

NEW WATER POLO RULES - QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Have you grasped the new rules yet? Inevitably, coaches and players are already querying what happens in particular situations. Hopefully, this Q&A section – with answers provided by international referee **Brian Littlejohn** – will help.

(4) CAPS

Can the goalkeeper wear a number 13 on a red cap?

Answer: Under the revised rules a substitute goalkeeper **MUST** wear a red cap numbered 13.

Can the goalkeeper wear a number 14 on a red cap?

Answer: No.

(5) TEAMS AND SUBSTITUTES

Previously, coaches were allowed to go to halfway under LEN rules - will this still be allowed?

Answer: No. In GB, we are applying the FINA rules, which mean that coaches can progress no further than their own five-metre line when their team have possession.

The coach has received a yellow card. Can he still move and direct the team?

Answer: Yes.

Are different goalkeepers allowed to save penalty throws during a penalty shootout? What if injured halfway through?

Answer: The goalkeeper may be changed at any time, provided the substitute was listed amongst the team list in that game.

After the game has started and a team only has 6 or less players left who are eligible to play. Does that team have to have a player wearing a goalkeepers cap?

Answer: To quote the rule, which isn't a new one - "A team playing with less than 7 players shall not be required to have a goalkeeper".

(12) TIME OUTS

A coach requests a third time during normal game time. Do you:

*a} pull the ball out restart with a free-throw on to the opposition on half way? or
b} just award a reversal on 1/2 way or behind?*

Answer : the chances are because the team had the ball the officials would likely have awarded the time out and already taken the ball out of the water before anyone noticed that it

was a third time out. In this case you'd indicate that it is a free throw to the opposition on half way and restart in accordance with WP12.3 at the half way line.

A player from the team receiving a time out commits an act of misconduct; do they start with 7, or with 6 & 1 in re-entry area to enter on resumption of play?

Answer : six in the field of play and one in the re-entry area ready to come in when the team has taken possession of the ball (which would be at the end of the timeout).

(14) METHOD OF SCORING

If one player from each team are excluded at the same time, can the player taking the free throw score a goal?

Answer: As long as it is a immediate shot from a free throw awarded outside 5m and complies with the note at the end of Rule WP14.3

(17) CORNER THROWS

After reading the detail on the FINA site it appears that a corner will result if the goalkeeper knocks the ball out or a defender deliberately sends the ball out. Does that mean that if the ball goes behind from a goalkeeper under any circumstances a corner will result and, if a ball goes behind from a defender's block, no corner will be awarded?

Answer: Correct on both points.

On the issue of the nearest player taking either the corner or goal throw, will the throw be reversed if the nearest player swims away from the ball?

Answer: Rule 17.2 clarifies that the throw need not be taken by the nearest player. Each throw still has to be taken without undue delay – as they always were. But rule (20.14) says that: "To delay unduly when taking a free throw, goal throw or corner throw" is an ordinary foul. So if the player swam away and the game was delayed unduly, there would be an ordinary foul awarded to the opposition.

(19) FREE THROWS

Do you think players are going to be excluded for blocking shots on goal from 5-7 metres (one-handed) because this is blocking the direction of the free throw? In effect, is it okay to coach players to step back and block when they concede a minor at 5-7 metres?

Answer: Perfectly acceptable for defenders to adopt a one-handed block, providing the block is stationary (i.e. not waving one arm about in front of the thrower trying to prevent him seeing anything) and is not leaning towards the thrower

At direct free throws outside five metres, is there still a rule that the blocking player must be at least one metre away? And is this rule going to result in more majors – or would this now be a penalty throw?

Answer: There is no rule which dictates distance between the person taking a free throw and a defender. See note to the above question about blocking. The position of the defender who has raised two hands to play or block the shot results in the exclusion or penalty – outside 5 metres is the exclusion, inside 5 (and but for which a goal would probably have resulted) will be a penalty.

(20) ORDINARY FOULS

Is there going to be a change to make it harder to get a minor just outside 5 metres?

Answer: There has been no change to the rules, so there should not be a difference in 'how difficult' it is to get a minor foul. It is worth stating that the practice of the attacker using his body as a shield and simply leaning in towards the defender with head down and releasing the ball is not a foul by the defender – and a minor foul should not be awarded to the attacker. In some instances, this may even result in a foul throw to the defending team as a result of the attacker impeding.

Can the goalkeepers stand up holding the ball anywhere inside their 5 metres?

Answer: The goalkeeper is entitled to all of the goalkeeping privileges whilst in the 5m area. Standing, two hands, punching the ball etc.

(21) EXCLUSION FOULS

It is likely there will be more shooting directly from the free throw at 5-7 metres. This is not often strictly applied but is it an exclusion offence to block the direction of the throw (one handed)?

Answer: The way in which the interfering rule should be applied – and the way Figure 13 of the rule 21.5 suggests – is that the blocking of the free throw is when the defender is leaning towards the thrower - i.e. trying to prevent the throw of the ball rather than the more normal situation where the defender raises his hand vertically and forces the thrower to an alternative throw.

How is the pit going to be refereed? Will it be more strict with a greater frequency of majors, as at the start of last season, or will you be allowed to jostle for position before the ball is passed in? In my opinion, the approach changed in the second half of last season (at least in Division 3) and at the World Championships.

Answer: Nothing has changed – players will be allowed to 'jostle' for position and either player will be penalised for 'rough' play - whether the ball is there or not!

I had three separate majors in one match - will I be on reported?

Answer: No. The only time referees should report players on automatic sanction forms is when exclusion is for the remainder of the match under WP21.10, 22.11 (misconduct or brutality). These forms will still be in use for this season in the National League.

What is the signal for a substitute to enter the pool after a player has received a 4 minute permanent exclusion?

Answer: The signal will be made by the match secretary raising the appropriate flag.

(22) PENALTY FOULS

Will a player with two hands in the air be penalised even if the hands are staggered so that the ball cannot hit both at once?

Answer: YES. The new rules and accompanying note on this are quite clear - to attempt to play or block a shot with two hands outside the 5 metre area is an exclusion foul. *Note - If a defending player who is outside the 5 metre area raises two hands in an attempt to play or block a shot on goal, the player shall be excluded.*

Last seasons rules on “pit marking” resulted in the defender having both arms raised to signify to the referee that he was not holding/fouling the centre forward. Given the new FINA ruling on blocking or attempting to block with both hands, what will be the position with a defender having both arms raised against the attacker (his back is towards the goal) with or without the ball? Attacker then does jump half turn on receiving ball, defender still has both arms raised? I am obviously making a presumption that the defender would not have the time to put one arm down, therefore would he be intentionally blocking with both hands and how would the referee interpret it?

If I’m defending the pit man, I should have both hands out of the water to avoid a major. What happens if I block a shot from the pitt man or another player in this situation? Will I get a major for blocking with both hands?

Answer: Nice situations to have and how likely is it that in defending the pit man the defender is going to be sitting there with two arms out of the water? I would also ask that if a defender is sitting there with two arms out of the water is he really defending the pit man or is he creating a block? In most cases I suspect that a defender with two arms out of the water would be interpreted as intentionally attempting to play or block a shot and would be punished accordingly. On the first situation - the presumption that the defender wouldn't have time to lower one of his arms is a bit theoretical as the attacker has received the ball and done a jump half turn - in this situation one would more likely assume that the defenders action of sitting there and having both hands raised and attempting to block a shot would be intentional and if it caused a probable goal not to be scored then a penalty would have to be awarded.

Under rule 21.15 if an excluded player re-enters or a substitute enters the field of play improperly, they are to be excluded and a penalty throw awarded, thus giving the player 2 personal faults, correct?

Answer: Just to clarify - if the excluded player (or a substitute) enters improperly (when his team does not have the ball) the player should be excluded and a penalty awarded. This penalty and exclusion only count as one personal fault. Therefore a blue player is excluded and this is his first personal fault - he enters improperly when his team are defending, he is excluded, and a penalty is awarded to white and he now has a total of two personal faults.

How does the coach signal for the possession option following the award of a penalty throw?

Answer: That's not been agreed yet and will be discussed at the NWPL technical meeting on the 10th September 2005.

If a team has no coach, how does a team request the possession option following the award of a penalty throw?

Answer: In the absence of a coach, the team captain would be deemed responsible for these decisions and it's up to the teams to make the referees and table aware of which number the captain is before the start of the match.

If a team have requested a free throw instead of penalty,

a. from where is the free throw taken?

b. can a goal be scored with an immediate free throw shot after possession has been given.

c. What happens if the goalkeeper is responsible for giving a penalty throw and it's their third personal foul?

d. If a team have requested possession instead of a penalty throw,

Answer:

a - From wherever the ball is.

b - No, because a goal can only be scored directly from a free throw awarded outside the 5m area - a penalty is not a free throw awarded outside the 5m.

c - If the third personal fault is a penalty the entry of the substitute should be immediate, no matter which player it is.

d - Same as before, the substitute must be allowed to enter before the game can continue, the only difference is this time the game will continue with a free throw and the team in possession having a new 30 sec possession time.

(23) PENALTY THROWS

Is a goalkeeper allowed to take a penalty throw during a penalty shoot out?

Answer: The coach is required to nominate 5 players AND a goalkeeper - the five players will be listed in order and will shoot in that order - the sequence cannot be changed.

What would happen to the resulting penalty throws should a simultaneous exclusion for brutality occur? As both teams would be entitled to a penalty under the new rules. Would they cancel each other out as it would be impractical for them to be taken one after the other? Or would the team in possession get a penalty and the other not? Or would the game simply restart with a free throw to the team in possession?

Answer: Point 13 in Appendix A explains the situation - both teams would be awarded penalty throws and the first throw would be taken by the team last in possession of the ball. After the second penalty has been taken, the game shall be restarted with a neutral throw at half way.

The goalkeeper fails to take up their correct position on the goal line at a penalty throw having been instructed to do so. The rules specifically provide for this situation and the punishment should be an exclusion foul, but what happens if the offence were to take place during a penalty shootout?

Answer : from instructions I've been given for the execution of a penalty shoot out, it would be difficult for the penalty to be taken without the goalkeeper being on his line, but if the goalie refused to move back he would be excluded from taking part in that penalty - and he would be substituted by one of the five players taking part in the penalty shoot out.

(24) PERSONAL FOULS

If a player has received 3 personal fouls, are they allowed to sit with their team?

Answer: Yes, as long as they keep their cap on. Only if a player has been excluded for the remainder of the match for misconduct or brutality must they leave the poolside immediately.

** If you still need clarification regarding any of the rules, please send your questions to rules@nwpl.co.uk. We will publish the details.*