

= Goalkeeper (water polo) =

In water polo , the goalkeeper occupies a position as the last line of defense between the opponent 's offence and their own team 's goal , which is 2 @. @ 8 m2 (30 sq ft) .

The goalkeeper is different from other people on their team ; they possess certain privileges and are subject to different restrictions from those of field players . As well as this , they must possess different skills from those of the fielders .

Goalkeepers often have longer playing careers than field players because they swim far less .

In water polo , the goalkeeper is commonly known as the goalie or keeper and may also be known as the man / woman in the cage .

= = History = =

The position of the goalkeeper has existed since the game of water polo originated . At that time , the object of the game was to touch the ball on the opponent 's end of the pool . The goalkeeper would wait at the end of the pool until an opposing player approached the goal , when the goalkeeper would try to stop that player , for example , by dunking their head .

A change occurred in the game and the role of the goalkeeper in the 1880s , when the Scottish reduced the size of the scoring area by placing rugby posts , spaced about 10 feet apart , at each end of the pool . At the same time , the rules were changed to allow goalkeepers to stand on the pool deck and leap onto the head of an opposing player who approached the goal . This change in the rules was brief . To prevent the serious injuries that resulted from this method of goalkeeping , the rules were revised again to require the goalie to remain in the water .

The basic functions of the goalie position have changed little over the last century , but there have been changes affecting the style of play . In the 1940s , Hungary introduced a new technique called the eggbeater kick that enables goalkeepers to maintain a stable balance in the water .

= = Rules = =

Inside the 5 m (16 ft) area , the goalkeeper is the only person on the team permitted to touch the ball with two hands , touch the bottom of the pool and punch the ball with a clenched fist . Although the goalkeeper may not advance beyond the half @-@ way line , they may attempt shots at the other goal .

Any goalkeeper who aggressively fouls an attacker in position to score can be charged with a penalty shot for the other team . The goalkeeper can also be temporarily ejected from the game for twenty seconds if they prevent a likely goal (for example , by splashing) . If the goalkeeper pushes the ball under the water in the 5 m (16 ft) area , instead of being a free throw to the other team , it is a penalty . A penalty is also awarded to the other team if the goalkeeper pulls down from the crossbar of the goal to prevent a goal .

Unless reserve , all goalkeepers caps are numbered 1 and contrast with their team 's colour to distinguish their position . Reserve goalkeepers have differently numbered caps depending on the governing body ; they are shown in the table below .

= = = Rule variations = = =

Below is a table showing the major differences of rules and regulations for water polo goalkeepers between the three largest governing bodies : FINA , NCAA and NFHS .

= = Responsibilities and techniques = =

In water polo , field players possess entirely different skills and responsibilities to the goalkeeper .

= = = Responsibilities = = =

The primary role of the goalkeeper is to block shots at the goal . After saving the ball , the goalkeeper has the responsibility to keep possession of the ball in order to stop opposing players regaining possession . They must make sure that whenever the opposition appears to be ready to make a shot on goal , their hands are near or above the surface of the water . They also possess the job to pass down the pool accurately in order to retain possession of the ball , often starting the team 's counterattack .

The goalkeeper is the only player who may block a penalty and because 63 @. @ 7 % of penalties are goals , the goalkeeper has a massive role in this area but failure to be in the correct position at a penalty is an exclusion foul . At a penalty shootout , the goalkeeper 's job is critical and will largely determine the outcome of the match . If the goalkeeper is excluded during the course of the penalty shootout , then one of the other five players in the pool may take their place . The goalkeeper 's hips should be high at a penalty shot to give them extra height . The goalkeeper should do one of two things at a penalty shot :

Stay in the middle of the goal , raise themselves up high and spread arms wide to eliminate the possibility of shots towards the centre of the goal

Move to one side of the goal as a guess to where the shooter will place the ball .

Moreover , goalkeepers should have leadership . They should inform field players of information , such as unmarked players and the time of the game clock and give instructions to the field players . Because of this , they may sometimes be known as the coach in the water .

When a man down , goalkeepers have extra responsibility . It is easier for the other team to continue to shoot , making the goalkeeper very worn out . Platanou said that with a man down the goalkeeper had " The highest possible intensity " .

= = = Body part techniques = = =

Most of the time , goalkeepers do low @-@ intensity work (treading water without too much effort) but when they do work (for example , when they have a man down or are in the ready position) it is very intense .

Goalkeepers must be able to perform the eggbeater kick to a high standard . Before the eggbeater kick , goalkeepers would use breaststroke which meant that they could not stay up for very long and players found it easier to score . By using the eggbeater kick , goalkeepers can raise their bodies high enough in the water to be able to block shots at the goal for longer periods of time . This can be used conjunctively with sculling , in which the goalkeeper keeps their hands closed (with the fingers together) and moves them forwards and backwards .

The easiest way for the goalkeeper to block shots is for them to block the ball with either their hands or arms . Longer arms can help the goalkeeper to reach the ball , thus being an advantage . Sports involving quick reactions may be helpful , as these help the goalkeeper 's reflexes which is a crucial skill .

= = = Body part work = = =

In order to improve , there are a variety of drills designed to improve the goalkeeper 's skill .

To start with , there are drills to help improve the goalkeeper in the water . These range from simple exercise (such as jumping as high out of the water as possible with two hands) to drills not specifically used in water polo ; rather they are used to improve the goalkeeper 's core muscles (such as catching a ball dropped from the side into the water) .

As the goalkeeper must be able to swim quickly for short distances , to improve they can practice exercises such as swimming quickly and then immediately stopping without touching the sides . It is important for the goalkeeper to swim both breaststroke and freestyle - the breaststroke helping with the eggbeater kick and the freestyle helping with the swimming in the match .

Moreover , at the start of the game it is vital for the goalkeeper to stretch for 15 minutes .

=== Blocking techniques ===

As blocking the ball is the primary role of the goalkeeper , they must have good knowledge of blocking techniques .

As the goalkeeper has the choice of how many hands they want to use , the decision should be made of what they want to do . A shot should be stopped with two hands either if it is weak or close to the goalkeeper 's body , and normally stopped with one in other circumstances . This is because one @-@ handed saves can go to the ball faster .

Goalkeepers should be wary of dummieing , lob shots and skip or bounce shots . Dummieing is where players fake shots , leading keepers to come out of the water too early . This can cause the goalkeeper to come up too early and have to go back down for energy . The lob shot is where a field player attempts to put the ball over where the goalkeeper 's hands can reach . This usually happens either if the goalkeeper is out of position from the dummies or if they are too far out from the goal . The goalkeeper should swim back to try to block it , as it is nowhere near as fast as the power shot . The bounce or skip shot is where a player propels the ball at the water with enough force to make it bounce or skim along the water . It can take the goalkeeper by surprise as they cannot predict the direction the ball will go .

Most shots are saved with the arms or the hands , but goalkeepers are known to save shots with their faces and even feet .

=== Filmography ===

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Sean Nolan (2011) . Becoming a Champion Water Polo Goalie . Championship Productions . OCLC 775016436 .