



Gold Water Polo Badge Award

Summary

These tests are designed for water polo players typically aged up to 16 who are working their way up the skills ladder. Some individuals will already have gained the Kent ASA's Mini Polo skills award but others will not. There is no requirement to have gained the Mini Polo award prior to taking the Water Polo Awards, although it will considerably assist in the task of building skills.

Test Set-up

Where required a size 4 water polo ball is to be used. The tests are done in deep water and candidates should complete them without the need for holding onto the side. A short warm up should be held prior to the formal testing. Goggles should not be worn at any stage during the session.

Each award comprises four individual test areas and there are three award levels. All four test areas must be passed for a player to earn the relevant award. Ideally all four tests areas should be attempted in a single testing session but testing can be spread over a number of sessions if this is deemed necessary.

In the event that a candidate fails a test area and there remains sufficient pool time on that day for a re-examination then this can be done. The candidate must, however, take the relevant test twice and pass it both times in order to demonstrate that they are of a sufficient standard to deserve to pass. If there is not time for a re-examination then areas that have been passed can be carried forward and a subsequent re-examination of the failed area can be undertaken. A fee would be charged for such a re-examination.

Candidates should normally have achieved the silver award before being examined for gold. In exceptional circumstances such as where a player joins a club having already gained some water polo skills elsewhere, they may, with the agreement of the examiner, start directly with the Gold Award.

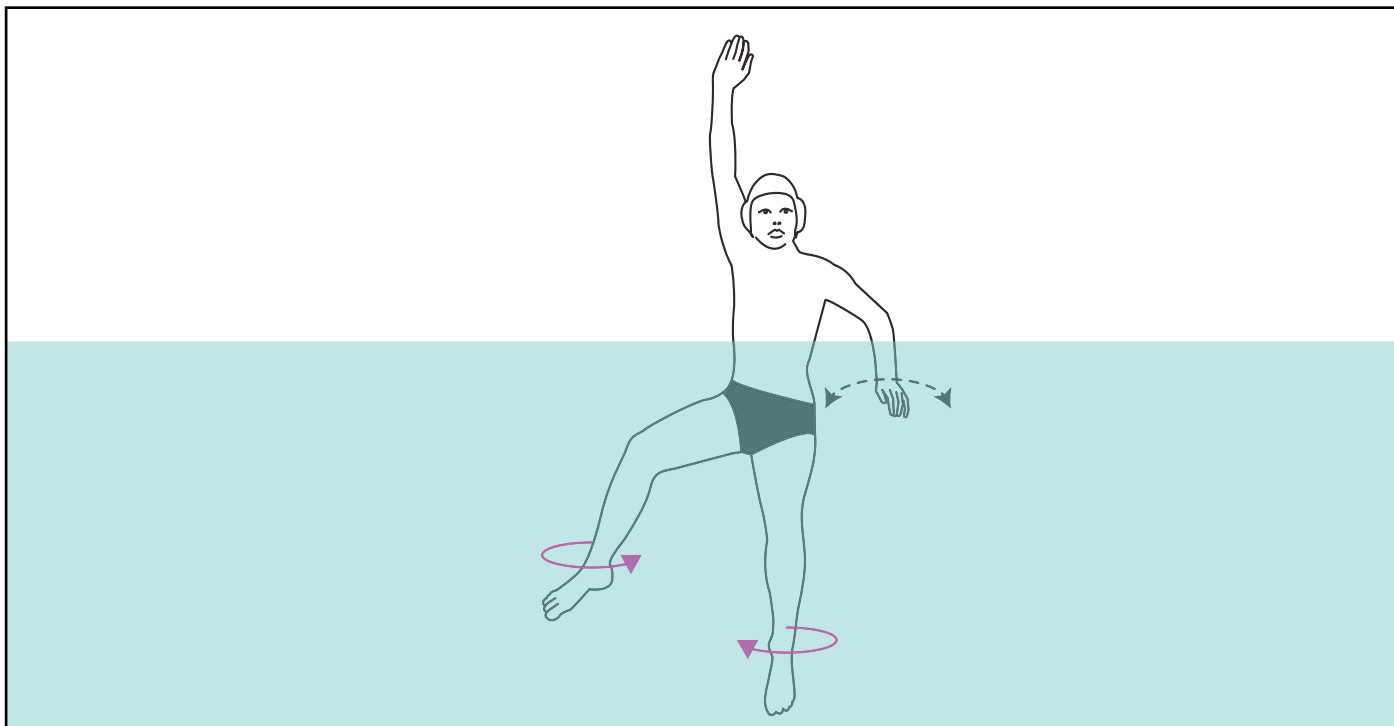
Testing must be undertaken by a coach who has been accredited by Kent ASA's Water Polo Secretary.

A scale of fees will be established. Different rates will be specified for the test and for individual test re-examinations. The rate will also be adjusted to reflect pool hire costs.



Test Area 1: Egg Beater

Exercise 1.A Demonstrate a one-arm block position for 40 seconds.



Set-up

The candidate should be positioned in deep water close to where the examiner is standing so that the examiner can see the leg kick action. The examiner tells the candidate to demonstrate the one arm block position and then after 40 seconds tells them to stop. Candidates should be examined one at a time so that they are continuously observed.

Coaching Points

- The body should be erect; knees spread well apart from the hips; thighs close to horizontal; lower legs performing the alternating eggbeater stroke.
- One arm should be supporting the body with a sculling motion. The sculling hand waves to and fro with a twist at the end of each arc so that the thumb is up on the inward motion and down on the outward motion.
- The body position should be steady and not bobbing up and down with one arm raised and the player working hard in order to support a raised body position.
- The blocking arm should be raised straight; and with the armpit of the supporting arm well clear of the water level.

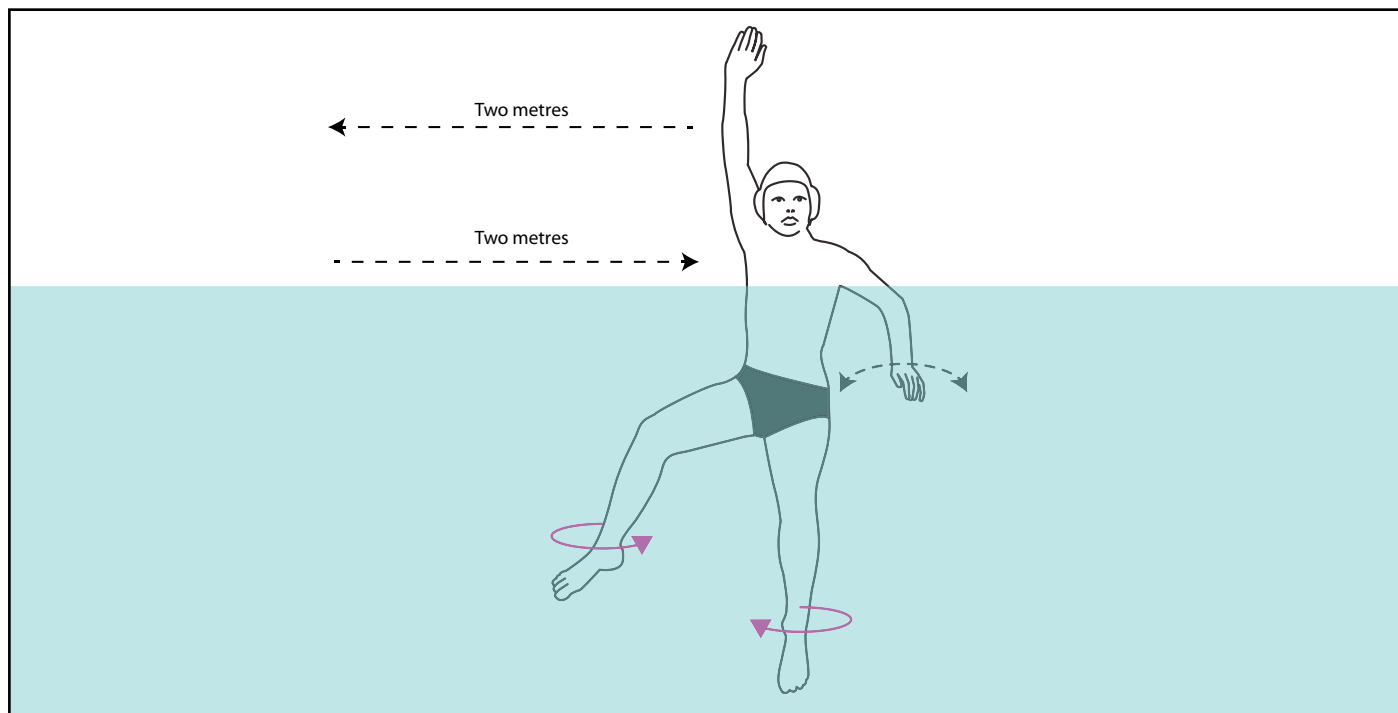
Test Criteria

The coaching points must be met for the full 40 second observation period. Note in particular the defined body height and the need for a static raised arm.



Test Area 1: Egg Beater

Exercise 1.B: Demonstrate a Block and Travel



Set-up

The candidate should be positioned facing the examiner in deep water reasonably close to where the examiner is standing so that the examiner can see the leg kick action but with space to either side of them. The examiner tells the candidate to take up the one arm block position. When this is done to the examiner's satisfaction the examiner gives the instruction to travel to the right for two metres. When this is done the instruction is given to move back to the left. Candidates should be examined one at a time so that they are continuously observed.

Coaching Points

- Throughout the exercise the body should be erect; knees spread well apart from the hips; thighs close to horizontal; lower legs performing the alternating eggbeater stroke.
- One arm (chosen by the candidate) should be supporting the body with a sculling motion. The sculling hand waves to and fro with a twist at the end of each arc so that the thumb is up on the inward motion and down on the outward motion.
- The body position should be steady and not bobbing up and down with one arm raised and the player working hard in order to support a raised body position.
- The blocking arm should be raised straight; held still; and with the armpit well clear of the water level.
- When demonstrating the sideways motion the raised arm must remain straight and the motion must be reasonably speedy in both directions.

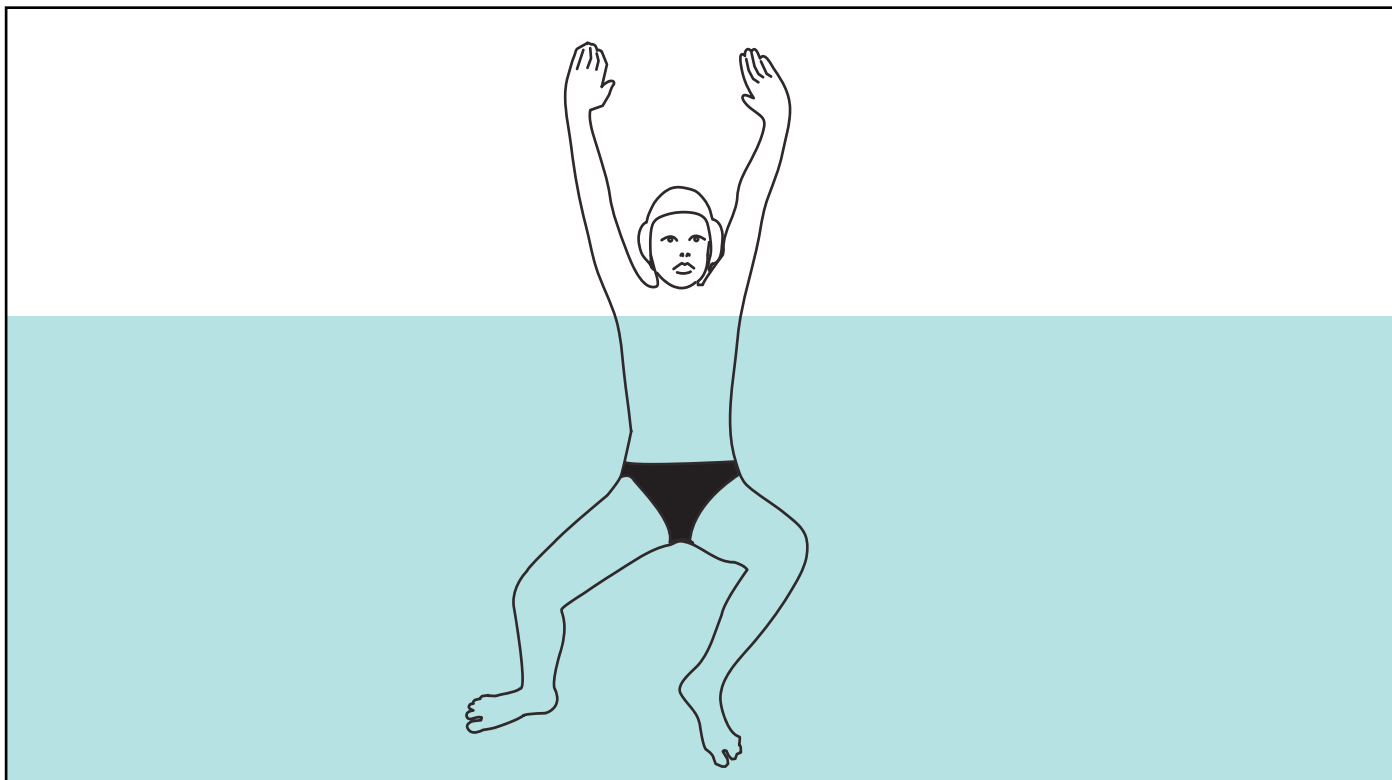
Test Criteria

The coaching points must be met. Note in particular the defined body height and the need for a static raised arm and reasonably speedy motion in both directions.



Test Area 1: Egg Beater

Exercise 1.C Demonstrate a double arm goalkeeper's two arm block for 30 seconds.



Set-up

The candidate should be positioned in deep water close to where the examiner is standing so that the examiner can see the leg kick action. The examiner tells the candidate to demonstrate the goalkeeper's two arm block and then after 30 seconds tells them to stop. Candidates should be examined one at a time so that they are continuously observed.

Coaching Points

- Basic eggbeater style leg kick as defined for exercise 1.A
- Both arms raised vertically above the body and held straight and still.
- Legs working hard in an eggbeater motion in order to support the arms so that both armpits are clear of the water level throughout the 30 second test.

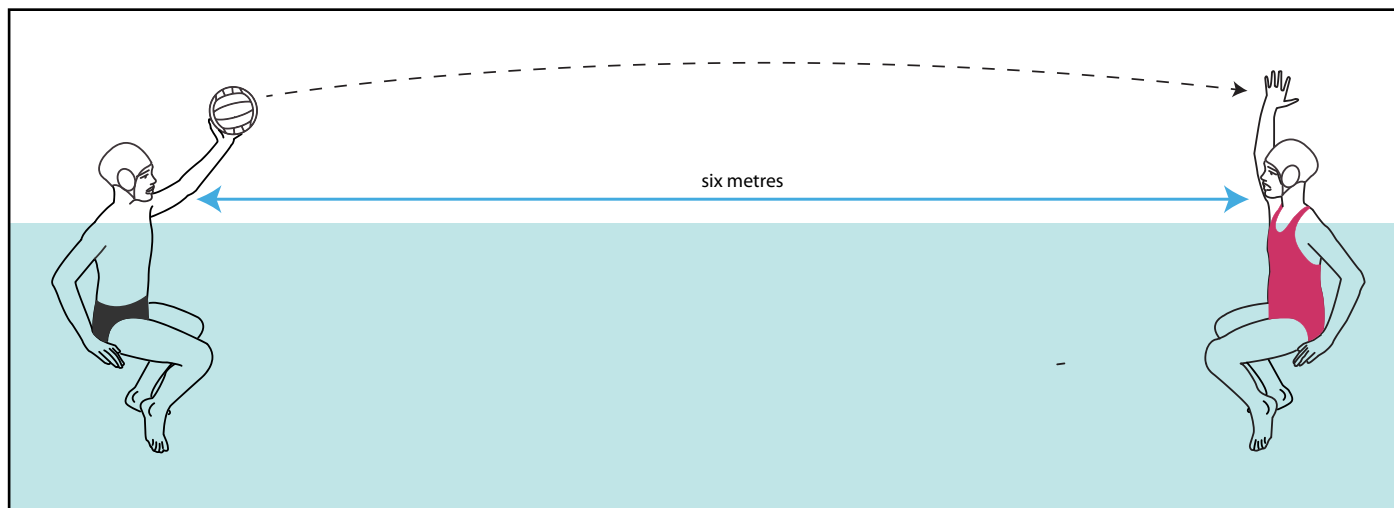
Test Criteria

The above three coaching points must all be achieved for the defined 30 second period.



Test Area 2: Throwing and catching

Exercise 2.A Demonstrate the ability to give and receive dry passes of good style over a six metre distance.



Set-up

The candidate should be positioned in deep water a few metres from the examiner so that the examiner can see the leg kick action. The passing is carried out in deep water between two players directly facing each other and six metres apart. Ten passes are made (i.e. each player gives and receives five passes). There is no time limit for this test and if the ball is dropped the swimmer should return to a position six metres away from the other before giving the next pass. The examiner may give minor corrections during the exercise. Note that for these Water Polo Skill Awards all the passing tests are to be undertaken with a partner of at least one skill level higher than the candidate who is being examined or with an appropriate senior player. This partner should give passes of suitable speed in the light of the candidate's skill level. Should this skilled partner be the cause of any failures then that pass should not count and is to be re-taken.

Coaching Points

- Give and receive five consecutive dry passes (i.e. a total of 10 passes are made by a pair).
- Correct body position must be shown throughout the exercise with a vertical body supported by a good eggbeater kick.
- Passing must be with the full body and not just from the elbow such that passes are fast and flat.
- The receiver should hold their hand above their head indicating where they wish to receive the ball.
- The ball must be brought into control by moving the hand and upper arm backwards after the ball is collected.

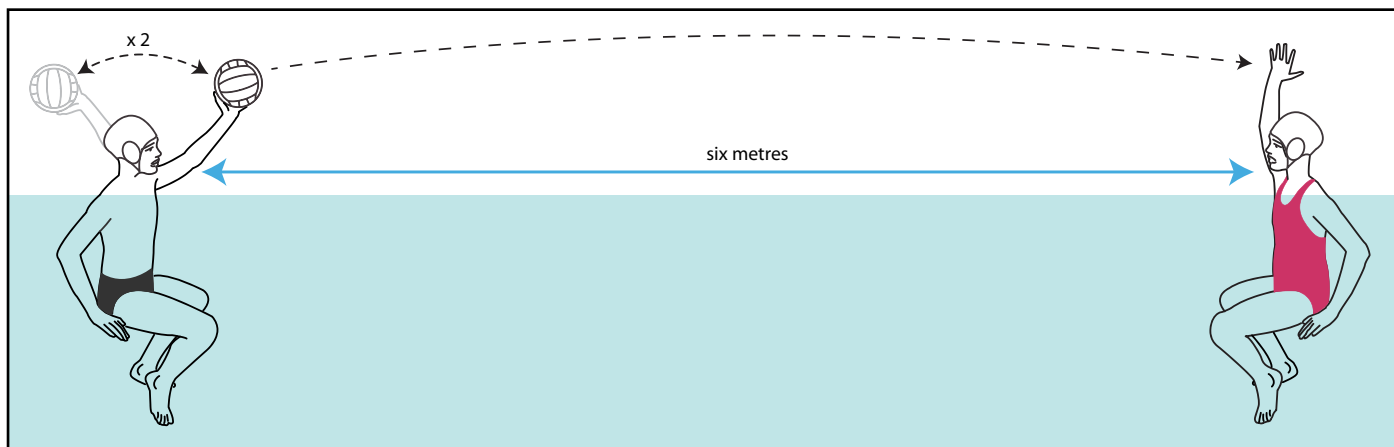
Test Criteria

The above five coaching points must be met. At least 8 of the 10 passes must be of a "good" style and dry (i.e. the ball must not touch the water). Coaching corrections may be given by the examiner on the initial passes but they must be responded to and the later passes should not require any style corrections. This test area comprises three tests, all of which must be passed. Each candidate is permitted "one life" and if a particular exercise is failed it may be retaken immediately. At least two of the tests must be passed at the first attempt.



Test Area 2: Throwing & Catching

Exercise 2.B Demonstrate the ability to receive/threaten/pass.



Set-up

This exercise is set-up in a similar way to exercise 2.A. The only difference is that on receipt of a pass the receiver must give two or more “threaten actions” before actually releasing the pass.

Coaching Points

- Apply the passing approach explained in exercise 2.A but before each pass effect two or more crisp and clear “threaten actions” with the ball.

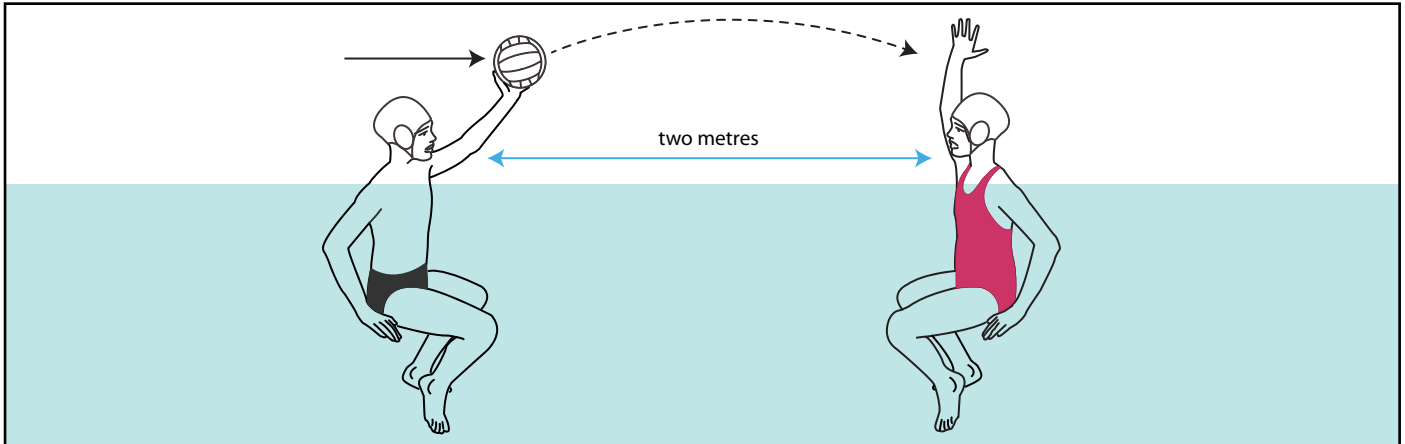
Test Criteria

At least 8 of the 10 passes must be of a “good” style and dry (i.e. the ball must not touch the water). Any coaching corrections that are given by the examiner must be responded to. The reference to the threaten actions being crisp and clear is important. They should be sufficient to make say a goalkeeper think that a shot was going to be made and not just a cursory waving of the ball.



Test Area 2: Throwing & Catching

Exercise 2.C Demonstrate the ability to give/receive quick dry passes.



Set-up

Once again the exercise is set up in a similar way to exercise 2.A with a candidate and a more skillful partner positioned in deep water two metres apart. The pair is then given 30 seconds during which time they must effect as many dry passes as possible. The pair may make as many attempts to pass as time permits but only those where the ball remains dry are counted. Should the ball be dropped players should cooperate with each other to re-establish a two metre gap between them. The passes should be over a distance of two metres but they need not always be from the same place. A number of candidates may be examined at one time provided each has a separate counter.

Coaching Points

- The aim is to give as many passes as possible but only dry passes count towards the total. Style is not taken into account – any two metre dry pass is acceptable!

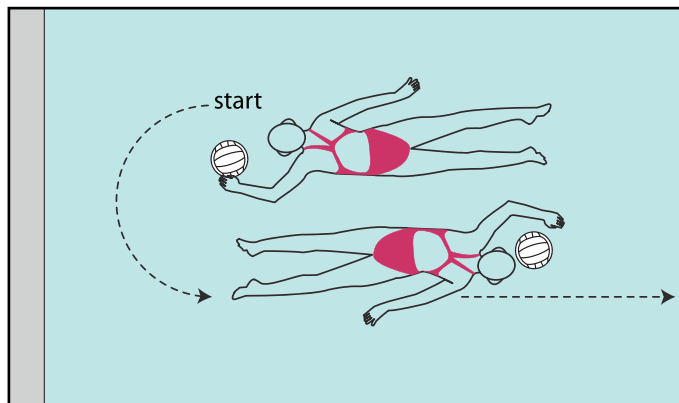
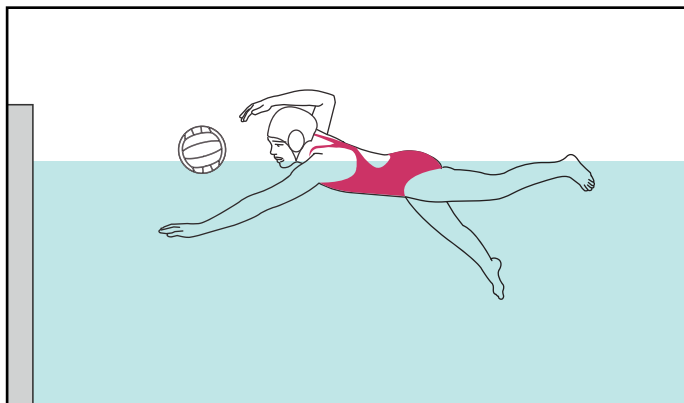
Test Criteria

At least 30 dry passes must be made during the allotted time of 30 seconds. Style is not taken into consideration as all that matters is the ability to give and receive quick dry passes. Should the skilled partner cause a significant delay by dropping an accurately delivered pass or giving a bad pass then the test would be deemed null and void and should be retaken. This would not count as using the candidate's "one life".



Test Area 3: Swimming with the ball

Exercise 3.A Pass the dribbling speed/style test.



Set-up

This exercise should usually be conducted by swimming across the width of the pool provided this is at least 12.5 metres. If the pool is not this wide, then the exercise is conducted by swimming part of a length. The candidate starts in deep water with the ball on the water 12 metres from the side/end of the pool. The swimmer is positioned initially on the wrong side of the ball looking away from the direction in which they must swim. On the signal the swimmer must pick up the ball, turn and then dribble the ball to the side within the specified time and with an acceptable style.

Coaching Points

- Retain the ball under control at all times (i.e. always within reach of one's arm);
- Swim with head up and still (not flicking from side to side);
- Maintain the ball in the cocoon created by high elbows and the head;
- Show a good leg kick creating significant splash behind;
- Touch the ball to the minimum extent possible and mainly with the arms not the hands.
- The swimmer may start with their hand on or under the ball and must retain possession throughout (i.e. always have the ball within an arm's reach of themselves).

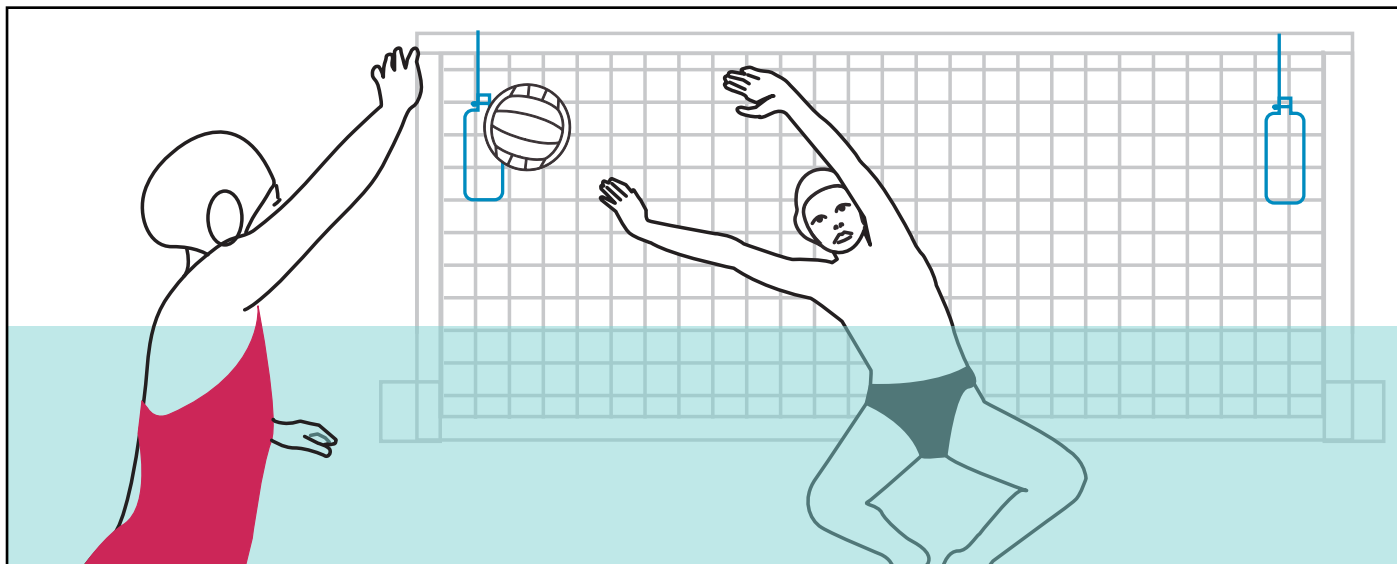
Test Criteria

The swim is timed with the watch stopped when the ball touches the side/end of the pool. The swim must be completed within a time not exceeding 9 seconds. The style of the swim must also be deemed by the examiner to be good with no more than very minor style errors relative to the six coaching points above.



Test Area 4: Shooting and saving

Exercise 4.A Demonstrate the ability to shoot to the corner of the goal with accuracy.



Set-up

This exercise involves shooting into a deep end goal. The candidate takes shots from in front of the goal on the 5 metre line. Empty plastic bottles are suspended close to the corners of the goal to act as targets. There should be of 2L capacity suspended by string 35 cm from each corner with the top of the bottle 20cm below the bar. A goalkeeper should take up a position in the centre of the goal and should attempt to make saves. The candidate takes a total of five shots always aiming to hit one of the bottles en route to scoring a goal.

Coaching Points

- A good high shooting position should be established with the body upright and eggbeater legs being applied.
- Use the full body to effect the shot and generate considerable power in the shot.
- Show some threaten actions before the actual shot is released.

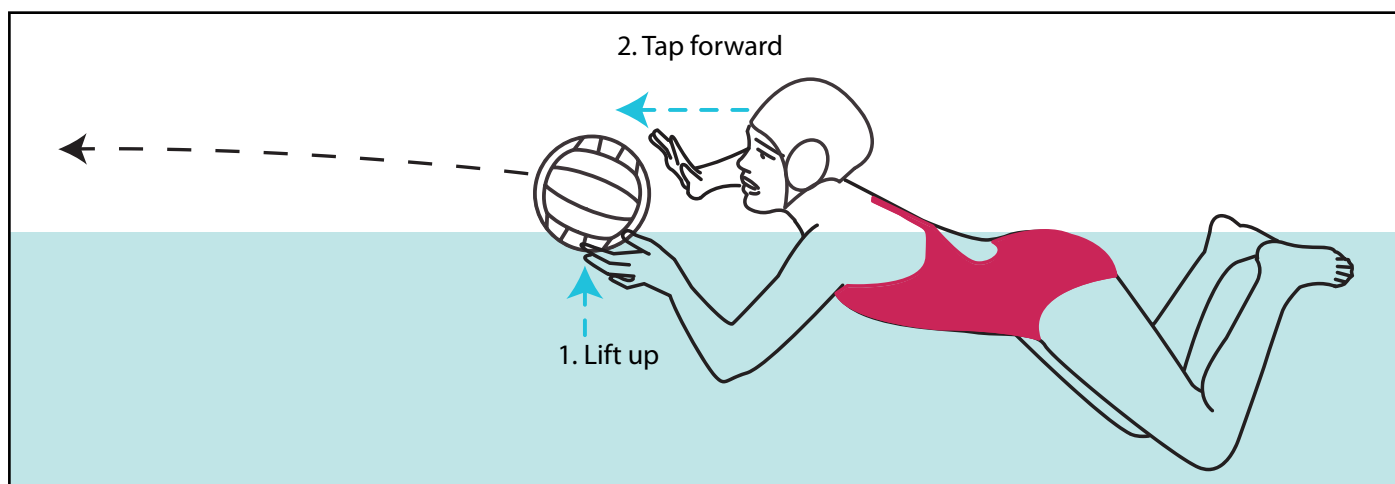
Test Criteria

The shooter is expected to score with at least three of their five shots and at least two of these must have struck the bottle en route to goal. In the unlikely event that the bottle serves to stop a shot then the goal should be awarded however should the goalkeeper make a save this would count as a missed attempt.



Test Area 4: Shooting and saving

Exercise 4.B Demonstrate the ability to perform a tip shot.



Set-up

This exercise is carried out in the deep end goal and involves a shooter and a goalkeeper. The shooter starts about eight metres from goal and the goalkeeper starts just in front of the goal line. The shooter swims in quickly and aims to score a goal with a tip shot. The shot can be taken from any position but if the ball goes within reach of the goalkeeper then they should push the ball away and thus effect a save.

Coaching Points

- The swim must be fast and at the goal.
- The tip shot when taken should be immediate as though there were a defender in close pursuit.
- In the tip shot, the ball is struck almost immediately after it leaves the water. It is not tipped high in the air, watched and then struck on the way down (as in a tennis serve).
- In the diagram the shooting hand is shown with the thumb pointing upwards. With this style of shot the ball is struck with the bony part of the hand immediately below where the fingers start. Using this part of the hand facilitates a hard shot without the ball ever being held but the fingers must be pulled backwards to avoid the risk of their striking the ball first thus causing them to be stubbed. An alternative position is also used, with the hand held the other way up and the fingers forming a cup for the ball as a shot is taken. This avoids the risk of stubbed fingers but does allow a defender a brief opportunity to effect a tackle while the ball is being held.

Test Criteria

The shooter must score at least one goal with their first two attempts or two from the following three. The above coaching points must also all be met.

Additional test criteria regarding goal keeping

If the candidate has not already gained the silver award then the examiner must be satisfied that the candidate can demonstrate goal keeper skills sufficient to achieve the silver award. This can usually be done by observing the candidate while they take a turn in goal during the goal award tests. If considered necessary by the examiner the candidate can be asked to attempt the goal keeping test from silver award exercise 4.B.