for that episode. So for example, this episode will live at 6-y-d-b-o-x.com/001. And on that page, I'll have a show description, an audio player where you can listen to the episode, and links to anything relevant we discuss in the episode. Depending on what the topic of the day is, if I can put together any graphics or handouts or cheat sheets, they'll also be available on that page. I'll also include a transcript of the episode, in case you prefer to read your podcasts as opposed to listening to them. And again - if the interview goes past 30 minutes - I'll include additional audio on that same page. So hopefully, if this interests you, you'll get in the habit of checking out those pages.

Alright. So where do you come in? Well, I'm glad you asked. And if you didn't ask, I'll tell you anyway. If this seems like a show that could be worthwhile. If it seems like it could be a value to you, as a goalkeeper. Or to you, as a coach. Or to the players that you coach, or to other goalkeepers and coaches that you know. Even if you're not sure how great it's gonna be - if you agree that the concept is promising - you can play a part in making it the show that it needs to be. This is especially important if you're listening to this around the time of its release. But I imagine it'll still be important whenever you're listening, even if it's years in the future. So you ready? If you think this show has potential, here are three things you can do - today - to help it reach that potential. And the best part? They're all free. None of these three things will cost you a dime.

**Ron:** Alright, number one. And I already mentioned this one. 6ydbox.com - 6-y-d-b-o-x.com/survey. This is for everyone, but this is especially for you if you already have some knowledge and some expertise in the field. If you already know a lot about goalkeeping, you could be cynical and skeptical and scoff at a program like this. Or - precisely because of the knowledge you already have - you can help make it a success. And in so doing, you can help the next generation of goalkeepers learn more, and train better and reach their potential. So use that survey to let us know: whom I should be talking to, what topics we should be covering, and - in general - how I can use this podcast to best serve the goalkeeping community.

Okay. Number two. Head over to iTunes. Subscribe to the show, and leave a review. In the massive flood of podcasts out there, the iTunes algorithm is trying to decide which shows to feature and which shows to ignore. Positive reviews and subscriptions go a long way toward tipping that scale in our favor. And it doesn't take long - just a couple sentences and a rating. And you can always change your mind later. A few weeks down the road, if you don't like what you're hearing, it's really simple to unsubscribe. But if you're willing to do this, it can make a massive difference in the show gaining traction.

And finally, number three. And this should be the easiest one. Tell somebody. If you've made it this far into the podcast - in an episode with no guests and no actual knowledge for goalkeepers - it can only mean that you're passionate about the game and about the position. And surely that means that you know other goalkeepers and other coaches. Make it point to tell somebody you know about the Six-Yard Box - or better yet, a bunch of somebodies. Help me spread the word.

So there you go. Three things - three totally free things - that you can do to help make the show better. If you're willing to do one or two or all of those things, I can't tell you how grateful I am for your support. But even if you don't, if you're just willing to come back and check out a few episodes - if you give the show a chance - that's all I can reasonably ask. And I really, really appreciate it.

Before I go, a quick preview of Episode 2. Our featured guest is a man named Karl Spratt. He is the Director of Academy Goalkeeping for the New England Revolution. They house one of the elite developmental academy programs in the nation, and Karl is in charge of the curriculum and the development of their goalkeepers. During the episode, we'll talk about Karl's personal development, as a player and as a coach, and also how he and the Revolution create what he calls the 'optimum training environment' - a way that he's able to distinguish coaching from simple training. So I hope you'll come back for that.

In the meantime, remember: 6-y-d-b-o-x.com/001 for today's show notes; 6ydbox.com/survey to help make the show better.

**Ron:** Reviews and subscriptions on iTunes are massively appreciated. And tell a friend. Man. You can tell I'm a teacher, right? Doling out the homework. I promise I won't make a habit of it - just help us get off on the right foot.

Thanks again - so much - for listening to the episode. Have a great week. And I'll see you in the next one.