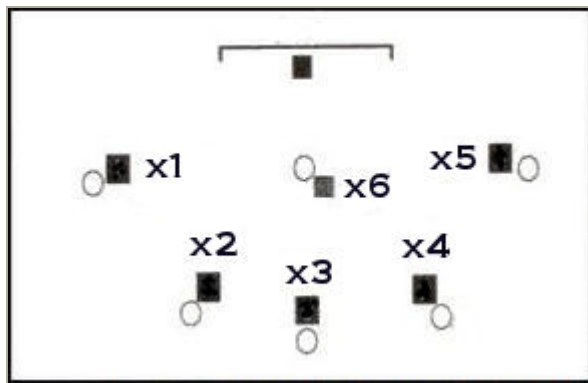


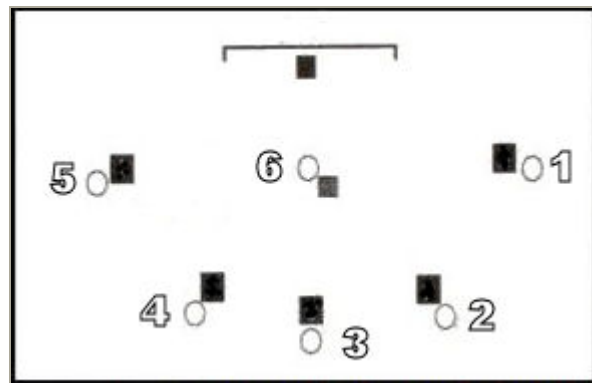
Pressure Defense: Technical Component by Guy Baker, Head Coach, Women's National Team

This article will focus on the technical component of USA Women's Water Polo press defense. We divide our press defense into two parts; perimeter and defender position. It is required that all our players are able to play any defensive position. Our defense does not change if we have a center or an attacker defending our opponent's center. Our centers are an integral part of our tactical defense. The only way to achieve this is to have all our players consistently practice all of our defensive techniques. Defense is technique, attitude, intelligence and practice, practice, practice.....

TERMINOLOGY



Defensive Numbering System



Offensive Numbering System

Strong Side	The side of the pool where the ball is located
Weak Side	Opposite side of the pool from where the ball is located Strong Side and Weak Side dividing line is the center of the goal
Ball Side (Defense)	Defensive player is between the offensive player and the ball
Attack Section	Offensive ten-meter line to the goal line
Ball, Player, Area and Center Awareness	A defensive player must: Know the location of the Ball is at all times Know what your Player is doing at all times Know what is happening in your Area at all times Know the location and position of the Center at all times

Press Base Position	Perimeter Ball Side Position Horizontal on a hip facing the location of the ball in the passing lane
Right Hand to player in relation Right Shoulder	The location of the ball determines the position of the defensive to the offensive player Defensive player in Press Base Position with right hand in contact player's right shoulder
Left Hand to player in relation Left Shoulder	The location of the ball determines the position of the defensive to the offensive player Defensive player in Press Base Position with left hand in contact player's left shoulder
Horizontal Lunge	Horizontal movement with a breast kick; moving forward or laterally
Lunge to the Lane	Technique to gain ball side position when a defensive player is in the incorrect press position
Giving Water	Sculling technique to maintain Press Base Position Sculling movement Cycle legs with feet Hands sculling slightly below the surface One leg is on top of the other Alternate legs Bend knees as cycling Scoop water with feet
Reverse Pivot	Technique to defend drive when in ball side position
Spin Around	Defender technique to maintain ball side position (front)
One Arm Swim Around	Defender technique to maintain ball side position
Spin Around	Defender technique to maintain ball side position
Pendulum	Defender technique when behind the center

Pendulum with a Lunge Defender technique to gain ball side position when behind the center

The objective of our press defense is to have each player gain ball side position by the attack section and maintain that position for as long as possible. The perimeter players and the defender must work together in order to accomplish this objective.

PERIMETER PRESS DEFENSE

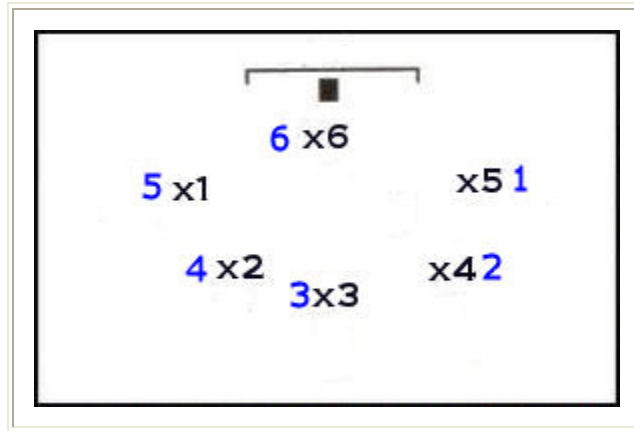
Perimeter Press Base Position

1. Horizontal position slightly on a hip facing the location of the ball
 - A. Ball to the right defensive player will be slightly on their left hip, ball to the left defensive player will be slightly on their right hip
 - B. Elbows slightly bent and hands sculling slightly below the surface of the water
 - C. Chest is slightly open to the location of the ball
2. Always play in the passing lane
3. Always have Ball, Player, Area and Center awareness
4. The location of the ball and the number players away from the ball dictates the position of the defensive player in relation to the offensive player
 - A. Defensive player's right hand in contact with the offensive player's right shoulder when the ball is to the defensive player's left side (Right Hand to Right Shoulder)
 - B. Defensive player's left hand in contact with the offensive player's left shoulder when the ball is to the defensive player's right side (Left Hand to Left Shoulder)

Ball Side Positioning: 1, 2 or 3-4 players away from the ball

1. 1 Player Away
 - A. Denial position; close contact with the hand that is nearest the offensive player
 - a. Right Hand to Right Shoulder or Left Hand to Left Shoulder
 - B. Play in the passing lane and deter direct pass with the other hand
 - C. Force the pass on the water
 - D. When receiving a pass, force the offensive player to turn their back to the goal
2. 2 Players Away
 - . Arm length away; still maintain contact with the nearest hand
 - A. Play in the passing lane and deter direct pass with other hand
 - B. Force the pass on the water
 - C. When receiving a pass, force the offensive player to turn their back to the goal
3. 3-4 Players Away

- . Arm length away; no contact
- A. Play in the passing lane
- B. Force the pass on the water
- C. When receiving a pass, force the offensive player to turn their back to the goal



Example: Ball is at 2. x3 and x5 will be 1-away from the ball and will be in denial position; x3 will have their right hand on 3's right shoulder; x5 will be left hand to left shoulder; x2 will be 2- away and will be an arm length away and still maintaining contact with right hand to right shoulder; x1 is 3-away and will be an arm length away with no contact.

Each pass will dictate a defensive movement. The common objectives of the perimeter press defense are to force each pass on the water and force the offensive player to turn their back to the goal when receiving a pass. If achieved it will be difficult for the defense to break the press and more importantly it will allow enough time for the defender to maintain ball side position.

Maintaining press base position is critical for the success of the press defense. The perimeter defense must be in the correct position. The defense is always in the passing lane. (Right Hand-Right Shoulder or Left Hand-Left Shoulder) The perimeter defense can maintain Press Base Position by giving water to maintain ball side position. The perimeter defense must be able to gain and maintain ball side position, so our defender can do the same. If the perimeter press quickly breaks down then it will be almost impossible for our defender to maintain ball side position. The perimeter and defender work together to gain and maintain ball side position.

PERIMETER PRESS DEFENSE TECHNIQUES

1. **Lunge to the Lane:** Recognition of incorrect perimeter press defense positioning

- A. Lunge with a breast kick either to the right or left depending on the location of the ball
 - B. Throw upper body and swing hips into Press Base Position
 - C. Move into correct 1, 2 or 3 away press defense position
2. **Giving Water: Maintaining Press Base Position**
- A. Anticipate offensive player swimming into the defensive player's chest or swimming into the defensive player and grabbing the suit
 - B. Deflect suit grab by pushing away the offensive's player hand
 - C. Maintain separation by slightly pushing on the shoulder of the offensive player when the offensive player is swimming into the defensive player's chest
 - D. Continue to maintain separation by using a double scull with arms
 - E. Bicycle kick with legs
3. **Reverse Pivot: Defending drive while in ball side position**
- A. Drop from a horizontal position to a vertical position in order to Reverse Pivot
 - B. Reverse pivot (180 degree turn) by starting the pivot with the elbow (lead elbow) that is closest to the ball
 - C. When pivoting the lead elbow is above the water
 - D. To complete the reverse pivot; simultaneously lunge with a breast kick and stroke with the lead pivot elbow

The Reverse Pivot allows the defensive player to maintain a slight separation as the offensive player is driving. If the defensive player pivots towards the drive, then the defensive player can pivot unto the offensive player's back. Pivoting towards the offensive player can create an advantage for the offense.

Perimeter Press Defense Technique Combinations

- 1. Lunge to the Lane to Give Water
- 2. Lunge to the Lane to Reverse Pivot
- 3. Lunge to the Lane to Give Water to Reverse Pivot
- 4. Give Water to Reverse Pivot

We combine the techniques to prepare our athletes for each perimeter situation that may occur

Perimeter Press Defense Teaching Progressions: Individual

All these techniques can be practiced in an area. These are teaching progressions. Start from the beginning and it is very important not to skip a step.

- 1. Lunge to the Lane:
 - A. Start in vertical position
 - a. Visualize the ball is to the defensive's player left side
 - B. Lunge to the Lane-Right Hand to Right Shoulder

- A. Start in vertical position
 - B. Lunge to the Lane
 - C. Reset and Repeat
2. Give Water
 - A. Defensive player starts in press base position ball right hand to right shoulder
 - B. Offensive player swims 4 strokes
 - C. Defensive player Gives Water
 - D. Reset by staying exactly where each player stopped
 - E. Switch which player is defense and offense
 - F. Repeat with defense already in ball side position and offensive player swimming 4 strokes
 - G. After a pre determined number of repetitions; switch the starting point to left hand to left shoulder
 3. Reverse Pivot
 - A. Defensive player starts in press base position right hand to right shoulder
 - B. Offensive player drives
 - C. Defensive player reverse pivots
 4. Lunge to Lane to Give Water
 - A. Defensive player starts in vertical position
 - B. Lung to the Lane (Right Hand to Right Shoulder)
 - C. Give Water
 - D. Switch defense and offense
 - E. Repeat
 5. Lunge to Lane to Reverse Pivot
 - A. Defensive player starts in vertical position
 - B. Lunge to Lane (Right Hand to Right Shoulder)
 - C. Reverse pivot on drive
 - D. Reset and Repeat (Defensive player lunges to the lane-Left Hand to Left Shoulder)
 6. Lunge to Lane to Give Water to Reverse Pivot
 - A. Defensive player starts in vertical position
 - B. Lunge to Lane (Right Hand to Right Shoulder)
 - C. Give Water
 - D. Reverse Pivot
 - E. Reset and Repeat (Defensive player lunges to the lane-Left Hand to Left Shoulder)

Perimeter Press Defense Teaching Progressions

1. 3x3 Drill (x2-x-3-x4 vs. 2-3-4)
 - A. Ball starts at 2
 - B. x2 and x3 are in correct press base position; x2-2 away and x3-1 away
 - C. On whistle 2 passes the ball to 3. Pass is on the water. (x3 allows the pass)
 - D. x2 and x4 moves to 1 away press base position

- E. On whistle 3 passes to 4. Pass is on the water. x3 moves to 1 away position and x4 moves to 2 away position
- F. Restart with the ball starting at 4

The purpose of the drill is to teach correct defensive positioning depending on the location of the ball. Start blowing the whistle at a slow pace; gradually increase the pace of the whistle.

- 2. 5x5 Drill (x1-x2-x3-x4-x5 vs. 1-2-3-4-5)
 - A. Same purpose of the 3x3 drill, with the addition of x1 and x5.
 - B. Can now add different ball location patterns. 1-2-3-4-5-4-3-2-1; 1-3-5-1-2-5-1-3-5-2-4-1
 - a. The patterns are endless

DEFENDER POSITION

Maintaining Ball Side Techniques (Fronting)

- 1. Swim Around: Good technique when the center is grabbing the top of the suit
 - A. Quick and choppy strokes
 - B. Pause at each position
 - C. After strokes, regain contact with the center with the hand that is the closest to the center
 - D. Critical point for the defender is when the ball is at 3 and is passed to 4 or 2
 - E. Steps:
 - a. Ball starts at 1; the defender is in base position with right hand on the center
 - b. Ball is passed to 2; the defender 2-3 quick and choppy strokes and regains contact with the center
 - c. Ball is passed to 3: the defender 2-3 quick and choppy strokes and regains contact with the center
 - d. Ball is passed to 4 (The Critical Point): the defender spins leading with the left hand and swings their hips into defender base position with the left hand regaining contact with the center
 - e. Ball is passed to 5; the defender slides/back pedals into base position maintaining contact with the center with the left hand
- 2. One Arm Swim Around
 - A. Quick strokes with outside arm (Arm closest to the ball)
 - B. Maintain contact with the hand closest to the center
 - C. Spin and regain position at the critical point
 - . Ball at 3 and pass to 4 or 2
- 3. Spin Around 1x: Technique when the center is physical and very grabby
 - A. Ball at 1; the defender is in base position

- B. Ball is passed to 2; the defender turns, spins and seals into the center base position. The defender turns with their left hand, spins with the right and seals in the center base position.
- C. Reset ball at 1 and the ball is passed to 2
- 4. Spin Around
 - A. Ball at 1; the defender is in base position
 - B. Ball is passed to 2; the defender turns, spins and seals into the center base position. The defender turns with their left hand, spins with the right and seals in the center base position.
 - C. Ball is passed to 3; the defender snaps with the right shoulder and regains base position
 - D. Ball is passed to 4; the defender turns, spins and seals into the center base position
 - E. Ball is passed to 5; the defender snaps with the right shoulder and spins quickly into base position regaining contact with the center with the left hand
- 5. Pendulum
 - A. Swing back and forth behind the center
 - B. Grab the center's upper rib cage area and pull
 - C. Stay in base position
- 6. Pendulum with a Lunge
 - A. Pull and then lunge to ball side position

A defender must determine whether to maintain ball side position by either maintaining the outside position or moving to the inside position and then pendulum with a lunge to gain ball side position. The location of the center will determine whether a defender will maintain ball side position either outside or inside.

Defender Position Teaching Progressions: 1x1 (Defender and Center)

- 1. Swim Around
 - A. Visualize the ball at 1. Defender in base position
 - B. On whistle visualize ball passed to 2. Defender Swim Around Technique
 - C. On whistle visualize ball passed to 3. Defender Swim Around Technique
 - D. On whistle visualize ball passed to 4. (Critical Point) Defender Swim Around Technique
 - E. On whistle visualize ball passed to 5. Defender Swim Around Technique
 - F. Reset switch defender and center and repeat
 - G. Can add ball starts at 1 to 5 and back to 1
- 2. One Arm Swim Around
 - A. See Swim Around
- 3. Spin Around 1x
 - A. See Swim Around
 - B. Reset to 1 after the ball has been passed to 2
- 4. Spin Around
 - A. See Swim Around

5. Pendulum
 - A. Repeat pendulum movement; either repetitions or time interval
6. Pendulum with a Lunge
 - A. Visualize the ball at 2
 - B. Defender in ball side base position
 - C. On whistle visualize ball passed to 4
 - D. Pendulum then lunge to ball side base position
 - E. Repeat with ball starting at 4
 - F. Repetitions or time interval

Press Defense Teaching Progressions

1. 6x6
 - A. Same drill as 3x3 and 5x5 with the addition of the Defender and the Center
2. 4x4 (x2-x3-x4-x6 vs. 2-3-4-6)
 - A. Live
 - B. Ball starts at 2
 - C. Defense has ball side position
 - D. Can change the location of where the ball starts
 - E. Can change the position of the players
 - a. x1-x2-x3-x6 vs. 3-4-5-6 (ball starts at 3)
 - b. x3-x4-x5-x6 vs. 1-2-3-6 (ball starts at 3)
3. 6x6
 - A. Live Half Court
 - B. 10-20 seconds on the shot clock
 - C. Ball starts in different locations