

WATER POLO

THINKING OFFENSE: TEAM

What is offense?

Generally speaking, offense is a strategy for getting the ball down field and into your opponents net.

Who plays offense in water polo?

Every single player including the goalie. Players that fail to actively take part in the offense expose their team to defensive pressure as the defense will leave a player that is not a threat in order to help their teammates. General strategy is usually determined by the coach and players often have set positions.

Scoring is the obvious primary objective. What are the most important aspects of offense?

- Protecting the possession: No bad passes. Players near the ball need to help if the ball comes under pressure. The field needs to put the ball into position for a good entry pass to the hole set.
- Forwarding the ball: In order to get a good shot opportunity, the ball must be close enough for an accurate shot on the other team's goal. Teams that don't forward the ball effectively don't have time to organize a good offense and use up their shot clock trying to get the ball down field.
- Creating high probability fast break shooting opportunities: Anticipate turnovers and participate in a fast counterattack. Usually, one player will wing out as others funnel down. If there is a good shooting opportunity, it should be taken; otherwise, it is more important to protect the possession and organize a front court attack. A good shooting opportunity on the counterattack usually involves more attackers than defenders between the ball and the cage.
- Transitioning into an organized front court offense when the fast break shot is not available: Move the ball into a safe position and pass it around to open up scoring opportunities.
- Committing the defense: Any player that is being left alone must move into shooting position for the shot.
- Creating high percentage shot opportunities for the team: Pass, swim, make quick decisions, look for mismatches, capitalize on defensive confusion, be a play maker. If the shot is at you, take it. Recognize when the shot is somewhere else and pass. No senseless shots.

How is the goalie involved in offense?

The goalie sees the entire field, reads the developing game situation and starts the offense. Many coaches have any balls blocked, stolen or retrieved in the back court passed to the goalie to initiate the offense. Field players must get into the front court as soon as possible.

How do you play "in the red"?

When the shot clock is expiring and there is no shot opportunity, "dump" the ball by throwing it where the other team will have to swim to retrieve it. Often this kills their counterattack.

Are there any other items to be aware of on offense?

Absolutely! As soon as your team loses possession, you become a defender. A smart attacker is careful to anticipate the turnover just as a smart defender is looking to beat the man he is guarding.

IT'S OKAY TO PLAY IN THE WATER