

**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 very excited today to introduce Karl Spratt. Karl is the Director of Academy Goalkeeping for the New England Revolution - one of the elite developmental academy programs in the U.S. Karl is originally from England, and was part of Manchester United's academy program as a player, and was also part of England's youth national program. But for most of the last decade, he's been with the Revolution, first as an Academy goalkeeping coach, and now as the director, where he designs and implements the goalkeeping curriculum and oversees the development of all of their keepers from the U13 level through U19.

His knowledge of the game is exceptional, but he's also very generous with that knowledge. He's willing to share what he's learned and he's eager to help goalkeepers improve, and help their coaches improve.

We'll talk about his development, both as a player and as a coach, and also the traits that he's looking for in a goalkeeper, as he scouts talent for the academy. All of today's content, including dozens of relevant links, can be found on our website. That's [6ydbox.com/002](http://6ydbox.com/002). But for now, thanks for listening. And I'm pleased to introduce Karl Spratt.

Welcome. Thanks so much for being with me today, Karl.

**Karl Spratt:** My pleasure, Ron.

**Ron:** I definitely want to get into the New England Revolution, and you've been with that program now for nine years, right?

**Karl:** That's right, yeah.

**Ron:** Definitely want to get into that, but first, I was hoping to go back and talk about you. Originally, you hail from northeast England, is that right?

**Karl:** Yeah. Just outside of a city called Durham, in the northeast of England. Yeah.

**Ron:** And has soccer always been a part of your life?

**Karl:** Huge, yeah. As far as I remember back, it's something that's been a huge part. All of my family were big soccer/football supporters.

- Karl:** Big Newcastle United fan, for my sins. I wish they were a little bit better than what they were. But you don't really get a choice, where we come from. You inherit the family team and you stick with it. But no, it's always been a huge part of my background.
- Ron:** And you played – were you always a goalkeeper?
- Karl:** Yeah. Like in primary school and stuff, you don't really identify to one position. You play all positions, and I remember just kind of getting an opportunity by our coach to go in goal. And I just loved diving around. It's not natural to want to dive in the way of a ball that's being kicked as hard as possible at you. My father was a goalkeeper. And it's just something that – though I never really saw him play – I just liked the position, liked the tendencies that go with it, loved diving around. And it's just something that I really kind of stuck to. I found success at an early age. And when you're good at something, you tend to want to keep doing it, right?
- Ron:** And you found yourself – correct me if I'm wrong here – but you were part of Manchester United's youth academy?
- Karl:** Yeah. When I was younger, I was part of their academy program. It was a great experience. Tremendous club, huge honor. I was never going to be a superstar there, but I got a real good soccer education going through their program.
- Ron:** And also part of England's youth national team setup for a time?
- Karl:** Like a developmental squad, yeah. So how they host it, if you're at school or at a club, they hold like regional and national camps. So they, first of all, invite you into like a north-of-England camp. I done pretty well there and I got invited to a couple of their national developmental programs, where they hold it in one location. What an awesome experience to play a couple of friendly games. No registered FIFA games, but a couple of friendly games. You got to represent your county, which was a really cool experience for a young boy.
- Ron:** Sure. So during this time, was coaching always something you thought might be in your future.
- Karl:** No. I'd be lying if I said it was. Just because it's a model back home that's a lot different than here, you know. Out here, you've got to get the education, gotta go to university, which is a tremendous option for young players. But if you are thinking of anything other than wanting to be the best player that you can be, back home, you're just going to get cast aside. So I was fully immersed in trying to be the best player that I could be and wasn't really looking at alternative option. So when my career came to an end – a little bit of injury, a little bit of not being good enough at the time – you're kind of disillusioned.

**Karl:** What do you want to do? How do you want to stay in the game? My grandfather was a huge influence on me. He encouraged me to be a good student and go to university. I did that, and when I was at university, I started coaching. I had some really good mentors and continued to find a way. If I wasn't going to get paid to play, I was going to get paid to kick a ball somehow, and that was coaching. You know? Managed to find my way into it and surround myself with good people, and watch and learn, and become a good listener. Slowly but surely, things start falling into place.

**Ron:** This was the University of Sunderland, correct?

**Karl:** It was, yeah. I done a degree in sport and exercise development. The sport and development aspect of how do you develop players? How do you develop a program? How do you develop an environment? It covers things like psychology, biomechanics, kinesiology, understanding movements, understanding the body, understanding the teaching methods. Because that's what – to me – that's what coaching is. You're an educator first, and you've got to find ways to make sure that the students, the pupils, are understanding what you say effectively.

**Ron:** So what brought you here, then? Was the university experience part of why you ended up in the U.S.? Or not so much?

**Karl:** Yeah, kind of. Yeah, kind of. I got a chance to play on scholarship over in the U.S. So I came out here, and it didn't really work out. So rather than waste the university's money on scholarship, and waste my time on something I wasn't really enjoying, I was going to go back home. But I just met a guy who was working for a company called Challenger Sports. They're a British coaching camp company, and I got a chance to work with those guys for a little bit. And it just kind of started from there, really. I got into coaching camps down in Louisiana, Arkansas, Mississippi, Tennessee. This was back in 2005. Yeah, that was how I initially got my start in the U.S.

**Ron:** And eventually, that would lead to a couple of assistant or goalkeeper positions at universities?

**Karl:** Yeah. I went back home and I worked at the Sunderland academy program for a year and a half. My grandmother was sick at the time, so I flew back home – wanted to be back home with the family. And then situations changed, and I came back out in 2008, and started working and met a guy called Bryan Scales, who now is the Academy Director at the New England Revolution. He was the head coach at UMass-Lowell. I worked with him, and then I worked a season at the College of Holy Cross as an assistant coach, goalkeeper coach. So that was my first coaching collegiate experience in the U.S., back in 2008, 2009.

**Ron:** Since then, though, it's been New England Revolution, right? Since what – 2009? 2010? Somewhere around there?

**Karl:** Yeah. Since 2009, I became the goalkeeper coach for their youth teams at the time. It's a young academy. It's still very much in the infancy stages. We're 10 years old, so we're not the oldest program going. But I was right there from the second season, working with the U16 and U18 programs, which were the only two teams that they had at the time. Just as one of the goalkeeper coaches. And then in 2013, I was offered the Director of Goalkeepers job, overseeing all of the programs, also the curriculum development, and the education of any prospective or aspiring young goalkeepers who want to come through and play for our team.

**Ron:** So now, explain to me that position. That means you work with all of the goalkeepers, but also all of the keeper coaches, and you design the overarching curriculum?

**Karl:** Yeah. From a team perspective – from a youth development perspective – we have U19, U17, U15, U14 and U13 age groups. So we have single age groups, 13s, 14s and 15s, and then double age groups. So I oversee, as the Director of Goalkeepers, all of the goalkeepers. I don't work with all of them. We have another goalkeeper coach that does that. But between the two of us, I oversee the scouting, recruitment, and the periodization of our goalkeeper training on the team side. And then, I also run a goalkeeper development school. We do four eight-week blocks where it's supplemental training. But it's a good way for us to identify prospective or aspiring goalkeepers within the region that fit our profile. And then, it's a great way for them to get exposure to myself and my coaching staff. So that if they progress through the stages, and they one day make our academy team, they're familiar with our voice, our ways, our methods, our environment. So it's a natural tool to get those guys involved at the earliest possible age.

**Ron:** That's something I was going to ask about too, is how you identify talent. So one of the ways is players that come through that development school. Otherwise, is it a tryout process? Or simple scouting?

**Karl:** We have scouts who work with connections all over New England. Our area, we scout players within an 80-mile radius of Gillette Stadium. That's our region that we can scout from. We have good relationships with clubs and coaches, but we also have scouts. And then, myself and the rest of the academy coaches, when we don't have games ourselves, we're out watching games, identifying players. Just trying to use your imagination, right? Because you're not looking for who's gonna be the best player or the best goalkeeper at the age of 11 or 12. As a coach, you've gotta use your imagination. You've gotta kind of imagine what that player will look like when they're 19 or 20, and could they potentially have the capacity to play on Gillette Stadium with the first team?

- Karl:** So it's a lot of imagination with coaches, but you're looking at certain characteristics and profiles to see if they fit it. And then, as the coach, it's your job to develop them the right way.
- Ron:** So what are some of the things you're looking for? Like you said, it's tough to look at an 11-year-old and project out 10 years. "How good is this kid gonna be?" So what are some of the things that jump out at you, in a positive or a negative way?
- Karl:** From a goalkeeper perspective, Ron, it's such a specific position, right? At 11 years old, goalkeepers haven't even identified that position. So you're trying to find out certain characteristics. Could they fit a model of what you imagine a goalkeeper is going to look like. So for example, from our perspective, you go through the technical, tactical, physical and emotional aspects, from a goalkeeper perspective. You're looking at techniques. You're looking at, are they good with the ball at their feet? Are they natural in their movements? Do they initiate? Are they aggressive in their starting position? Can they communicate? Are they good talkers? Have they got a certain athleticism? You're looking at strength and explosiveness. And you're also looking at, do they show composure? Are they calm? Do they have an attention to detail? Do they show initiative in their movements, whether it be a breakaway situation or trying to make a save or coming for a cross. So you're looking at that, but also, you've got to take into consideration their body type. Are they an early developer? Are they a late developer? So that's a huge piece of the puzzle too. So just all but a few things. And then you're looking at traits and characteristics which you feel. Do they match what you want your goalkeeper to look like? Is it a blank canvas? Are they giving you the colors and you just have to paint the picture yourself?
- Ron:** A lot of the traits you mentioned are obviously not goalkeeper-specific. Are there ever times when you see a big target center forward and think, "This guy has qualities that could be a great goalkeeper"?
- Karl:** It depends what age, right? Yes, you identify a big, strong, athletic 11-year-old – if that's such a thing? A big, strong 11-year-old. But yeah, you go back to using your imagination. You find out, are they multi-sport athletes? Do they play basketball? Do they play football? Do they play baseball? The multi-sport athlete is a huge piece, too. Do you have an understanding of general body mechanics, that you can identify someone who is a multi-sport athlete or not? You absolutely just gotta use your imagination.
- Ron:** Like you said, the Revolution academy program is young, but you've had a fair amount of success in recent years. You've had a number of keepers called into national camps.
- Karl:** Yeah, we haven't achieved our ultimate goal. We haven't signed a professional goalkeeper yet through our academy. That's what makes my job unique, right?

**Karl:** Our players are put in a great environment. It's a fully-funded program. All of their equipment, all of their travel, all of the exposure, all of their gear – it's all given to them. They train in Gillette Stadium. They're given all of these resources. And because of that, they're good. They're going to be on the radar for college coaches. And they're gonna inevitably get scholarships to great schools. So they've got that, but my ultimate goal is to develop players who can play in Gillette Stadium on Saturday night in front of 25,000 people, right? That's where I've gotta get to. So we haven't signed a professional goalkeeper yet, but we've had goalkeepers go on to Syracuse, Louisville, big-time schools. And at the younger age groups, we've had five goalkeepers from our system being called into the youth national teams. So, we're doing a good job, but we can always do better. And we're always trying to push the envelope and continue to develop the environment that our players are put into.

**Ron:** So we've already been talking about it for a little bit, but for people that may not be familiar with the Development Academy in the U.S., can you talk a little bit about what that looks like? I think for some people, the way oversimplified impression is that this is just an elite club program, and the players aren't allowed to participate in high school sports.

**Karl:** Yeah, I mean it's couldn't be...

**Ron:** I know, obviously, that there's a lot more to it than that. But could you give me a little more nuanced description?

**Karl:** I suppose that's a layman's term look at it. For the Development Academy, there's almost two tiers of Development Academy, right? So there's Development Academy MLS teams, and there's Development Academy non-MLS teams. Although we play in the same league, the goal of an MLS team in the Development Academy is to produce players to play for the first team. The goal of a non-MLS team in the Development Academy is to win games and to get players into college. And although winning is important, it's not the be-all and end-all for a program like ourselves. We will enhance players in terms of their playing-up opportunities. Our players, when they're on school breaks, they can get invited to train with our first team. We had five players go preseason with our first team this year. So that to me is a huge area. And those experiences for those players are experiences they can't get if they're at a non-MLS team.

So, club team? Not really. Professional organization. The way they travel, the way they prepare. The treatment that they get prior game. The way that they recover, regen after games. The training environment, the coaching staff that they're exposed to. The role models that they have on a daily basis with the first-team guys. It's a fully-beneficial, all-encompassing environment. Yes, they can't play high school.

**Karl:** But we're looking for players who, in order to play at a professional level, there's a certain amount of commitment that needs to be taken upon by them, as the player. Huge financial commitment by us as the organization. These guys are training four, sometimes five days a week, ten months of the year. So by them playing other sports, they're not really being exposed to the maximum amount of exposure that they should be, in order to try to achieve the ultimate goal.

**Ron:** It sounds like a professional environment, just for players who are not old enough to play at that level or haven't quite gotten there yet.

**Karl:** That's the goal, right? That's what we're trying to achieve, for sure.

**Ron:** So in addition to being the Director of Goalkeeping, you also work some with the first-team at New England, right?

**Karl:** Yeah, it's not my full-time job. My full-time job is on the youth development side with their academy. But there's times where the first-team goalkeeper coach might be out scouting or traveling or whatever. Things pop up. I've got a pretty good relationship with the goalkeepers – Cody, Matt Turner and Brad Knighton. So if ever there was a time where the first-team goalkeeper coach was away or traveling with the team and there's a couple guys left behind, I'll train those guys and make sure that they're getting good consistent training and reps. And not wasting opportunities or not getting touches of the ball or a feel for the environment.

Yeah, it's good. It gives them a different voice. I encourage all coaches, if you can have a coach to come in, and they can hear me saying exactly what you're saying, but in a different voice, sometimes it just resonates with the athlete. So they get a different voice, there's obviously a lot of communication that's involved. We're not just running sessions. We're catering sessions based on those particular players. What they want to get out of it. What their areas of improvement are. Yeah, it's a good environment to be in, and it's a lot of fun working with those guys.

**Ron:** As if that's not enough, the last I talked to you, you were also the goalkeeping coach for Providence College. Are you still doing that as well?

**Karl:** Yeah, I do. The head coach, Craig Stewart, is a great guy, very professional coach. And the only reason I work with Providence- I mean, I live in Providence as well, so it's definitely convenient. But I wouldn't work in a college environment if it wasn't ran like a professional setup. Being in a professional club day-in and day-out, I wouldn't want to put myself in an environment that is less than what I'm in on a daily basis. So Craig does a great job. And the staff there – John Mark and Dave DeMello and the whole support staff there – do a great job. He gives me kind of carte blanche with the goalkeepers.

**Karl:** He trusts me, and I work with those guys based around my schedule. I work what I can do from the Revolution. It's a lot of fun. But those guys, again, have pretty good success on that one. They had a goalkeeper drafted a few years ago in the league, and goalkeepers getting Big East Goalkeepers of the Year. Those guys put a lot of effort and commitment and attention to detail in that environment too, so it's fun.

**Ron:** So in a given week, you could go from working with the U13 players all the way up through college goalkeepers at Providence, first-team goalkeepers at New England. Obviously, there's some huge differences in a U12 versus working with Brad Knighton. But are there significant differences in the way you approach even at different levels or different ages – a U13 versus a U19?

**Karl:** Yeah, 100 percent. Again, the environment is key. It's knowing your audience, right? Brad and Cody and Matt – those guys know their bodies. So I'm not trying to change too much technically with those guys. They're obviously good because they're professional athletes, right? So I'm trying to create the environment – the game pace, the game tempo, the game pressure type environment. Whereas, with the younger guys – the 15s – there's real technical details that, as a coach, I've got to be able to teach and educate those guys on, and develop them, right? So they're learning how to play the game, the young guys. The middle guys, they're learning how to adapt to the game. And then the older guys, they're learning how to win. And doing everything they can to win. And putting themselves in the best possible environment to do so. There are the three stages that we categorize it: Learning how to play it. Learning how to adapt to it. And then learning how to win in it. So there are the three stages that we categorize the goalkeepers.

**Ron:** You mentioned to me before, and you brought it up a couple times here: In terms of training these goalkeepers, one thing that you suggested is key – and that maybe gets overlooked – is the environment that they train in. Can you talk about that?

**Karl:** To me, it's probably one of the most important parts to any sport. As a coach, you can either be a coach or you can be a trainer. I would define a trainer as someone who can run an activity. The players will have fun. They'll get a good workout in. But they're not really getting any instruction. They're not getting any better. They're just running through fast-paced activities. Where, as a coach, you're looking to coach and educate the athlete. You can be the most technically knowledgeable, proficient coach, but if you can't create an environment where the athletes want to succeed, then it's absolutely pointless.

There's multiple ways that we talk about – with all of our coaching staff – about creating the environment. You've gotta have a command of the group. You've gotta be on top of the players during these sessions. There's a big difference between shouting at someone and shouting to someone. It can be done in a positive way. There's no real punishments.



**Karl:** It's always referenced with an elite player. Any instruction you give them, it has to be an elite player. And it's okay to identify weaknesses. But always making sure that, if you're going to identify a weakness, you've got a capacity to build a player back up with positive reinforcement. You're talking about coaching individuals from a goalkeeper's perspective, but you've gotta reference how goalkeepers are a part of the team, not apart from the team.

Preparation, I think, is super important. Yes, we have curriculums and things, but it's all about the playing. Making sure that your training sessions are functional. Making sure that it relates to the game. Planning the phases. Making sure that there are smooth transitions. Making sure that it's being as efficient as possible. You're staying on task. You're not bouncing from one topic to another.

The competition piece is huge, Ron. It's a game, right? So, as a goalkeeper, we always talk about having that certain level of stubbornness. It's me versus you. Yes, you can be technical. But ultimately, the essence of competition as a goalkeeper – you're not getting the ball past me. And I'm going to do everything I possibly can to make sure that stays the same. As a coach, one of the big things that we always talk about is the demonstration. Because the higher the level you go up, you've got to be able to show the athlete that you can do it too. You're not just a sideline coach with a whistle. I'm in there with the guys. I'm training with them. I'm working out with them.

You're encouraging creativity. We're not looking to create robots here. Everyone has different physical attributes and strengths that they can work within. So I'm definitely big on encouraging creativity. We're looking to develop the whole group to the best of their ability. The communication with the players. It's informative. It's concise. I'm not lecturing these guys. I'm not constantly giving them stuff, stuff, stuff. I'm looking to really make sure my session is about the players. It's a player's game – it's not a coach's game. I always look to finish on a positive, and remind these players of the highest possible standard that they're looking to achieve. And they should set it themselves.

For me, the environment really boils down to it being a player's game. And if a player isn't getting what I want them to get, it's my fault. It's not theirs. It's me as the educator. It's like in class. If a teacher is in maths and the students aren't getting algebra, it's not their fault. The teacher has to find a way to make sure they understand it. That's the same way as me as a coach. The environment that I create has to make sure that it allows the players to succeed. For me, it's a huge part. Like I said, there's different ways to do it. There's different coaching styles.

We use an acronym called REPS – 'R' 'E' 'P' 'S'. 'R' stands for reaching and repeating. The 'E' stands for engagement. The 'P' stands for purposefulness.

**Karl:** The 'S' stands for making sure that it's strong, direct and immediate feedback. And I think sometimes we try and give these guys – and especially our coaches – an understanding of what each of those letters means. Not just in the game, but also in a bigger picture. The reaching and repeating side - I'll briefly touch upon it. Say, for example, a teacher selects a student in class, and they're gonna say, "I want you to write your tables on the board." That's Teacher A, right? And then Teacher B, for example, goes, "Okay, we're gonna create a gameshow format," where the maths question is posed verbally to the entire class and calls on a single student to answer. Well, in terms of the reaching and repeating side, the teacher who creates the game is going to create 30 reaches. Because you've offered it to the whole class. And in the same amount of time, the person who identifies one person to write it on the board has only really stretched one person. Having everyone activated and engaged is really key.

The engagement side of it. Say, for example, a student is a musician. And a teacher wants one student to play a certain passage 20 times. And then, the teacher wants a different student to try and play the same passage perfectly, but with no mistakes, five times in a row. The person who is asked to do it perfectly, five times with no mistakes, that method is more engaging, right? Because just playing the same passage 20 times in a row becomes boring – it's a chore. They're just counting how many reps they're doing until they reach that 20. Where by playing it five, you've actually engaged the student to really focus on the quality, not the quantity. So we always talk about, how do you relate these educational methods away from the field?

And then how can you relate it on the field? To talk about the purposefulness and strong and direct feedback, you can absolutely go into the same details. But just a couple of examples of reaching and repeating and making sure that everyone is engaged. It's a purpose. It's detailed feedback for the athlete to understand. Four key areas that, if you're looking to create an environment, you follow those guidelines, you're not going to go too far wrong.

**Ron:** What's an example – those are great classroom examples for the reach and engagement. Can you throw me one, maybe a simple on-the-field example of something that would have that same kind of reach and engagement?

**Karl:** Yeah, from a goalkeeper perspective. So I train, for example, three goalkeepers in an age group. And I'm gonna say, "Alright guys, today we're gonna be working on crosses and high balls." And I'm gonna say, "Player A, hey listen. Player B and Player C, you're just gonna serve all day, and we're really gonna work on Player A." Now, Player A is gonna get really good at dealing with crosses and high balls. But Player B and Player C are just serving, right? What are they there for? Although they might look and see somebody getting better, they're not getting a chance to activate themselves.

**Karl:** Making sure that the reps, for example, are distributed evenly. We're gonna say, "Okay, listen, here's the situation. Here's the activity. Here's the environment that you're placed in. I want everybody to go away and think about this, because tomorrow, this is gonna be the session." All of a sudden, when we come back to the session, they've all had a think about it. They've all had to study the game. They've all thought about how they can achieve success in that particular situation. So that when we come to the session, I can choose any of the three guys to become successful at it. And that's a way to keep them all engaged. The direct feedback – I've told them what I want them to do. I've given them a day of, "Listen, tomorrow, this is going to be the session." So make sure that everyone understands. Everyone has to be engaged, because they're not too sure who I'm gonna pick on to start the activity or to use as a demonstrator. And therefore, everyone's had to really think about it, and repeat and reach their thought process to become successful at it.

**Ron:** That's great. Are there any counter-examples? Are there any common mistakes that you see coaches making that put players in a less than optimum environment?

**Karl:** I think I said it before, right? It's a player's game. So often, you see, from a goalkeeper, you see - It's tough as a coach, right? Because you want your session to go well. No one wants to have a bad session, right? So coaches sometimes do whatever they need to do, to make the session go well. But it might be to the detriment of the athlete. For me, it doesn't really serve our players if I'm the one kicking balls at them. Because I'm an adult, and they're youngsters. So it's not real. So I try and make sure our players are the ones doing all the serving, all the distribution. And listen, it might not look great. But now I'm focused on the goalkeeper. When they're serving and kicking balls, they have to focus on distribution, right? They're kicking the ball. They have to learn how to manipulate the ball. They have to be good with the ball at their feet.

And you can tell. We've done national training centers. Our academy goalkeepers are the ones – they're doing all of the distribution and service. And then when I bring goalkeepers from other environments into our environment, and I ask them to hit a half-volley or to hit a volley or to throw a ball here, they sometimes struggle with it because they're not really having to do that on a day-to-day basis. And I think that really comes down to the coaches. There's a lot of goalkeeper trainers out there, but there's not a lot of goalkeeper coaches out there. You know? And I think you have to understand – you have to take a deep look at yourself as an educator first, to say: What is the difference between a coach and a trainer? What do I want to be? And more importantly, which category do I fall into right now? And if I fall into the 'trainer' side, I need to reevaluate my methods. And it's not easy, right? It's not easy as a grownup to take a look at yourself and go, "Maybe I'm not doing a good job." But you've got to swallow your pride, because it's a player's game.

**Ron:** That's fantastic. I really can't thank you enough, Karl. People that want to keep up with you and follow you and the New England Development Academy and even just the New England Revolution – is there anywhere you would direct them? Websites or social media or anything like that?

**Karl:** Yeah, you can go onto revolutionsoccer.net. That's the New England Revolution website. We've got Twitter. I've got Twitter @SprattyK – that's my Twitter handle. I post some clips of my sessions and educational aspects on there too. And then @nerevsacademy is the New England Revolution Academy Twitter handle. So, a couple social media aspects there. And then, you can Google my email address. So if anybody has any questions or queries based on goalkeeping or training methodologies or anything like that, I'm more than happy to answer questions too. Because my job is to – the last time I checked, it was the New England Revolution. It wasn't just the Karl Spratt Revolution. So, I'm open to helping players all across New England, and goalkeeper coaches, anybody who wants help, I'm certainly open to try to help them along the pathway too.

**Ron:** You mentioned you have a goalkeeper development school. That's open to players who are not yet part of the academy, is that right?

**Karl:** That's right. It's called the Regional Development School. It's an elite player program, so you're looking for players that have ambitions of playing at the highest possible level. Or more importantly, a certain characteristic is playing at the highest possible level that they can play at. Not everyone's gonna be a professional player, right? Do they want to play high school? Do they want to play club? Do they want to play in college? As long as a player has the mentality of wanting to play at the highest possible level that they can, that's the type of player that we want in our environment. It starts at ages 8 – we do an 8- to 10-year old block, and then 11- to 16-year old training block. So, certainly categorized by age, and then move on from there. But yeah, the Regional Development School. You can find that information on revolutionsoccer.net.

**Ron:** Perfect. Well, Karl, I really can't thank you enough. Thanks so much for taking the time today.

**Karl:** My pleasure, Ron. Thank you.

**Ron:** So I hope you enjoyed that interview with Karl Spratt. There's more to it - material that just didn't fit into our 30-minute window - and you can find all of that over on our website, which I'll get to in just a second. But first, you can keep up with Karl and with the Revolution and the Revolution Academy at revolutionsoccer.net. And if that REPS training environment acronym was intriguing to you, you'll want to out a book called The Little Book of Talent.

**Ron:** It was written by Daniel Coyle, the author of *The Talent Code*, and it's *52 Tips for Improving Your Skills*, and one of those is the REPS Gauge. Now, Karl and the Revolution have cleverly adapted it to goalkeeper training, but there are plenty of other applications, plus - what? - 51 more tips. So definitely a recommended read. So we'll have all of those links and dozens of others - including additional audio from this interview - over at [6ydbox.com/002](http://6ydbox.com/002).

And before I go, a quick preview of our next episode. The featured guest is Jenny Bindon, an assistant coach from UCLA's women's soccer program. If you follow the women's game on an international level, that name is probably familiar to you. Jenny was the goalkeeper of the Football Ferns for 10 years, New Zealand's national team. We'll talk college soccer, the UCLA Bruins and her journey from Belleville, Illinois, to New Zealand, and eventually back to the states. But not before competing in two Olympics and two World Cups. You'll definitely want to come back for that.

In the meantime, I would be so, so grateful if you would head over to iTunes and leave us a review. As we roll out these first episodes, it's the most important time for the show to find some traction with the iTunes algorithm. And subscriptions and reviews are a big part of that. So if you'd like to see us continue to put out episodes, it just takes a minute to leave a review, and it'll help more than you know. And tell a friend! If you know a goalkeeper or a coach, please help spread the word.

Either way, thanks for listening. One more big thank you to Karl Spratt. And to all of you, have a great week! I'll see you in the next episode.