Scottish Swimming

Water Polo Poolside Helper

Course Outline

The aim of the poolside helper is to provide you with the knowledge, skills and understanding to assist on poolside in your chosen water polo club. The course will be practical learning based within your home club environment with support to help you develop and assist the water polo athletes and the club. The certificate for this course will be valid for 2 years and will help you in progressing towards undertaking a coaching qualification.

From this course you will be able to:

- **Support a qualified water polo coach on poolside.**
- **Safely set up, use, dismantle and put away equipment.**
- **Understand the importance of Health & Safety in an aquatic environment.**
- **Effectively communicate with water polo athletes.**
- **Understand basic rules and principles of water pool.**

Roles and responsibilities of Club Poolside Helper



Support Pool organisation

- Organise athletes
- Ensure safe lane discipline for warmups
- Set up pitch using cones

Communicate with the athletes

- Informing athletes of basic session plan
- Passing on basic technical information
- Answering questions from the athletes
- Ensure basic rules are adhered to during training
- Ensure athletes are following instructions correctly

Record information

- Taking register
- Recording scores and major fouls during training games
- Assist with time keeping and shot clocks
- Support recording of test results e.g. bleep test, swim tests

Pool Organisation



There are various aspects that a club poolside helper will support in regard to pool organisation.

Swimming

- Direction of lanes - alternating direction of travel
- Organise wave orders
- Ensuring the athletes have correct gaps between each other (5/10secs)
- Organising equipment for the session

Ball Work

- Have equipment (i.e. balls/ caps) set up for each group
- Ensure groups are spaced out appropriately
- Ensure drills are started and completed in the correct position of the pool

Game play

- Ensure equipment and pitch is set up properly
- Ensure correct number of players in the water
- Support with recording scores and major fouls during training games

Health & Safety



A good club poolside helper always operates in a safe, responsible manner according to guidelines and acceptable standards of good practice. As a poolside helper, you will need to:

1. Identify potential hazards and risks around your working area.
2. Identify relevant information on procedures for health, safety and emergencies.
3. Check equipment for damage and cleanliness
4. Set up and put away equipment safely and effectively.
5. Report any problems to the person responsible (in the first instance the lead coach)
6. Be able to seek guidance from a centre manager or supervisor if required.
7. Maintain a tidy and safe poolside area during training sessions.

Coaching Aids and Equipment



As a club poolside helper you will know the different equipment aids and their uses, including how to use these in the correct manner.

1. Balls
2. Cones
3. Goals
4. Caps
5. Timing equipment
6. Resistance bands
7. Goggles
8. Foam roller
9. Rebound nets
10. Stopwatches
11. Medicine balls
12. Kickboard/pull buoy

Understanding a session plan



As a club poolside helper, you will need to understand the basic principles of a water polo session:

1. Swimming/fitness
2. Drills
   a. Body position
   b. Passing
   c. Shooting
3. Game play and basic tactics

There are also many Water Polo specific terms that are used by coaches – Please see glossary of terms. Some of these may be individual to coaches and clubs. As a poolside helper you are not expected to have an extensive knowledge of the sport of water polo in the first instance. This is something you gradually build on through shadowing training sessions alongside experienced coaches.

Supervising Water Polo Players



As a Club Poolside helper, you will not be solely responsible for the water polo athletes but in conjunction with your coach you will be responsible for supervising and overseeing the session. You will also ensure as part of the organisation everyone's safety, understanding and general wellbeing.

Recording Information



As a club poolside helper you will be required to assist your coach in noting information during the training session. To be able to do this effectively you will need to ensure you are prepared. You should either bring your own or know where they are stored.

- Ensure you have writing materials or electronic device
- Stopwatch
- Match sheet
- Clearly understand the information you are recording
- List of athlete names/ cap numbers
- Let the coach know if you have missed any information

Responsibility for running a session



As a club poolside helper you will be responsible for instructing the athletes during the session, as directed by the coach. To be able to do this you will need to ensure that you:

1. Know the water polo squad you are instructing and their ability level
2. Ensure that you understand the basic principles of the session plan being delivered.
3. Have all the equipment that is required and is ready prior to starting
4. Have the attention of all the water polo athletes
5. Check the water polo athletes understand instructions to carry out the activity
6. Check the water polo athletes are completing the activity properly
7. Have support from the coach and in full view throughout the session

Stages of Learning



As a club poolside helper, is essential that you understand that athletes go through several stages of learning and that it takes time to develop skills, so that they can be repeated effectively.

- **Stage 1** (Cognitive) Athletes will not be able to do the skill but will learn to understand what is required for them to achieve the result.
- **Stage 2** (Associative) Athletes will be able to do the skill sometimes. They will need to repeatedly practice it correctly. They may improve and regress through this stage and will need support and feedback to help improve.
- **Stage 3** (Autonomous) Athletes will have learnt to do the skill automatically without much thought. During this stage, they will need to keep practicing to ensure that they can maintain the skills.

* All athletes learn at different paces. There is not a 'normal' leaning pace. As a poolside helper you should be aware of the different development and learning levels.

Communication



As a club poolside helper you will need to use a range of skills to help communicate with the athletes. The two types of communication are Verbal and Non-Verbal. When communicating with athletes, you need to ensure that: all athletes can see and hear you; you are clear and concise; you use body language and hand signals to aid instructions; and all athletes understand the instructions.

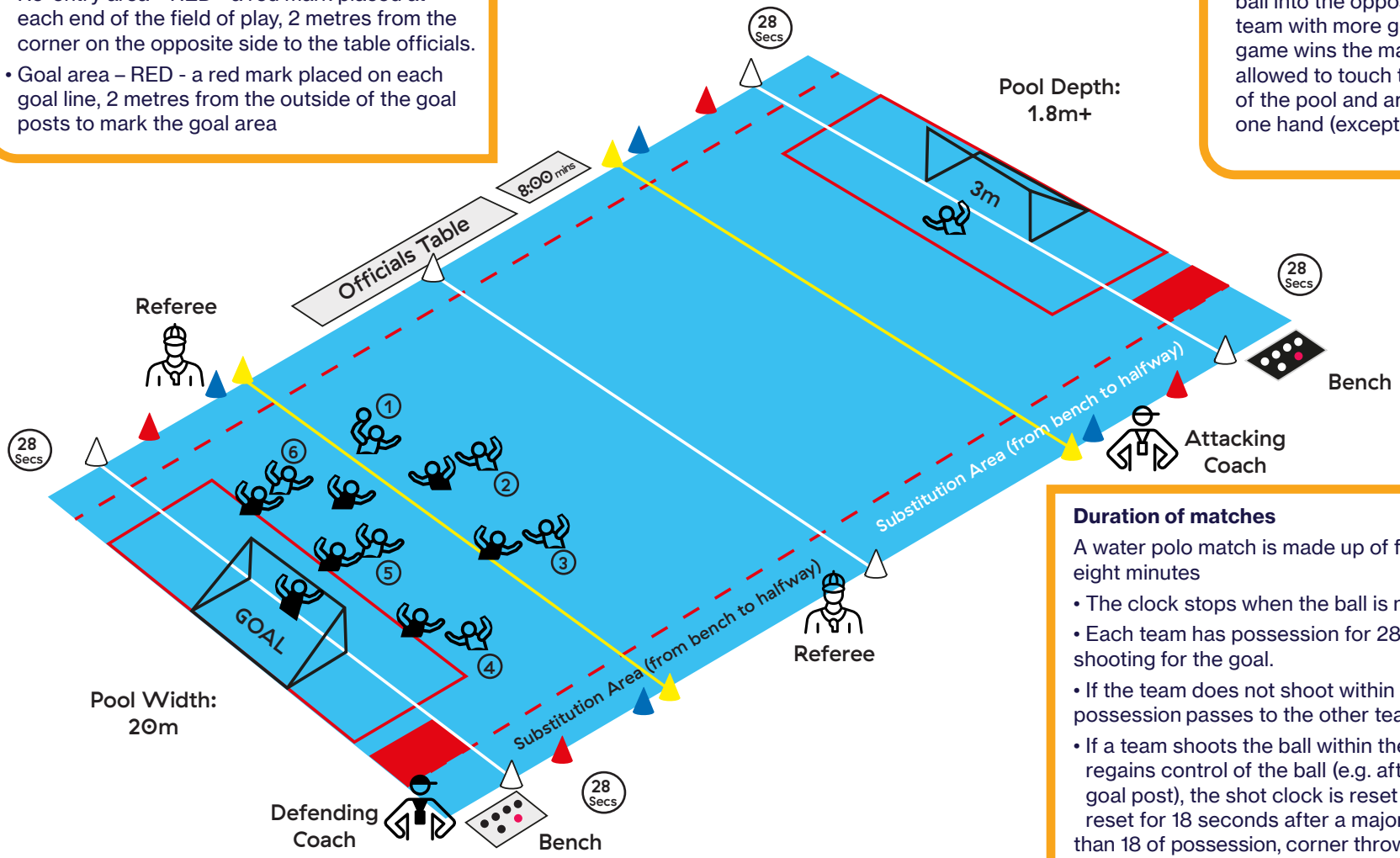
Athletes will also benefit from praise and feedback, make sure that this is **POSITIVE** and **CONSTRUCTIVE.**

Notes

Basic Rules of Water Polo

Pitch layout & cone markers

- Goal line and half distance - WHITE
- Two metres from the goal line - RED
- Five metres from the goal line - RED
- Six metres from the goal line - YELLOW
- Re-entry area – RED - a red mark placed at each end of the field of play, 2 metres from the corner on the opposite side to the table officials.
- Goal area – RED - a red mark placed on each goal line, 2 metres from the outside of the goal posts to mark the goal area



Basic rules:

Water polo is a competitive team sport played in water between two teams of seven players each. The game consists of four quarters in which the teams attempt to score goals by throwing the ball into the opposing team's goal. The team with more goals at the end of the game wins the match. Players are not allowed to touch the sides or the bottom of the pool and are only allowed to use one hand (except the goalkeeper).

Duration of matches

A water polo match is made up of four quarters, each lasting eight minutes

- The clock stops when the ball is not in play.
- Each team has possession for 28 seconds before shooting for the goal.
- If the team does not shoot within 28 seconds, possession passes to the other team
- If a team shoots the ball within the allotted time, and regains control of the ball (e.g. after a rebound from the goal post), the shot clock is reset to 18 seconds. It is also reset for 18 seconds after a major (exclusion) foul if less than 18 of possession, corner throw, or rebound from a penalty throw if the attacking team retain possession.

*duration of games can be modified to suit local conditions

Basic Rules of Water Polo continued

Substitution

Rolling substitutes are allowed during play via the re-entry area. Players need to re-enter the water correctly - including touching hands above the water.

Players are only allowed to substitute without the use of the re-entry area during 'dead-time' (the game has been stopped by a referee) in the following situations:

- after a goal has been scored, before play is restarted
- during a time out
- during intervals between periods

If a player attempts to substitute by jumping directly into the pool without using the re-entry area during any other situation, they are likely to receive a red card for illegal entry.

Scoring a goal

The whole ball must pass fully over the goal line (front of goalposts).

A player can score directly by means of:

- a penalty throw or corner throw
- an immediate shot from a goal throw or corner throw
- an immediate shot from a free throw awarded outside 6m
- a free throw taken outside 6m, or a corner throw, after the player has visibly put the ball into play

Throws

Free throw

- A free throw in water polo is a method for restarting play after a foul or when the ball goes out of bounds. The team that was fouled or did not touch the ball last is awarded the free throw. The throw is taken at the location of the ball (or on the 2m line - if the ball is inside the goal area)

Penalty Throw

- Taken by any member of the team, on the opponents' 5m line.

Corner throw

Given when the ball goes out of play behind the goal line, either:

- last touched by the defending team's goalkeeper
- or deliberately put out by a defending player.
- Taken from the 2m mark at the side line (not further into the pool)

Fouls

Ordinary foul - The punishment for an ordinary foul is a free throw to the other team

Exclusion foul - The normal punishment for an exclusion foul is a free throw to the opposing team and the exclusion of the player who committed the foul. Each player is allowed a maximum of 3 exclusion fouls before being removed from the game.

- The excluded player must swim to their team's re-entry area without leaving the water or interfering with play.
- They must visibly rise to the surface of the water within this area * above the water with the substitute (if applicable) before one of them can re-enter.
- They (or a substitute) can re-enter after:
  - 18 seconds of play have elapsed and the secretary has raised the appropriate flag
  - their team has gained possession of the ball and the referee has waved them in
  - their team is awarded a free throw or goal throw.

Penalty Fouls

- Defender committing any foul within the 6m area if a goal would probably have resulted.



Basic principles of Water Polo

Swimming techniques

- Water Polo front crawl – elbows wide, short stroke, hips up and head facing forward looking for the ball
- Water Polo back crawl – elbows wide, drop hips, seated position, breaststroke kick, head up looking for the ball
- Vertical eggbeater – The eggbeater kick is a fundamental skill in water polo that allows players to tread water and stay afloat. Make large circles with your legs, one at a time.
  - Keep your upper body upright.
  - Keep your thighs at a 90 degree angle from your torso.
  - Keep your knees bent and toes pointing towards shin.
  - Lightly scull
- Horizontal eggbeater – change body position to horizontal

Throwing

- Body position; boxing stance- non dominant shoulder forward, hips and legs underneath with wide stance, strong eggbeater kick. Front arm across body protecting the space, Dominant/ throwing arm behind body with ball.
- Throwing; strong eggbeater kick to lift body as high as possible out of the water, as you do this propel arm forward with ball, pointing shoulder-elbow-wrist-fingers towards target.
- Use throwing technique to aim for passing to team member or shooting at the goal.

Catching

- Body position same as throwing technique (boxing stance), have dominant hand out of water for team mate to pass to. Use strong eggbeater to lift body as high as possible out of the water, move arm backwards with momentum of the ball as the ball makes contact with hand (provide cushion for the ball). Use open hand with wrist and palm facing direction ball is travelling from.

Basic Game Play

Attack

Positions 1 & 5 – wings at 2m
Positions 2 & 4 – Drives at 6m just outside goal width
Position 3 – Point/ Centre Back just outside 6m in centre of goal
Position 6 – Centre Forward 2m in centre of goal

Defence attempt to stay between attacker & goal

Basic man-up/ man down (4-2)

Man up – opposition player has been excluded
Man down – team mate has been excluded

Attack:

Position 1 & 4 – Wings at 2m
Positions 2 & 3 – Top at 6m opposite each post
Positions 5 & 6 – On each post at 2m

Defence attempt to block and defend/ move between 2 attacking players

In attack move the ball quickly, try to keep the ball dry when passing between players. Create movement to break down defence and create shooting opportunities. Protect the ball using your body to stay between defender and ball.

In defence attempt to stay between attacker & goal. If possible, try to block or steal passes or shots from the attacking team. Players can only block with one hand (except form Goalkeeper who can block with 2).

Glossary of Terms

- **2 meter line** – The line at each end of the pool crossing 2 meters in front of the goal, designated by a red cone on the edge of the pool. The edge of the playing area from the 2 meter mark to the goal line is a red line.
- **2 meter zone or area (GK Box)** – The area between the 2 meter line and the goal line. No attacking player may be in this area without the ball.
- **4-2 man up** – Team on offense positions four players on the 2 meter line, and two players on 6 meter line.
- **5 meter line** – The line in which a penalty shot must be taken from. Designated by a red cone on the edge of the pool.
- **6 meter line** – The line at each end of the pool crossing 6 meters in front of the goal, designated by a yellow cone on the edge of the pool. The edge of the pool from the 6 meter mark to the 2 meter mark is a yellow line. A player may shoot at the goal from beyond this line without taking a free pass after an ordinary foul, if the shot is made with one continuous motion.
- **advantage rule** – The referee may refrain from calling a foul if it would give an advantage to the offending player's team.
- **ARC** – An offensive set up where the perimeter players form an arc around the goal with the centre forward in the centre of the goal on the 2m line.
- **assist** – A pass to a teammate that leads directly to scoring a goal.
- **attacker** – A field player on the team in possession of the ball
- **back door** – Offensive player on the weak side gets behind their defender and open for a quick shot
- **Backhand/ back hook** – A pass or shot in which the ball carrier flips the ball directly behind him/her.
- **ball** – A water polo ball is usually a bright yellow color with a gripable surface, allowing it to be held with one hand
- **ball under** – The player holding the ball, if it is forced under water as a result of contact with a defender, is charged with an ordinary foul, and loses possession. If the GK puts the ball under while under pressure this will result in a penalty to the opposing team.
- **bounce shot** – Executed by throwing the ball at an angle directly into the water. If done properly and with enough force, the ball will skip off the water into the goal, since the goalkeeper cannot easily anticipate the angle.
- **caps** – The home team wear white caps and away team wear dark caps. Both starting goalkeepers wear red caps, numbered "1".
- **centre Back/ Pit Defence** – Defense player or position on the 2 meter line directly in front of the goal.
- **centre Forward/ Pit attack** – Offense player or position on the 2 meter line directly in front of the opposing team's goal.
- **corner throw** – Free throw awarded to the attacking team when the ball is deflected over the goal line and out of the playing area by the goalkeeper (but NOT defending field player). An attacker puts the ball in play from the 2 meter mark at the edge of the pool.
- **counterattack/ counter** – Transition when the defensive team regains control of the ball, advances the ball and sets up offense in front of the opponent's goal.
- **cover back** – Call to defensive teammates to defend players between them and their goal.
- **crash back** – defensive field players swim back rapidly to the center of their end as soon as the other team recovers possession, to counter the offensive counterattack
- **double pit** – Offense with two attackers on the 2 meter line in front of the opponent's goal.
- **draw a foul (ejection)** – Causing an opponent to receive a foul (or ejection).
- **driver** – A perimeter player in the arc, positioned on either side of the point, who attempts to swim toward the goal to escape their defender, receive the ball and score.
- **drop** – Defenders swim back to the attacking centre forward to block passes to this player and outside shots by advancing attackers.
- **dry pass** – A pass thrown and caught in one hand between players; the ball does not touch the water.
- **dumping the ball** – An attacking player throws the ball into a far corner, away from the defenders, before the 30 seconds of possession expires for their team, to avoid a fast break opportunity for the opposing team.
- **egg-beater** – A form of treading water, named because the circular movement of the legs resembles the motion of an egg-beater. This kick allows the player to maintain a constant position to the water level, and also by kicking faster for a brief period the player can get high out of the water for a block, pass, or shot.

- **faking** – When shooting, the player gets in position to shoot but stops halfway through, immobilizing or misdirecting the goalkeeper before releasing the ball. This can be done several times in a row.
- **fast break** – The team recovering the ball, usually after an unexpected turnover, sprints to the opponent's goal to gain an advantage in numbers or position, and an easy goal.
- **field player** – One of a team's six players who swim up and down the field of play, excluding the goalkeeper.
- **fouls** – Ordinary or minor foul: The referee signals with one short whistle blow and points one hand to the spot of the foul and the other hand in the direction of the team who gains possession. Play continues immediately.
  - If by a defender preventing the free movement of an opponent who is not holding the ball, the attacking team has a free throw. The player fouled has three seconds to make a free pass to another offensive player.
  - If the attacking team delays play, allows the ball to be pushed underwater, has a player inside the two meter area without the ball or pushes a defending player to create space for a pass or shot, the opposing team is given possession of the ball and play resumes immediately.
  - **Exclusion or major foul (kick-out)**: A referee signals a major foul by two short whistle bursts and indicates that the player must leave the field without impacting play and move to the penalty area for eighteen seconds.
  - Dunking, intentional splashing, or pulling an opponent back who does not have the ball, also interfering with a free throw or attempting to block a shot with two hands.
  - Striking another player intentionally, misconduct or disrespect will also result in exclusion for the entire game.
  - **Penalty foul:** The referee signals by blowing their whistle and raising five fingers.
  - Any foul is committed inside the 6-meter line and the offensive player had an opportunity to score, or a goal was prevented by the foul. A penalty shot is awarded from the five meter line.

  Exclusion and penalty fouls are called personal fouls. A player who receives three personal fouls must sit out the remainder of the match.
- **free throw** – After an ordinary foul, a player of the team retaining possession of the ball puts the ball in play without delay. The defender may not challenge the player in possession until the ball leaves their hand. After a foul, the player putting the ball in play may only make a direct shot on goal if he/she is beyond the 6 meter line and shoots with one continuous motion.
- **front marking** – Defensive tactic by the pit defender when guarding the center forward close to the 2 meter line. The pit defender moves between the center forward and the ball to cut off the passing lane.
- **give and go** – Offensive move where player passes the ball and then drives toward the goal to receive a pass and attempt a shot
- **goal** – Refers to both the result of a score and the physical structure that defines where a score is achieved. A goal is scored after the ball passes completely over the goal line, between the goal posts and under the crossbar.
- **goal line** – The line at each end of the pool crossing the front of the goal, designated by a white mark on the edge of the pool.
- **goalkeeper or goalie** – The player for each team assigned to remain directly in front of the goal to prevent the opposite team from scoring. Within the six meter area in front of their goal, the goalkeeper may touch the ball with two hands, strike the ball with a clenched fist and touch the bottom of the pool (pool depth permitting). Both goalkeepers wear quartered red caps, numbered "1" or "13".
- **goal throw** – A free pass by the defending goalkeeper from behind the 2 meter line to restart play, if anyone but the defending goalkeeper was last to touch the ball before it went out over the goal line.
- **halfway line** – The midpoint of the pool or playing area, designated on the pool edge by a white cone. The ball is dropped here at the start of play.
- **impede** – Defensive guarding that prevents a player from moving; a foul if the impeded player does not have the ball.
- **inside water** – Best position for a defender: between the attacker he/she is guarding and the goal.
- **high press** – Defenders closely guard the player with the ball and attempt to block the passing lanes.
- **lob shot** – An shot thrown with a high arc, intended to pass over the goalie's hands and under the crossbar.

- **man to man** – Defensive tactic where each attacker is guarded by a specific defender, regardless of their position on the field of play.
- **man up** – A team has one player more than its opponent, after a player of the opposing team is ejected for an exclusion foul.
- **misconduct** – Any behaviour that is against the rules or spirit of the games such as using unacceptable language, being violent or showing disrespect. A player may be ejected for the remainder of the game if they commit misconduct (red card).
- **neutral throw** – The referee restarts play by throwing the ball into the pool between two opposing players, giving each an equal opportunity to recover the ball. A neutral throw results when players of each team commit a fouls at the same time, or if the referees disagree on which team committed a foul.
- **passing lane** – The path between the player with the ball and their teammate to whom he/she intends to pass.
- **period/quarter** – The game is divided into four periods/ quarters; the length depends on the level of play. Normally 8mins per period.
- **penalty shootout** – A tie breaker if the score is tied after 4 periods. Five players and a goalkeeper are chosen by the coaches of each team. Players shoot from the 5-meter line alternately at either end of the pool in turn until all five have taken a shot. If the score is still tied, the same players shoot alternately until one team misses and the other scores, deciding the winner.
- **penalty throw** – A shot awarded when any foul is committed inside the six meter line and the offensive player had an opportunity to score, or a goal was prevented by the foul. The penalty shot is attempted from five meters with play stopped. Any defenders flanking the player taking the shot must be no closer than two meters to the side and back on the 6m line. The goalkeeper must be on the goal line. The referee signals with a whistle and by lowering their arm, and the player taking the penalty shot must immediately throw the ball with an uninterrupted motion toward the goal.
- **point** – Position on offense in the center of the line furthest from the goal. The point player's position provides opportunities to pass to teammates and communicate among the offense,
- **possession** – Undisputed control of the ball. The team with the ball has 28 seconds to take a shot until possession is given to the opposing team.
- **press** – Defensive pressure on the attacking team by closely defending each player man to man.
- **rebound** – After an unsuccessful shot at the goal, the ball becomes free in the water, and can be recovered by the offense for another goal attempt or by the defense for a counterattack. A rebound after a shot on goal resets the 18 second possession clock.
- **red card** – Shown by a referee to signify that a coach, substitute, or bench personnel has been excluded for misconduct, and is required to leave the pool area immediately and cannot return to the game.
- **red flag** – A red flag is used by officials at the scorer/timekeeper's table to signal when a player has received three exclusion fouls and must sit out the rest of the game
- **re-entry area** – Area at each end of the pool next to each team bench, designated by a red box, where players may enter and exit the playing area for substitution or exclusion penalties.
- **referee** – The two referees control the players, game play and the playing area throughout the match. Their decisions are final including rule infractions, fouls, scoring, possession of the ball and rulings of the timekeeper and goal judges. One referee stands on each side of the pool. The referee with the goal to their right when a team is on the attack is called the attacking or offensive referee. The other, the defensive referee, remains as far back as the attacking player who is furthest from the goal. When the other team regains the ball, their roles reverse as the ball moves to the other goal
- **release** – To break free from a defender to receive a pass.
- **save** – Successful blocked shot by the goalkeeper. Also called a stop
- **setting a screen (or pick)** – An offense player is positioned to allow their teammate to swim by, while blocking or delaying their defender.
- **shot clock** – A clock at each corner of the pool deck counting down (from 28 seconds) the time remaining for a team to take a shot. Also known as the possession clock. The shot clock counts down from 18 seconds in the case of an exclusion foul, corner and a rebound.
- **stalling** – Failing to take a shot within 28 seconds or intentional delay in advancing the ball results in a turnover.
- **steal** – A steal occurs when a defensive player or goalkeeper legally causes a turnover by their positive, aggressive action(s).
- **swim off** – At the start of each period, teams line up on their own goal line. At the referee's whistle, both teams swim to midpoint of the field, where the referee drops the ball. The first team to recover the ball begins their offense.

- **switch** – Players change defensive assignments to cover a teammate who has fallen behind an opponent, or to match up better with an offensive player in size or speed.
- **table official** – A group people who keep track of time and score during the game. They also record other important events such as time outs, penalties and exclusions.
- **timeout** – Each team may call two 60 second timeouts in the four periods of regulation play. During game play, only the team in possession of the ball may call a timeout.
- **turn a defender** – An offensive move to get by an opponent using leverage or strength. The result is a 180 degree turn, where the defender is "wheeled" around, resulting in the attacking player possessing inside-water, or position towards the goal, with the defender trailing behind. This manoeuvre often results in the defender being forced to foul.
- **turnover** – A team loses possession of the ball, which reverts to the opponent, as a result of a foul or possession for more than 30 seconds without a shot on goal.
- **violent action** – A violent foul with intention to harm. The fouling player is ejected from the game without substitution. The opponents are awarded a penalty shot, and the ejected player's team plays one man down for the next four minutes of game time. This type of foul is signaled by the referee by crossing the arms in the form of an X.
- **walk it in** – The attacker grips the ball in one hand and either eggbeaters or strokes in taking the space toward the goal.
- **wet pass** – A deliberate pass into the water, just out of reach of the intended teammate and their defender. The receiving player can then lunge towards the ball and out of the water to make a shot or pass.
- **wing** – The position on offense on either side of the center forward, along the 2 meter line. Players at this position may set screens for the drivers and recover rebounds.
- **wrapped** – A player is "wrapped" when they receive a red card due to the hand action the referee makes to signal this. They are removed from play for misconduct and may not return for the remainder of the game.
- **yellow card** – Shown by the referee to indicate that a coach, substitute, or bench personnel has been officially cautioned for misconduct, but may continue participating in the game. If a person receives a second yellow card caution, it has the effect of receiving a red card, and the individual must leave the playing area for the rest of the match. Players out of the water are not shown a yellow card in Water Polo.
- **zone** – Defensive arrangement in which players are assigned to defend an area, rather than a specific opponent.

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