Football Goalkeeper – positioning for a one-on-one

**C1 - Cause of poor positioning when one on one with attacker– being operantly conditioned to anticipate where the striker is going to shoot**

I believe that I have been operantly conditioned to anticipate what direction the striker is going to shoot using his body position to anticipate. I have been positively reinforced to dive at an early stage as I have been able to get away with it at a lower level of football as it has been successful there with me saving more shots by anticipating. This high success rate has lead me to keep diving early and anticipate attacker’s movements. Now I am playing a higher standard with strikers who will punish this as they are better players and they will notice this and begin to receive positive reinforcement so they will continue to make fake shots and change the angle of their body.

Operant conditioning is defined as behaviour which is manipulated through reinforcement. The chance of the response occurring when presented with the stimulus depends on the strength between the stimulus-response bonds. The stronger the bond between the stimulus and the response the more likely the response is going to occur. In this situation the stimulus would be the striker shaping up to hit the ball. The response would be me starting my movement in the direction which I think the ball is going to be hit. Reinforcement can be in three different forms these are either positive, negative or punishment. The type I have received is positive through the high success rate in the lower level of football; this has conditioned me into this weakness.

Positive reinforcement can take many different forms it can be intrinsic or extrinsic and it can be either tangible or intangible. An extrinsic positive reinforcement would be a coach telling me well done this would also be intangible. An intrinsic positive reinforcement would be the feeling of success as I have saved the shot this would also be intangible. A tangible extrinsic positive reinforcement would be getting a cup or medal or maybe a payment of money for making the save or saves during a game. Negative reinforcement is used when the incorrect technique or action has been performed. The wrong movement is then removed after it is performed correctly, the idea is to create an unpleasant feeling within the performer to try and weaken the bond between the stimulus and the incorrect response. An example of this is a coach shouting at a performer when they don’t perform the correct action or movement. Punishment is defined as any action or event that aims to break the stimulus-response bond in order to remove the incorrect action. To break the bond the punishment has to be very unpleasant for the performer, for example dropping a player from the next match or matches for using the wrong action. It is a harsh method to use but it has to be harsh for it to work.

**C2 – Breaking the stimulus-response bond for this action**

To correct this weakness within my game I would have to break the bond so it no longer exists and is not a natural action for me to perform. I could do this through punishment, this could be during a competitive game where the biggest punishment is letting a goal in. it could also be done by being dropped for a week and having to prove I have corrected the weakness to get back into the team. I will have to ensure that the good action is reinforced so it is stored in my long term memory so it becomes natural for me to perform. I will do this through allocating a larger chunk of my limited training to this area of my game. The training method which I could use could be drill training as the repeated performing of the wanted action will reinforce it within my long term memory.

I would use positive reinforcement to make the S-R bond for the correct movement stronger when I perform the correct movement. I would have my coach give me positive reinforcement every time I do the correct movement. But when I perform the unwanted incorrect movement I will get him to give me a physical challenge which I don’t want to do for example press ups or a long run, this will weaken the bond as I will become physically drained by these punishments. Over a period of weeks and months of doing this the bond will eventually become broken and won’t exist. This will hopefully improve my game as I will now stand up for longer and won’t dive early which makes it easier for the striker. It will increase the number of one on ones which I am successful in preventing a goal from.