



HaBaWaBa School v.04
FOUNDATION LEVEL
KIDS 7 to 9 YEARS OLD

3rd WEBINAR
25th March 2026



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3rd WEBINAR - AGENDA

Kids 7-8-9 years old - Foundation Level

- ✓ 2nd WEBINAR – REVIEW OF SKILLS #6, #7, #8, #9, #10
- ✓ PARTICIPANT COACHES' INPUT
- ✓ RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS
- ✓ 3rd WEBINAR - PRESENTATION OF SKILLS #11, #12, #13, #14, #15



Kids 7-8-9 years old - Elementary Level

2nd WEBINAR – REVIEW

SKILLS #6, #7, #8, #9, #10

- ✓ Skill 6 – Water Polo Backstroke + Breaststroke Kick
- ✓ Skill 7 – Breaststroke Kick on Back with a Ball in Hand
- ✓ Skill 8 – Eggbeater Kick (Horizontal & Vertical)
- ✓ Skill 9 – Learning the Basic Vertical Position with the ball
- ✓ Skill 10 – Passing the Ball on Water while in Vertical Position

All videos to be presented were prepared with the participation of [Damiano SPINA](#), an 8-year-old athlete of Club Aquatico Pescara.



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Kids 7-8-9 years old - Elementary Level

PARTICIPANT COACHES' INPUT

1. Ildikó SZEDLMAYER, Age Group WP Coach – Vasas SC, HUNGARY
2. Gelly BISBA, Age Group WP Coach – Ethnicos Piraeus, GREECE
3. Yiannis KOINIS, Age Group WP Coach – CN Posillipo, ITALY
4. Dino CASONE, Age Group WP Coach – Muri Antichi Catania, ITALY



BRIEF ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

COACH	QUESTION	HOW TO APPLY
Fernando LEITE	How to introduce the game from early ages?	Start with free play in water → add ball interaction early → progress to small-sided games (1v1, 2v2). Keep instructions minimal and let children explore.
Ricardo PEREIRA	How can we support the transition from swimming to water polo	Swim → ball → simple games
Roland BARTALIS	How to teach basic skills?	Brief demo → short reps → immediate game use
Mohamed Medhat HASSAN	How to develop 1v1 situations?	Start with simple games → give cues during play
Stefano STOPPONI	How to teach shooting & attacking?	Short technique → 1v1 → choose shoot or pass
Tim KENDALL	How to teach defending skills?	Use 1v1 / small games → simple cues (positioning)
Ahmed ASHRAF	How to reinforce defensive behavior?	Small-sided games + constraints (space/time)

RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS – brief

- 1. The transition from swimming to water polo should be gradual, moving from basic swimming to ball use and then to simple games.**
- 2. Learning should start through play, using small-sided and 1v1 situations where children can explore and experience the game.**
- 3. Coaches guide learning during play by giving simple and clear cues at the right moment.**
- 4. Defensive skills and game understanding develop naturally through repeated game situations rather than isolated drills.**

Kids 7-8-9 years old - Foundation Level

Introduction

- ❑ At the ELEMENTARY LEVEL, children develop basic aquatic skills. Swimming ability improves through body position, breathing control, and movement, while the ball is gradually introduced. Activities progress from freestyle and backstroke to head-up swimming combined with breaststroke legs and swimming with the ball, building confidence. Children are then introduced to the vertical position, including the eggbeater kick and basic throwing position.
- ❑ At the FOUNDATION LEVEL, these abilities evolve into water polo skills through play and simple games. Children learn repositioning, direction changes, ball control, passing while swimming, and basic shooting. Skills are developed within game-like situations rather than in isolation. By the end of this stage, children can play simple games without tactical complexity, guided by one key principle: “Move to get the ball.”



Kids 7-8-9 years old - Foundation Level

Skill 11 – Sculling / Moving with Hands

Objective:

- ☐ Learn to use sculling for balance, support, and small directional adjustments without full swimming strokes.

Description:

- ☐ With arms bent and elbows close to the body, the player sweeps the hands in and out in a figure-eight motion.
- ☐ Thumbs point slightly up on the inward sweep and slightly down on the outward sweep.
- ☐ The body remains steady, with the shoulders high and hips aligned under the chest.
- ☐ Small changes in hand angle or wrist pressure allow forward, backward, or lateral movement.
- ☐ This is a key skill for stability and repositioning in water polo.





Kids 7-8-9 years old - Foundation Level

Skill 11 – Sculling / Moving with Hands

Drills:

1. Ball Between Knees Balance: Sit on the ball, scull hands to move forward and backward while maintaining balance.
2. Ball Between Knees - Side Travel: Sit on the ball, scull right and left; alternate directions.
3. Ball Between Knees - Turn Drill: Sitting on a ball, turn full circles both directions using sculling only.
4. Vertical Support: From a seated vertical position without eggbeater, use sculling to move forward, backward, or sideways.
5. Horizontal Glide: Lie horizontal with extended legs; scull palms in and out to move slowly backward.



Kids 7-8-9 years old - Foundation Level

Skill 12 – Starting Off without Wall Push

Objective:

- ☐ Develop explosive starts from still water using leg power, balance, and coordinated arm action.

Description:

- ☐ From a stationary floating position (one arm extended forward, one by the side), the player performs a strong breaststroke kick combined with a simultaneous arm pull under the body, launching forward into horizontal swimming.
- ☐ The head stays above water with eyes forward. Players then continue with 2–3 head-up freestyle strokes before stopping to repeat.
- ☐ This movement teaches quick acceleration and transition from rest to motion—an essential reaction skill in water polo.



Kids 7-8-9 years old - Foundation Level

Skill 12 – Starting Off without Wall Push

Drills:

1. [Ready–Go Start](#): From start-off position, on whistle perform a powerful breaststroke kick and switch lead side.
2. [Head-Up Start Drill](#): Start-off → 3 m head-up freestyle → stop → repeat; focus on fast, clean first strokes.
3. [Back Transition](#): Start-off → roll to backstroke → 3 m swim → stop → repeat; trains adaptability.
4. [Ball Dribble Start](#): Hold ball on palm in start-off; kick, push forward, and dribble 3 m head-up.
5. [Vertical to Start](#): From vertical with both arms raised, switch to start-off position on signal, then return to vertical.





Kids 7-8-9 years old - Foundation Level

Skill 13 – Changing Body Position (Vertical - Horizontal)

Objective:

- ☐ Learn to transition quickly and smoothly between vertical and horizontal positions while keeping control and balance—with or without the ball.

Description:

- ☐ To move from horizontal to vertical, the player bends the knees under the body, starts eggbeatering, and stabilizes posture while keeping the head above the surface.
- ☐ To move from vertical to horizontal, the player pushes one hand under the chest while executing a strong breaststroke kick, extending into a streamlined swimming position.
- ☐ With the ball, one hand supports or guides the ball forward during each transition. The goal is to react instantly, maintaining orientation and readiness for play.





Kids 7-8-9 years old - Foundation Level

Skill 13 – Changing Body Position (Vertical - Horizontal)

Drills:

1. [Signal Start–Stop](#): From a vertical position, move forward with eggbeater while pushing the ball ahead with alternating hands. On the signal, swim forward; on the next signal, stop and return to the vertical position.
2. [Basic Throwing Position to dribbling](#): From the basic throwing position with the ball in hand → on signal, start dribbling forward → on the next signal, stop and return to the vertical throwing position.
3. [Back-to-Vertical](#): Start on the back with the ball at the chest → perform 5 breaststroke kicks → rise to vertical → lift the ball overhead → eggbeater for 5 s → repeat.
4. [Signal Reaction](#): Kids follow the coach's signals → one arm raised → SWIM → both arms raised → STOP.
5. [Directional Command](#): One arm points direction to swim; both arms = stop; builds focus and response speed.





Kids 7-8-9 years old - Foundation Level

Skill 14 – Changing Direction (with/without the Ball)

Objective:

- ☐ Learn to pivot quickly and efficiently by bringing the legs under the body, rotating the trunk, and coordinating arms and legs—all while maintaining vision and balance.

Description:

- ☐ Without the ball: the player initiates the turn using a wide outer arm and a strong inward pull with the inner arm, combined with a breaststroke kick to accelerate rotation.
- ☐ With the ball: the player keeps the palm under the ball, steering it to the new direction while performing a compact leg and torso rotation. The key is to pivot around the vertical body axis, keeping the head high and eyes forward at all times.





Kids 7-8-9 years old - Foundation Level

Skill 14 – Changing Direction (with/without the Ball)

Drills:

1. [Signal Turns](#): Swim head-up without the ball → on signal, turn right → on the next signal, turn left → continue in a zig-zag pattern.
2. [Zig-Zag Swim](#): Head-up freestyle → on signal, turn right or left → continue zig-zagging → repeat until the end of the lane.
3. [Zig-Zag Dribble](#): Swim head-up with ball; on signal, turn right or left; repeat until end of lane.
4. [Zig-Zag Line Relay](#): Players with a ball line up in groups of three → 2 m apart → the two in front stay vertical with eggbeater. On signal, the last player swims head-up → zig-zags around the two players → reaches the front. When arriving → the new last player starts and repeats.
5. [Move to Receive Ball](#): One player with the ball in a basic position → passes to a teammate moving to one side to receive → the teammate returns the ball → the passer then passes to the opposite side → always move before receiving, not waiting still to receive the ball.



Kids 7-8-9 years old - Foundation Level

Skill 15 – Gliding Forward while Holding the Ball Behind

Objective:

- ☐ Develop coordination and spatial awareness while protecting the ball behind the body and maintaining smooth forward movement.

Description:

- ☐ The player holds the ball on the palm behind the body, keeping the arm extended and the ball slightly below the surface.
- ☐ The front hand performs light sculling for balance and direction, while the legs use strong, rhythmic breaststroke kicks to glide forward.
- ☐ The body stays semi-vertical, alternating between looking ahead and glancing back to maintain control and awareness of both the ball and the surroundings.





Kids 7-8-9 years old - Foundation Level

Skill 15 – Gliding Forward while Holding the Ball Behind

Drills:

1. [Glide and Dribble Combo](#): Glide 5 m with the ball held behind and then dribble 5 m forward, then; repeat several times.
2. [Zig-Zag Glide](#): Move in zig-zag pattern with the ball behind; stop on signal to hold still for 3 seconds.
3. [Glide & Stop](#): Glide forward 5 m with ball behind, then stop in vertical position and hold 5 seconds; repeat.
4. [Chased Glide](#): In pairs, attacker glides forward with ball behind while defender follows from 5 m; attacker switches to dribble when defender closes in.
5. [Back-to-Front Switch](#): On back, perform 3 breaststroke kicks with ball behind → switch to forward glide keeping ball behind.





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