



## Year 5 & 6 Water Polo Rules.

### The Game

- Each team is allowed 8 players, with four (a goalkeeper and 3 field players) participating at any one time.
- Players should wear swimming caps of the same colour. (These can be provided, but it would be better if each school could have 8 of their own).
- Players may only handle the ball with only one hand (except goalkeepers).
- Substitutions are most common after a goal is scored, between periods, or for an ejected player. Rolling substitutions are allowed, so players are allowed to re-enter the game having been previously replaced. Players can also be substituted by swimming to their team corner and tagging an entering player.
- Deliberate physical contact is not allowed. The referee indicates fouls by blowing a whistle and using hand signals to point out the location of the foul and the attacking direction of the fouled player. Offended teams then have 3 seconds in which to make a free throw once they are at the correct position in the pool. Defending players must retreat 1 metre and allow the pass to be made. Players cannot score from a free throw.
- Players may only handle the ball for 3 seconds at a time.
- Players may not use a clenched fist.
- Pushing the ball below surface level when under pressure by an opponent is a foul.
- A goal (1 point) is scored when the ball is thrown or pushed completely past the face of the goal or against the wall which a goal is marked.

### Additional Rule on agreement before competition, dependent on swimmers ability.

- Players tread water when in possession of the ball and cannot touch the bottom. They cannot touch the sides of the pool at any stage). Except for the goalkeeper.

### Starting the game.

- Each game is started and restarted with the teams lined up on opposite goal lines.
- On a signal (whistle) from the referee, the teams sprint toward centre pool where the referee tosses the ball into the water. The team gaining possession of the ball advances it toward its offensive end of the pool by swimming, dribbling or passing the ball.

### Fouls

- There are two types of fouls in water polo -- ordinary fouls and major fouls.

#### Ordinary fouls:

- *When the referee calls an ordinary foul, the offended team is awarded a free throw at the point of the foul. Defenders must retreat 1 metre.*
- *The offended team must put the ball in play within three seconds by releasing, swimming or passing the ball.*
- *A player cannot shoot the ball on a free throw, unless the foul occurred in their own half.*

#### Common ordinary fouls include:

- Touching the ball with two hands;
- Touching the ball whilst touching the floor.
- Taking the ball under water when under pressure by an opponent;
- Impeding an opponent who is not holding the ball;
- Pushing off an opponent;
- Stalling (a team being in possession and failing to shoot within 30 seconds – i.e. time wasting).

### Major / Exclusion Fouls:

- Exclusion fouls result in a player being excluded for 20 seconds.
- The excluded player (or his/her substitute) may not return until the 20 second exclusion time expires, a goal is scored or a change of possession takes place, whichever occurs first.
- A player committing extreme or continual major fouls is removed from the game for the duration.

### Common major / exclusion fouls:

- Kicking or striking;
- Deliberate splashing in the face;
- Reaching over a player;
- Interfering with a free throw;
- Misconduct or disrespect to the referee;
- Holding, sinking or pulling back an opponent not holding the ball;
- Blatant or aggressive fouls or blocking committed "off the ball".

### Penalty Fouls:

- Penalty fouls are committed within the five-metres of the goal or where a goal probably would have resulted.
- A penalty foul results in a 20 second exclusion.
- Any player in the game from the offended team can take the penalty throw.
- The shot is taken 3 metres from the goal, with only the goalie defending.

### The award of a penalty throw most commonly occurs in the following situation within the five-meter area:

- Any player, including the goalkeeper, physically moving the goal.
- Any player, except the goalkeeper, playing the ball with both hands or a clenched fist;
- The goalkeeper or a defensive player taking the ball underwater;
- When an offensive player in control of the ball and facing the goal is fouled by holding, sinking or pulling back.

### Basic Strategy of the Game:

*Water polo is a team sport that mixes the best aspects of soccer, basketball, and hockey.*

*Like soccer, goalkeepers defend a large netted goal.*

*Water polo players are allowed to use only one hand at a time to pass or shoot the yellow, soccer-sized ball.*

*Like basketball, there are fast breaks and a set offense that uses a powerful "playmaker" that can either make powerful offensive shots or dish passes off to players driving towards the goal.*

*Driving, towards the goal and sprinting into space near the goal to receive the ball & shooting are typical offensive tactics.*

*"Hole men" (like centre forwards or goal shooters) tend to be big because they need to plant themselves in front of the goal without being blocked out. Guard-like "drivers" tend to be smaller, quicker, and good ball handlers, and outside shooters (like 3-point shooters in basketball) have good arms to peg the high corners of the goal with accuracy whenever a defender swims to cover a driver breaking towards the goal.*

*Water polo can be a physical game and players can be temporarily ejected in a "penalty box" for short periods of time (20 seconds) if the referee deems it necessary.*

*Occasionally, if possession is contested there can be a "face off" between two players to decide who regains possession of the ball (like a jump ball).*

*Teams may wish to adopt the positions of goalkeeper, defender, midfield (playmaker) and defender.*

*Players may dribble the ball by swimming (head up) and pushing the ball with the inside of their upper arms. The ball can be passed by scooping it up from underneath with one hand and thrown from above the head.*

*Some players will be able to catch / balance the ball with one hand.*

*It is a tiring game, so many substitutions are likely to be needed. Coaches / captains should ready the next player in to allow quick changeovers. Players must be tagged before entering the pool.*

*No diving in is allowed.*