

WATER POLO



GENERAL STRATEGIES

Water polo is a tough sport. All these keys to improvement can be practiced regardless of skill level.

- **Awareness:** Always read the game. Where is the ball? Where is the attack? Where is the defense? Make smart decisions based on the game situation. Swim with your head up as much as possible.
- **Body Position:** Defense: Hips up. Choose where your attacker can drive. Use your body position to limit the attack's options. Offense: Help the ball by creating a safe place that you can receive into. Make a plan before you receive the ball to speed up your execution. Use your body to block and screen for your teammates. Take advantage of your teammates to block and screen for you. Protect the ball with your shoulder and body. Commit the defense by allowing space between you and your teammates. Especially on exclusions, use your body to create or discourage shooting lanes.
- **Goalie:** Offense: What part of the cage is the goalie protecting? Where is the shot available? Get the ball to the shot if it is not at you. Defense: Always help the goalie. Be sure the ball is protected before leaving for the counter.
- **Communication:** Offense: Tell your teammates where the open man is and where there is danger. Defense: Help cover all attackers, call for help when you are beat. Ask the Goalie to indicate the position of the ball on counterattack. Ask the Goalie to talk to you to adjust the defense.
- **Anticipation through Pattern Recognition:** Offense: Watch your teammates shoot so you can know when they are shooting in a game so you can be ready to counter. Know where they like to receive the ball. Create shooting situations for good shooters. Defense: Notice your man's tendencies. Overall: Notice and react to the tendency of the ref. What is allowed and what is not? How are fouls being called? Two refs watch much more closely than one ref. Adjust your game to the situation.
- **Teamwork:** Offense: Help the ball. Pass well. Create opportunities for the team. Thank the passer when you score off a good pass. Defense: Cover the greatest threat first. Call for help or switch when there is a threat you can't cover. General: Have a good attitude, help and encourage others, take responsibility for failures and compliment others when they are instrumental to team successes.
- **Contact:** Do not initiate more contact that you are willing to have used against you. Never make contact out of emotion or without a specific water polo purpose. Remember that a 98 pound attacker might have a 300 pound teammate watching his back.
- **Practice:** Good fundamentals and water polo specific work are keys to continued improvement.

Respect the game, follow your coach's game plan, do not talk to the ref and respect every player.

IT'S OKAY TO PLAY IN THE WATER