

## NFHS Water Polo Rules Changes for 2010-2011

(References are to rules numbers and pages in 2010-11 Rule Book)

7-04-10

1. **Points of Emphasis for Coaches and Referees (Page 89).** The points of emphasis were reduced from 28 to 20. The information on officiating in a shallow-bottom pool was moved to Rule 20-5 and Appendix C. Others points were eliminated that duplicated rules.
2. **Rule 1-2 Field of Play (Page 94).** The layout and markings of the field of play in a pool with floating goals officiated by two referees shall be in accordance with the diagram in the rules book. The score table should be located at approximately the center of one side of the pool in accordance with this diagram.  
**Rationale:** The location of the score table in the center of the course provides the optimum view of the field of play for the score table personnel as well as for ease of communication between the referees and score table personnel.
3. **Rule 1-6 Pool Markers (Page 95).** NOTE: Correctly colored sidelines must be used if the pool width is greater than 20 meters, as of July 1, 2007. In addition to the correctly colored sidelines, it is recommended that cones and other deck markers also be used to assist the referees, coaches and players.  
**Rationale:** This clarifies that more than one type of marking on the course may be used, but properly marked sidelines are required if the pool width is greater than 20 meters.
4. **Rule 1-7 Re-entry Area (Page 95).** NOTE: It is recommended that the entire re-entry area from the sideline to the mark at 2 meters on the boundary line be colored red.  
**Rationale:** Marking the entire re-entry area in red makes it easier for the referees and the exclusion secretary to verify that the excluded player is entering from the correct location.
5. **Rules 3-3, 3-4 The Ball (Page 97).** The men's ball shall be inflated to a pressure of 13-14 pounds per square inch; the women's ball shall be inflated to a pressure of 12-13 pounds per square inch.  
**Rationale:** This wording provides both a maximum and a minimum for the ball pressure.
6. **Rule 4-1, 3 Description of Water Polo Caps Conforming to the Rules (Pages 98-99).** Caps may have piping of any color not to exceed a width of 1 centimeter around the cap or on the seams of the cap. The numbers on dark caps must be white, yellow or gold. White field players' caps must be solid white. White field players' caps may not have alternating colored panels, stripes, stars, checkerboard, etc. The caps of the goalkeeper may not be striped. The panels on the goalkeeper caps must be of approximately equal size (thirds or fourths). Referees must notify the state association of the use of non-conforming caps.  
**Rationale:** This clarifies cap rules and provides examples of non-conforming caps.
7. **Rule 4-1 Requirement for Caps on Players on the Bench (Page 98).** INTERPRETATION: If a player excluded from the remainder of the game for misconduct, the player must remain on the bench with cap on for the remainder of the game.  
**Rationale:** This clarifies that a player excluded for misconduct must remain on the bench throughout the remainder of the game (a player excluded for flagrant misconduct must leave the bench).
8. **Rule 5-2-2 Team Bench (Page 101).** INTERPRETATION: The assistant coach may stand to throw in a counter ball, but must then immediately sit down.  
**Rationale:** This conforms with current practice and with the 2009-2010 case book.
9. **Rule 5-4-3 Articles Likely to Cause Injury (Page 102).** INTERPRETATION A referee should not allow a finger splint or padded or unpadded plaster of paris cast. No permission is needed for the use of a mouth protector.

**Rationale:** A player may not use a plaster of paris cast as the material is hard. However other material that is more flexible may be used if the release described in this rule is obtained.

10. **Rule 5-5-2 Substances on Body (Page 103).** NOTE: A player shall not use a substance on the hand(s) to improve the grip on the ball. If such a substance is found, the referee shall order the player to remove the substance and shall inspect the player's hands before the player returns to the game. The referee shall warn both teams through the head coaches that if another player is found with this substance on the hand(s), that player shall be removed for the remainder of game.

**Rationale:** A strong rule is needed to prevent the use of such a substance.

11. **Rule 7-1-3 Referee Uniform (Page 106).** INTERPRETATION: A state association may authorize shorts due to heat-related issues. If shorts are authorized, both referees must dress alike. Both must wear white long trousers or both must wear white shorts.

**Rationale:** Both referees in a game must wear a similar uniform.

12. **Rule 7-8 Checking and Signing Scoresheet (Page 109).** The referee must verify after each game that all incidents of misconduct, flagrant misconduct, fighting and red cards have been recorded on the scoresheet and that the appropriate coaches have been informed after the game of the occurrence of these fouls.

**Rationale:** This will ensure that reportable offenses are recorded on the score sheet, the official record of the game. Since there are follow-up penalties for some offenses, it is essential that the coach is aware of the occurrence of these reportable offenses.

13. **Rule 7-10 Protests (Page 111).** Protests may be lodged only for misapplication of the rules, equipment malfunction, errors in recording information or other desk errors, including timing errors.

**Rationale:** Since timing errors can have a major effect on a game, especially at the end of the game, this type of error was added to the list of errors which can be protested.

14. **Rule 8-1 Location of Goal Judges (Page 112).** If team benches are located on the same side as the score table, the goal judges shall be situated on the opposite side from the score table.

**Rationale:** This provides instruction for the location of goal judges in an atypical pool.

15. **Rule 8-3 Penalty for Player Leaving Field of Play to Retrieve a Ball (Page 113).** INTERPRETATION: If the player does leave the field of play to retrieve a ball without the permission of the referee, the player shall be excluded for 20 seconds (see Rule 21-4).

**Rationale:** This clarifies that the penalty for this offense is a 20-second exclusion as opposed to exclusion for the remainder of the game.

16. **Rule 10-1 Duties of the Scorekeeper (Page 115).** Additional information was added concerning the recording of goals and fouls on the scoresheet.

17. **Rule 11-6 Replay of Game (Page 117).** If a game (or portion of a game) must be replayed, the goals, fouls and time-outs that occurred during the time to be replayed are removed from (lined through on) the secretary's scoresheet; however, notation of misconduct, flagrant misconduct, fighting, red cards and yellow cards must be retained on the scoresheet. A player removed for the remainder of the game may not play in any part of the game to be replayed.

**Rationale:** This is the procedure for replay of all or part of a protested game or for replay of a game for any other reason.

18. **Rules 12-6 Improperly Called Time-Out (Page 119).** NOTE: No time-out is charged against the team calling an improper time-out in Rules 12-4, 12-5, and 12-6.

**Rationale:** Although there is a penalty if a team calls an improper time-out (penalty throw or ball turn over), this added wording clarifies that a time-out is not charged to that team calling an improper time-out.

19. **Rule 12-7 30-Second Time-Out (Page 119).** NOTE: A 30-second time-out may be shortened by the coach calling the time-out.

**Rationale:** The information about a 30-second time-out was moved from Rule 11-7, Tournament Variations, to Rule 12-7, Time-Outs, in order that all information on time-outs is located in the same rule, even though the 30-second time-out is only a tournament option. This wording clarifies that both regular and 30-second time-outs may be shortened at the option of the coach.

20. **Rule 13-1 Coin Toss (Page 119).** NOTES: Although ends may be pre-assigned, one coach may always request a coin toss for choice of ends. If requested by one coach, the teams must change ends and benches after each period.

**Rationale:** This clarifies that either or both of these choices are permitted prior to a game.

21. **Rule 13-3 Position of Referees at the Start (Page 120).** If a center sprint is used with a ball-release device, the referees will position themselves on their respective 5-meter lines. The starting signal shall be given by the referee on the same side as the score table. Both referees will then move towards the center as the ball-release person releases the ball on the half.

**Rationale:** This change in the position of the referees if a center sprint is used enables them to watch the position of players at the start.

22. **Rule 14-3 Interpretation: Direct Shot After Removal of Ball from Field of Play (Page 121).** A goal may be scored by a direct shot from the restart following the return of the ball by the referee to the player fouled outside the 5-meter line after correcting a clock error.

**Rationale:** This change corrects the situation that if there is a clock error at the very end of the game and the referee removes the ball from the field of play to correct the clock error, the player fouled outside the 5-meter line could not have otherwise taken a direct shot on goal.

23. **Rule 18-1 Neutral Throw – When Awarded (Page 125).** A neutral throw shall be awarded:
- 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 offended first;
  - e. 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.

**Rationale:** Point b is a minor change in wording and point e is currently contained in a note to the rule. This language conforms to the FINA rule.

24. **Rule 20-4 Pushing Off From Pool (Page 127).** It is an ordinary foul to push off from the ends of the pool during actual play or at the start of a period. An exception is made in a pool with wall goals at the start of a period if both teams are able to push off from the walls.

**Rationale:** Since neither team has an advantage in a pool with wall goals, a player may push off the end of the pool at the start of the period if both teams are able to push off the ends.

25. **Rule 20-5 Using the Bottom (Page 127) and Appendix C (156-7).** It is an ordinary foul to take any active part in the game when standing on the bottom of the pool. This rule should be applied in deep pools (two or more meters deep). In the case of a shallow-bottom pool (a pool less than two meters deep), a defensive player who uses the bottom to otherwise impede or hold an offensive player and prevent him/her from moving will be excluded for 20 seconds for holding under Rule 21-8. This rule also applies to the situation in a shallow-bottom pool where a defensive player uses the bottom to improve his/her defensive position and take away an advantage created by the offense.

**Rationale:** This rule imposes a more severe penalty for use of the bottom in shallow-bottom pools, and is added to the rules from the 2009-10 Points of Emphasis.

26. **Rule 20-9 Impeding (Page 128)** Impeding includes ducking under to gain an advantage.

**Rationale:** This clarifies that ducking under to gain an advantage is classified as impeding, an ordinary foul

27. **Rule 20-16 Keeping Ball More Than 30 Seconds Without Shooting and Duties of the 30-Second Shot Clock Timer (Page 130) and Rule 9-2 (Page 114).** The ordinary foul of wasting time has been eliminated. However, if a player relinquishes possession of the ball by dumping

the ball into a vacant area prior to the expiration of the shot clock, the referee shall blow the whistle, turn the ball over, and the shot clock is reset.

**Rationale:** This clarifies that if a team gives up possession by throwing the ball in an empty area, it is considered to be relinquishing possession of the ball. The ball is turned over to the opposing team, instead of letting the shot clock run out.

- 28. Rule 21-2 and 21-4 Interpretation 3 Method of Leaving the Field of Play (Pages 131 and 133)** A excluded player who leaves the water to move to the re-entry area shall be excluded for the remainder of the game for misconduct.

**Rationale:** The player shall be excluded for the remainder of the game, but the foul is not considered to be misconduct.

- 29. Rule 21-10-1 Misconduct During Play (Page 136).** If a player commits an act of misconduct “during play” either during the time between the award of a foul and when the ball is put into play (formerly called “dead time”) and the time after the ball is put into play (formerly called “live time”), the player is excluded from the remainder of game for misconduct, with a substitute in the reentry area.

**Rationale:** These two times are now collectively called “during play”. This concept was moved from the 2009-10 Points of Emphasis into the playing rules.

- 30. Rule 21-10-1 Misconduct (Page 136).** If a player commits an act of misconduct during the interval time (the time between periods, during a time-out, after a goal, or before a penalty throw is taken, the player is excluded for the remainder of the game and a substitute is eligible to reenter immediately. The shot clock is not reset if misconduct occurs during a time-out. If misconduct occurs before a penalty throw is taken, the game starts even up with the taking of the penalty throw.

**Rationale:** The time before a penalty throw is added to the definition of interval time to bring the rule into alignment with the latest FINA interpretation with both misconduct and a MAM.

- 31. Rule 21-10-2 Minor Acts of Misconduct (Pages 137).** The definition of a minor act of misconduct has been expanded to also include minor acts of misconduct toward another player, such as minor shoving, minor taunting or gestures or other similar acts that do not warrant exclusion from the remainder of the game.

**Rationale:** This change broadens the definition of minor acts of misconduct.

- 32. Rule 21-10-1, 2 Misconduct or MAM during Interval Time (Pages 137, 139).** The shot clock is not reset if either misconduct or a minor act of misconduct occurs during a time-out.

**Rationale:** The shot clock is reset if either misconduct or MAM occurs between periods, following a goal, or before a penalty throw is taken because these are times when the shot clock is reset normally. If either of these fouls occurring during a time-out, play continues even-up after the time-out with no change in possession. Therefore, the shot clock is not reset.

- 33. Rule 21-10-2 Minor Acts of Misconduct (Pages 137, 139).** The penalty of a 20-second exclusion for a minor act of misconduct may only be awarded if the minor act of misconduct occur during play. If it occurs during interval time, the referee will exclude the player for 20 seconds for the first occurrence of this foul, with immediate substitution (the player, however, can be substituted back in later). The referee shall then immediately warn both teams through the head coaches that the next minor act of misconduct committed by any player during interval time in that game will result in a game exclusion for misconduct.

**Rationale:** This change distinguishes between the penalty for a minor act of misconduct committed during play as compared with one committed during interval time, increasing the penalty if the foul is committed during interval time after a warning.

- 34. Rule 21-11-1 Definition of Fighting (Page 139).** Fighting usually involves a minimum of two players or other personnel....All players, coaches, or other personnel who leave the bench area during a fight shall be assessed a flagrant misconduct foul. (See Rule 21-11-6.)

**Rationale:** If two or more players or other personnel engage in a fight or enter the pool from the bench during a fight, the same penalty is invoked as with double flagrant misconduct fouls.

- 35. Rule 21-11-6 Penalty for Fighting (Page 140).** If multiple players engage in a fight or enter the pool during a fight, the same principle is followed as with double flagrant misconduct fouls (multiple alternate penalty shots with exclusion of each participant for the remainder of the game and from the next game).

**Rationale:** One penalty shot shall be taken by the opposing team for each person from the other team charged with fighting.

- 36. Rule 21-11-11 Additional Penalties for Participating in a Fight (Page 141).** A state association may enact additional penalties for flagrant misconduct or for participating in a fight.

**Rationale:** The current penalty for flagrant misconduct and fighting is the award of a penalty throw, exclusion for the remainder of the game and from the next game. A state association may increase the penalties for flagrant misconduct or for participating in a fight since this behavior has the potential for serious injury.

- 37. Rule 21-13 Entering Field of Play Improperly (Page 142).** INTERPRETATION: If an excluded player, either on offense or on defense, enters the field of play improperly, the time of the subsequent penalty awarded shall be the time of the improper re-entry of the excluded player.

**Rationale:** This clarifies that the time of the subsequent penalty is the time of the re-entry, not the time of the original exclusion foul.

- 38. Rule 21-14 Interference with a Penalty Throw (Page 143).** Interpretation: If a player commits an act of misconduct such as directing foul language towards the referee or taunting the shooter during the time before a penalty shot is taken, the player is excluded from the remainder of the game, a substitute enters immediately, and the penalty throw is taken.

**Rationale:** Since the time before a penalty throw is taken is now considered to be interval time, the player who commits an act of misconduct during the time between when the referee awarded the penalty throw and the taking of the penalty throw is excluded from the remainder of the game and is replaced immediately by a substitute.

- 39. Rule 22-2-b,c Blocking a Pass Within 5-meter area to Prevent Goal (page 143-144).** INTERPRETATION: If the defending player intentionally blocks or attempts to block a pass which prevents a probable goal within the 5-meter area, a penalty throw is awarded. If the ball was being passed to a player who was in such a position that the pass would not have led to a probable goal, an exclusion foul should be called.

**Rationale:** This clarifies the difference in penalties for these fouls.

- 40. Rule 22-2-g Off the Bottom Within 5-Meter Area to Prevent Goal (Page 144).** It is a penalty foul for a defending player other than the goalkeeper to jump off the bottom within the 5-meter area to prevent a probable goal.

**Rationale:** Although this is not new, it needed to be added to the list of penalty fouls here and in Rule 20-5.

- 41. Rule 25-4 Concussion Management (page 148)** Any player who exhibits signs, symptoms or behaviors consistent with a concussion (such as loss of consciousness, headache, dizziness, confusion or balance problems) shall be immediately removed from the game and shall not return to the game until cleared by an appropriate health-care professional. (See NFHS Suggested Guidelines for Management of Concussion on page 161.)

**Rationale:** This language is from the NFHS Sports Medicine Advisory Committee.

- 42 Appendix A, Instructions for the Use of Two Referees, No. 10 (Page 150).** When simultaneous calls are made by both referees against players either on the same team or on opposing teams and one is for an ordinary foul and the other is for an exclusion foul or penalty foul, the exclusion foul or penalty foul awarded shall be applied.

**Rationale:** This clarifies that the two fouls can be on the same team or on different teams.