



Dolphins Water Polo Club

# Fin Review

## The Coach's Corner – June 2009

### Welcome

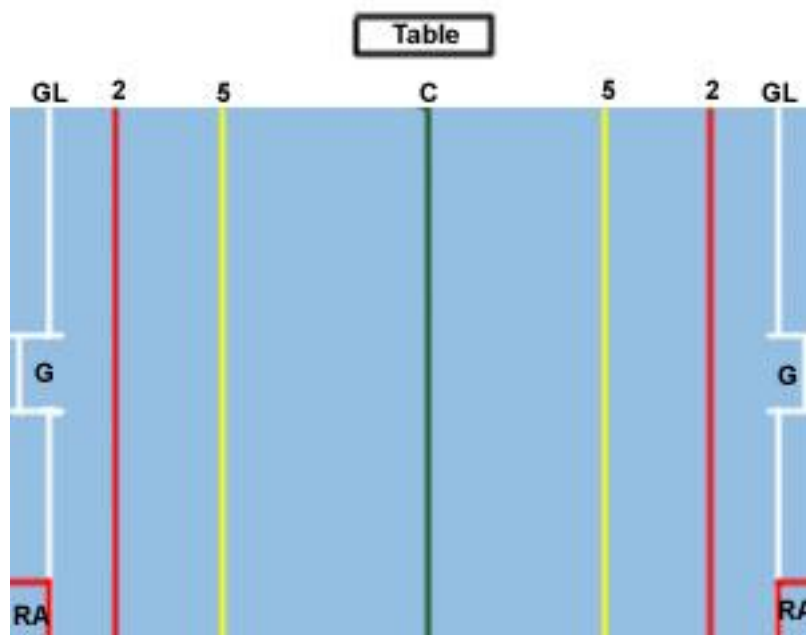
Hi and welcome to Coaches Corner, every second month we will bring you some tips and useful information on the following topics:-

- Ball handling – passing, shooting and catching.
- Mobility – swimming, leg work and body positioning
- Personal fitness, health and wellbeing with the Team Physiotherapist.
- Set plays and positions – extra man, centre forward and centre back.
- General game play – counter attack, zoning, pressing and passing under pressure.
- Rules – interpreting the rule and how to use them to advantage.

I hope you enjoy the read and that the contents help you improve your game, making it more enjoyable to play and win.

### Field of Play

If we are going to play Water Polo we should gain an understanding of the field of play and some of the rules and basic concepts of the game that relate to specific features of the field of play. It would be a bit strange if an AFL player didn't know that to start the game the umpire bounces the ball in the centre of the oval and how confused would he get if he didn't know the difference between a goal post and a point post. Below is a simple representation of a water polo field of play.





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We told you it was a simple diagram. The width and length of the pool has not been specified because it will change given the particular game that is being played based on age group or level of competition. It is more important that you note the location of the goal line, the 2 metre line, the 5 metre line and the centre line. These markings are important and we will discuss their roles and the rules associated with them next.

Firstly let's start with what the letters and numbers mean on the diagram:-

- 2 – This is the point 2 metres from the goal line,
- 5 – is the point 5 metres from the goal line,
- GL – is the Goal line, the white lane rope runs just outside the goal line,
- C – is the centre,
- G – is for Goal,
- RA – is the Re-entry Area,
- Table – is the area where the timekeeper and secretary sit.

Apart from the white lane rope behind the goal line there are not red, yellow and green lines across the pool, these notional lines are usually marked out by using cones on the side of the pool.

### The Goal Line

You will note that the white lane rope is set back from the goal line, which is the line that runs across the front of the goal. The reason for this being done is to allow the ball to go out of play, which may result in a goal throw or a corner. A corner throw if it was last touched by the goalie or intentionally put out by a defender in other circumstances a goal throw is given.

### The 2 metre mark

The 2 metre mark is significant in determining offside, remember attackers need to stay out of the 2 metre area unless the ball is also within the area. The 2 metre mark on the side of the pool is also used to indicate the point at which a corner throw is taken.

### The 5 metre mark

There are two main elements to the 5 metre mark. Firstly it is the area that penalties are determined within, remember any foul against an attacker within the 5 metre area but for which a goal would result. Secondly an attacker may shoot on goal after being fouled, if the foul was outside the 5 metre mark, but the shoot must be taken without undue delay.



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### The centre mark

At the start of the game and quarters this is the point at which the ball is released. After a goal is scored or when a time-out is called, players must return to their half of the pool. When the time-out has concluded the attacking team will get the ball back on the centre line.

### The re-entry area

The re-entry area is also known as the penalty box. Players sent from the water must swim to the re-entry area and remain there until their penalty time is over. The penalised player or a replacement may re-enter the game from the re-entry area. The re-entry area is also used if coaches are swapping players during play during the game. The head of the player leaving the game must surface before the replacement player can enter the game.



Goalkeeper Emma Knox makes a flying save in Australia's water polo semi-final against Russia at the 2007 Fina World Swimming Championships in Melbourne



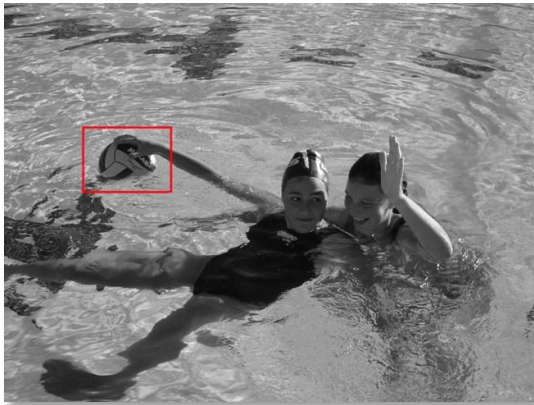
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### Protecting the Ball

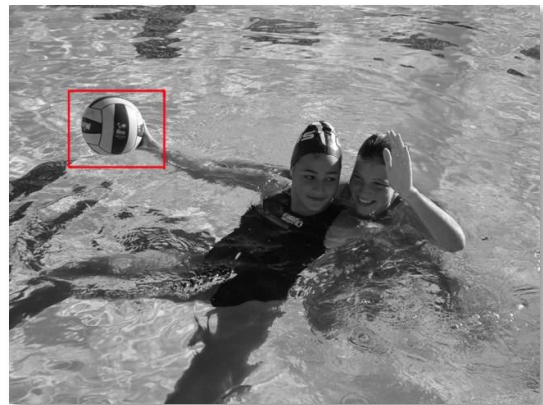
The game of water polo is very much a possession game. By this we mean that we want our team to have possession of the ball more than our opponents. If we control the ball the opposition can't score goals but we can. The rules give us 30 seconds, from the time at which we gain possession of the ball, to have a shot on goal or the opposition gain possession of the ball. Please note this rule is not played at all junior games. In order for our team to move the ball around the pool and get ourselves into a position where we can have a shot on goal we must be able to pass the ball between our players and not let the opposition get the ball.



In the photo to the left we see the attacking player using their body well by placing it between the defensive player and the ball. We also note that the attacking player has their arm stretched out ensuring a good distance between the defensive player and the ball. However as you can see and it has been highlighted by a red square, the attacking player has their hand on top of the ball. The problem with this is that if the defensive player pushes down on the arm that is holding the ball the ball will go under the water with the arm. If this

happens the referee will award a free to the defensive player and our team will lose possession. **Rule Check** – The rules state it is an ordinary foul “*To take or hold the entire ball under the water when tackled*”.

To ensure you can still control the ball, but will not take the ball underwater when tackled, have your hand underneath the ball or at the side of the ball as we have highlighted using the red square again. Using this technique to control the ball will allow you to protect the ball and hopefully gain a free throw quickly allowing you to keep the ball moving in your attack; remember you have a 30 second shot clock.



It is also important to remember the defender can press hard and even sink you if you are in possession of the ball. By having your hand on top of the ball the referee can easily see you are in possession and will not award you a free throw. Having your hand underneath or to the side will assist you gain the quick free throw.



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### **Ball Handling**

When we start teaching young players (10 years and under) how to control and throw the ball we start with three very basic rules:-

1. Use one hand
2. Pick the ball up from underneath
3. End with the elbow higher than the shoulder.

The sequence of photos that follow illustrate picking the ball up using one hand by simply placing the hand under the ball then lifting until the elbow is higher than the shoulder. From this point the player is ready to pass or shot the ball.



You will also note that as the player lifts the ball they kick harder and lift themselves out of the water in readiness to play the ball.

When practising picking the ball up, be sure to always finish in the *ready to pass or shot* position with the shoulders well out of the water and also vary the starting position of the ball. Have the ball in front of you, to the side or behind and remember to do the exercise with both your right and left hand.

### **Useful Drills**

Here is a couple of drills that will help with your ball handling and you don't have to get wet and you can do it by yourself. All you need is a ball and a wall.

Drill 1 – Standing close to the wall (about half a step away) making sure your elbow is above your shoulder throw the ball against the wall by just using your wrist. You may have some arm action but try and just use your wrist. This will help increase your hand/eye coordination and strengthen your forearm and wrist. Remember to use both hands.





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Drill 2 - In the second drill you will work on your total arm movement. Move a few steps away from the wall. Set your body in the same position as you normally would if you were in the water. If you are right handed have your left foot forward (the opposite for the left handed). With the elbow higher than the shoulder, throw the ball against the wall remembering to follow through and also start with the ball well back. It's a good idea to set yourself one spot on the wall and always try to hit the same spot.

As you get stronger you can use a heavier ball to increase your strength further. You can use a special heavy water polo ball or just use a basket ball which is bigger and heavier. And as always remember to practise using both hands.

Drill 3 – The third drill is a lot like the first two, however you get yourself into a kneeling position. If you are right handed have your left leg raised, as per the photo, have your right knee raised if you are a left hander.

By kneeling you place yourself in a situation that closer resembles being in the water in that you don't get the full use of your legs as you would in the more natural standing position. With the knee raised it brings the leading leg's hip forward, again closer to your body position when you are in the water.

Concentrate on the basics with your arms and bring your whole upper body into the throw by rotating your shoulders and moving the body forward as you throw. As always use both hands and remember to switch knees when you switch hands.



### **Training Tips**

Throwing a ball at 100 Km/h can be rough on your shoulders and eggbeater gives the knees a real workout, so here are some training tips to ensure you can train hard but you don't hurt yourself doing it.

- Always warm-up through some form of activity and start slow, build your intensity as you go, movement is the key.
- Start your warm-up with some form of land based work then move to the water, remember start slow and build intensity. Never pick up a ball and start throwing goals before you warm up the shoulders and arms with some passing.



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### **The Team Physiotherapist**

The following extracts were taken from Clinical Sports Medicine by P. Brukner & K. Khan, Third Edition, and relate to young athletes specifically the question of "How much is too much?"

*"Officials, coaches, teachers and parents must be aware of the individual variations that occur in the physical, physiological and psychological capacities of young athletes."*

*"Prior to puberty, children should be encouraged to participate in a variety of activities so that general skills can be developed and all facets of athlete performance enhanced."*

*"Some practical guidelines for those supervising general children's sports are list below:-"*

1. All coaches should gain accreditation by attending coaching courses.
2. Coaching programs must be individually tailored to the child, taking into account:
  - a. Physical maturation
  - b. Skill level
  - c. Ability to learn new skills
  - d. Enthusiasm
  - e. The presence of physical limitations (including injury).
3. Coaches or someone involved in the club or school should have a basic first-aid knowledge.
4. Any child complaining of pain, tenderness, limitation of movement or disability should be promptly referred for management by an appropriately qualified clinician.
5. Children playing sports should wear suitable clothing, footwear and protective equipment.
6. A responsible adult should ensure that sunburn, dehydration and heat stroke do not occur.
7. Warm-up and stretching should be encouraged before all training or competition.
8. Equipment should be maintained in good, safe working condition.
9. Training should be conducted on a variety of surfaces.
10. The frequency, duration and intensity of both training and competition should be monitored."

#### **Coaching Quote**

*"You get the best effort from others not by lighting a fire beneath them, but by building a fire within." Bob Nelson*