

The upcoming information is very important to know if you would like to play underwater hockey at a higher level than just pushing the puck forward and give injuries to others. You should not only 'know' these basics but also should be able to apply it during the game without thinking. Otherwise it costs too much time, and that's one thing you don't have in stressful situations.

So hang this on the ceiling, above your bed. Read it every time before you go to sleep and when you wake up again. Talk about it, dream about it, check if other teammates know it by calling them in the middle of the night and ask questions about it...

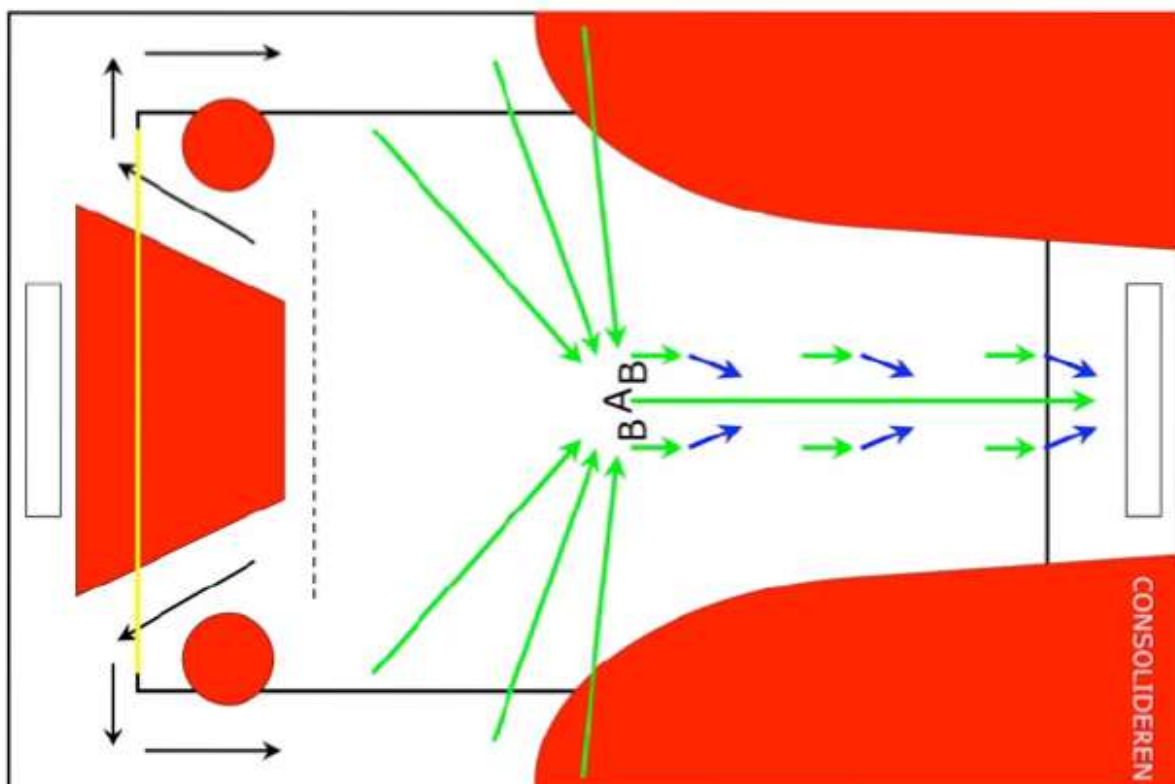
Basic knowledge and skills

Standard layout of the field:

The field is divided in 3 parts:

1. offensive third
2. midfield
3. defensive third

We also speak of the 'High Way', which is the straight line from one goal to the other. (the green horizontal arrow)



The direction of play is from left to right.

Red marked areas are 'no-go' places; you don't want to be there. Not by swimming, flicking nor any other way. If you stay out of the red areas, you get the ideal play situation: From our own third (the defensive third) we defend the puck to the corner. From the corner we bring the puck along the wall to the midline. After that, the puck goes to the High Way and from there we score at the opponent.

Explanation of the High Way:

The High Way in the offensive third is the part where we would like to play. Straight in front of the opponent's goal, were we are the most dangerous for them.

The High Way in the defensive third is the part where we absolutely not wanted to play.

Some basic rules:

In the defensive third (our own third):

1. Stay out of the red areas
2. Take over control of the puck as quickly as possible.
3. Defend to the back and away from our own goal if we reach the border of the defensive third. (the dashed line)
4. NEVER leave the puck alone, also not when it looks safe in the corner.
5. Never let the opponent flick or backflick from the corner.
6. keep the goal clean, defend like your life depends on it.
7. never flick in the direction of the red area, also not when your buddy is there 'uncovered'.
8. keep the puck in possess, so don't take risks with an outbreak.
9. SWIM out of the corner, never flick. And join up.
10. If the opponent attacks across our right side, then our left forward is the back-up defender. Defending happens by swimming the puck from his position straight into the right corner.

At the midfield:

1. Swim and join up wherever you are.
2. At the midline or the border of the offensive third bring the puck to the High Way, preferred by swimming.
3. the later the puck is brought from the wall to the middle, the sharper the angle is to swim to the high way.
4. At the high way the puck is brought forward, whereby:
 - a. person A flicks in the direction of the middle of the goal and person B in the direction of the farthest end of the goal.
 - b. Flick at the right time, prevent blocking of the opponent.
 - c. Always SWIM and JOIN UP.

At the offensive third (the opponents third):

1. NEVER flick to the goal in this third of the field, if you flick, you lose control of the puck.
2. Stay OUT of the corners!
3. Always attack the farthest end of the goal. Otherwise the area the opponent has to defend is very small and that's in his advantage.
4. Prevent the possibility that the opponent passes on your side, so for example the right forward covers the right side.
5. When you cross the 6m circle, close the goal after hand over the puck to your buddy. This means that NO PUCK gets out on your side. If this happens it's always a goal against us.
6. SWIM and JOIN UP
7. Be underwater and fight until the referee stops the game.

Common rules, counts everywhere!!!

1. Avoid turning around and playing with the backhand. (“Stagnation is declining”)
2. If you are forced to turn, always swim before you flick.
3. Always swim after flicking!
4. Swimming forward results in flicking sideward, swimming sideward results in flicking forward. Always create 2 opportunities to pass on the puck (form triangles) and never lie down behind the opponent
5. Be aware of the body position of the opponent, by watching to the direction of the opponents legs you know which side is the easiest to pass him.
6. If we play on the left side of the field, the most important job of the players on the right side is to prevent being passes along the right side at all time!!!

Skills:

The minimal skills required for a player to play at a higher level:

1. Swimming with and without the puck is the most important skill to have. Make sure you are able to do that, otherwise ask help from a swimming coach.
2. Flick the puck by forehand from every body position. For example a 90° flick to the right or left, in a turn. Or a short/long, low/high flick straight on.
3. pull the puck back from every position and protect it (keep in mind that you put your shoulder on the floor when you protect the puck)
4. the ‘V’ movement.
5. forward feints on the right as well as the left side of the opponent.
6. the ‘Benson’ movement
7. swim and turn with the puck on forehand.
8. minimal distance of the forehand flick: men 3 meters, women 2 meters.
9. minimal distance of the backhand flick: men 1,5 meter, women 1 meter.

If you don't know the movements please ask. You can also look it up on the internet; there are a lot of interesting sites like:

- <http://www.underwaterhockeyworld.com>
- <http://underwaterhockeyvictoria.com/training-downloads/>
- <http://www.uwhtrainer.com>
(unfortunately on this site you have to order the books.)