

PART SIX: WATER POLO RULES

Term	Definition
5 metre line	The line from where penalty throws should be taken.
6 metre area	An area within six metres of the goal line where a foul may result in a penalty throw.
Actual Play	Teams play four periods, each period consisting of eight minutes of actual playing time; a total of 32 minutes. Actual play starts at the beginning of each period, when a player touches the ball, stops on every stoppage indicated by the referee or shot clock and continues after every stoppage when the player puts the ball into play according to the rules, shoots or passes the ball.
Action shot	A shot taken by a player when the teams have an equal number of players in the pool.
Advantage	The opportunity of an attacking player and/ or the attacking team to continue to play the ball in order to generate an opportunity to score. Referees must officiate such that the attacking team can maintain its advantage.
Aggressive foul play	Behaviour that can lead to injuries of opponents. The intention of these kind of fouls is to destroy and completely stop the advantage or progress of the match or a player, or to provoke the opponent. It is dangerous play, without a clear intention to injure the opponent player, but typically is caused by emotions.
Assist	This occurs when a player passes the ball to a teammate who scores. The player who scored is credited with the goal.
Assistant referee	See "Goal Judge".
Attacking player	Player whose team has possession of the ball; the team controls the ball and has the opportunity to score a goal.
Attacking referee	The referee who is giving primary attention to the attacking situation in front of the goal to the referee's right.
Bad pass	A pass which cannot be reached by the attacker, regardless of whether or not the player has been fouled. There are no sanctions against the defending player in the case of a bad pass.
Ball under	Ordinary foul called against a player for taking the ball under water when tackled by an opponent or with intent to hide a ball from an opponent.
Block a shot or pass	To stop the ball's flight with hand, arm or body.
Cap numbers	The players wear caps numbered 1 to 13. The first goalkeeper wears number 1 and the second goalkeeper wears number 13. A player shall not be allowed to change their cap number during the match except with the permission of a referee and with notification to the secretary.
Caps	The players wear caps numbered 1 to 13. The first goalkeeper wears number 1 and the second goalkeeper wears number 13. 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 match when the player's team is in possession of the ball. Caps shall be worn throughout the entire match. For international matches, the caps shall display on the front the international three letter country code and may display the national flag.
Centre back	A defender whose primary responsibility is to mark the attacking centre forward.
Centre forward	An attacking player whose primary position is near the opponent's two metre line and generally between the width of the goal posts.
Centre shot	A shot made by a player in the centre forward position.
Corner throw	Throw awarded to the attacking team on the defender's two metre line on the side nearest to which the ball crossed the goal line after having been touched by the defending goalkeeper.
Counter attack	The transition by the attacking team that brings the ball quickly from one end of the field to the other in an attempt to score before the defensive team can get into position.

Defending player	Player whose team does not control, and does not have possession of the ball; a player trying to defend the team's goal.
Defensive referee	The referee who is controlling the attacking situation to the referee's left. This referee generally maintains a position no closer to the goal being attacked than that player of the attacking team furthest back from the goal.
Delaying the match	Intentionally preventing attacking players from proceeding with the action or any interference against the spirit of the game with the intention to prevent a probable goal.
Designated lateral substitution area	See "Flying substitution area".
Direct shot	The ball may be shot directly at the goal: A) following a free throw when the player, the ball and the foul are outside the 6 M line, B) from a penalty throw, C) from a corner throw.
Disproportionate movements	To make any movement with intent to kick or strike, even if the player fails to make contact.
Disqualification	A ruling by officials that a competitor or team has broken the rules of the sport and cannot be considered for placing in an event unit, a phase or an event.
Double exclusion	See "Simultaneous Exclusion".
Dribble	To swim with the ball or progress the ball by swimming. A player dribbling the ball is in possession of the ball but is not holding the ball.
Drive	An attacking move by a player who is facing an opponent and who attempts to aggressively swim by that player to a position of advantage closer to the goal.
Driver	A player who is driving towards the goal, usually starting from a stationary position facing an opponent attempting to aggressively swim by the opponent to a position of advantage closer to the goal.
Exclusion for twenty (20) seconds	A major foul by a defender which results in the exclusion of the defender for twenty (20) seconds and the award of a free throw to the offensive team. A substitute is allowed after the expiration of twenty (20) seconds, when the ball changes possession or when a goal is scored.
Exclusion foul	A foul where a player is excluded from taking part in the match for a period of time as prescribed in the Rules.
Exclusion with substitution	This occurs when a player has been excluded from the remainder of the match by the referee, usually for misconduct, violent play, disrespect or simulation. A substitute is allowed after the expiration of twenty (20) seconds, when the ball changes possession or when a goal is scored.
Exclusion with substitution after four (4) minutes	This occurs when a player has been excluded from the remainder of the match by the referee, for brutality. A substitute is allowed after the expiration of four (4) minutes.
Exclusion re-entry area	The location from where a player or substitute returns to the field of play after an exclusion.
Extra player shot	A shot taken by a player whose team has more players in the pool than the opposing team.
Fake	To simulate a shot.
False start	To begin the start of play improperly, either before the signal from the referee or pushing off from or affecting the alignment of the goal.
Field of play	The part of the water officially marked as the place for the action of a water polo match.
Flying substitution	The ability of a team to exchange players during play from the flying substitution area.
Flying substitution area	The area designated by the rules at the side of the field of play where flying substitutions may occur.
Foul	A violation of a rule resulting in a stoppage of the match clock and the awarding of a free throw. There are two types of fouls. See "Physical foul" and "Technical foul".
Free throw	A method of putting the ball into play after an ordinary foul, an exclusion foul or a restart after a timeout, a goal, an injury including bleeding, the

	replacement of a cap, the referee calling for the ball, the ball leaving the side of the field of play or any other delay.
Front position on a defender	An offensive player establishing an advantageous position, that is, a position between a defending player and the opponent's goal.
Goal	The result of the ball fully crossing the goal line past the front line of the goal posts and underneath the crossbar.
Goal	The structure into which the ball must fully enter in order to score.
Goal area	A rectangular box extending two metres from the lateral outsides of the goal posts to the two metre line opposite the goal line. In this area, attacking players must not enter without possession of the ball, unless they are behind the line of the ball.
Goal Judge	An official seated on the goal line responsible for assisting the referee in determining if the ball has entered the goal or passed the goal line, including who last touched the ball as well as for throwing a new ball according to the referees' instructions.
Goal line	The end of the field of play, formed by the front face of the goal post.
Goal throw	The throw awarded to the defending team to restart the match.
Goalkeeper	An individual member of a team, wearing cap number 1 or 13, whose main role is to prevent the ball from entering the goal.
Half distance line	The line which divides the length of the field of play into two equal halves at its midpoint.
Hold an opponent	To use the hands, arms or legs to hold onto an opponent with the intention of restricting movement.
Holding the ball	Lifting, carrying or touching the ball but not including dribbling the ball.
Illegal player	A player not entitled to participate in the match.
Illegal timeout	A requested timeout to which the team is not entitled.
Impede	To obstruct movement with unallowed physical acts, like holding or blocking an opponent.
Improper entry	Entry of a player into the match during play not in accordance with the rules.
Improper re-entry	Entry of a substitute into the match during play not in accordance with the rules.
Interfere with a free throw, goal or penalty throw	To disrupt or interfere with any of these throws.
Kicking	A blow, strike or forceful thrust with the foot to an opponent's body or face, which is a personal foul.
Match	A match is a contest between two teams. It is a part (unit) of the tournament. A match consists of four periods of eight (8) minutes actual play. There is a two (2) minute interval after the first and third periods, and a three (3) minute interval after the second period (half time). If the scores are tied at full time in any match for which a definite result is required, a penalty shoot-out will be held to determine the result.
Match exclusion	This occurs when a player is excluded from the remainder of the match. It may arise as a result of the player committing three exclusion fouls, striking, showing disrespect or for misconduct.
Match officials	The match officials consist of the referees, World Aquatics delegate, TWPC evaluator, goal judges, timekeepers and secretaries.
Misconduct	Any improper behaviour, including being disrespectful towards a referee or opponent, as well as showing disregard for an instruction from the referee.
Neutral throw	Method of putting the ball into play when neither team has possession. The referee restarts play by throwing the ball into the pool between two opposing players, giving each an equal opportunity to recover the ball.
Offending player	A player committing a foul according to the rules.
Offensive foul	A foul committed by an attacking player resulting in a free throw awarded to the defending team.
Official table	The designated location where other necessary officials and authorised persons carry out their responsibilities during a match.

Pass	To throw the ball from one player to a teammate or to the area controlled by a teammate. To throw the ball towards a teammate (or to oneself) with the intention of keeping control of the ball (as opposed to the intention to score a goal).
Penalty foul	Any foul committed inside 6 metres preventing a probable goal. Additionally, violent actions or delaying the match may result in a penalty.
Penalty Shoot-Out	The method of determining a definite result for a match should the scores be level at full time
Penalty Shoot-Out competition	If three or more teams are tied in the final group ranking after applying the World Aquatics tiebreaking rules, results of the penalty shoot-out competition(s) will decide the final group ranking.
Penalty throw	A free shot at the goal from the 5 metre line defended only by the goalkeeper. The defending goalkeeper shall be positioned on the goal line between the goal posts and may move forward after the referee gives the signal for the shot to be taken. Defending players may only enter the 6 metre area after the ball has left the hand of the shooting player.
Persistent foul play	Unallowed fouls of defending players, which are stopping the attack. The intention of these fouls is not to injure an opponent, but to destroy the flow of the match, advantage and speed, as well as to intimidate the opponent.
Personal foul	Individualised foul recorded against a player, when the referee awards an exclusion or a penalty foul.
Physical foul	Physical contact of a player preventing an opposing player from continuing with movement.
Player	An individual member of a water polo team.
Possession	Possession of the ball is when a player from one of the teams is holding or swimming with the ball.
Possibility to play the ball	When the player in possession of the ball is able to continue playing by putting the ball into action.
Probable goal situation	Situations in which the attacking player is facing the goal and there is no defending player between the attacking player and the goalkeeper, and without a foul, a goal would most likely be scored. There are also probable goal situations when the goal is empty and the ball is nearby.
Pull back	To pull an opposing player.
Push-off	To use the hand, arm, foot or another body part to push off an opponent to gain an advantage.
Red card	Signal from the referee to indicate an exclusion from the remainder of the match to a player, coach or any team official.
Referee	An official responsible for conducting the match with designated functions according to the rules.
Reserve	A team member who is not playing at the time.
Restart	See "Start".
Shot	An attempt to score by purposely directing the ball towards the opponent's goal.
Shot clock	A team has either thirty (30) or twenty (20) seconds to shoot the ball at the goal, depending on how they gained possession. The shot clocks count down the remaining time and are located at the edge of the pool in each corner.
Simulation	To pretend to be fouled.
Simultaneous exclusion	When two players from opposing teams are simultaneously excluded.
Sink	To push an opponent under the water.
Spirit of the game	Defining characteristic of the sport. Playing within the spirit means playing to win while respecting teammates, opponents and the game itself. It is defined by understanding the rules and playing with integrity and honesty in mind.
Sprint	See "Swim up"
Starting line-ups	Starting line-ups represent the six players and a goalkeeper of each team which will start the match.

Start	The commencement of play at the beginning of a period, after a goal or after the referee has called for the ball and stopped play.
Statistics	Statistics evaluate the performance of the teams and players.
Steals	Winning a ball from an attacking team without foul.
Substitute	A player entering the field to replace a player already in the field of play or an excluded player.
Swim up	At the beginning of a period the ball is placed in the middle of the field of play and once the whistle is blown to signal the start of the match, teams sprint towards the middle of the pool to gain possession of the ball.
Tackle	To hold, sink, pull back or impede a player who is holding the ball.
Tactical foul	Any foul by a defender with the objective to stop the flow of the match with intent to take away an advantage, especially the counter attack.
Team standings	Position in order of achievement of the teams by points and goals.
Technical error	A technical error committed by any match official during a match which could affect the match result.
Technical foul	An action against the rules, e.g., false start or restart, to strike the ball with clenched fist, two hands, etc
Technical Water Polo Committee (TWPC)	The Technical Water Polo Committee is a standing committee in charge of technical matters of Water Polo.
Throw	Any movement by hand releasing the ball, with intent to put the ball into play or pass or score.
Tiebreaking	The World Aquatics rule applied to determine the final group ranking in the event of ties.
Timeout	A one-minute stoppage of play available to the attacking team at any time, except at the awarding of a penalty throw or during a VAR review. Each team is entitled to two timeouts per match.
Transition	The phase of the match when a team changes from offense to defence or from defence to offense.
Turnover	A turnover occurs when an offensive player or team loses ball possession to the opposing team before a shot has been taken. This can result from a player getting the ball stolen or sent out of the field of play, having a pass intercepted, committing an ordinary foul, or committing a turnover (offensive) foul.
Video Assistant Referee (VAR)	Video technology and assistant referee, which the referee may use to make a final decision after reviewing a situation.
Violent action	An action by a player intended to cause harm or to injure another player or official, regardless of whether contact is made or not.
Visibly putting the ball into play	The ball must leave the hand of the player with the ball. Throwing the ball from a player's left to right hand is considered putting the ball into play.
World Aquatics TWPC Commission	The World Aquatics TWPC Commission is an executive body with the responsibility of conducting championships. It is composed of the World Aquatics Bureau liaison, together with the Chairman, Vice Chairman and the Secretary of the TWPC.
Yellow card	Warning signal from the referee to the coach for inappropriate behaviour or insufficient bench discipline, or for repeated simulation and persistent foul play of a team.