

Aquatic Adventures



Chapter 6

Water Polo:

Splashball and Intro to Water Polo



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Water Polo

the most physically fit athletes play due to the nature that it is played in water without support from the ground. While this is true, it originated as a far more violent sport with even harder obstacles. The sport's origins come from northern Europe, specifically the British Isles. Water polo originated as a type of rugby that was played under the water with violence, injuries, and near-drownings as part of the game. The Scots then developed more civilized rules and developed the concept of passing the ball above water while submerging the ball was considered illegal. The sport grew in popularity and spread all across Europe. The Hungarians then took up the sport and developed much of it to the way we play today. They

developed the dry pass, meaning that the ball was to never touch the water; this revolutionized the sport and allowed the Hungarians to establish a water polo dynasty.

Water polo is one of the oldest Olympic sports. It was included in the 1900 Olympic Games. One of the most violent games in history was the 1956 Gold Medal Match between the USSR and Hungary. The Soviets had just crushed the Hungarian revolution and had decimated much of their country. There were accounts that the match was so violent that the pool kept turning red and the term "Blood in Water Match" was coined after the scene where a Hungarian player was bleeding after being punched in the eye. The officials deemed the match too dangerous at the end of the third quarter and declared Hungary the winner, 4-0.

Water polo kept growing as a sport in various countries, and a hundred years later at the 2000 Sydney, Australia Olympiad it was included as a women's sport. The sport continues to grow throughout the world and the United States. As the sport grows there is constant need for the introduction and education of young people to the sport of Water Polo.



Figure 6- 1 The Hungarian player that was punched in the eye in the 1956 Olympics.

USA Water Polo, the national governing body for water polo in the United States, developed the Splashball program in early 2009. They developed this program to introduce the sport to children between the ages of 5 and 9. The Kearns Oquirrh Park Facility (KOPFC) took this program and tailored it to make a program for children ages 5-9 that would teach them the skills needed to be successful on the Kearns Water Polo Club 8th grade and Under team. We also took this information and created a program for children ages 9 to 13 and called it Intro. to Water Polo. This class is essentially the same as the Splashball course but it is adapted for an older audience. The staff at KOPFC realized that there was a lack of instructional material for water polo specific to this age group. It was then decided that the staff would undertake the task of writing instructional material for the coaches and instructors of this age group. The manual would help the facility's program and also provide material for the surrounding water polo community. The end goal is to improve the sport of water polo specific for this age group. This chapter in the manual will help you learn and understand the basic movements in water polo that are necessary for a child to begin a successful and fun water polo career.

How to Use This Manual

This manual was designed to teach instructors the basic movements needed for beginning water polo players to achieve success in the beginning of a player's career. The manual is broken up into four different categories: Swimming Skills, Ball Handling Skills, Game Skills, and Game Protocol. Every skill is accompanied by a brief yet, in depth explanation of every movement. Accompanying some descriptions are images that aid in learning of these movements. There is an image for every basic skill, yet for some complex skills made up of basic skills there is not. We encourage you to remember that the complex skills are made up of the fundamental skills taught in this manual. We encourage you to teach progression, so that every skill you teach builds upon the one learned prior. We wish you luck in your endeavors to teach children the sport of water polo. We assure you that in this task you will touch the lives of the children you teach and help give them lifelong skills.

Swimming Skills

Head-Up Freestyle

Head-up Freestyle is the main way that water polo players travel through the water. It is a front crawl while maintaining the head all the way out of the water and shorter strokes are taken with an emphasis of a high elbow in the recovery part of the stroke. (Fig. 6-2:4) It is essential to keep the hips up by the surface of the water, and to keep a strong kick for forward momentum. (Fig. 6-5) The motive for keeping the head out of the water is to make sure that you are aware of the game; meaning that you have awareness of where the ball and other players are. Head-up freestyle can be performed with a flutter kick or breaststroke kick. It is performed with a flutter kick for far quick travel through the water, while the breaststroke kick is used for small precise movements.



Figure 6- 2



Figure 6-3



Figure 6-4



Figure 6- 5

Head-Up Backstroke

Another way of travel through the water used in water polo is Head-up Backstroke or Water Polo Backstroke. While regular backstroke, or back crawl, is performed with the body in a horizontal position, close to 180°. Water Polo Backstroke is performed while the body is in a seated-like incline position with the head and shoulders out of the water to maintain awareness. Because the player's hips will be lower in the water the player must develop a strong kick to avoid sinking of the body and to compensate for the added resistance. The strokes must be wider and shorter. Water Polo Backstroke is performed with either a flutter kick (Fig 6-6) or a breaststroke kick (Fig 6-7).



Figure 6- 5



Figure 6- 6

Switching between Head-Up Back to Head-Up Free

The switch between water polo backstroke and head-up freestyle is an important skill, and when performed correctly adds agility to the player's movements in the water and improves overall awareness of the game. The switch from head-up freestyle to water polo backstroke is performed by over- rotating the whole body all the way, so that the player is on their back, during the pull phase of the stroke. The off arm in recovery rotates into a backstroke recovery. These two actions are executed simultaneously. It is important to keep a strong kick throughout the process of switching to maintain forward progression.

Changing Directions

Changing directions in water polo, while swimming, is probably one of the most important skills in the game. It can determine who has possession of the ball or if the player will have the ability to either score or stop an opponent from scoring. While swimming one must bring the legs into the chest (Fig. 6-7). The arm in recovery is pulled back and is rotated to take a stroke in the opposite direction (Fig. 6-8); this action forces the body to rotate onto its side. The opposite arm is forcefully taken into a stroke in the desired direction; simultaneously a breaststroke kick is performed to gain impulse into head-up freestyle (Fig 6-9).



Figure 6-7



Figure 6-8



Figure 6-9

Treading

Treading is a skill used to keep a player's head out of the water while maintaining the body in a vertical position. The Eggbeater Kick and Sculling are the skills used specifically by water polo players to maintain their bodies in a vertical position and allow movement through the water in a vertical position.

The Eggbeater kick requires that the player be in a seated-like position: the thighs being perpendicular to the torso and the lower leg parallel to the torso but past shoulder-length apart. The feet must be flexed, meaning that the player would try to decrease the distance and angle between the foot and lower leg by pulling their foot toward their leg. The leg (right leg in the Fig. 6-10) is pulled towards the thigh while the foot is pulled towards the buttocks, by bending at the knee. The foot is then moved forward through the water in a sweeping motion to its original position by performing a whip kick. (Fig 6-11; 6-12) This is done by both legs; the left leg making the motion in clockwise direction and the right leg making the motion in a counter-clockwise direction. The motion is performed by each leg at opposite times; one leg would be forward while the opposite leg would be backward (Fig 6-13).

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Figure 6- 10



Figure 6-11



Figure 6- 12



Figure 6-13

Sculling is an important technique that facilitates balance and movement in the water. While sculling, the arm is positioned perpendicular to the body. The arm is then bent at the elbow and water is pushed with the hands; when pushing water in towards the body the thumbs must be pointing up (Fig. 6-14) and pointing down when pushing water away from the body(Fig. 6-15).



Figure 6-14



Figure 6-15

The procedure previously described would be treading in a neutral position with no movements in any direction. To move in a direction while treading some minor changes to the neutral treading procedure need to occur. To move in a lateral direction a player must angle the backs of their hands to face the direction they would like to move in, thereby pulling more water in a specific direction. To make a lateral movement the player must slightly adjust the way they eggbeater. The player will focus on pulling more water with the leg that is in the direction that the player wants to move; the other leg is then used for

support and balance. When making forward and backward movements the same principle that is used in lateral movements is applied to the hands. The hips must be slightly angled in the opposite direction of the movement the player wants to make.

Breaststroke Kick

The Breaststroke kick is an important skill to learn because it is used in many game-like situations because it allows the player to keep their head above water while allowing movement in various directions. It is also important to note that the Eggbeater kick and Breaststroke kick are very similar allowing a simple and quick transition. The difference between Eggbeater and Breaststroke is that in breaststroke the legs are performing the same movements at the same time; when doing eggbeater the legs are doing the same motion but at different times. The progression of the Breaststroke kick is “Up, Out, Together” or “Up, Around, Together”. The legs bend together at the knee and the feet are brought close to the buttocks, with the toes are pointing away from the body. While the feet are flexed and toes pointing in a direction that is perpendicular to the body, the feet are moved in a sweeping motion as the legs are extended and brought together. (Fig. 6-16; 6-17) The breaststroke kick in water polo specific situations is a little different due to the fact that breaststroke kick is used for small explosive movements. The legs are not fully extended and there is no pause for the glide (Fig 6-18; 6-19), which is necessary for the breaststroke kick in the sport of competitive swimming. The goal is to have quick, successive breaststroke kicks.



Figure 6-16



Figure 6-17



Figure 6-18



Figure 6-19

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Lunging

Lunging is a defensive technique that incorporates the breaststroke kick. There are two ways of performing the lunge one way is where the body is in a completely horizontal and another where the body is at a 45°. The body is in a (semi-)horizontal position with arms outstretched in front of body. The player performs a quick breaststroke kick and reaches with one arm pulling through the water to aid the legs in producing forward momentum (Fig.6-20). The opposite arm comes out of the water towards the intended target. (Fig. 6-21) The purpose of the maneuver is to provide quick pressure on an opposing player or to quickly move to an intended target, such as a loose ball or another player (Fig. 6-22).



Figure 6- 20



Figure 6-21



Figure 6- 22

Ball Handling Skills

Dribbling

Dribbling the ball is the movement players perform when traveling through the water with the ball. It is performed by the player swimming head-up freestyle and maintaining the ball between the arms. The player's head should be low in the water almost at the same level as the ball. The emphasis of short quick strokes is crucial. The waves created by the arms keep the ball from veering to either side. For efficient dribbling the player must be able to perform the skill without having the ball touching their arms. (Fig 6-23)



Figure 6-23

Picking Up the Ball

To properly pick up the ball the player must place their hand, palm facing up, underneath the ball. (Fig. 6-24) The player picks up the ball. In a sweeping motion the player brings the ball behind the head (Fig. 6-25; 6-26). It is important to teach beginner players to pick up the ball from underneath. It forms good habits and avoids bad habits that could result in improper shooting and passing techniques, as well as a ball under. (Because it is illegal for players to take the ball under water to improve offensive situations; having the player learn to pick up the ball from the top allows the defense to easily cause the player to take the ball underwater resulting in a call against the player in possession of the ball and a turnover.)



Figure 6-24



Figure 6-25



Figure 6-26

Double Threat Position

The double threat position is a stance that makes the player a threat to the defense. The player is treading water while holding the ball high in the air. The legs should be underneath the body towards the bottom of the pool constantly eggbeatering. The opposite hand should be sculling for support and balance. The player's opposite shoulder is pointing in the direction of the goal; the player is also alert and looking towards the goal. Because of this the ball is positioned behind the player's head and as far away from the nearest defending player. (Fig. 6-27) The position is called double threat because the player can now efficiently perform two actions: pass the ball or shoot the ball. This draws attention to the player

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allowing for other players to become open or it allows the player to create a goal scoring opportunity when there is no other opportunity.



Figure 6-27

Passing

Passing is the one of the main concepts taught to beginning players. It is a foundation skill that leads to the master of other skills and more complex maneuvers. Passing has two components, throwing the ball and catching the ball. Both concepts are important and must be broken down for beginner players. Passing is of paramount importance because this is the most efficient and safest way for the ball to travel. It also facilitates plays that allow the team to score.

Throwing the ball correctly allows for strength development which improves distance and accuracy. The player's body position is important to the accuracy and power of the throw. The player's legs should be performing the eggbeater kick and must be underneath the shoulders. The player's opposite shoulder and opposite hand (not holding the ball) must be in the direction where the ball is to be thrown, with the opposite hand sculling to provide support and balance; as well as pointing in the direction of the throw. The player's head must also be looking in the direction that the ball is to be thrown. The ball must be held above the head and slightly behind the body. The player's arm must be outstretched and be bent at the elbow at an angle greater than 90°. The ball must rest in the palm of the player's hand (Fig. 6-28). To actually throw the ball one must increase the rate of the eggbeater kick and the sculling done by the opposite hand. The player must then rotate the whole torso forward in the direction of the throw (Fig. 6-29), as the ball is being thrown (Fig. 6-30). When releasing the ball the player is to flick the wrist in a downward motion to add a backspin and to increase the speed of the ball (Fig. 6-31). It is important that the player follow through after throwing; this increases power and accuracy (Fig. 6-32).



Figure 6-28



Figure 6-29



Figure 6-30



Figure 6-31



Figure 6-32

To properly catch the ball the player's body must be in the same position required to throw the ball. The most important concept in catching the ball is the ability to follow the ball. This technique absorbs the momentum of the coming ball and then allows the player to transform that momentum coming at the player into momentum in the forward direction adding power to the ball. The player must be able to anticipate the coming ball. The player holds his arm and hand outstretched in the air (Fig. 6-32). As the ball comes into contact with the player's hand (Fig. 6-33), the player moves the arm backwards and slightly rotates the torso backwards in the direction of the ball (Fig. 6-34).



Figure 6-32



Figure 6-33



Figure 6-34

Because passing the ball through the air, also called a dry pass, is the fastest way to move the ball, communication to make the passing go smoothly and without any mistakes is important because it allows maximum use of time allotted to score. For beginning players there are some ways to develop this communication. Eye contact is always needed when passing the ball. It alerts the receiving player that you are going to pass the ball to them. Calling out the receiving player's name can also accomplish the same

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thing. The idea of passing the ball at the correct time should be introduced to beginning players: Passing to a player who is wide open v. Passing to a player who is not open; Passing the ball to players near the goal to increase chance of scoring v. Passing the ball to players who are farther from the goal, therefore decreasing chance of scoring.

Passing while moving is a skill highly used in game situations. It combines the techniques of moving in a direction while treading and passing.

Transfer

Transferring the ball from one hand to the other is a skill that can come in handy in a game. To transfer the ball the player should be in a neutral treading position or in the double threat position. (Fig. 6-36) The player in a sweeping motion brings the ball in front of their body with the arm entering the water when the arm is fully outstretched in front of their body. The ball travels with the hand until the ball is at the middle of the chest.(Fig. 6-36) The opposite hand then picks up the ball from underneath and in a sweeping motion brings it behind their head back to a neutral or double threat position. (Fig. 6-37)



Figure 6-35



Figure6-36



Figure6-37

Shooting

Shooting is the way that player's score and whichever team scores the most wins the game. Therefore emphasizing correct technique to beginning players is important and allows them to grow, develop and gain strength in the correct manner. There are two types of shots that should be taught to beginning players a dry shot and a wet shot.

A dry shot is when the ball is in the air and the player begins the process of shooting the ball facing the cage, or the goal. The body movements for this type of shot are very similar to the movements for passing; yet, there is greater emphasis on power and strength of the movements. This is accomplished by a higher rate of kicking eggbeater and sculling. This allows the player to get higher out of the water reducing drag allowing the player to shoot quicker and stronger. The whole body is involved in the follow

through. Including the body in the follow through allows the player to use the momentum of their body to aid the ball in traveling farther and at a higher speed. The flick of the wrist must increase in power as well to increase accuracy and speed of the spin.

A wet shot is when the ball is in the water as the player begins the process of shooting the ball. There are three different types of wet shots: Shove Shot, T-Shot, and Screw Shot. These shots are used when the player is swimming head-up freestyle towards the goal and is less than 2m away. The shots require the player to perform head-up freestyle in strong manner. The Shove shot is where the player picks up the ball at about 2m and then coils the arm backward and basically shoves or pushes the ball into the goal.(Fig 6-38) The T-shot is performed by the player picking up the ball and using the hand as a tee and then using the opposite hand to push the ball into the goal. (Fig. 6-39) The screw shot is essentially a shove shot; yet, when shooting the ball the player rotates the arm in a counter clockwise direction sending the ball in a different direction. (Fig. 6-40)



Figure 6-38



Figure 6-39



Figure 6-40

Up, Slide, Up

The up-slide-up technique is the most common technique that incorporates the breaststroke kick. The player begins the movement in a double threat position. The player breaststroke kicks to lunge up, then kicks again to lunge forward, and then kicks on last time to lunge up again. This movement is done while the ball is in the air and the player maintains a double threat position. This movement can be used to confuse goalies or field players and increase chance of scoring.

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Goalie

The goalie position is a defensive-oriented position and is not part of offensive play. Due to the nature of the goalie position being only defensive there is a separate set of rules that govern the actions of the goalie. The goalie is the only player that can touch the ball with two hands. In a shallow-deep pool situation the goalie is allowed to use the floor to their advantage. But, the goalie cannot go past the half tank mark; this action would result in a turnover. The consequences of the various fouls are more severe for goalies because of the concept of advantage. A minor foul committed by a goalie would result in exclusion; while any major foul committed would result in a penalty. The goalie must always begin center cage and move to either side if the ball is close to the cage and on either side. There are goalie specific skills that should be taught to all beginner water polo players. A goalie lunge is much like the regular lunge for field players, but the goalie reaches towards the top corner of the cage closest to the direction the ball is heading (Fig. 6-41). Another technique is a pull-down; it is essentially a lunge up with both hands out of the water. The goalie's hands must be in a cupped position so that if the hands touch the ball the resulting direction of the ball is down and lands in front of the goalie. (Fig. 6-42)



Figure 6-41



Figure 6-42

Game Skills

Self-Awareness

The player must be taught to understand his or her role in the context of the game. The concept of offense and defense though thought to be a rudimentary concept must be understood completely by a beginner player to minimize mistakes and to enjoy game play. The offense is the team that has possession of the ball and has the goal to score by making goal scoring opportunities. The defense is the team without the ball and has the goal to minimize and truncate the offense's goal scoring opportunities.

Another concept that the beginning water polo player should understand is to become an open player. The open player is free from the defender and has the ability to make a goal scoring opportunity. The player must constantly try to get open. This is the way that the player aids their team in winning the match. The player must also learn to pass to the open player that is closest and most center to the goal to increase goal scoring opportunities. The player must learn to be alert and how to evaluate the field of play so that the player may be able to make the most correct decision.

Communication and Game Set Up

Fostering communication between the players builds player relationships and promotes the team to work with each other. Teach players to develop this skill and to work as a team. Teach the player to be conscious and respectful of other players. Communication can increase goal scoring opportunities and will aid players in their efforts to create this.

The ability to have structure in a game like situation can be difference between winning and losing a match. The most basic setup is a 3-3 set up. This offensive structure has three players down by the 2m line; along with three players either at the 5m line or a little farther out but not past the 7m line. Teach players to not go past the 2m line without the ball due to the off-sides rule. (A player may not cross the 2m line without the ball; if he or she does it is a contra foul resulting in a turnover) The reason for being past 5m line is that if an ordinary foul is committed then the player can take a shot, if the shot is quick and in an uninterrupted motion. (This is normally taught to more advanced players but the correct player placement in the field of play should be taught at this level.) There is a basic numbering system that is used in player placement. At the goal starting at the lower left hand corner, if you were to be facing the goal, and in a counterclockwise direction you number 1 to 6 with the player numbered 6 at the center and the others (1-5) consist of the perimeter. Spacing should be emphasized. Many beginning players will follow the ball and gravitate towards the ball causing a chaotic pileup and minimizing goal scoring opportunities. This also causes a greater chance of making mistakes that take away goal scoring opportunities. The closer the players are to each other the less effective they are at achieving the goal of scoring the most goals.

Center Offense

The Center is a key player in the game of water polo. The Center is the player that is nearest to the goal and has the most scoring potential of all the other players on the field. A center-based offense is a common strategy that many teams use. The basic concept is that the ball is passed along the perimeter

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until the center is open and is facing the ball; this concept is called “having ball side”. To summarize in a center-based offense the perimeter players are to pass the ball until the center has ball side. If the center never gets ball side then the other options would be to shoot from the perimeter or to switch to a driving offense.

Driving Offense

A driving-based offense is a strategy that requires the perimeter players, usually the top three (2-4), to drive, or quickly swim, either into the center position or to the wing positions (1 or 5). The goal of the driving offense is to create goal scoring opportunities by either drawing major fouls: exclusions or penalties, or out-swimming the defense creating opportunity for the player.

A good offense should be the combination of both a driving and center offense. The versatility of a team to perform both types of offense well generally equals success.

Swimming in a game

As discussed before, swimming is the way players travel in water polo. Though thought to be a natural instinct, the ability to recognize the need to swim towards the goal or to set up in a defensive/offensive formation is something that beginning water polo players need to be taught. Many times in matches between beginning players you see many players playing the game at half tank. The players are far away from the goal and have low chances of scoring. The player, especially beginning players, must understand that swimming in the game is vital to scoring opportunities.

Quarter Turn

A quarter turn is an offensive movement that an attacking player performs to get around the defender. The attacking player positions their opposite shoulder on the chest of the defending player, so that the attacker’s body is perpendicular to the defender’s body. The attacker’s body must be in a semi horizontal position and the legs of the player must be eggbeater. (Fig 6-43) The player, while holding the ball, makes a quarter turn movement in the direction that the player is holding the ball. (Fig. 6-44) The ball is brought forward and the player uses the opposite hand and elbow to create separation and as a pivot to go around the defending player. The legs should eggbeater or breaststroke kick in order to provide propulsion to complete the turn. (Fig. 6-45) This frees the player to pass, shoot, or swim.



Figure 6-43



Figure 6-44



Figure 6-45

Stepping out

Stepping out is also an offensive movement that creates space between the attacker and the defender. The attacker's body must be on perpendicular to the defender, on its side, and the opposite shoulder placed on the defender's chest. The attacker then pushes into the defender with their shoulder and uses that momentum to make a swift movement to the ball. While moving away from the defender the attacker uses the legs in rapid eggbeater to move away from the defender. The attacker then picks up the ball from underneath and rotates to face the defender. The player uses the breaststroke kick to create more separation. This movement allows the player to pass or shoot without pressure from the defender.



Figure 6-46



Figure 6-47



Figure 6-48

Hip Position in regards to ball and player

While defending any player in the field of play the defender should adopt some basic technique. One technique that should be taught to beginning players is to always keep their hips in the direction where the ball is located. This concept of being "between the player and the ball" allows the defender to minimize the chance of the attacker getting the ball. The player should also always keep one hand on the player to keep awareness and provide adequate defense.

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B-PAC (Ball, Player, Area, Center)

This is an acronym used by USA Water Polo's Olympic Development Program. The acronym B-PAC stands for Ball, Player, Area, and Center. The acronym is used to teach players what they need to be aware of while defending: Ball: awareness of the ball's location in the field of play and proper defense according to the location of the ball; Player: awareness of the player's action, including possible actions the attacker could do to gain advantage over the defender; Area: awareness of the actions of others in the area around the defender; Center: awareness of actions of the Center (attacker) and Center Defender. For beginning players the awareness of the ball, player and area should be emphasized because of the lack of sophisticated level of play in the center.

Game Protocol

A water polo match consists of four quarters that vary in time depending on nature of the game and level of play. A shot clock is used allowing a team to only have the ball in possession for a certain amount of time before a turnover occurs. The shot clock also varies on skill level of the players. To begin the match and every quarter a sprint occurs. A sprint is where two players, one from each team sprints to the ball. The victor of the sprint gains possession of the ball first. A foul is committed when a player through illegal methods inhibits the actions of the opposing player. There are two different types of fouls minor and major. A minor foul is also called an ordinary foul. It is a foul of a possession meaning that the defending player uses illegal methods to gain possession of the ball. The ordinary foul results in a guarantee of possession by the attacker, or a free pass. The referee signifies this by one short whistle. A major foul is a foul of position meaning that the defending player uses illegal methods to gain a better position; this can be done by sinking, pulling or holding. If a probable goal was taken away then the major foul would result in a penalty shot. A penalty shot is taken 5m away at center cage. The referee signifies this by two whistle blows and holding a hand out stretched above the head. If there was no probable goal then the major foul would result in an exclusion, which is where the player at fault is removed from the game for 20s, resulting in a power play for the attacking team. The referee indicates an exclusion by three quick whistles followed by the referee pointing to the player then to the player's corner. To avoid confusion the referee then signifies the player's number through hand signals. If the player collects 3 major fouls he is removed from the game. Only a rudimentary knowledge of these fouls is needed to be taught to beginning players.

Referee

The referee in water polo is usually dressed in all white clothing; at certain events the shirt color can be different. The referee communicates through the whistle. The referee's job is to ensure the safety of all players and good game play.

Class Structure and Objective

Splashball/IWP Class Structure:

1. Warm-Up
2. Instruction of Skills
3. Application of Skills (Game-like experiences)
4. Game

Protocols

- Teach kids that if they are early they can go grab equipment and be ready for class.
- Warm Up always written on White Board
- Always have one cage in the water
- ALWAYS wear caps and belts unless instructor says otherwise
- Always be in the water with kids.

Objectives

- Make sure kids are having fun
- Teach children basic water polo skills
- Teach children to enjoy water polo
 - Promote and encourage kids to progress to the 8th grade and under team.
- Teach children Teamwork

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Teaching water polo to younger and beginning players should be fun for the instructor as well as the child. This is very important and should be the primary objective of the instructor. If the kids learn while having fun they associate these new skills with fun and then want to learn and progress more. Always try to be creative in the way that you teach these concepts. I recommend that you as the instructor get know the kids and relate to them as much as you can. By doing this you find ways to better explain the material. Find joy in their success and always help them to overcome their failures.

Reference

Rules

Below are rudimentary explanations of rules that should be taught to beginner players so that they are able to play in the match and have fun.

Field of Play & Equipment

1. The goal line is marked with a white line, 2m line red, 5m line yellow, and half tank marked green
2. The exclusion area is located in the corner on your goalie's end on the side opposite the table.
3. Swim caps worn under water polo caps must be of like color.
4. The home team will wear dark caps while the visiting team will wear white caps.

Teams

1. Teams consist of 7 players, one of which is the goalie.
2. Players must remove any articles likely to cause injury (finger and toe nails cut , jewelry, bracelets, etc.)

Duration of the Game

1. Games are four periods each, with varying times depending on skill level and event characteristics

Method of Scoring

1. A goal is scored when the entire ball has passed full over the goal line, between the goal posts and underneath the crossbar.
2. At least two players must have intentionally played or touched the ball before a goal can be scored, except in the case of a shot after a foul outside 5m.
3. A player may shoot a free throw if the foul was committed more than 5m away from the goal it is done immediately without hesitation.

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Starting Play

1. At the start of each period, the players must take up positions on their defensive wall with at least one hand on the wall or head against the lane line, and no part of their body past the goal line.
2. After a goal has been scored, the players must take up positions anywhere within their respective halves of the field of play. A referee shall blow the whistle to restart the game and a player from the team, not having scored the goal, is awarded a free throw from anywhere within their defensive half.
3. After a time out, the ball will be put into play at mid pool by any player from the team that initiated the timeout. The other players can be positioned anywhere in the field of play.

Free Throws

1. The referee shall blow his/her whistle to declare fouls and signal towards the direction of the attack of the team who was awarded the free throw. Anyone on the team may take the free throw without undue delay.
2. The free throw must be taken where the foul was committed, unless the foul occurred within 2m then the player and ball must be moved to the 2m line and the free throw taken there.
3. A contra foul, or turnover, shall be called if the attacking team unduly delays the taking of a free throw.

Goal Throws

1. This is a free throw taken by the defending goalie after the ball has gone out of bounds being finally touched by a player on the attacking team or deflected by a defending field player blocking a shot.

Corner Throw

1. This is a free throw taken by anyone on the attacking team after the ball traveled out of bounds after having been last touched by the defending goalie. The throw must be taken at 2m.

Ordinary Fouls

1. All of the following are ordinary fouls punished by the award of a free throw to the opposing team:
 - a. To impede or to otherwise prevent the free movement of an opponent who is not holding the ball

- b. To push or push off of an opponent
- c. To hold onto or push off of the bottom or sides of the pool or the goal posts (The resulting consequence of using the bottom to block a shot is a penalty shot.)
- d. To take or hold the ball under the water while a defender is playing correct defense. (The resulting outcome if the goalie were to take the ball under the water would be a penalty shot)
- e. To be within two meters of the opponents goal without possession of the ball, or behind the line of the ball. (When the ball is taken past 2m the line of the ball, an imaginary horizontal line that marks where the ball is, becomes the new 2m line and standard for off sides.
- f. For the team to retain possession of the ball for more than the allotted shot clock time. (The shot clock is reset after a change in possession or a shot is taken)

Exclusion Fouls (Ejections)

1. Exclusion fouls result in a free throw for the attacking team and the seclusion of the player who committed the foul. The excluded player must go to the exclusion area, and may re-enter at the earliest occurrence of the following:
 - a. When 20 sec of actual play have elapsed
 - b. When a goal has been scored
 - c. When the excluded player's team has retaken possession of the ball
2. An excluded player may not reenter the field of play until they have reached the exclusion area, unless a goal occurs.
3. The following are exclusion fouls:
 - a. To hold, sink, or pull back an opponent who is not holding the ball.
 - b. To interfere with the taking of a free throw
 - c. To intentionally splash in the face of an opponent
 - d. For an excluded player to reenter field of play improperly: such as pushing of the wall, diving in, or reentering at the wrong place
 - e. To interfere with taking penalty throws

Penalty Shots

1. The following are major fouls which result in a penalty shot
 - a. For defending player to commit a major foul within 5m where there was the opportunity for a probable goal

Aquatic Adventures

- b. For an excluded player to intentionally interfere with play
- c. For a goalie to take the ball under water while a defender is defending the goalie

Example of Lesson Plans

This is an example curriculum that was developed. This should give you, the instructor, an idea of what to do and how much to expect to accomplish in a lesson. This was the 6x1hr Lesson Block.

Day 1:

- Head Up Free
- Head Up Back
- Dribbling
- Eggbeater
- Passing Skills
- Shooting
- Moving while eggbeatering

Day 2:

- Pump
- Picking up ball from underneath
- Transfer weak hand to strong hand
- Review Shooting
- Review Eggbeater

Day 3:

- Breaststroke Kick
- Flutter Kick
- Passing at longer distances

Water Polo: Splashball and Intro to Water Polo

- Shooting drills: UCLA, Pass *then* Shoot
- Off water shots: T-shot, Shove Shot, Screw Shot
- Game Setup: Numbering System, Player Position relative to the field of play and other players.

Day 4:

- Goalie Skills
 - Lunges
 - Pull Downs
 - Sculling
- Passing while Swimming
- Shooting w/goalie in cage

Day 5:

- Passing: "dry"
- Using Breaststroke Kick in game-like situations
- Up-Slide-Up

Day 6:

- Scrimmage
 - Sprint
 - Defense
 - Communication
 - Set Up

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