

## FINA Rule Changes

The changes to the FINA rules of Water Polo will apply from the 15/09/05 and are “experimental” until 31/12/06. Having said this my copy of them says 2005 to 2009!! I anticipate the Notts. League and many others will finish its season under the current rules without changing over to the new ones until next year.

These changes were agreed at the recent World Championships in Montreal, Canada(Aug05) and are intended to make the game quicker, more easy to understand and more telegenic( for those countries where it is televised). There are a total of 28 material changes .Hence the new game times of 4X 8 minutes with a 5 minute break at half time and 2 minutes at the other intervals. This will neatly fill one whole hour of television.

The changes to the Brutality rule have already been trailed in Italy where they have played 2 minutes if man down before reverting to a full team- again for the TV audiences who would otherwise simply switch off!!

Women’s games revert to the 25 metre pool size.

The 7 metre line is now at 5 metres as is the Penalty area. All the previous 7 metre shot rules now apply to the 5 metre line as do the previous Penalty rules.

Caps must now be fitted with malleable ear protectors and a reserve Goal keeper must wear the RED 13 cap.

There are some minor changes to the timings for extra time.

The Penalty shoot out has now been clearly defined and has become an exact science.

The Timeout has no real changes but may now be called immediately following a goal.

Possession time is reduced to 30 seconds from 35 and exclusion times remain at 20 seconds.

There are significant changes to the rules regarding Goal throws and Corner throws. A Corner throw will only be awarded if the ball was last touched by the defending Goal Keeper or deliberately put out by a defending player. Otherwise it will be a Goal throw.

Goal throws can now be taken by any player of the team from anywhere within their own 2 metre area. Indeed the nearest player to the ball **MUST** now take the throw.

When the referee excludes two opposing players simultaneously the attacking team now retains possession and continues with its attack. Previously it was a neutral ball.

There is a new offence of “attempting to play or block a shot outside 5 m with 2 hands” which will earn the offender an exclusion.

The same offence inside 5m will be a Penalty .Indeed two hands in the air to block a pass or shot will result in a Penalty.

Improper entry or re-entry will now be a Penalty and further exclusion for a defending player . For an attacking player it is a Free Throw and further exclusion. It is at present unclear whether this will be worth one or two personal fouls but my bet is one on the basis that it is a single offence..

Disrespect has been combined with misconduct to produce a truly catch-all rule which includes the use of “inappropriate language “and actions against the “spirit of the game”.

For anyone to commit an act of Brutality anytime in the game or its stoppages this will result in complete exclusion of the culprit and a Penalty. The offending team will then have to play 4 minutes of man down before they may have a substitute. The offending player may take no further part in the game and will be reported for further disciplinary measures.

There are a couple of minor changes to the Penalty rules. The most important of these being that should a team receive a Penalty during the last minute of a game the coach may elect to play on from a free throw if he pleases. The coach of the attacking team can now advance to the attacking teams’ 5 metre line ie the line at his end of the pool.

These rule changes are abbreviated for the convenience of players, coaches and other non-referees. It would be sensible for referees and other officials to obtain a full copy of these rules when they become available.

In the meantime if you have any questions regarding these rules or their applications please contact me.

Chris Freebury            01332-550167  
   07771-673515  
[c.freebury@ntlworld.com](mailto:c.freebury@ntlworld.com)