

Water Polo Positions & Terminology

I. Positions

Driver - Drivers are field players who specialize in driving skills and quick shooting techniques. Drivers must be extremely fast swimmers and have above average hand-eye coordination. They also focus considerable attention on defensive play.

Goalkeeper - The goalkeeper, or goalie, is the only player permitted to take the ball in both hands or punch it so long as he is within his own 4 meter line. He patrols the 3m long goal area and is called upon to make "saves" to prevent opponent's scoring. Within the 4m area, the goalie is permitted to stand during play. He is not allowed to go beyond the half-distance line, but is allowed to shoot at the opponent's goal, as long as he does so from his half of the pool.

Hole set (Two-meter man) - The two-meter man is the offensive player who takes position directly in front of the opponent's goal, between the 2m and 5m lines. The best hole players have above average size, great leg strength, excellent passing abilities and are skilled in specialized goal scoring. The two-meter players are always closely guarded.

II. Terminology

Advantage Rule: permits a referee to refrain from declaring a foul if the foul would benefit the offender's team. Applied properly, the rule serves to speed up the game.

Assist: where an offensive player passes the ball to a teammate and he scores.

Backhand: a pass or shot made with either a bent or straight arm in which the ball is projected directly behind the thrower.

Ball under: an ordinary foul - taking or holding the ball under water when an opponent makes bodily contact with the shoulder, arm or hand.

Caps: identification headgear with plastic ear guards and visible number worn by all players. One team wears white, the other dark. Goalkeepers wear red.

Choice of ends: the decision about which goal defend determined by the toss of a coin. In pools with one deep end and one end shallow, it is believed to be an advantage to attack the deep end in the final period.

Corner throw: offensive player putting the ball into play at the 2m mark on the side nearest to which the ball crossed the goal line.

Counterattack: offensive strategy that seeks to create a fast break or advantage situation at the offensive end after a turnover by the opponent in the defensive end of the pool.

Dead time: usually refers to the time between the whistle for foul, which stops the clock, and the restarting of the clock after the ball is put in play.

Donut: a goal that is scored by a hard shot that is aimed close to the goalkeeper's head.

Dribbling: the technique of moving and controlling the ball while swimming.

Drive: quick swimming movement made toward the goal by an offensive player without the ball.

Drop: almost a zone defense where the defensive players drop back to help protect the center of the pool and help block shots. The ball carrier must be pressured to force a bad pass or hurried shot.

Dry pass: a pass made when there is a need for a quick reception by the receiver and the ball may be caught without touching the water.

Eggbeater: the alternating leg kick, like a breaststroke kick, that enables players to lift themselves vertically out of the water while constantly treading water.

Ejection: occurs when a defensive player is whistled for a major foul (e.g. pulling back, striking or kicking, Advantage Rule, dead time, splashing, etc.)

Ejection area: an area behind the goal line and opposite from the desk where penalty makes him leave defensive positioning to the advantage of the offensive player.

Feinting (faking): a body, arm, or eye movement, which freezes a defensive player or makes him leave defensive positioning to the advantage of the offensive player.

Field player: a player other than the goalkeeper.

Flat: the area in the pool generally positioned 5 to 8 meters out from the goal posts. The 'flat' is the position from which most drives are initiated.

Forfeit: when a team fails to comply with the rules, decides not to complete a game for any reason, or fails to appear. The referee may declare the game a forfeit and the score will be recorded 5-0.

Free throw: the method of putting the ball in play after a team is awarded the ball by the referee after a penalty. The free throw must be taken from the point of the infraction, unless otherwise specified, and by the player closest to that spot.

Fronting: defensive positioning whereby the hold guard gets in the passing lane (between the ball and the hole set), thereby preventing the hole set from receiving a pass.

Goal throw: a free throw awarded to the goalkeeper after a member of the offensive team has caused the ball to go out of bounds across the goal line.

Greenie: a vertical, quick shot taken by a perimeter player following a pass from the two-meter position. Pass and shot are taken quickly in an effort to "catch" the perimeter defender and goalkeeper by surprise.

Man-down/man-up (6 on 5 extra man): when a defensive player commits a major foul and is ejected for 20 seconds, the offensive team has a "man" advantage.

Natural goal: a goal scored from open play when both teams are at full strength, as opposed to a goal scored from a penalty throw or a many-up situation.

Outlet: a pass from the goalkeeper to a field player after a save to begin a counterattack.

Penalty shot: free shot at goal, taken upon the signal of the referees, from any point along the 4m line with only the goalkeeper between the penalty taker and the goal.

Personal foul: a foul that results in exclusion or a penalty shot. Any player committing three personal fouls is excluded from the remainder of the game.

Press: the basic "man to man" defense that is the most commonly used strategy. The idea is to guard each offensive player tightly without fouling. Defenders should always position themselves between their goal and the player they are guarding.

Red marks: the line 2m from the goal line.

Shot clock: as in basketball, a team has 35 seconds to shoot the ball. The clocks are located at the edge of the pool.

Slough: a defensive strategy whereby a defensive player drops off the attacker being guarded to adopt a position to guard an offensive player who is attacking from a more dangerous situation.

Stationary pick: when an offensive player swims a defender into another (usually unseen) offensive player, similar to setting a screen in basketball.

Steal: when a defensive player gains possession of the ball from the offensive team.

Substitutions: replacing one player with another. This may occur at any time in the ejection area, or between periods, after a goal is scored, or to replace an ejected player.

Swim off: the players taking up positions on their respective goal lines and swimming toward the ball at the center of the pool at the blast of the referee's whistle. This occurs at the beginning of each period.

Tackling: holding, sinking, grabbing, and pulling back a player who is holding the ball, not a foul so long as it is not done in a manner likely to injure the offensive player.

Turnover: when a player loses possession of the ball to the opposition.

Wet shot: a shot that is attempted while the ball is controlled in the water. Usually a quick wrist shot. Also called an "off the water shot."

Yellow marks: the line 4 meters from the goal line.