

WATER POLO

THE PRESS

What is a press defense?

Press or Pressure Defense is a defensive strategy that is characterized by close man to man coverage. This is in contrast to a zone or drop defense in which individuals are responsible for areas, or an attacker is left open in favor of double teaming the center attacker (respectively).

What does a team hope to achieve with a press defense?

The main objectives are to delay the offense, to force offensive errors and to create counter attack possibilities.

How do you play a press defense?

At it's most fundamental level, the defender plays close to the attacker in order to make a pass to that attacker difficult and to prevent an attacker with the ball from making a good pass or shot.

Beginners usually play between their man and the goal. Ideally, however, the distance from the attacker is determined by the proximity of the ball. If your attacker has the ball, both hands are up and you are eggbeating against them and pushing them backwards. If the ball is one player away, you are very close, your ball side hand is up, your other hand is on your attacker's ball side shoulder and you are discouraging a pass. If the ball is two players away, your position is similar but you are an arm's length away. If the ball is further away, you are in the passing lane not touching the attacker. With this positioning, you try to force the attack to make a safe pass on the water away from the defense. As you continue to press, it helps to delay the offense by forcing the attacker to turn his back on the goal to pick up the ball and play it.

Body position in the press is with feet towards the center of the cage and chest open towards the ball. As the ball moves around, defenders continually move to position themselves based upon the position of the ball.

When do you play a press defense?

Defensive strategy is usually a team decision. Barring that, it makes sense to play a press when your team's two meter defender is fronting the hole set, when the other team's hole set is not a scoring threat, or when you lack the speed or mobility to play another type of defense. Generally, a press is not used in man down situations.

How do you attack a press defense?

Be quick, use your holeset, look to draw quick fouls, release for each other, set picks, shoot off the foul outside of the five to help reduce the pressure and use the element of surprise.

IT'S OKAY TO PLAY IN THE WATER