

FINA Approves New Water Polo Rules

Updated after 2019 World
Championships, Nicola Johnson.



In December 2018, twelve new or augmented rules were overwhelmingly approved at a FINA Extraordinary Congress. According to a FINA press release, of 110 national federations represented, 161 delegates voted to approve the rule changes, with only six dissenting votes.



The possession time to be reset to 20 seconds after:

- a) a corner throw awarded,
- b) a rebound after a shot which does not cause change of possession,
- c) an exclusion*
- d) a defending player puts the ball under.

*If the time on shot clock is between 20-30sec when the exclusion is called, the shot clock is not reset and the time remains the same



Inside the 6m area, when a player is swimming with and/or holding the ball and is impeded from behind, during an attempt to shoot, a penalty must be awarded (unless only the ball or hand is touched by the defender).

There must be clear water (i.e. no defender in front of the attacker), the **attacker must have a clear intention to score a goal** and the foul must have **prevented a probable goal**.

The penalty can't be a gift, if the attacker stops swimming or playing for the goal when they had a chance to finish, this is not a penalty.



Penalty Situation



A player taking a corner throw may:

- * Shoot directly or, after putting the ball in play:

- * Swim and shoot or,

- * Pass to another player.

Make sure the corner throw is taken right against the rope.



The free throw shall be taken from the location of the ball (except if the foul is committed inside the 2m line – the ball must always be played from outside the 2m area).

Ensure all players are outside the 2m area before the ball is put in play.



A goal may be scored from a free throw awarded outside 6 meters:

- * from a direct shot at goal or
- * by the player **putting the ball in play** then baulking, dribbling and then shooting.

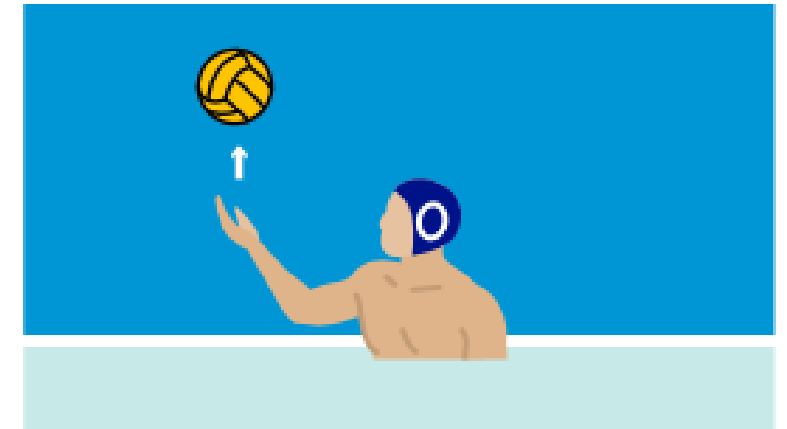
The referee shall raise their arm straight up in the air if the foul happened outside the 6m line.

The referee must drop their arm when they consider the attacker to have played the ball so the defender can attack the player.

Figure 1



Figure 2



An additional substitution re-entry area will be at any place between the goal line and the center field line for flying substitutions.

Both players must have their heads above the water inside the substitution area, AND must visibly 'high-five' before the incoming player may enter the field of play.

The players should only be in the flying substitution area for about 2-3 possessions.

A flying sub cannot be made before the taking of a penalty or any stoppage (injury, blood), they can only be made "during the game."



Flying Substitutions



Each team is allowed 2 time-outs per game.

The time-outs can be called at any time during the game, including during the same quarter or back-to-back, provided that the team is in possession of the ball.

Where provided, a coach must use a time-out hooter/button to request their time-out.



The goalkeeper is now allowed to move beyond the half-way line and take part in play. However, once outside the 6m area, they lose their goalkeeper privileges (e.g. cannot use 2 hands, cannot punch the ball).

The goalkeeper is also now allowed to take a penalty as well as take part by shooting in a penalty shoot-out, including whilst they are acting as the team's nominated goalkeeper



Goalkeeper in Attack



There shall be a 3-minute interval at half time and a 2-minute interval after the first and third quarters.



When the referee returns the ball to the water, the ball is live, this means that the player can put the ball into play and go on to shoot.



Other FINA rules that were implemented but are not likely to have an impact on water polo within Australia at this time:

1. The referees wear audio head sets, this happens in AWL.
2. The VMS can be used to review a goal being scored or not.
3. The VMS can be used after the game to review for brutality and misconduct.
4. Visual effects such as flashing lights around the exclusion area.



Notes from WWR after 2019 World Champs

Impeding WP22.8:

- Impeding is a very important topic and referees must apply exclusions for impeding anywhere in the field of play, this can be done with or without the ball. Exclusions off the ball are important for a clean and fast game.
- The referee must protect the movement of the attacking player, impeding fouls on the moving players must be called.
- At the same time the referee must know WHEN and WHERE to call an exclusion off the ball so as not to take away an advantage.

A player leaving the field of player (not the water) on their own initiative:

- There is no sanction for a player leaving the field of play but they can only re-enter the field of play at the end of the period, during a time out, after a goal or with the permission of the referee (via the re-entry area).

Free Throws WP 20:

- The player who takes possession after a contra foul, **needs to put the ball into play visibly**, if this is not done then another contra foul is called. The referee can help by signalling to the player to put the ball into play.