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## **Principles of Team Defense**

by Rich Corso, Havard Water Polo Foundation

### **Two-meter Defenders**

- **Your Goals:** Eliminate all goals out of set.
  - Play as physical as allowed.
    - The nature of the position requires that you will be ejected occasionally, but be aware of minimizing the number of ejections you need to take.
  - You must counter the two-meter man as often as possible.
- **Your Roles:** Pick up - and defend - the two-meter man immediately, every single time.
  - Position is paramount
  - You must be mobile, quick, and aggressive.
  - Take the physical part of your defensive game to the limit!
  - Work-and communicate-with your goalie.

### **Perimeter Defenders**

- **Your Goals:**
  - Eliminate Counter-Attack Goals (1 on none, 2 on 1, 3 on 2)
  - Eliminate Goals out of Set
    - Press / Crash / Zone (When in doubt or in between, crash)
  - Eliminate Ejections on the Perimeter
    - Play the ball and adjust to the referee's style
- **Your Roles:** Defend Early
  - Counter-Attack Defense:
    - Position Yourself Early on Offense in order to Eliminate any Counter-Attack Goals (1 on none, 2 on 1, 3 on 2)
    - Pick up and Press Immediately when the ball turns over
    - Identify their two-meter man ASAP & any possible free man
  - Front-Court Defense:
    - Delay the ball going into set as long as possible.
    - Be aware of the relation between the two-meter man's position and your own position and be ready to react accordingly
    - Recognize and communicate helps, gaps, and

stair-steps. Do not allow yourself to be pulled out of a helping  $\tau$  team defense.

### **Five-on-Six Defenders**

- **Your Goals:** Hold Every Team to Less Than a 38% Success Rate
  - Your Priorities:
    1. Eliminate Goals from the Posts
    2. Eliminate Goals from 1 and 6
      - You Must Take the Shooting Lanes
    3. Minimize Goals from 4 and 5
    4. The key to success on 5-on-6 defense is all-out hustle!

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