

Chapter 4

Individual Offensive Ball Handling Skills

As in any sport, in order to develop the motor pathways necessary for coordinated motions players should start with **basic** water polo skills and move to more complex physical tasks. This chapter will follow a progression which will evolve from simple to complex. Photos will be used for each skill in order to provide the reader with a visual example of each of the skills. The skills in this chapter will all be offensive skills.

A. Ball pick up – under water and on top of the water:

The player will need to execute this skill both as part of his(her) swimming/dribbling motion and as a “stand alone” motion. A clean pick up of the ball is the foundation of any sort of pass or shot, and therefore needs lots of practice.

Technique points:

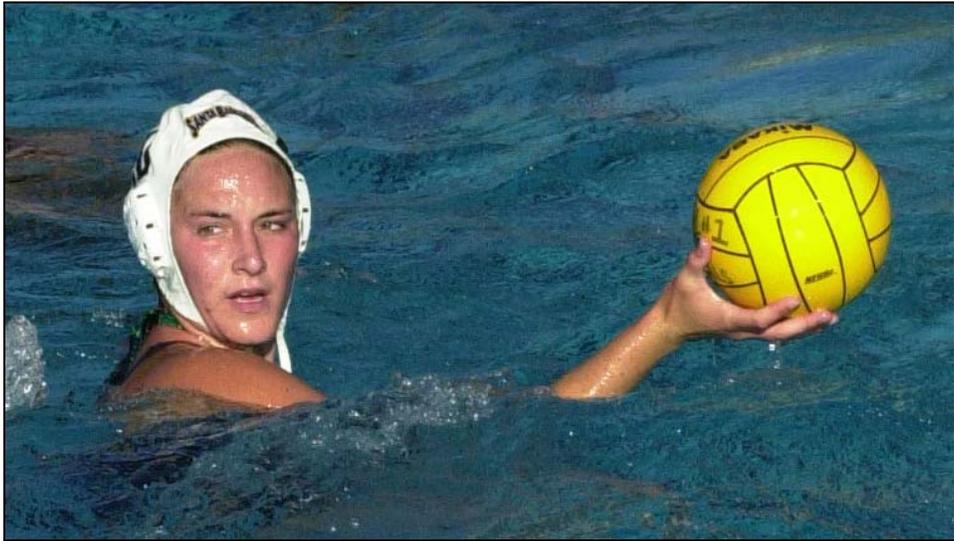
- Fingers and thumb spread apart so as to distribute the mass of the ball.
- Elbow above hand on top pick-up OR hand above elbow underneath pick-up for maximum leverage.
- Pick-up arm slightly bent at elbow for additional ball control and quicker vertical or horizontal movement if needed.
- Under water pick-up emphasized initially so as to avoid “ball under water” technical foul and the defense or goalie knowing when the pick-up is made.
- If pick-up is part of the dribble, opposite arm must continue its swimming motion so as to provide potential base to elevate the body and not tip off the goalie or a defender as to when the pick-up will be made.(see p. 3-4)

Stationary underwater pick up, unguarded



Katina Kitchens
www.magnoliahs.org

Stationary underwater pick up, unguarded



Mike Sandford

Stationary underwater pick up, closely guarded



Matt Brown
<http://mattbrownphoto.com>

Note: Fingers and thumb spread, looking towards possible receiver while in possession of the ball to expedite pass, continuous eggbeater to maintain good body position.

Stationary on top pick-up, unguarded



Matt Brown
<http://mattbrownphoto.com>

Note: two skills at one time - picking up ball and looking towards direction or target of pass.

Dribbling on top pick-up, unguarded



Joan Gould
www.waterpoloplanet.com

Elevating ball to passing position after on-top pick up



Matt Brown
<http://mattbrownphoto.com>

Preparation for underwater pick-up while dribbling (note: high elbows)



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Preparation for on top pick-up while dribbling, closely defended (note: high elbows)



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Opposite hand underwater pick-up while dribbling, preparation for flip pass, toss-up or pop shot



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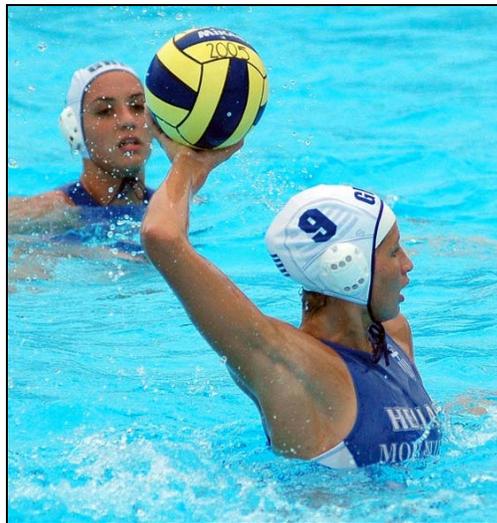
B. Baseball pass and pass reception.

The motion for passing in water polo and the sequence involved were described in detail in chapter two as part of the biomechanics of throwing. What this segment on passing will emphasize is the following

Technique points:

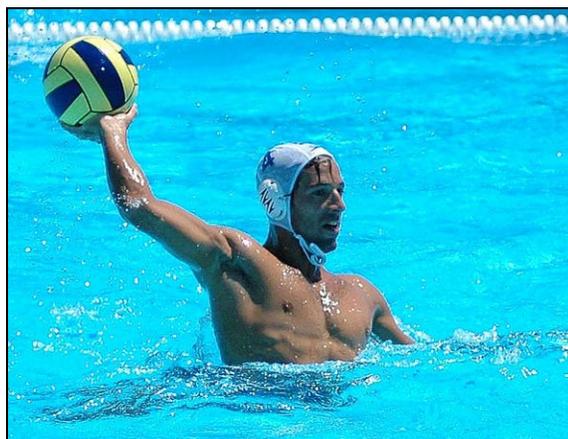
- The ball should start well above the head and extended back as far behind the head as is possible.
- The elbow should lead the throwing motion.
- The ball should finish its exit point from the middle and index fingers of the throwing hand, thumb pointing down, like throwing a football.
- There should be backspin on the ball as part of the snapping motion of the wrist (pronation) on the follow-through, like a shot in basketball.

High ball position, pass or shot



Joan Gould
www.waterpoloplanet.com

High ball position, pass or shot, wrist laid back (hyperextended)



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Lead with elbow



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Eyes on target while shooting



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Follow thru, thumb down (pronation), ball touched last by index and middle fingers



Joan Gould
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C. Layout pass when closely guarded or unguarded:

Technique points:

- Rolling torso from position on stomach protecting the ball to position on back while holding on to ball with arm extended. (roll towards left shoulder when holding on to ball with right hand, towards right shoulder when holding on to ball with left hand) see p.8
- Looking over shoulder several times to see where receiver or target is. (see p.7)
- Utilizing eggbeater, 45° turn, or “step-out” move to get distance from defender. (see p.8)
- Body position on back – continuous eggbeater or breaststroke kick. (see p.8)
- Follow through with baseball pass motion.

Layout pass preparation, throwing arm extended, looking for receiver or target



Matt Brown
<http://mattbrownphoto.com>

Layout pass preparation for step-out move



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Layout pass roll to back



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Layout pass continue kick on back



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Layout pass, distance from defender



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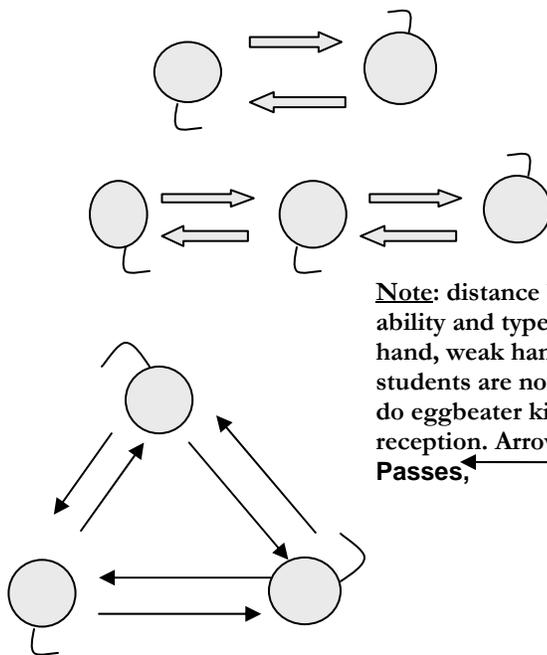
C. Basic passing drills, guarded and unguarded:

Technique points:

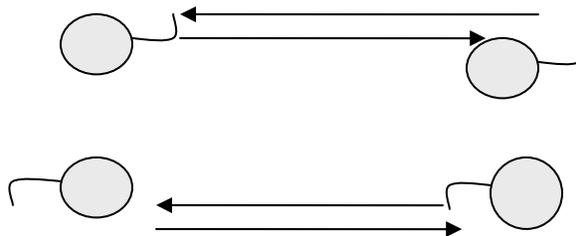
- **Eye-to-eye** contact between passer and receiver paramount.
- Communication between passer and receiver essential.
- Continual movement of the ball and player motion imperative to keep the defense off-guard.
- Distinction between wet area pass and dry in-the-hand pass essential; knowledge of what an assist pass is and where it must be thrown. Wet area passes usually made to receivers that are closely guarded or not ready to shoot; dry passes to a potential shooter.
- Body position for passing and reception – hips behind, strong eggbeater, soft hands – always ready to shoot the ball off from the pass (immediately upon reception).
- Dry pass reception – fingers spread, decelerate the ball into the passing motion.

Passing Drills

Suggested Basic Static Passing Formations

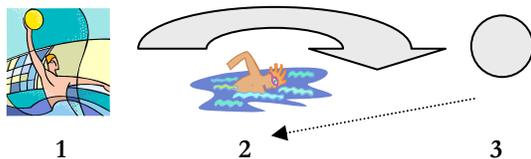


Note: distance between players contingent on level of ability and type of pass being practiced – wet, dry, strong hand, weak hand. (usually 9-12 feet apart or more). If students are not on the bottom of the pool, they need to do eggbeater kick simultaneous with passing and pass reception. Arrows are used to indicate directions of: **Passes,** **shots,** or swims.



Suggested stationary and mobile passing drills – objectives: looking for ball always, passing with pressure, accurate wet (area) passes.

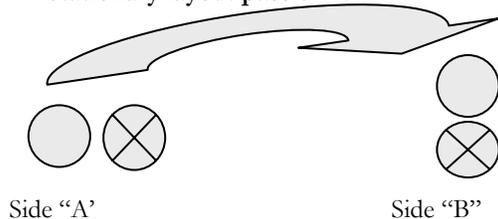
Three player dribble pass drill:



◆ In top diagram, player #1 throws a wet pass over #2's head; player #2 then dribbles towards player #3. As player #2 approaches, player #3 swims towards player #1 and receives a wet layout pass over his(her) head from player #2; and...so....on.

With Defenders

Stationary layout pass drill:



◆ In lower diagram, offensive player on side "A" makes guarded (X=defense) wet layout pass to free offensive player on the opposite side. Then players on side "B" re-form to guarded position and offensive player makes guarded layout pass back to free player on side "A"....and....so....on.

References:

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