

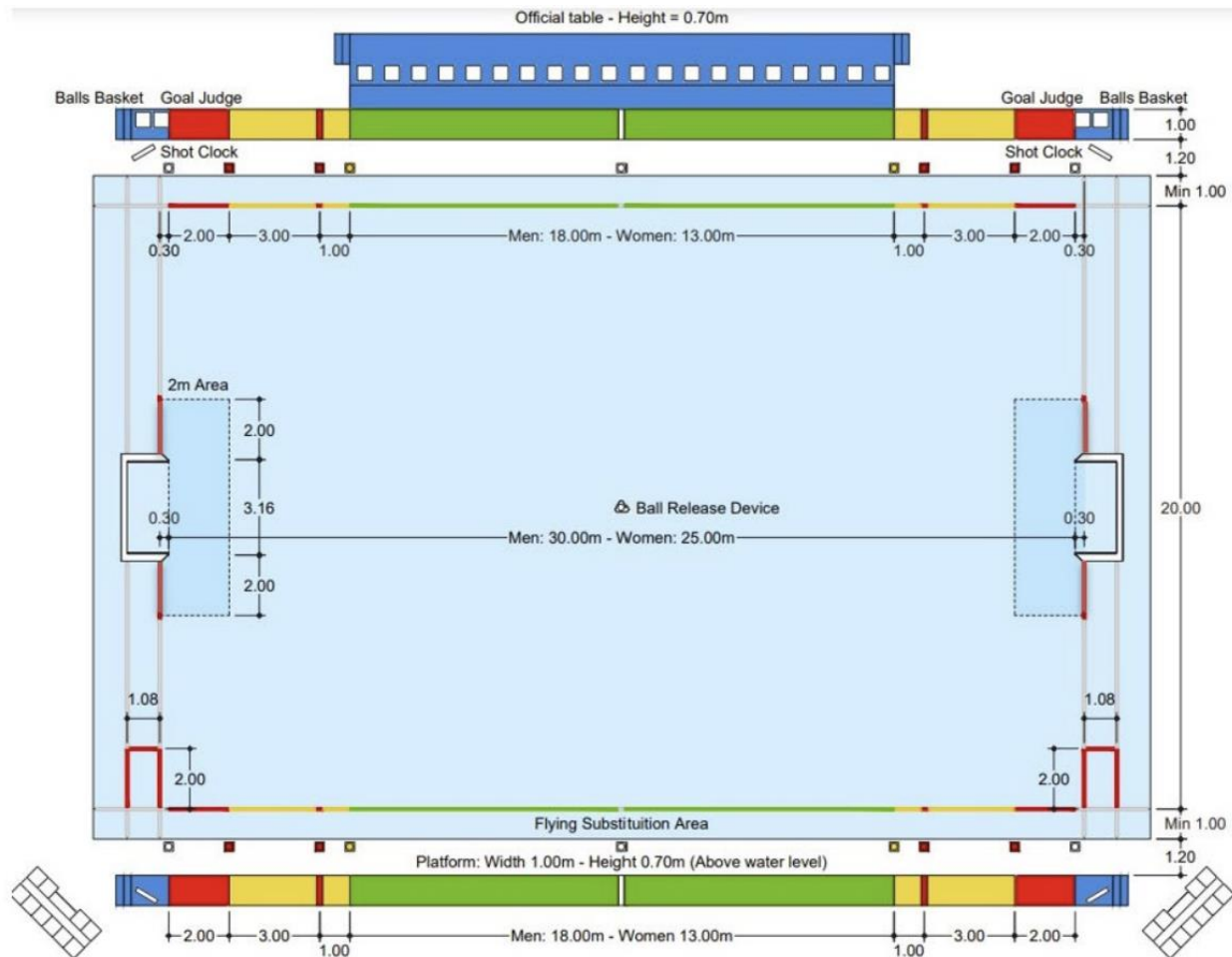
**USA WATER POLO RULES**  
**2026 – 2027**

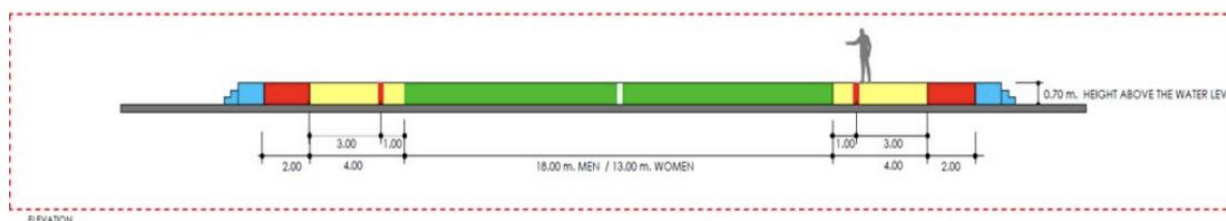
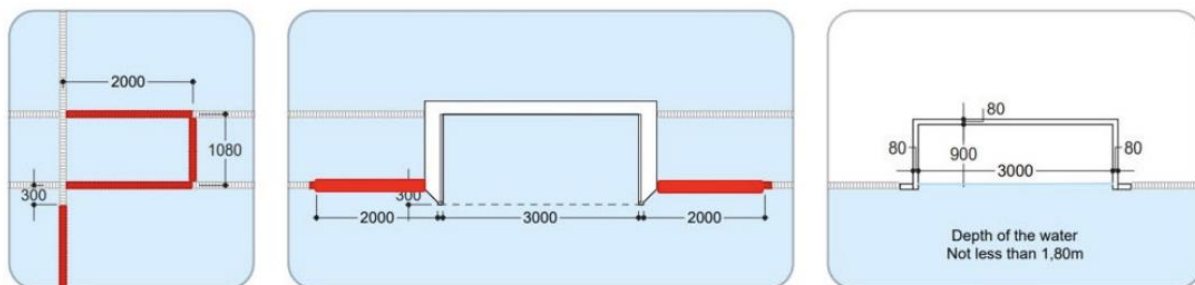
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## WP 1 FIELD OF PLAY & EQUIPMENT

**WP 1.1** - The promoting organization shall be responsible for the correct measurements and markings of the field of play and shall provide all required fixtures and equipment.

**WP 1.2** – The layout and markings of the field of play for a game officiated by two referees shall be in accordance with this diagram:





\*a red 5 meter mark of the side line and referees catwalk, indicating the place where a penalty throw has to be taken must be added and the yellow area must be expanded to be 4 meters at each end reducing the green by 2 meters to 18/13.

**WP 1.3** – In a game officiated by one referee, the referee shall officiate on the same side as the official table, and the goal judges shall be situated on the opposite side.

**WP 1.4** – The distance between the goal lines shall not be less than 20 meters and not more than 30 meters for games played by men. The distance between the goal lines shall not be less than 20 meters and not more than 25 meters for games played by women. The width of the field of play shall not be less than 10 meters and not more than 20 meters.

**WP 1.5** – For FINA Events, the dimensions of the field of play, water depth and temperature, and light intensity shall be set forth in FR 7.2, FR 7.3, FR 7.4, and FR 8.3.

**WP 1.6** – Distinctive marks shall be provided on both sides of the field of play to denote the following:

- white marks – goal line and half distance line
- red marks – 2 meters from the goal lines
- yellow marks – 6 meters from the goal lines
- a red marker shall be placed 5 meters from the goal lines to indicate the point from which a penalty shot must be taken

The sides of the field of play from the goal line to the 2 meter line shall be marked in red; from the 2 meter line to the 6 meter line shall be marked in yellow and from the 6 meter line to the half distance line shall be marked in green.

**WP 1.7** – A red mark shall be placed at each end of the field of play, 2 meters from the corner of the field of play on the side opposite to the official table, to denote the exclusion re-entry area.

**WP 1.8** – An area for flying substitutions must be available on the lateral outer side of the field of play, on the side where the team benches are situated. The width of this area must be a minimum of half a meter from the wall. The designated area for flying substitutions for each team will be between the goal line in front of the team bench and the center of the field of play.

**WP 1.9** – Sufficient space shall be provided to enable the referees to have free movement from end to end of the field of play. Space shall also be provided at the goal lines for the goal judges.

**WP 1.10** - The secretary shall be provided with separate white, blue, red and yellow flags, each measuring 0.35 meters x 0.20 meters.

## **WP 2 GOALS**

**WP 2.1** – Two goal posts and a crossbar, rigidly constructed, rectangular with a dimension of 0.075 meters facing the field of play and painted white shall be located on the goal lines at each end, equal distances from the sides and not less than 0.30 meters in front of the ends of the field of play.

**WP 2.2** – The inner sides of the goal posts shall be 3 meters apart. When the water is 1.50 meters or more in depth, the underside of the crossbar shall be 0.90 meters from the water surface. When the water is less than 1.50 meters in depth, the underside of the crossbar shall be 2.40 meters from the floor of the pool.

**WP 2.3** – Limp nets shall be securely fastened to the goal posts and crossbar to enclose the entire goal area and shall be attached to the goal fixtures in such a manner as to allow not less than 0.30 meters clear space behind the goal line everywhere within the goal area.

## **WP 3 THE BALL**

**WP 3.1** – The ball shall be round and shall have an air chamber with a self-closing valve. It shall be waterproof, without external strapping or any covering of grease or similar substance.

**WP 3.2** – The weight of the ball shall be not less than 400 grams and not more than 450 grams.

**WP 3.3** – For games played by men, the circumference of the ball shall not be less than 0.68 meters and not more than 0.71 meters, and its pressure shall be 7.5-8.5 pounds per square inch.

**WP 3.4** – For games played by women, the circumference of the ball shall not be less than 0.65 meters and not more than 0.67 meters, and its pressure shall be 6.5-7.5 pounds per square inch.

## **WP 4 CAPS**

**WP 4.1** – Caps shall be of contrasting color, other than solid red, as approved by the referees, but also to contrast with the color of the ball. A team may be required by the referees to wear white or blue caps. The goalkeepers shall wear red caps. Caps shall be fastened under the

chin. If a player loses the cap during play, the player shall replace it at the next appropriate stoppage of the game when the player's team is in possession of the ball. Caps shall be worn throughout the entire game.

**WP 4.2 –** Caps shall be fitted with malleable ear protectors which shall be the same color as the team's caps except that the goalkeeper may have red protectors.

**WP 4.3 -** Caps shall be numbered on both sides with numbers 0.10 meters in height. The goalkeeper shall wear cap no. 1 and the other caps shall be numbered 2 to 13. A substitute goalkeeper shall wear a red cap numbered 13. A player shall not be allowed to change cap number during the game except with the permission of a referee and with notification to the secretary.

**WP 4.4 –** For international games, the caps shall display on the front the international three letter country code and may display the national flag. The country code shall be 0.04 meters in height.

**WP 4.5 –**

(a) The use of a padded swim cap worn under a water polo competition cap is permitted provided that the water polo competition cap can securely fit over the padded swim cap. The color of the padded swim cap shall match the color of the water polo competition cap as closely as possible.

(b) The use of soft headgear is permitted provided it meets the requirements of rule WP 4. In addition, the headgear shall not have large gaps anywhere in its design.

Referees have the authority to prohibit the use of a padded swim cap and soft headgear, if they do not meet the requirements Rule WP 4 and/or if the cap or headgear has the potential to cause injury to the wearer or other participants.

## **WP 5 TEAMS AND SUBSTITUTES**

**WP 5.1 –** At the beginning of the game, a team shall field seven players, one of whom shall act as the goalkeeper and shall wear the designated goalkeeper's cap, thereby assuming the privileges of that position. Following the start of the match, a team is not required to have a goalkeeper in the water and may instead have seven field players.

**WP 5.2 –** All players not in the game at that time, together with the coaches and officials with the exception of the head coach, shall sit on the team bench and shall not move away from the bench from the commencement of play, except during the intervals between periods or during timeouts. The head coach of the attacking team shall be allowed to move to the 6 meter line at any time. Teams shall only change ends and benches at half time. The team benches shall both be situated on the side opposite to the official table.

**WP 5.3 –** The captains shall be playing members of their respective teams and each shall be responsible for the good conduct and discipline of his team.

**WP 5.4 –** Players shall wear non-transparent costumes or costumes with a separate undergarment and before taking part in a game shall remove any articles likely to cause injury.

**WP 5.5** – Players shall not have grease, oil or any substance on the body which might provide an advantage. If a referee ascertains before the start of play that such a substance has been used, the referee shall order it to be removed immediately. The start of play shall not be delayed for the substance to be removed. If the offense is detected after the play has started, the offending player shall be excluded from the remainder of the game and a substitute permitted to enter the field of play immediately from the team's exclusion re-entry area.

**WP 5.6** – At any time in the game, a player may be substituted by leaving the field of play at the team's designated substitution areas. The substitute may enter the field of play from the exclusion re-entry area as soon as the player has visibly risen to the surface of the water within the re-entry area. Substitution from the designated lateral substitution area is allowed when both players, the exiting player and the substitute, are in the water, outside of the field of play and touch hands above the water.

If a goalkeeper is substituted under this rule, it must only be by the substitute goalkeeper. If the team has less than seven players, the team shall not be required to have a goalkeeper. No substitution shall be made under this rule between the time a referee awards a penalty throw and the taking of the throw.

*[NOTE: In the event that the goalkeeper and substitute goalkeeper are not entitled or able to participate, a team playing with seven players shall be required to play with an alternative goalkeeper who shall wear the goalkeeper's cap. During a game should a team have no more substitutes apart from the substitute goalkeeper either the goalkeeper or substitute goalkeeper may play as a field player].*

**WP 5.7** – A substitute may enter the field of play from any place:

- a) during the intervals between periods of play;
- b) after a goal has been scored;
- c) during a timeout;
- d) to replace a player who is bleeding or injured.

**WP 5.8** – A substitute shall be ready to replace a player without delay. If the substitute is not ready, the game shall continue without the substitute and, at any time, the substitute may then enter the field of play from the team's designated substitution areas, after touching hands where applicable.

**WP 5.9** – A goalkeeper who has been replaced by a substitute may not play in any position other than goalkeeper.

**WP 5.10** – Should a goalkeeper retire from the game through any medical reason, the referees shall allow an immediate substitution by the substitute goalkeeper.

**WP 5.11 (New)** – If a player, on the player's own initiative, leaves the field of play during live-time play in a place other than the re-entry area or the designated flying substitution area, the player **will not be punished** for leaving the field of play. This player or a substitute will be able to re-enter the field of play immediately from their own exclusion re-entry area once the exiting player has reached the re-entry area. The player may also re-enter from anywhere after a goal, after a time out or at the start of the next period.

If a player leaves the water completely in an effort to walk on deck to the re-entry area, the player exiting the water is excluded for the remainder of the game. The substitute cannot re-

enter until the excluded player has reached the re-entry area and 20 seconds have elapsed or possession has changed. The substitute may also re-enter after a goal has been scored.

If the player re-enters the field of play during live-time play illegally (anywhere other than their own exclusion re-entry area), the penalty is as follows:

- a) If the player's team is on defense or if no one is in possession of the ball, the player is excluded for 20 seconds and a penalty throw is awarded to the opposing team.
- b) If the player's team is in possession of the ball, the ball is turned over to the opposing team and the player who entered illegally is excluded for 20 seconds.

## **WP 6 OFFICIALS**

**WP 6.1** – For FINA/USAWP events the officials shall consist of two referees, two goal judges, timekeepers and secretaries and a video assistant referee, each with the following powers and duties. These officials shall also be provided wherever possible for other events, except that in a game refereed by two referees and no goal judges, the referees shall assume the duties (but without making the specified signals) allocated to the goal judges in WP 8.2.

## **WP 7 REFEREES**

The use of audio equipment by the referees of the match. During the match, both referees may have an audio headset for communication between themselves. The delegate may also have one, but only to receive information for the official table/desk and ensure clarity.

**WP 7.1** – The referees shall be in absolute control of the game. Their authority over the players shall be effective during the whole time that they and the players are within the precincts of the pool. All decisions of the referees on questions of fact shall be final and their interpretation of the rules shall be obeyed throughout the game. The referees shall not make any presumption as to the facts of any situation during the game but shall interpret what they observe to the best of their ability.

**WP 7.2** – The referees shall whistle to start and restart the game and to declare goals, goal throws, corner throws (whether signaled by the goal judge or not), neutral throws and infringements of the rules. A referee may alter a decision provided it is done before the ball is put back into play.

**WP 7.3** – The referees shall have discretion to award (or not award) any ordinary, exclusion or penalty foul, depending on whether the decision would advantage the attacking team. They shall officiate in favor of the attacking team by awarding a foul or refraining from awarding a foul if, in their opinion, awarding the foul would be an advantage to the offending player's team.

*[NOTE: The referees shall apply this principle to the fullest extent.]*

**WP 7.4** – The referees shall have the power to order any player from the water in accordance with the appropriate rule and to abandon the game should a player refuse to leave the water when so ordered.

**WP 7.5** – The referees shall have the power to order the removal from the precincts of the pool any player, substitute, spectator or official whose behavior prevents the referees from carrying out their duties in a proper and impartial manner.

**WP 7.6** – The referees shall have the power to abandon the game at any time if, in their opinion, the behavior of the players or spectators, or other circumstances prevent it from being brought to a proper conclusion. If the game has to be abandoned, the referees shall report their actions to the competent authority.

## **WP 8 GOAL JUDGES**

**WP 8.1** – The goal judges shall be situated on the same side as the official table, each on the goal line at the end of the field of play.

**WP 8.2** – The duties of the goal judges shall be:

- a) to signal by raising one arm vertically when the players are correctly positioned on their respective goal lines at the start of a period;
- b) to signal by raising both arms vertically for an improper start or restart;
- c) to signal by pointing with the arm in the direction of the attack for a goal throw;
- d) to signal by pointing with the arm in the direction of the attack for a corner throw;
- e) to signal by raising and crossing both arms for a goal;
- f) to signal by raising both arms vertically for an improper re-entry of an excluded player or improper entry of a substitute.

**WP 8.3** – Each goal judge shall be provided with a supply of balls and when the original ball has gone outside the field of play, the goal judge shall immediately throw a new ball to the goalkeeper (for a goal throw), to the nearest player of the attacking team (for a corner throw), or as otherwise directed by the referee.

## **WP 9 TIMEKEEPERS**

**WP 9.1** – The duties of the timekeepers shall be:

- a) to record the exact periods of actual play, timeouts and the intervals between the periods;
- b) to record the periods of continuous possession of the ball by each team;
- c) to record the exclusion times of players ordered from the water in accordance with the rules, together with the re-entry times of such players or their substitutes;
- d) to audibly announce the start of the last minute of the game;
- e) to signal by whistle after 45 seconds and at the end of each timeout.

**WP 9.2** – A timekeeper shall signal by whistle (or by any other means provided it is distinctive, acoustically efficient and readily understood), the end of each period independently of the referees and the signal shall take immediate effect except:

- a) in the case of the simultaneous award by a referee of a penalty throw, in which event the penalty throw shall be taken in accordance with the rules;



- b) if the ball is in flight and crosses the goal line, in which event any resultant goal shall be allowed.

## **WP 10 SECRETARIES**

**WP 10.1** – The duties of the secretaries shall be:

- a) to maintain the record of the game, including the players, the score, timeouts, exclusion fouls, penalty fouls, and personal fouls awarded against each player;
- b) to control the periods of exclusion of players and to signal the expiration of the period of exclusion by raising the appropriate flag or by another approved method of signaling; except that a referee shall signal the re-entry of an excluded player or a substitute when that player's team has retaken possession of the ball. After 4 minutes, the secretary should signal the re-entry of a substitute for a player who has committed brutality by raising the yellow flag along with the appropriate colored flag or by another approved method of signaling;
- c) to signal with the red flag and by whistle, or by another approved method of signaling, for any improper re-entry of an excluded player or improper entry of a substitute (including after a signal by a goal judge to indicate an improper re- entry or entry), which signal shall stop play immediately;
- d) to signal, without delay, the award of a third personal foul against any player as follows:
  - i. with the red flag, or by another approved method of signaling, if the third personal foul is an exclusion foul;
  - ii. with the red flag and a whistle, or by another approved method of signaling, if the third personal foul is a penalty foul.

## **WP 11 VIDEO ASSISTANT REFEREE**

**WP 11.1** – The duties of the Video Assistant referee shall be:

- a) to alert the match referee(s) in doubtful "goal / no goal" situations
- b) to show the match referee(s) a re-play of the doubtful "goal / no goal" situation

## **WP 12 DURATION OF THE GAME**

**WP 12.1** – The duration of the game shall be four periods each of eight minutes actual play. Time shall commence at the start of each period when a player touches the ball. At all signals for stoppages, the recording watch shall be stopped until the ball is put back into play by the ball leaving the hand of the player taking the appropriate throw or when the ball is touched by a player following a neutral throw.

**WP 12.2** – There shall be a two-minute interval between the first and second periods and between the third and fourth periods and a three-minute interval between the second and third periods. The teams, including the players, coaches and officials, shall change ends before starting the third period.

**WP 12.3** – Should the scores be level at full time in any game for which a definite result is required, there shall be a penalty shootout to determine the result.

*[NOTE: If a penalty shootout is necessary, the following procedure shall be:*

- a) if it involves the two teams having just completed a game, the shootout will begin immediately and the same referees will be used*
- b) otherwise, the shootout will occur 30 minutes following the completion of the final game of that round, or at the first practical opportunity. The referees involved in the most recent game of that round will be used, provided they are neutral*
- c) if two teams are involved the respective coaches of the teams will be requested to nominate five players and goalkeeper who will participate in the penalty shootout, the goal keeper may be one of the shooters; the goalkeeper may be changed at any time provided the substitute was listed amongst the team list in that game, however he cannot be substituted as one of the shooters*
- d) the five players nominated will be required to be listed in order and that order will determine the sequence in which those players will shoot at their opponents' goal; the sequence cannot be changed*
- e) no players excluded for the game are eligible to be listed among those players to shoot or substitute as goalkeeper*
- f) if the goalkeeper is excluded during the penalty shootout, a player from the nominated five players may substitute for the goalkeeper but without the privileges of the goalkeeper; following the taking of the penalty shot, the player may be substituted by another player or alternate goalkeeper. If a field player is excluded during the penalty shootout, the player's position is removed from the list of the five players participating in the penalty shootout, and a substituted player is placed in the last position on the list*
- g) shots will be taken alternately at each end of the field of play, unless conditions at one end of the field of play advantage and/or disadvantage a team, in which case all shots may be taken at the same end. The players taking the shots will remain in the water in front of their bench, the goalkeepers will change ends, and all players not involved must sit on their team bench*
- h) the team to shoot first will be determined by toss of a coin*
- i) should teams still be tied following the completion of the initial five penalty shots, the same five players shall then take alternate shots until one team misses and the other(s) score*
- j) if three or more teams are involved, each team will shoot five penalty shots against each of the other teams, alternating at each shot. The order of the first shot will be determined by draw.]*

**WP 12.4** – Any visible clock shall show the time in a descending manner (that is, showing the time remaining in a period).

**WP 12.5** – If a game (or part of a game) must be replayed, then goals, personal fouls, and timeouts that occurred during the time to be replayed are deleted from the game score sheet, however brutality, misconduct, and any red card exclusions are recorded on the game score sheet.

## **WP 13 TIMEOUTS**

**WP 13.1** – Each team may request two timeouts per game. The duration of the timeout shall be one minute. A timeout may be requested at any time, including after a goal or prior to the administration of a penalty throw, by the coach of the team in possession of the ball calling "timeout" and/or signaling to the secretary or referee with the hands forming a T-shape. If a timeout is requested, the secretary or referee shall immediately stop the game by whistle and

the players shall immediately return to their respective halves of the field of play. The timeout request can also be made by any device authorized for use in the game.

**WP 13.2** - Play shall be restarted on the whistle of the referee by the team in possession of the ball putting the ball into play on or behind the half distance line, except that if the timeout is requested before the taking of a corner throw or penalty throw, the throw shall be maintained.

*[NOTE: The possession clock continues from the recommencement of the play after the timeout.]*

**WP 13.3** – If the coach of the team in possession of the ball requests an additional timeout to which the team is not entitled, the game shall be stopped and play shall then be restarted by a player of the opposing team putting the ball into play at the half distance line.

**WP 13.4** – If the coach of the team not in possession of the ball requests a timeout, the game shall be stopped and a penalty throw awarded to the opposing team. After requesting this illegal time-out, the coach shall lose the right to request the longest remaining time-out if the team still has one.

**WP 13.5** – At the restart following a timeout, players may take any position in the field of play, subject to the Rules relating to the taking of corner throws.

## **WP 14 THE START OF PLAY**

**WP 14.1** – The first team listed in the official program will wear white caps or the caps reflecting the color of their country and will start the game to the left of the official table. The other team will wear blue caps or caps of a contrasting color and will start the game to the right of the table.

**WP 14.2** – At the start of each period, the players shall take up positions on their respective goal lines, about one meter apart and at least one meter from the goal posts. Not more than two players shall be allowed between the goal posts. No part of a player's body shall be beyond the goal line at water level.

*[NOTE: No player may pull the lane line forward and the player swimming for the ball must not have their feet on the goal in an attempt to push off at the start or restart of the game.]*

**WP 14.3** – When the referees are satisfied that the teams are ready, a referee shall blow the whistle to start and then release or throw the ball into play on the half distance line.

**WP 14.4** – If the ball is released or thrown giving one team a definite advantage, the referee shall call for the ball and award a neutral throw on the half distance line.

## **WP 15 METHOD OF SCORING**

**WP 15.1** – A goal shall be scored when the entire ball has passed fully over the goal line, between the goal posts and underneath the crossbar. The goal line is an imaginary laser line which runs on the front side from one goal post to the other post. A goal is scored when the ball has fully passed the goal line.

**WP 15.2** – A goal may be scored from anywhere within the field of play.

**WP 15.3** – A goal may be scored by any part of the body except the clenched fist. A goal may be scored by dribbling the ball into the goal. At the start or restart of the game, at least two players\* (of either team but excluding the defending goalkeeper) must intentionally play or touch the ball except at the taking of:

- a) a penalty throw;
- b) a free throw thrown by a player into the player's own goal;
- c) an immediate shot from a goal throw;
- d) an immediate shot from a free throw awarded anywhere in the field of play by the player with the ball outside of 6 meters; or
- e) after a free throw is awarded anywhere in the field of play and the player with the ball outside of 6 meters has visibly put the ball into play.
- f) an immediate shot from a corner throw;
- g) after awarding a free throw inside the 6 meter area, when at least two players (of either team but excluding the defending goalkeeper) intentionally play or touch the ball.
- h) After a corner throw is awarded and the player visibly puts the ball into play, a goal can be scored anywhere in the field of play.
- i) After a free throw is awarded to a player inside of 6 meters, the player is allowed to put the ball into play, move outside of 6 meters, and then shoot and score. Once the player has moved outside of 6 meters, they are considered live and can score from anywhere, including moving back inside of 6 meters. **Note:** the player must put the ball into play where the ball lies before moving the ball.

*\*At the start of the game or period or if the restart of the game is outside of 6 meters or a corner throw, the player may put the ball into play and then shoot and score.*

*After a corner throw is awarded and the player puts the ball into play, a goal can be scored after faking (simulating a shot) or swimming with the ball. An immediate direct goal may not be scored under this rule after the restart of play following:*

- a) a swim up or the commencement of a period
- b) a timeout
- c) a goal
- d) an injury, including bleeding
- e) the replacement of a cap
- f) the referee calling for the ball or calling for a neutral throw
- g) the ball leaving the side of the field of play
- h) any other delay.]

**WP 15.4** – A goal shall be scored if, at the expiration of 20 or 30 seconds possession, as applicable, or at the end of a period, the ball is in flight and enters the goal.

*[NOTE: In the circumstances of this Rule, if the ball enters the goal after hitting the goal post, crossbar, goalkeeper or other defending player, and/or bouncing off the water, a goal shall be allowed. If the end of the period has been signaled and the ball is then played or touched intentionally by another attacking player on its way into the goal, the goal shall not be allowed.*

*If the ball is in flight towards the goal in the circumstances of this rule and the goalkeeper or another defending player pulls down the goal, or within his own 6 meter area a defending player other than the goalkeeper stops the ball with two hands or arms or punches the ball to prevent a goal being scored, the referee shall award a penalty throw if, in the referee's opinion, the ball would have reached the goal line if the offense had not occurred.*

*If the ball which is in flight towards the goal in the circumstances of this Rule lands on the water and then floats completely over the goal line, the referee shall award a goal only if the ball floats over the goal line immediately due to the momentum of the shot.]*

## WP 16 RESTARTING AFTER A GOAL

**WP 16.1** – After a goal has been scored, the players shall take up positions anywhere within their respective halves of the field of play. No part of a player's body shall be beyond the half distance line at water level. A referee shall restart the game by blowing the whistle. At the time of the restart, actual play shall resume when the ball leaves the hand of a player of the team not having scored the goal. A restart not taken in accordance with this rule shall be retaken.

## WP 17 GOAL THROWS

**WP 17.1** – A goal throw shall be awarded:

- a) when the entire ball has passed fully over the goal line excluding between the goal posts and underneath the crossbar, having last been touched by any player other than the goalkeeper of the defending team;
- b) when the entire ball has passed fully over the goal line between the goal posts and underneath the crossbar, or strikes the goal posts, crossbar or the defending goalkeeper direct from:
  - i. a free throw awarded inside 6 meters;
  - ii. a free throw awarded outside 6 meters not taken in accordance with the rules;
  - iii. a goal throw not taken without undue delay.

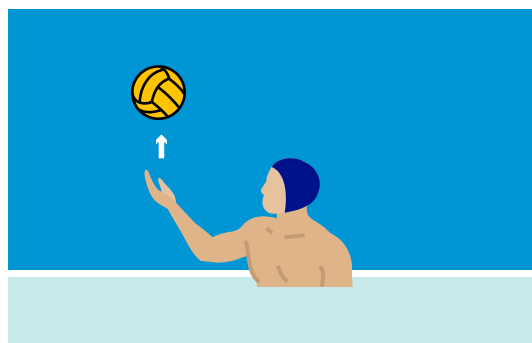
**WP 17.2** - The goal throw shall be taken by any player of the team from anywhere within the 2 meter area. A goal throw not taken in accordance with this rule shall be retaken.

*[NOTE: The goal throw shall be taken by the player nearest to the ball. There should be no undue delay in taking a free throw, goal throw or corner throw, which must be taken in such a manner so as to enable the other players to observe the ball leaving the thrower's hand. Players often make the mistake of delaying the throw because they overlook the provisions of WP 20.4, which permit the thrower to dribble the ball before passing to another player. The throw can thus be taken without undue delay, even though the thrower cannot at that moment find a player to whom to pass the ball. On such an occasion, the player is allowed to take the throw either by dropping it from a raised hand on to the surface of the water (figure 1) or by throwing it in the air (figure 2) and then swim with or dribble the ball. In either case, the throw must be taken so that the other players are able to observe it.*

*When there is a counter attack, a player with advantage does not have to give up the advantage to go to the ball and take the free throw, goal throw or corner throw. Another player of that team can take the throw as long as there is **no undue delay**]*

**Figure 1**

**Figure 2**





## WP 18 CORNER THROWS

**WP 18.1** – A corner throw shall be awarded when the entire ball has passed fully over the goal line excluding between the goal posts and underneath the crossbar, having last been touched by the goalkeeper of the defending team or when a defending player deliberately sends the ball over the goal line.

**WP 18.2** – The corner throw shall be taken by a player of the attacking team from the 2 meter mark on the side nearest to which the ball crossed the goal line. The throw need not be taken by the nearest player but shall be taken without undue delay.

*[NOTE: For method of taking the throw, see note to WP 17.2]*

**WP 18.3** – At the taking of a corner throw no players of the attacking team shall be within the 2 meter area.

**WP 18.4** – A corner throw taken from the wrong position or before the players of the attacking team have left the 2 meter area shall be retaken.

## WP 19 NEUTRAL THROWS

**WP 19.1** – A neutral throw shall be awarded:

- a) when, at the start of a period, a referee is of the opinion that the ball has fallen in a position to the definite advantage of one team;
- b) when one or more players of opposing teams commit an ordinary foul at the same moment which makes it impossible for the referees to distinguish which player offended first;
- c) when both referees blow their whistles at the same moment to award ordinary fouls to the opposing teams;
- d) when neither team has possession of the ball and one or more players of opposing teams commit an exclusion foul at the same moment. The neutral throw shall be taken after the offending players have been excluded;
- e) when the ball strikes or lodges in an overhead obstruction.

**WP 19.2** – At a neutral throw, a referee shall throw the ball into the field of play at approximately the same lateral position as the event occurred in such a manner as to allow the players of both

teams to have equal opportunity to reach the ball. A neutral throw awarded within the 2 meter area shall be taken on the 2 meter line.

**WP 19.3** – If at a neutral throw the referee is of the opinion that the ball has fallen in a position to the definite advantage of one team, the referee shall call for the ball and retake the throw.

## **WP 20 FREE THROWS**

**WP 20.1** – A free throw shall be taken at the location of the ball, except if the foul is committed by a defending player within the defender's goal area (2 meter area for 12/10U) and the ball is inside the goal area (2 meter area for 12/10U), the free throw shall be taken on the 2 meter line opposite to where the foul was committed or laterally outside the goal area.

**WP 20.2** – A player awarded a free throw shall put the ball into play without undue delay, or immediately by shooting, if permitted by the rules. It shall be an offense if a player who is clearly in a position most readily to take a free throw does not do so unless they have an advantage on a counter attack and a teammate can take the free throw without undue delay. A defending player having committed a foul shall move away from the player taking the free throw before raising an arm to block a pass or shot; a player who fails to do so shall be excluded for "interference" under WP 22.5.

**WP 20.3** – The responsibility for returning the ball to the player who is to take the free throw shall be that of the team to which the free throw is awarded.

**WP 20.4** – The free throw shall be taken in a manner to enable the players to observe the ball leaving the hand of the player taking the throw, who shall also then be permitted to carry or dribble the ball before passing to another player, or to shoot, when permitted. The ball shall be in play immediately when it leaves the hand of the player taking the free throw.

*[NOTE: For method of taking the throw, see note to WP 17.2]*

## **WP 21 ORDINARY FOULS**

**WP 21.1** – It shall be an ordinary foul to commit any of the following offenses (WP 21.2 to WP 21.17), which shall be punished by awarding of a free throw to the opposing team.

*[NOTE: The referees must award ordinary fouls in accordance with the rules to enable the attacking team to develop an advantage situation. However, the referees must have regard to the special circumstance of WP 7.3 (Advantage).]*

**WP 21.2** – To advance beyond the goal line at the start of a period, before the referee has given the signal to start. The free throw shall be taken from the location of the ball or, if the ball has not been released into the field of play, from the half distance line.

**WP 21.3** – To assist a player at the start of a period or at any other time during the game.

**WP 21.4** – To hold or push off from the goal posts or their fixtures, to hold or push off from the sides or ends of the pool during actual play or at the start of a period.

**WP 21.5** – To take any active part in the game when standing on the floor of the pool, to walk when play is in progress or to jump from the floor of the pool to play the ball or tackle an opponent. This rule shall not apply to the goalkeeper while within the goalkeeper's 6 meter area.

**WP 21.6** – To take or hold the entire ball under the water when tackled.

*[NOTE: It is an ordinary foul to take or hold the ball under the water when tackled, even if the player holding the ball has the ball forced under the water as a result of the opponent's challenge. It makes no difference that the ball goes under the water against the player's will. What is important is that the foul is awarded against the player who was in contact with the ball at the moment it was taken under the water. It is important to remember that the offense can only occur when a player takes the ball under when tackled. Thus, if the goalkeeper emerges high out of the water to save a shot and then while falling back takes the ball under the water, the goalkeeper has committed no offense; but if the goalkeeper then holds the ball under the water when challenged by an opponent, the goalkeeper will have committed an infringement of this rule and if the goalkeeper's actions prevented a probable goal, a penalty throw must be awarded under WP 23.2]*

**WP 21.7** – To strike at the ball with a clenched fist. This rule shall not apply to the goalkeeper while within the goalkeeper's 6 meter area.

**WP 21.8** – To play or touch the ball with two hands at the same time. This rule shall not apply to the goalkeeper while within the goalkeeper's 6 meter area.

**WP 21.9** - To push or push off from an opponent who is not holding the ball.

*NOTE: Pushing can take place in various forms, including with the hand or with the foot. In the cases illustrated, the punishment is a free throw for an ordinary foul. However, referees must take care to differentiate between pushing with the foot and kicking - which then becomes an exclusion foul or even brutality. If the foot is already in contact with the opponent when the movement begins, this will usually be pushing, but if the movement begins before such contact with the opponent is made, then this should generally be regarded as kicking.]*

**WP 21.10** - To be within the goal area (two meters of the opponents' goal line for 12/10U) except when behind the line of the ball. The goal area is a rectangular box extending 2 meters from the lateral outsides of the goal posts to the 2 meter line opposite the goal line. It shall not be an offense if a player is inside the 2 meter line but outside the goal area.

Any player who is behind the line of the ball can enter the goal area to receive the ball. Any player inside the goal area who does not shoot but passes the ball backwards has to leave the goal area immediately to avoid being sanctioned under this rule.

For 12/10U, it shall not be an offense if a player takes the ball into the 2 meter area and passes it to another player who is behind the line of the ball and who shoots at goal immediately, before the first player has been able to leave the 2 meter area.

**WP 21.11** – To take a penalty throw other than in the prescribed manner.

*[NOTE: See WP 24.4 for method of taking a penalty throw.]*



**WP 21.12** – To delay unduly when taking a free throw, goal throw or corner throw.

*[NOTE: See note to WP 17.2]*

**WP 21.13** – To last touch the ball that goes out of the side of the field of play (including the ball rebounding from the side of the field of play) except in the case of a defensive field player blocking a shot over the side of the field of play, in which case a free throw is given to the defensive team.

**WP 21.14** – For a team to retain possession of the ball for more than:

- i. 30 seconds of actual play, or
- ii. 20 seconds in the case of an exclusion, corner throw or rebound to the attacking team after a shot, including after a penalty shot, without shooting at the opponent's goal.

The timekeeper recording the possession time shall reset the clock:

- a) when the ball has left the hand of the player shooting at goal. If the ball rebounds into play from the goal post, crossbar or the goalkeeper, the possession time shall not recommence until the ball comes into the possession of one of the teams. The clock shall be reset to 20 seconds if the ball comes into possession of the attacking team. It shall be reset to 30 seconds if it comes into possession of the defending team;
- b) when the ball comes into the possession of the defending team, the clock shall be reset to 30 seconds. "Possession" shall not include the ball merely being touched in flight by an opposing player;
- c) when the ball is put into play following the award of an exclusion foul to the defending player, the clock shall be reset to 20 seconds unless there are more than 20 seconds of possession time remaining, in which case the time shall continue and not be reset;
- d) when the ball is put into play following the taking of a penalty throw without a change of possession or, corner throw, the clock shall be reset to 20 seconds;
- e) when the ball is put into play following the award of a penalty throw with a change of possession, a goal throw or neutral throw, the clock shall be reset to 30 seconds.

Visible clocks shall show the time in a descending manner (that is, showing the possession time remaining).

*[NOTE: The timekeeper and referees must decide whether there was a shot on goal or not but the referees have the final decision.]*

**WP 21.16** – For a team to deliberately give up possession of the ball.

**WP 21.17** – To simulate being fouled.

*[NOTE: Simulation means an action taken by a player with the apparent intent of causing a referee to award a foul incorrectly against an opposing player. A referee may issue a yellow card against a team for repeated simulation and may apply WP 22.13 (persistent fouling) to sanction offending players.]*

**WP 21.18 (New)** – When two players are competing for position, it is an ordinary foul (contra foul) for an attacking player to go underwater and gain a positional advantage. It is an exclusion foul for a defender to go underwater and take away a positional advantage.

## **WP 22 EXCLUSION FOULS**

**WP 22.1** – It shall be an exclusion foul to commit any of the following offenses (WP 22.4 to WP 22.18) which shall be punished (except as otherwise provided by the rules) by the award of a free throw to the opposing team and the exclusion of the player who committed the foul.

**WP 22.2** - The excluded player shall move to the re-entry area nearest to the player's own goal line without leaving the water. An excluded player who leaves the water (other than following the entry of a substitute) shall be exclusion for the remainder of the game (not misconduct).

*[NOTE: An excluded player (including any player excluded under the rules for the remainder of the game) shall remain in the water and move (which may include swimming underwater) to the re-entry position nearest to the player's own goal line without interfering with the play. The player may leave from the field of play at any point and then swim to reach the re-entry area provided the player does not interfere with the alignment of the goal.]*

*On reaching the re-entry area, the excluded player shall be required to visibly rise to the surface of the water before the player (or a substitute) shall be permitted to re-enter in accordance with the rules. However, it shall not be necessary for the excluded player to then remain in the re-entry area to await the arrival of an intended substitute.]*

**WP 22.3** - The excluded player or a substitute shall be permitted to re-enter the field of play from the exclusion re-entry area nearest to the player's own goal line after the earliest occurrence of one of the following:

- a) when 20 seconds of actual play have elapsed, at which time the secretary shall raise the appropriate flag provided that the excluded player has reached the re-entry area in accordance with the rules;
- b) when a goal has been scored;
- c) when the excluded player's team has retaken possession of the ball (which means receiving control of the ball) during actual play, at which time the defensive referee shall signal re-entry by a hand signal;
- d) when the excluded player's team is awarded a free throw or goal throw, the referee's signal to award the throw qualifies as the re-entry signal, provided that the excluded player has reached the re-entry area in accordance with the rules.

The excluded player or a substitute shall be permitted to re-enter the field of play from the exclusion re-entry area nearest to the player's own goal line, provided that:

- a) the player has received a signal from the secretary or a referee;
- b) the player shall not jump or push off from the side or wall of the pool or field of play;
- c) the player shall not affect the alignment of the goal;
- d) a substitute shall not be permitted to enter in the place of an excluded player until that player has reached the exclusion re-entry area nearest to the player's own goal line except between periods, after a goal, or during a timeout;
- e) after a goal has been scored, an excluded player or a substitute may re-enter the field of play from any place.

These provisions shall also apply to the entry of a substitute when the excluded player has received three personal fouls or has otherwise been excluded from the remainder of the game in accordance with the rules.

*[NOTE: A substitute shall not be signaled in by a referee and nor shall the secretary signal the expiration of 20 seconds exclusion period until the excluded player has reached the re-entry area nearest to the player's own goal line. This shall also apply to the re-entry of a substitute who is to replace a player excluded from the remainder of the game. In the event of an excluded player failing to return to the player's re-entry area, a substitute shall not be permitted to enter until a goal has been scored or at the end of a period or during a timeout.]*

*The primary responsibility for giving the signal for the re-entry of an excluded player or a substitute is with the defensive referee. However, the attacking referee may also assist in this regard and the signal of either referee shall be valid. If a referee suspects an improper re-entry or the goal judge signals such an improper re-entry, then the referee should first be satisfied that the other referee had not signaled the re-entry.*

*Before giving the signal for the re-entry of an excluded player or a substitute, the defensive referee should wait momentarily in case the attacking referee whistles to restore possession to the opponent's team.*

*A change of possession does not occur merely because of the end of a period, but an excluded player or substitute shall be eligible to re-enter if the team wins the ball at the swim up at the start of the next period. If a player is excluded when the end of a period is signaled, the referees and the secretary shall ensure that the teams have the correct number of players before signaling for the restart.]*

**WP 22.4** – For a player to leave the water or sit or stand on the steps or side of the pool during play, except in the case of accident, injury, illness or with the permission of a referee.

**WP 22.5** – To interfere with the taking of a free throw, goal throw or corner throw, including:

- a) intentionally to throw away or fail to release the ball to prevent the normal progress of the game;
- b) any attempt to play the ball before it has left the hand of the thrower.

*[NOTE: A player is not to be penalized under this rule if the player does not hear the whistle as a result of being under the water. The referees must determine if the actions of the player are intentional.*

*Interference with a throw may take place indirectly when the ball is hampered, delayed or prevented from reaching the player who is to take the throw, or it may occur when the execution of the throw is interfered with by an opponent blocking the direction of the throw (figure 6), by disturbing the actual movement of the thrower (figure 7) or by an opponent committing a foul under WP 20.2. For interference with a penalty throw, see also WP 22.17.]*

**WP 22.6** – To attempt to block a pass or shot with two hands outside the 6 meter area.

**WP 22.7** – To splash in the face of an opponent intentionally.

*[NOTE: Splashing is frequently used as an unfair tactic but is often only penalized in the obvious situation when players are facing one another. However, it can also occur less obviously when a player produces a curtain of water with an arm, seemingly without deliberate intent, in an attempt to block the view of the opponent who is about to shoot at goal or to make a pass.*

*The punishment for intentionally splashing an opponent is exclusion under WP 22.7 or a penalty throw under WP 23.2 if the opponent is inside the 6 meter area and is attempting to shoot at goal. Whether to award a penalty throw or an exclusion is decided solely by the positioning and actions of the attacking player; whether the offending player is inside the 6 meter area or outside is not a decisive factor.]*

**WP 22.8** - To impede or otherwise prevent the free movement of an opponent who is not holding the ball, including swimming on the opponent's shoulders, back or legs. "Holding" is lifting, carrying or touching the ball but does not include dribbling the ball.

*[NOTE: This rule can also be applied to advantage the attacking team. If a counter attack is in progress and a foul is committed which limits the attack, the offending player shall be excluded.]*

*The first thing for the referee to consider is whether the opponent is holding the ball, because if the player is doing so, the player making the challenge cannot be penalized for “impeding”. It is clear that a player is holding the ball if it is held raised above the water. The player is also holding the ball if the player swims with it held in the hand or makes contact with the ball while it is lying on the surface of the water. Swimming with the ball (dribbling) is not considered to be holding.*

*A common form of impeding is where the player swims across the opponent’s legs, thus reducing the pace at which the opponent can move and interfering with the normal leg action. Another form is swimming on the opponent’s shoulders. It must also be remembered that the foul of impeding can be committed by the player who is in possession of the ball.]*

**WP 22.9** - To hold, sink or pull back an opponent who is not holding the ball. “Holding” is lifting, carrying or touching the ball, but does not include dribbling the ball.

*[NOTE: The correct application of this rule is very important both as to the presentation of the game and in arriving at a proper and fair result. The wording of the rule is clear and explicit and can only be interpreted in one way: to hold, sink or pull back an opponent who is not holding the ball is an exclusion foul. It is essential that referees apply this rule correctly, without personal arbitrary interpretation, to ensure that the proper limits to rough play are not exceeded. In addition, referees must note that an infringement of WP 22.9 within the 6 meter area which prevents a probable goal must be punished by the award of a penalty throw.]*

**WP 22.10** – To use two hands to hold an opponent not holding the ball anywhere in the field of play.

**WP 22.11** – For a defending player to commit a foul on any player of the team in possession of the ball with the intent to stop the flow of the attack, anywhere in the field of play. This kind of foul is called a tactical foul.

**WP 22.12** – To kick or strike an opponent intentionally or make disproportionate movements with that intent.

*[NOTE: The offense of kicking or striking can take a number of different forms, including being committed by a player in possession of the ball or by an opposing player; possession of the ball is not a decisive factor. What is important is the action of the offending player, including if the player makes disproportionate movements in an attempt to kick or strike, even if the player fails to make contact. One of the most serious acts of striking is elbowing backwards (figure 19), which can result in serious injury to the opponent. Similarly, serious injury can occur when a player intentionally heads back into the face of an opponent who is marking the player closely. In these circumstances, the referee would also be justified in punishing the offense under WP 22.14 (Brutality) rather than under WP 22.12]*

**WP 22.13** – To be guilty of misconduct, including the use of unacceptable language, aggressive or persistent foul play, to refuse obedience to or show disrespect for a referee or official, or behavior against the spirit of the rules and likely to bring the game into disrepute. The offending player shall be excluded from the remainder of the game, with substitution after the earliest occurrence referred to in WP 22.3, and must leave the competition area.

*[NOTE: If a player commits any offense mentioned in this rule during the interval between periods, during a timeout, or after a goal, the player shall be excluded for the remainder of the game and a substitute shall be eligible to re-enter immediately prior to the restart of the game as*

*all these situations are considered to be interval time. Play will restart in the normal manner.]*

**WP 22.14** – To commit an act of brutality (including to play in a violent manner, kicking, striking or attempting to kick or strike with malicious intent) against an opponent or official, whether during actual play, during any stoppages, timeouts, after a goal has been scored or during intervals between periods of play.

Should the incident occur during any stoppage, timeout, after a goal or interval between periods of play, the player shall be excluded for the remainder of a game and must leave the competition area. No penalty throw shall be awarded. The offending player may be substituted when four minutes of actual play have elapsed and play will restart in the normal manner.

If the referees call simultaneous brutalities or actions of play in a violent manner on players of opposing teams during play, both players are excluded for the remainder of the game with substitution after four minutes of actual play have elapsed. The team, which had possession of the ball, will first shoot a penalty throw followed by the other team shooting a penalty throw. After the second penalty throw, the team, which had possession of the ball, will restart play with a free throw on or behind the half distance line.

**WP 22.15** – In the case of simultaneous exclusion of players of opposing teams during play, both players are excluded for 20 seconds. The possession clock is not reset. Play is restarted with a free throw to the team which had possession of the ball. If neither team had possession when the simultaneous exclusions were called, the possession clock is reset to 30 seconds and play shall be restarted with a neutral throw.

*[NOTE: Both players excluded under this rule shall be permitted to re-enter at the next earliest occurrence referred to in WP 22.3 or at the next change of possession.]*

*If two players have been excluded under this rule and are eligible to re-enter, the defensive referee may wave in the player as soon as that player is ready to re-enter. The referee does not have to wait until both players are ready to re-enter.]*

**WP 22.16** – For an excluded player to re-enter or a substitute to enter the field of play improperly, including:

- a) without having received a signal from the secretary or referee;
- b) from any place other than the player's exclusion re-entry area, except where the rules provide for immediate substitution;
- c) by jumping or pushing off from the side or wall of the pool or field of play;
- d) by affecting the alignment of the goal.
- e) for a flying substitute to enter the field of play not following the correct flying substitution procedure as mentioned in **WP 5.6** and **WP 5.6.1**

If this offense is committed by a player of the team not in possession of the ball, the offending player shall be excluded and a penalty throw awarded to the opposing team. This player receives only one personal foul, which should be marked by the secretary as exclusion penalty.

If this offense is committed by a player of the team in possession of the ball, the offending player shall be excluded and a free throw awarded to the opposing team.

**WP 22.17** – To interfere with the taking of a penalty throw. The offending player shall be excluded from the remainder of the game with substitution after the earliest occurrence referred to in WP 22.3 and the penalty throw shall be maintained or re-taken as appropriate.

*[NOTE: The most common form of interference with a penalty throw is when an opponent aims a kick at the player taking the throw, just as the throw is about to be taken. It is essential for the referees to ensure that all players are at least 3 meters from the thrower and outside of the 6 meter area, to prevent such interference taking place. The referee should also allow the defending team the first right to take position.]*

**WP 22.18** – For the defending goalkeeper to fail to take up the correct position on the goal line at the taking of a penalty throw having been ordered once to do so by the referee. Another defending player may take the position of the goalkeeper but without the goalkeeper's privileges or limitations.

**WP 22.19** – When a player is excluded, the exclusion period shall commence immediately when the ball has left the hand of the player taking the free throw or when the ball has been touched following a neutral throw.

**WP 22.20** – If an excluded player intentionally interferes with play, including affecting the alignment of the goal, a penalty throw shall be awarded to the opposing team and a further personal foul awarded against the excluded player. If the excluded player does not commence leaving the field of play almost immediately, the referee may deem this to be intentional interference under this rule.

**WP 22.21** – If, during the administration of a penalty throw, the goalkeeper moves forward off of the goal line before the referee's whistle and the shot is taken without a goal being scored, the goalkeepers shall be excluded for 20 seconds and the penalty throw shall be retaken. A field player in the field of play may take the position of the goalkeeper but without the goalkeeper's privileges.

## **WP 23 PENALTY FOULS**

**WP 23.1** – It shall be a penalty foul to commit any of the following offenses (WP 23.2 to WP 23.9), which shall be punished by the award of a penalty throw to the opposing team.

**WP 23.2** – For a defending player to commit any foul within the 6 meter area but for which a goal would probably have resulted.

*[NOTE: In addition to other offenses preventing a probable goal, it is an offense within the meaning of this rule:*

- a) *for a goalkeeper or other defending player to pull down or otherwise displace the goal;*
- b) *for a defending player to attempt to block a shot or pass with two hands;*
- c) *for a defending player to play the ball with a clenched fist;*
- d) *for a goalkeeper or other defending player to take the ball under the water when tackled.*

*It is important to note that while the fouls described above, and other fouls such as holding, pulling back, impeding, etc., would normally be punished by a free throw (and exclusion if appropriate), they become penalty fouls if committed within the 6 meter area by a defending player if a probable goal would otherwise have been scored.]*

**WP 23.3** – For a defending player within the 6 meter area to kick or strike an opponent or commit an act of brutality. In the case of brutality, the offending player shall also be excluded from the remainder of the game, and a substitute may enter the field of play after four minutes of actual play have elapsed, in addition to the award of the penalty throw. If the offending player is the goalkeeper, a substitute goalkeeper may be changed for another player in accordance with WP 5.6.

**WP 23.4** – For an excluded player intentionally to interfere with play, including affecting the alignment of the goal.

**WP 23.5** – For a goalkeeper or any other defending player to pull over the goal completely with the object of preventing a probable goal. The offending player shall also be excluded from the remainder of the game, with substitution after the earliest occurrence referred to in WP 22.3.

**WP 23.6** – For a player or substitute who is not entitled under the rules to participate in the play at that time to enter the field of play. The offending player shall also be excluded from the remainder of the game with substitution. The substitute may enter the field of play after the earliest occurrence referred to in WP 22.3.

**WP 23.7** – For the coach, or any team official of the team not in possession of the ball to request a timeout. No personal foul shall be recorded for this offense.

**WP 23.8** - For the coach, any team official, or player to take any action with intent to prevent a probable goal or to delay the game, including (but not limited to):

- a) If a defending player deliberately throws the ball away before the attacking team can take a free throw.
- b) If a defending player, after a free throw outside the 6 meter line, deliberately pushes or flips the ball inside the 6 meter line, to avoid a direct shot.

No personal foul shall be recorded for this offense for the coach or any team official.

**WP 23.9** – For a defending player to foul or impede an attacking player from behind within the 6 meter area when the attacking player is facing or swimming towards the goal in a probable goal situation, unless the defending player makes contact only with the ball or hand. If the defending player's actions prevent the attacking player from shooting, a penalty must also be called.

*[NOTE: The referees must award a penalty unless the attacking player scores.]*

**WP 23.10** – If, in the last minute of the game, a penalty throw is awarded to a team, the coach may elect to maintain possession of the ball and be awarded a free throw. The timekeeper recording possession time shall reset the clock to 30 seconds, and the game will be restarted as after a time-out.

*[NOTE: It is the responsibility of the coach to give a clear signal without delay if the team wishes to maintain possession of the ball in accordance with this rule.]*

## **WP 24 PENALTY THROWS**

**WP 24.1** – A penalty throw shall be taken by any player of the team to which it is awarded from any point on the opponents' 5 meter line.

**WP 24.2** – All players shall leave the 6 meter area and shall be at least three meters from the player taking the throw. On the 6 meter line, on each side of the player taking the throw, one player of the defending team shall have the first right to take position. The defending goalkeeper shall be positioned between the goal posts with no part of his body beyond the goal line at water level. If the correct position is not taken after the referee has warned, the referee may exclude (regular 20 second exclusion) the goalkeeper or player. They shall re-enter in accordance with rule WP22.3. Should the goalkeeper be out of the water, another player may take the position of the goalkeeper but without the goalkeeper's privileges and limitations.

**WP 24.3** – When the referee controlling the taking of the throw is satisfied that the players are in their correct positions the referee shall signal for the throw to be taken, by whistle and by simultaneously lowering the arm from a vertical to a horizontal position.

**WP 24.4** – The player taking the penalty throw shall have possession of the ball and shall immediately throw it with an uninterrupted movement directly at the goal. The player may take the throw by lifting the ball from the water or with the ball held in the raised hand and the ball may be taken backwards from the direction of the goal in preparation for the forward throw, provided that the continuity of the movement shall not be interrupted before the ball leaves the thrower's hand.

*[NOTE: There is nothing in the rules to prevent a player taking the throw with the player's back to the goal while the player adopts a half screw or full screw action.]*

**WP 24.5** – If the ball rebounds from the goal post, crossbar or goalkeeper it remains in play and it shall not be necessary for another player to play or touch the ball before a goal can be scored.

**WP 24.6** – If at precisely the same time as the referee awards a penalty throw the timekeeper whistles for the end of a period, all players except the player taking the throw and the defending goalkeeper shall leave the water before the penalty throw is taken. In this situation, the ball shall immediately be dead should it rebound into play from the goal post, crossbar or the goalkeeper.

## **WP 25 PERSONAL FOULS**

**WP 25.1** – A personal foul shall be recorded against any player who commits an exclusion foul or penalty foul. The referee shall indicate the offending player's cap number to the secretary.

**WP 25.2** – Upon receiving a third personal foul, a player shall be excluded from the remainder of the game with substitution after the earliest occurrence referred to in WP 22.3. If the third personal foul is a penalty foul, the entry of the substitute shall be immediate.

## **WP 26 YELLOW AND RED CARDS**

The referee, if necessary, must use yellow and red cards to control the head coach, assistant coach(es), team officials, and substitute players on the team bench as well as the players in the water. The use of yellow and red cards applies to all USA Water Polo competitions and will be administered as follows.

- a) The issuing of a yellow card by the referee is an official warning to the Head Coach of the team. Disruptive or disrespectful behavior from assistant coaches, team officials, and individual players on the team bench is a direct red card.
- b) The subsequent issuing of a red card by the referee is the signal that the offender must leave the pool area immediately. Should the actions of the head coach require it, the referee may issue a red card without having issued a yellow card.
- c) When the Head Coach is excluded from the game, an assistant coach may take this position, however without the privileges of the head coach. The assistant coach is not allowed to stand and move away from the team bench but can ask for a time-out according to the rules. During a time out the assistant coach may move freely along the poolside until the halfway mark to instruct the team.



- d) During the match, when a player inside the water refuses to leave the water or continues to show disrespect after receiving a misconduct or brutality, the referee may show a red card to that player as an additional violation. If the player continues to refuse to leave the water, the referee may forfeit the match.
- e) A referee may issue a yellow card, if in the referee's opinion, a player persists in playing in an unsporting manner or engages in simulation. The referee shall show a yellow card to the offending team and point to the offending player. Should the action continue from a member of that team, the referee can exclude the player with substitution for Misconduct.
- f) A referee may issue a yellow card to the team bench (player's collectively)

## **WP 27 ACCIDENT, INJURY AND ILLNESS**

**WP 27.1** – A player shall only be allowed to leave the water, or sit or stand on the steps or side of the pool during play in the case of accident, injury, illness or with the permission of a referee. A player who has left the water legitimately may re-enter from the team's exclusion re-entry area at an appropriate stoppage, with the permission of a referee.

**WP 27.2** – If a player is bleeding, the referee shall immediately order the player out of the water with the immediate entry of a substitute and the game shall continue without interruption. After the bleeding has stopped, the player is permitted to be a substitute in the ordinary course of the game.

**WP 27.3** – If accident, injury or illness, other than bleeding, occurs, a referee may at the referee's discretion suspend the game for not more than three minutes, in which case the referee shall instruct the timekeeper as to when the stoppage period is to commence.

**WP 27.4** – Should the game be stopped through accident, injury, illness, bleeding or other unforeseen reason, the team in possession of the ball at the time of the stoppage shall put the ball into play at the place of stoppage when the play is resumed.

**WP 27.5** – Except in the circumstances of WP 26.2 (bleeding), the player shall not be allowed to take further part in the game if a substitute has entered.

## **AGE GROUP RULES – WATER POLO**

**WPAG 1** – All age group competitors remain qualified from 1 January to the following 31 December at their age at the close of day (12 midnight) on 31 December of the year of competition.

**WPAG 2** - Age grouping for Water Polo for boys and girls are as follows:

- i. 15 and 16 years of age and under
- ii. 17 and 18 years of age and under
- iii. 19 and 20 years of age and under

The age for Cadet, Youth and Junior World Championships is 16 years and under, 18 years and under and 20 years and under.

**APPENDIX A - INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE USE OF TWO REFEREES**

1. The referees are in absolute control of the game and shall have equal powers to declare fouls and penalties. Differences of opinion of the referees shall not serve as a basis for protest or appeal.
2. The committee or organization appointing the referees shall have power to designate the side of the pool from which each referee shall officiate. Referees shall change sides of the pool before the start of any period when the teams do not change ends.
3. At the start of the game and of each period, the referees will position themselves on the respective six (6) meter line. The starting signal shall be given by the referee on the same side as the official table.
4. After a goal, the signal to restart shall be given by the referee who was controlling the attacking situation when the goal was scored. Before restarting, the referees shall ensure that any substitutions have been completed.
5. Each referee shall have the power to declare fouls in any part of the field of play but each referee shall give primary attention to the offensive situation attacking the goal to their right. The referee not controlling the attacking situation (the defensive referee) shall maintain a position no closer to the goal being attacked than that player of the attacking team furthest back from the goal.
6. When awarding a free throw, goal throw or corner throw, the referee making the decision shall blow the whistle and both referees shall indicate the direction of the attack, to enable players in different parts of the pool to see quickly which team has been awarded the throw. Referees shall use the signals set out in Appendix B to indicate the nature of the fouls which they are penalizing.
7. If, in the referee's opinion, a player persists in playing in an unsporting manner or engages in simulation, the referee shall show a yellow card to the offending team and point to the offending player. Should the action continue, the referee will issue the player with a red card visible to both the field of play and the table as this is deemed to be misconduct. The referee then signals the excluded player's cap number to the table.
8. The signal for a penalty throw to be taken shall be made by the attacking referee, except that a player who wishes to take the throw with the left hand may request the defensive referee to make the signal.
9. When simultaneous free throws are awarded by both referees to the same team, the award shall go to the player awarded the throw by the attacking referee.
10. When simultaneous awards are made for ordinary fouls but for opposing teams, the award shall be a neutral throw, to be taken by the attacking referee.

11. When simultaneous awards are made by both referees and one is for an ordinary foul and the other is for an exclusion foul or penalty foul, the exclusion foul or penalty foul award shall be applied.
12. When players of both teams commit an exclusion foul simultaneously during play, the referees shall call the ball from the water and make sure both teams and the secretaries know who is excluded. The possession clock is not reset and play is restarted with a free throw to the team which had possession of the ball. If neither team had possession when the simultaneous exclusions were called, the possession clock is reset to 30 seconds and play shall be restarted with a neutral throw.
13. In the event of simultaneous awards of penalty throws to both teams, the first throw shall be taken by the team last in possession of the ball. After the second penalty throw has been taken, the game will restart with the team which had possession of the ball receiving a free throw on or behind the half distance line. The possession clock is reset to 30 seconds.

## APPENDIX B

### SIGNALS TO BE USED BY OFFICIALS

- Fig. A** The referee lowers the arm from a vertical position to signal (i) the start of the period (ii) to restart after a goal (iii) the taking of a penalty throw.
- Fig. B** To point with one arm in the direction of the attack and to use the other arm to indicate the place where the ball is to be put into play at a free throw, goal throw or corner throw.
- Fig. C** To signal a neutral throw. The referee points to the place where the neutral throw has been awarded, points both thumbs up and calls for the ball.
- Fig. D** To signal the exclusion of a player. The referee points to the player and then moves the arm quickly towards the boundary of the field of play. The referee then signals the excluded player's cap number so that it is visible to the field of play and the table.
- Fig. E** To signal the simultaneous exclusion of two players. The referee points with both hands to the two players, signals their exclusion in accordance with Fig. D, and then immediately signals the players' cap numbers.
- Fig. F** To signal the exclusion of a player for misconduct. The referee signals exclusion in accordance with Fig. D (or Fig. E if appropriate) and then rotates the hands round one another in such a way that is visible to both the field of play and the table in addition to issuing the player with a red card. The referee then signals the excluded player's cap number to the table.
- Fig. G** To signal the exclusion of a player with substitution after four (4) minutes. The referee signals exclusion in accordance with Fig. D (or Fig. E if appropriate) and then crosses the arms in such a way that is visible to both the field of play and the table in addition to issuing the player with a red card. The referee then signals the excluded player's cap number to the table.
- Fig. H** To signal the award of a penalty throw. The referee raises an arm with five fingers in the air. The referee then signals the offending player's cap number to the table.
- Fig. I** To signal that a goal has been scored. The referee signals by whistle and by immediately pointing to the center of the field of play.
- Fig. J** To indicate the exclusion foul of holding an opponent. The referee makes a motion holding the wrist of one hand with the other hand.
- Fig. K** To indicate the exclusion foul of sinking an opponent. The referee makes a downward motion with both hands starting from a horizontal position.

- Fig. L** To indicate the exclusion foul of pulling back an opponent. The referee makes a pulling motion with both hands vertically extended and pulling towards his body.
- Fig. M** To indicate the exclusion foul of kicking an opponent. The referee makes a kicking movement.
- Fig. N** To indicate the exclusion foul of striking an opponent. The referee makes a striking motion with a closed fist starting from a horizontal position.
- Fig. O** To indicate the ordinary foul of pushing or pushing off from an opponent. The referee makes a pushing motion away from the body starting from a horizontal position.
- Fig. P** To indicate the exclusion foul of impeding an opponent. The referee makes a crossing motion with one hand horizontally crossing the other.
- Fig. Q** To indicate the ordinary foul of taking the ball under the water. The referee makes a downward motion with a hand starting from a horizontal position.
- Fig. R** To indicate the ordinary foul of standing on the bottom of the pool. The referee raises and lowers one foot.
- Fig. S** To indicate the ordinary foul of undue delay in the taking of a free throw, goal throw or corner throw. The referee raises a hand once or twice with the palm turned upwards.
- Fig. T** To indicate a violation of the two-meter Rule. The referee indicates the number 2 by raising the fore and middle fingers in the air with the arm vertically extended.
- Fig. U** To indicate the ordinary fouls of wasting time and the expiration of 30 second possession. The referee moves a hand in a circular motion two or three times.
- Fig. V** By a goal judge to signal for the start of a period.
- Fig. W** By a goal judge to signal an improper start, restart or improper re-entry of an excluded player or substitute.
- Fig. X** By a goal judge to signal a goal throw or corner throw.
- Fig. Y** By a goal judge to signal a goal.
- Fig. Z** To indicate a player's cap number. To enable the referee to communicate better with the players and the secretary, signals are made using both hands if appropriate where the number exceeds five. One hand shows five fingers with the other hand showing additional fingers to make up the sum of the player's number. For the number ten, a clenched fist is shown. If the number exceeds ten, one hand is shown as a clenched fist with the other hand showing additional fingers to make up the sum of the player's number.

## **APPENDIX C**

### **REGULATIONS FOR DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS IN WATER POLO**

**PREAMBLE:** These Regulations contain basic regulations for fair play, ethical and moral behavior, and general discipline in Water Polo.

These Regulations include measures related to incidents involving teams, water polo Federations, water polo sections of Member Federations, players, team leaders and officials, supporters, spectators but also involving officials or any other persons present at water polo matches.

The Regulations shall be in force from 1 August 2001 and replace the Code adopted by the FINA Bureau on 28th March 2001.

The purpose of these Regulations is to guarantee that the sport of Water Polo will be played in a fair manner without disturbance and to sanction incidents, which damage the image of Water Polo or bring it into disrepute.

#### **Article 1. SUBORDINATE AND SUPPLEMENTARY TO FINA RULES**

**1.1** These Regulations are subordinated and supplementary to all FINA Rules adopted by the FINA Congresses from time to time and the FINA Code of Conduct.

#### **Article 2. OFFENSES BY OFFICIALS**

**2.1** The sanctions to be imposed for offenses committed by any person appointed by FINA as delegate, referee, goal judge or serving at the table at any water polo match shall be suspension from participating further in the tournament in which the match occurred and a report shall be made to the FINA Bureau, or if the Bureau is not assembled, to the FINA Executive, for consideration of additional sanctions.

**2.2** If a person, appointed by FINA as a delegate, referee, goal judge or serving at the table at a water polo match, commits an offense referred to in these Regulations or the FINA Code of Conduct and involving cheating or partiality, the person shall be suspended up to life.

#### **Article 3. OFFENSES AGAINST OFFICIALS**

**3.1** Any offense committed by any member of a team or team official shall result in a minimum suspension of one (1) match up to a maximum suspension of all water polo matches for one (1) year period.

**3.2** If the offense includes violence resulting in serious injury, use of any hard object or any other kind of violence against the body, the minimum suspension shall be for all water polo matches for one (1) year period up to a maximum of a lifetime suspension from water polo matches.

**3.3** If the offense is an attempt to commit an offense referred to in 3.2, the minimum suspension shall be three (3) matches up to a maximum suspension of all water polo matches for one (1) year period.

**3.4** Offenses in 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3 involve acts committed from 30 minutes before the beginning of the match until 30 minutes after the end of the match.

**3.5** If an offense referred to in 3.1, 3.2 or 3.3 is committed by any person other than a player or team official, the minimum sanction shall be a warning or exclusion from the venue up to a maximum sanction of suspension of the right to attend water polo matches for any period up to, and including, life.

**3.6** The minimum sanction for any offense under Article 3 may be increased for a second or subsequent offense by any individual.

#### **Article 4. OFFENSES AGAINST TEAM MEMBERS OR TEAM OFFICIALS**

**4.1** For brutality, or any offense not covered in FINA Rules WP 20-22 committed by a player against other players or team officials, the minimum suspension shall be for one (1) match up to a maximum of all water polo matches for a one (1) year period.

**4.2** If the offense is committed by a team official against any player or team official, the minimum suspension shall be one (1) match up to a maximum of a lifetime suspension from water polo matches.

**4.3** If the offense is committed by any other person, the minimum sanction shall be expulsion from the venue up to a maximum of a suspension of the right to attend water polo matches for any period up to, and including, life.

**4.4** The minimum sanction for any offense under Article 4 may be increased for a second or subsequent offense by any individual.

#### **Article 5. OTHER OFFENSES**

**5.1** For any offense committed by any team member or team official against media representatives, spectators, pool staff or any other person present in the venue at the time of a match, the minimum suspension shall be from all water polo matches for a one (1) year period up to a maximum of suspension of the right to attend competitions for any period up to, and including, life.

**5.2** For oral or written statements of an abusive kind or nature and directed against FINA, any Federation, any organizer, authority or any other person, and which are not elsewhere covered in this Code, the minimum sanction shall be suspension for a period of six (6) months up to a maximum suspension for life.

**5.3** The minimum sanction for any offense under Article 5 may be increased for such period as the Management Committee deems appropriate.

## **Article 6. OFFENSES COMMITTED BY TEAMS**

**6.1** If more than three members of the same team, including team officials, commit offenses sanctioned in accordance with Articles 3, 4 or 5 in the same match, that team shall be sanctioned with disqualification from that match and a minimum suspension from the next match in the tournament to a maximum suspension from taking part in any competition organized by the same body for a period of one (1) year.

**6.2** Suspension in 6.1 means that the match or matches for which the team has been suspended shall be awarded to the opponent(s) with the goal score of 5-0.

## **Article 7. PROCEDURES FOR IMPOSING SANCTIONS**

**7.1** Sanctions for offenses in 3.1 and 3.5 shall be imposed by the Management Committee within 24 hours after the end of the match, with immediate notification to the player(s), team official(s), or other person(s) suspended.

**7.2** The Management Committee shall have the right to provisionally suspend any person or team who has committed offenses in 2.1, 2.2, 3.2, 3.3, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3 5.1, 5.2, and 6.1, subject to immediate written submission of the case to the FINA Bureau or, Board of the Organizing body.

**7.3** Sanctions in accordance with 2.1, 2.2, 3.2, 3.3, 3.5, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, and 6.1 shall be imposed by the. Board of the Organizing body.

**7.4** Sanction involving disqualification and suspension of a team from one or more matches in the same tournament shall be imposed by the Management Committee within 24 hours after the end of the match and immediate notification to the team officials, the Federation of the team and the Board of the Organizing body.

**7.5** Sanctions involving suspension of a team in accordance with 6.1 for a period covering more than the actual tournament shall be imposed by the Board of the Organizing body.

**7.6** As used in these Regulations "suspension" for offenses other than in 3.1, 3.2, 3.5 and 4.1 shall mean, as may be specified by the Board of the Organizing body, from competitions or that the individual sanctioned shall not participate in any or certain activities of FINA, the recognized continental organizations or any of FINA's Member Federations, in any discipline of FINA including acting as a competitor, delegate, coach, leader, physician or other representative of FINA, a recognized continental organization or a Member Federation. A suspension shall take effect from the date specified by the competent authority.

**7.7** If a player or team official is suspended from a specific match, the team shall have the number of players or team officials on the bench reduced accordingly; provided that there is at least one (1) team official on the bench.



**Article 8. BURDEN OF PROOF**

**8.1** Referees, match officials or the competition management shall have the burden of establishing that offenses in the Water Polo Rules and these Regulations have occurred.

**Article 9. CONSIDERATION**

**9.1** In imposition of any sanction, the nature of the offense, the circumstances under which it occurred, the gravity of the offense, the character of the action and other consideration that is in harmony with the objectives of FINA must be taken into account.

**Article 10. APPEALS**

**10.1** An individual sanctioned by the Management Committee may appeal to the Board of the Organizing body within 21 days from the date of receipt of the decision including a sanction of the appealing party and further in accordance with the rules of the body concerned.

## Appendix D

### **BL 9.6.3 Tie Breaking**

**BL 9.6.3.1** If two (2) teams shall have equal points, further classification shall be established as follows:

**BL 9.6.3.1.1** The team winning the game between them shall be placed higher.

**BL 9.6.3.1.2** If the game between them was tied, then the results against the highest placed team(s) in the group shall be considered.

**BL 9.6.3.1.3** The first comparison shall be based on goal difference, and if still tied, then based on goals scored.

**BL 9.6.3.1.4** The comparison shall be made first compared to the highest placed team (or teams, if tied) in the group.

**BL 9.6.3.1.5** If still tied, the results against the next highest placed team (or teams, if tied) shall be used in succession until all results have been considered.

**BL 9.6.3.1.6** If still tied, the teams shall shoot penalty shots to determine which team shall be placed higher. Each team shall nominate five (5) players and a goalkeeper who will participate in the penalty shoot out. The team shall shoot five (5) penalty shots at the goal of the other team, alternating shots. If a tie exists after each team has taken five (5) shots, then teams shall take sets of alternate shots until one team scores and the other does not. The procedure shall be conducted following the final game of the round or at the first practical opportunity.<sup>49</sup> By Laws, as approved by the FINA Bureau on 12 February 2015

**BL 9.6.3.1.7** If there is more than one tie in a group, the highest placed tie shall be determined first.

**BL 9.6.3.1.8** If it is the situation where there is more than one tie in a group and it is not possible to determine the highest placed team then all results within the group shall be used to determine the highest placed team.

**BL 9.6.3.2** If three (3) or more teams shall have equal points, further classification shall be established as follows:

**BL 9.6.3.2.1** The results among the tied teams shall determine which team is placed highest.

**BL 9.6.3.2.2** If, at any time during the application of the procedure set out in this BL 9.6.3.2, the number of tied teams is reduced to two (2), then BL 9.6.3.1 shall be used to determine which of the two (2) remaining teams is placed higher.

**BL 9.6.3.2.3** The comparison shall be made first, upon the points of the games among the tied teams, second, the goal difference, and third, based upon goals scored.

**BL 9.6.3.2.4** If still tied, the games played against the highest placed team (or teams, if tied) shall be considered.

**BL 9.6.3.2.5** The first comparison shall be based on goal difference, and if still tied, then based on goals scored.

**BL 9.6.3.2.6** If still tied, the results against the next highest placed team (or teams, if tied) shall be used in succession until all results have been considered.

**(5) BL 9.6.3.2.7** If still tied, the teams shall shoot penalty shots to determine which team shall be placed highest. Each team shall nominate five (5) players and a

goalkeeper who will participate in the penalty shoot out. Each team shall shoot five penalty shots at its opponent's goal in alternate succession. The first team shall take its first penalty shot and then each other team shall take its first penalty shot, etc. If a tie shall exist after that procedure, the teams shall then take sets of alternate shots until one team misses and the other(s) score. The procedure shall be conducted following the final game of the round or at the first practical opportunity. **BL**

**9.6.3.2.8** If there is more than one tie in a group, the highest placed tie shall be determined first.

**APPENDIX E**

**modified 11.29.16**  
**Effective January 1, 2017**

**USA Water Polo Playing Rules**  
**Modifications for 12U & 10U Competitions and FAQ**

In the interest of improved player development in younger athletes, USA Water Polo has instituted modifications to the playing rules for the 12U and 10U age divisions. The modifications are currently in effect and apply to all USA Water Polo National Sanctioned events, (Rock-tober, ODP, National Junior Olympics, and qualification tournaments) Please note that although encouraged to do so, member sanctioned events are not required to follow these rule modifications. Official playing rules for any event should be clearly communicated to all participants ahead of time, including club administration, coaches, (and in turn players), and referees.

**Modified Rules Summary:****1. No direct shot after foul outside of 6 meters or corner throws.**

A direct shot at the goal will not be allowed after a free throw is awarded as the result of a foul being called or a corner throw.

On an initial infraction, the referee will remove the ball from the water and inform BOTH teams of the rule modification. Any goal that may have been scored will be dis-allowed. The referee will then return the ball to the team that was in possession at the time of the infractions and award a free throw. The shot clock **will not** be reset. Subsequent violations shall result in a contra foul against the offending team and a free throw awarded to the opposing team.

**2. On an Exclusion Foul there is no specific time a player has to serve in the exclusion area.**

The excluded player must still swim to the re-entry box, rise to surface within the re-entry area, but he/she or a substitute in the re-entry box may enter the field as soon as the original excluded player raises their head above the water in the re-entry area.

If a time out is called, or if the referee stops play during a player advantage situation, (6 on 5), the teams will restart play at even strength.

If an exclusion foul is called as a period of play ends the teams will start even at the beginning of the next period.

If an excluded player interferes with play after being excluded and that interference results in a penalty foul, the excluded player will remain in the field of play for the taking of the penalty shot.

In the case of a double exclusion the referee shall remove the ball from the water to remove the excluded players and then return the ball to play when both players have reached their respective re-entry areas.

### **3. Injury to Players**

If the referee recognizes and stops play for an injury, immediate substitution shall be allowed regardless of injury and that player may return to the game at any time as allowed by substitution rules.

### **4. Size of Goal**

Recommended goal size for 12/10U age division shall be approximately 2 meters x 0.8 meters. There will be **no** mandated difference in goal size at the 12U level at this time. 12U age division will continue to use standard size goals.

**5.** Goalkeeper cannot cross half pool during the game but can be a shooter in a shoot-out

**APPENDIX F –**  
**RULE 26**  
**Modified**  
**1.1.20**

**ACCIDENT, INJURY AND  
ILLNESS**

**WP 26.1** A player shall only be allowed to leave the water, or sit or stand on the steps or side of the pool during play in the case of accident, injury, illness or with the permission of a referee. A player who has left the water legitimately may re-enter from the re-entry area nearest his own goal line at an appropriate stoppage, with the permission of a referee.

**WP 26.2** If a player is bleeding, the referee shall immediately order the player out of the water with the immediate entry of a substitute and the game shall continue without interruption. After the bleeding has stopped, the player is permitted to be a substitute in the ordinary course of the game.

**WP 26.3(a)** If accident, injury or illness, other than bleeding or as provided in WP 26.3(b), occurs, a referee may at the referee's discretion suspend the game for not more than three minutes, in which case the referee shall instruct the timekeeper as to when the stoppage period is to commence.

**WP 26.3(b)** If a player suffers a substantial blow to the head, an impact that causes a substantial and sudden movement of the head, or a head injury, a referee shall suspend the game for not more than three minutes to allow the player to be assessed, in which case the referee shall instruct the timekeeper as to when the stoppage period is to commence. If, following such assessment, a referee suspects that the player may have suffered a concussion or head injury, the player shall not be allowed to take further part in the game.

**WP 26.4** Should the game be stopped through accident, injury, illness, bleeding, as provided in WP 26.3(b), or other unforeseen reason, the team in possession of the ball at the time of the stoppage shall put the ball into play at the place of stoppage when the play is resumed.

**WP 26.5** Except in the circumstances of WP 26.2 (bleeding), the player shall not be allowed to take further part in the game if a substitute has entered.