

# 2009-10 Water Polo Major Rules Changes

## Summary of NFHS Rules Changes for 2009-10

7-01-09

(Rule numbers used in this document are those in the 2009-10 rules book), with reference, if necessary, to old rule number)

### 1. Risk Management Warnings (#1 in the Points of Emphasis and Prior to Rule 1)

The NFHS is calling to the attention of all schools, referees and coaches the following risk management warnings:

1. Players shall enter the water feet first at all times. The referee must point out the rule to a representative of the host institution whose players are not in compliance with the rule. If the situation persists, the referee must notify the appropriate authority as determined by the state association or section (each state association or section must draw up guidelines for the reporting of non-compliant coaches/schools). No game penalties may be instituted nor does the games official contact the school directly subsequent to the game.
2. Before the start of the game, the referees shall meet with facility personnel for the purpose of knowing how to summon emergency assistance should it be required. This includes agreement on appropriate signals (whistles) to summon aid as well as awareness of facility personnel who will summon first responders.

**Rationale:** In order to make these risk management warnings readily available for all users of the rules book, these risk management warnings were incorporated into the rules book in the Instructions to Referees and Points of Emphasis for Coaches and Referees and also prior to Rule 1.

### 2. Point of Emphasis #19 Drive/Perimeter Defense

Added to this instruction is the following: Referees must be aware of the situation where an offensive and defensive player "lock-up" (face each other and hold each other to prevent the free movement of either player). The referee must attempt to punish the player (either offense or defense) who initiates the contact in this situation. If both players are holding, then the offensive player must release the defensive player before initiating a drive or receiving a pass, or be called for an offensive foul (Rule 20-9 and Rule 20-10). If the defensive player does not release the offensive player, the defender should be excluded for holding (Rule 21-8).

### 3. Point of Emphasis #22 Shallow-Bottom Pool

In pools over two meters (6.5 feet) deep, the rules are very clear and should be applied as written. For pools with shallow ends less than two meters deep, referees are instructed to apply the following rules or points of emphasis.

**Rules 20-9 and 21-8:** A new instruction to referees is included in the special case of a shallow bottom pool.

Under Ordinary Fouls, Rule 20-9 states, "*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.*"

Under Exclusion Fouls, Rule 21-8 states, "*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.*"

In the special case of games played in shallow bottom pools referees are instructed as follows: A defensive player who uses the bottom to otherwise impede or hold an offensive player and to prevent him/her from moving will be excluded for 20 seconds for holding under Rule 21-8. Even if this foul might otherwise have been viewed as impeding under Rule 20-9, in this special situation using the shallow bottom will be considered an exclusion foul. This rule is to be applied whether the offensive player is holding the ball or not.

This rule also applies to the situation where a defensive player uses the bottom to improve his/her defensive position and to take away an advantage created by the offense. For example, if the ball is passed into the 2m player and a defender guarding another player launches him/herself off the bottom in order to slough or crash on the 2m player, this will be deemed a violation of this rule as the defender has now been able to impede the offense by use of the bottom. This would also apply to a defender on the perimeter who uses the bottom to take away an advantage gained by an offensive player on a drive.

**Rationale:** The goal of this instruction is to increase the consistency of the punishment for inappropriate use of the bottom by either the offense or defense in a pool involving a shallow bottom (less than two meters deep) and to decrease the number of times a player chooses to use the bottom during a game because of the deterrent effect of a severe punishment (exclusion or contra foul) for doing so.

#### **4. Rule 1-1 Pre-Game Inspection**

Before the game the referees shall ensure that the field of play, game equipment, suits and caps comply with the rules, make any corrections possible at that time, and report any deficiencies to the administrator in charge and afterwards to the state association office, school athletic director, and assigning authority, unless determined otherwise by state association policy, in order that these may be corrected (see Rule 7-7).

**Rationale:** This change makes this reporting requirement conform with the revised reporting requirements in Rule 7-7.

#### **5. Rule 1-1 Clock Buzzers**

**NOTE:** This difference in the sound of the clock buzzers is required as of July 1, 2009.

**Rationale:** This requirement is necessary to eliminate confusion between the sounds of the buzzers of the game clock and shot clock. This was recommended for immediate implementation as of July 1, 2006, and required as of July 1, 2009.

#### **6. Rule 1-6 Pool Markers**

**NOTE:** The use of metric units for the 2-meter mark is required as of July 1, 2009.

**Rationale:** Prior to this time the 2-meter mark could be measured in either meters or in yards. The required use of meters instead of yards for the 2-meter mark standardizes the length of all markings on the sides of the pool. This change was recommended for immediate implementation as of July 1, 2008, and required as of July 1, 2009.

#### **7. Rule 1-7 Re-Entry Area**

**NOTE:** The use of metric units for the re-entry area is required as of July 1, 2009.

**Rationale:** Prior to this time the re-entry area could be measured in either meters or yards. The required use of meters standardizes the size of the re-entry area. This change was recommended for immediate implementation as of July 1, 2008, and required as of July 1, 2009.

#### **8 Rule 4-4 Cap Numbers**

**NOTE:** It is recommended that each team either have a replacement set of caps readily available so that a cap with the same number can be used for replacement if a cap is lost or damaged during the game or have additional cap numbers available of the original set. If a replacement cap is not available, a player may change cap number with the permission of a referee and with notification by the referee to the game secretary and the coach of the opposing team, but may not use either the cap number of a player previously excluded from the remainder of the game or the cap number of a

player who has any personal fouls. If a goalkeeper and field player change positions, the goalkeeper must use a different numbered cap when he/she moves into the field if there are any personal fouls charged to the cap number of the field player moving into the goal. The name of the field player moving into the goal must be written on a different line on the scoresheet (1A, for example) and any fouls previously charged to that field player must be transferred to that line on the scoresheet and lined out on the line for the original cap number.

**Rationale:** This note replaces the original note and ensures that personal fouls are charged to the correct player, not to a particular cap number.

### **9. Rule 5-1 Illegal player**

If a player has three personal fouls but was not visibly red-flagged by the desk, the player shall be removed from the water as soon as the error is discovered. The offended team may elect to **either**

a. Reset the game clock to the time the player with three personal fouls re-entered the pool or, if that player had not left the field of play, to the time of the third personal foul

**or**

b. The offended team may elect to not reset the game clock, keeping all goals scored and fouls assessed during this period of time as recorded. The player with three personal fouls would be replaced with a substitute and play continues from that point.

**Rationale:** This clarifies when the game clock is reset and to what time. Several additional interpretations are also provided.

### **10. Rule 5-2-2 Co-Head Coaches**

**INTERPRETATION:** A team may have co-head coaches; however, one must be designated before the game as head coach for that game. This coach is the only coach who can stand during play, move up to the 5-meter line while on offense, and speak to the referees at the times permitted. These two individuals can alternate in subsequent games, but must always inform the referees before the game who is the head coach for that game.

**Rationale:** The privileges of the head coach only apply to one coach in a game.

### **11. Rule 5-4-1 Apparel**

The women's suit must have a solid high back with broad straps. The goalkeeper may wear either this type of suit or a competitive one-piece suit with straps at least one inch in width (the straps may not be spaghetti straps).

**Rationale:** This clarifies that the field player's suit for women must have a solid high back and that the goalkeeper may wear a different competitive one-piece suit, provided that the straps are not spaghetti straps.

## **12. Rule 7-1-2 Referee Authority**

The referees must be present at least 15 minutes prior to the game.

**Rationale:** This time is necessary in order for the referees to conduct both the pregame inspection of facilities and the pregame meeting of the referees and captains. The jurisdiction of the referees begins at this time.

## **13. Rule 7-4-1 Requirement for a School Representative on the Team Bench**

There shall be at least one authorized school staff member, such as a head coach, assistant coach, athletic administrator, etc., on the bench to oversee the team and bench personnel at all times. Only those persons meeting the state association standards shall be eligible to meet this requirement. If the head coach receives a red card, the referees shall allow two minutes for an authorized school staff member to take the bench to assume coaching responsibilities. If no authorized school staff member is available, the game shall be declared a forfeit.

**Rationale:** There must be at least one school staff member on the bench to assume responsibility for the conduct of the team.

## **14. Rule 7-5 Removal from Pool**

**Interpretation:** A spectator sounds an air horn during play. Since an air horn may be used by the team to call a time-out or may be used by the timekeeper to signal the end of the period, the sound of an air horn is confusing to both the referees and the players. The referee should request the host institution to remove the disruptive spectator from the pool area.

**Rationale:** This clarifies that it is the responsibility of host institution (not the referee) to remove a disruptive spectator from the pool area.

## **15. Rule 7-7 Referee Reporting Responsibilities**

The referees shall report:

- a. Any conduct that requires a suspension from the remainder of the game for misconduct as well as for any conduct that also requires suspension from future games (flagrant misconduct, or for receipt of a red card or for misconduct [in some associations]), to the state association and the commissioner of the local association (when applicable). Should the player/coach be from a different state and/or local association, the host state and/or local association shall be responsible for notifying the second state association and/or local association of the reportable offense, who will then be responsible to notify the principal of the offending school.
- b. Any issues with the field of play, non-conforming caps or suits, abandonment of game, forfeit of game, etc., committed by a competing school to the state association office, school athletic director, and the assigning authority, in order that these may be

corrected.

**NOTE:** Each state association shall establish its requirements for reporting. Each state association may also determine whether an additional game suspension is required for the foul of misconduct. This suspension is in addition to the required suspension from the remainder of the game in which this foul occurred.

**Rationale:** This adds misconduct to the list of reportable offenses. It also provides a method for reporting offenses committed by a player from a team that belongs to a different association to that team's state association or section.

### **16. Rule 7-11 Forfeits**

A game may be declared a forfeit if a team

- a. fails to follow the water polo rules as stated in this book;
- b. is not ready to start the game within 30 minutes of the announced starting time, unless there is mutual consent between the competing institutions to wait an additional period of time; or
- c. decides not to complete the game.

**Rationale:** The current rules provide a penalty for withdrawal of a team from tournament play but do not state clearly what happens if a team decides not to complete a non-tournament game.

### **17. Rule 9-2 Resetting of the Shot Clock**

If a player throws the ball into a vacant area of the pool before the expiration of 30 seconds, the referee shall not blow the whistle until the shot clock expires. The shot clock is then reset, and both the game clock and the shot clock are started when the ball is put into play by the opposing team at the site of the free throw.

**Rationale:** This change is required due to the elimination of the ordinary foul of wasting time. The foul is to keep the ball for more than 30 seconds without shooting (Rule 20-16).

### **18. Rule 10-1 Duties of the Scorekeeper**

**Note:** In the case of game exclusions that are required to be reported by NFHS rules (misconduct, flagrant misconduct or receipt of a red card) or for any additional conduct that is required to be reported by a state association, the scorekeeper must note the reason for the game exclusion (for example E-game misconduct) on the scoresheet. The secretary may use E-game for other game exclusions that are not required to be reported, such as for interference with a penalty shot or for entrance of a player not entitled to participate.

**Rationale:** Since the scoresheet is the official record of the game, all game exclusions that must be reported to the state association or section, must be

noted with the reason on the scoresheet.

#### **19. Rule 11-5 Tournament Variations - 30-Second Time-Out**

**NOTE:** The tournament host may decide to have a 30-second time-out replace one of the regular time-outs. The coach calling the 30-second time-out may move along the sideline to the half-distance line during the 30-second time-out and the players may swim to the side of the pool to receive instructions from the coach.

**Rationale:** This clarifies that the coach calling a 30-second time-out move along the sideline to the half-distance line.

#### **20. Rule 12-6 Charging a Time-out**

**NOTE:** No timeout is charged to the team calling the improper time-out in Rules 12-4, 5, and 6.

**Rationale:** The punishment awarded to the team calling the improper time-out in these rules listed is the loss of the ball in Rules 12-4 and 12-6 and the award of a penalty shot in Rule 12-5.

#### **21. Rule 13-3 Start**

Add the following as **NOTE 1:** No player may pull the end line forward.

**Add NOTE 2:** If a center sprint is used, the sprinter must not have his/her feet on the goal in an attempt to push off at the start or restart of the game.

**Rationale:** These changes clarify that a player may not pull the end line forward or push off the goal to gain an advantage.

#### **22. Rule 14-3 - Note g (new) and Rule 14-6-e When Goal Not Counted**

A goal does not count if the ball is shot illegally (for example, shot directly on a corner throw).

**Rationale:** A direct shot may not be scored if the ball is shot from inside the 5-meter line. Therefore, a goal may not be scored if a corner throw is shot directly at the goal.

#### **23. Rule 20-4 - Holding or Pushing Off From Pool**

It is an ordinary foul 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 the period.

**Rationale:** This revision clarifies that a player may not push off from the goal posts or from the sides or ends of the pool at the start or at any time during the game and eliminates the reference to gutters.

#### **24. Rule 20-Using the Bottom**

It is an ordinary foul to use the bottom. **NOTE:** However, see Points of Emphasis No. 22 for play in a pool with a shallow bottom.

**Rationale:** this rule refers to the Points of Emphasis for the more severe penalty in a pool with a shallow bottom.

## **25. Rule 20-8 Using Two Hands**

It is an ordinary foul to touch the ball with two hands at the same time. This rule shall not apply to the goalkeeper while within the goalkeeper's 5-meter area.

**NOTE:** It is an exclusion foul (Rule 21-6) or penalty foul if inside 5 meters (Rule 22-2-b) to attempt to block a shot or pass with two hands.

**Rationale:** The change in this note is required to make this rule agree with the changes in Rule 21-6 and Rule 22-2-b.

## **26. ~~Rule 20-11 Offensive Dead-Time Foul~~**

~~It is an ordinary foul for a player of the team in possession of the ball to commit an offense under Rule 20-9 (to impede an opponent) or Rule 20-10 (to push or push off from an opponent) before a free throw, goal throw or corner throw is taken.~~

**Rationale:** Rules 20-9 and 20-10 state that it is an ordinary foul to impede or push or push off from an opponent with no distinction made whether the player is on offense or on defense or if these occur before or after the ball is put into play. Elimination of this rule is part of the elimination of the special penalty for a foul committed during dead time.

## **27. Rule 20-15 - Ball Out of Bounds Over Sideline**

It is an ordinary foul 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 above water level) 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.

**Rationale:** This eliminates the use of the words "send the ball out of the side of the pool" and clarifies the actual meaning of the rule.

## **28. ~~Rule 20-18 - Wasting Time~~**

~~Eliminate the entire wasting time rule and the notes associated with the rule.~~

**Rationale:** The elimination of the foul of wasting time means that a team no longer must advance the ball towards the offensive end of the pool. There was inconsistency as to when the foul is called (calls tend to be made more often in the last minute of the game). The required change in the directions for the referee and timers is added to Rule 9-2.

## **29. Rule 21-6 - Blocking a Pass or Shot With Two Hands**

It is an exclusion foul to attempt to block a pass or shot with two hands outside the 5-meter area.

**NOTE:** If a defending player who is outside the 5-meter area raises two hands in an attempt to block a pass or shot, the player shall be excluded. The player does not actually have to touch the ball and a shot or pass does not have to be actually taken. The player is being punished for intent.

**INTERPRETATION:** A player may put two hands up to show that the player is not fouling the attacking player. However, the player must immediately lower one hand if the player attempts to shoot or pass.

**Rationale:** This eliminates the ambiguous term "to play the ball" and adds attempting to block a pass with two hands to this rule.

### **30. Rule 21-10-1 Misconduct**

It is an exclusion foul to be guilty of misconduct, including the use of obscene, abusive, threatening language or gestures, violent or persistent foul play, overaggressive fouls, or to refuse obedience to or show disrespect for a referee or official.

**Rationale:** Violent play is moved to Rule 21-11, Flagrant Misconduct, as violent play is a more serious foul than persistent foul play or committing an overaggressive foul.

### **31. Rule 21-10-1-b, Rule 21-10-2-b Misconduct or Minor Act of Misconduct During a Time-out**

If misconduct occurs during a time-out, the player is excluded for the remainder of the game with immediate substitution, the teams start even up after the time-out, no matter which team committed the foul, with a free throw by the team in possession of the ball and the shot clock is not reset. If a minor act of misconduct occurs during a time-out, the player is excluded for 20 seconds with immediate substitution, the teams start even up after the time-out, no matter which team committed the foul, with a free throw by the team in possession of the ball and the shot clock is not reset.

**Rationale:** This clarifies that the shot clock is not reset during a timeout. This corrects an error in the rule book.

### **32. Rule 21-11-1 Flagrant Misconduct**

It is an exclusion foul to commit flagrant misconduct (including playing in a violent manner, kicking, striking, attempting to kick or strike with malicious intent, fighting or biting) against an opponent or official, whether during play (including any stoppages or time-outs) or during the intervals between periods of play.

Remainder of rule the same.

**Rationale:** "Violent play" was moved to Rule 21-11, Flagrant Misconduct, as violent play is a more serious foul than an overaggressive foul.

### **33. Rule 21-12 Dead-Time Foul (original rule deleted and rules renumbered)**

~~It is an exclusion foul for a player of the team not in possession of the ball to commit any of the following offenses before a free throw, goal throw, corner throw or penalty throw is taken or for a player of either team to commit any of the following offenses before a neutral throw is taken:~~

~~Rule 20-9 to impede an opponent~~

~~Rule 20-10 to push or push off from an opponent~~

~~Rule 21-4 to Rule 21-11 to commit an exclusion foul~~

~~The original throw (including any neutral throw) shall be maintained. The player shall be excluded from the remainder of the game where the rules so provide.~~

**Rationale:** This is part of the elimination of the concept of dead time. See Point of Emphasis #3. The punishment for an ordinary foul is the same if it is committed in the time before the ball leaves the hand of the player putting the ball into play or after the ball leaves the hand of the player putting the ball into play (the term "in play" or "during play" encompasses both these periods of time) or if committed by the offense or by the defense. The term "dead time" is no longer used for the period of time before the ball leaves the hand of the player taking the free throw.

### **34. Rule 21-12 Simultaneous Personal Fouls**

~~ART. 1 It is an exclusion foul for a player of each team to commit any of the following offenses simultaneously before a free throw, goal throw, corner throw, penalty throw or neutral throw is taken:~~

~~Rule 20-9 to impede an opponent~~

~~Rule 20-10 to push or push off from an opponent~~

~~Rule 21-4 to Rule 21-11 to commit an exclusion foul~~

**ART. 1** In the case of simultaneous exclusion of players of opposing teams during play, both players are excluded for 20 seconds and the team on attack shall maintain possession of the ball. The referee shall take the ball from the water and make sure that both teams and the secretaries know who is excluded. The shot clock is reset. Players shall be excluded from the remainder of the game where the rules so provide. Play is restarted by a player of the team which had possession of the ball when the simultaneous fouls were committed at the point of the foul or behind.

Remainder of Article 1, Note, and Interpretation unchanged.

**ART. 2** If offenses are committed simultaneously at the taking of a penalty throw. Rule and Interpretation unchanged.

**ART. 3** If offenses are committed simultaneously at the taking of a neutral throw, both players shall be excluded and the referee shall restart the play with a neutral throw. Rule and interpretation unchanged.

**ART. 4 (formerly ART 2 of Rule 21-18-2)**

When a player of each team commits a penalty foul simultaneously during play, Rule unchanged.

**Rationale:** The rule now includes how the ball is put into play when simultaneous personal fouls are committed. The wording of this rule was changed to reflect the elimination of the concept of dead time. The term "during play"

encompasses both before and after the ball is put into play. The original throw is not maintained in a simultaneous exclusion fouls. The ball is put into play at the point of the foul or behind.

**35. ~~Rule 21-14 - Offensive Exclusion Fouls~~ Delete the entire rule and renumber.**

**Rationale:** The deletion of this rule concerning the penalty for an offensive exclusion fouls committed before ball put into play is part of the elimination of the concept of dead time. An exclusion foul committed by a member of the team on offense during the time between the awarding of a free throw and the time the ball was put into play will have the same penalty as one committed after the ball is put into play.

**36. ~~Rule 21-18 Simultaneous Personal Fouls~~**

Delete the entire rule and renumber.

**Rationale:** Articles 1 and 2 are covered in the new Rule 21-12. Article 3 is deleted.

**37. Rule 22-2 WITHIN 5-METER AREA TO PREVENT GOAL**

It is a penalty foul for a defending player to commit any of the following offenses within the 5-meter area but for which a goal would probably have resulted.

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

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 two hands;

Interpretation 3: A defensive player uses two hands inside the 5-meter area to pull back a ball on the water to prevent it from drifting into the goal. A penalty foul is called against that player.

d. Interpretation 2. The goalkeeper leaves the goal and sinks an offensive player to prevent a goal or pulls back an offensive player to prevent a goal. A penalty foul is awarded against the goalkeeper for committing a foul within the 5-meter area to prevent a probable goal.

Remainder of rule is unchanged.

**Rationale:** This change makes it clear that a penalty foul is awarded for blocking a shot with two hands, for blocking a pass with two hands if the pass would have lead to a probable goal, or for playing the ball with two hands within the 5-meter area if it prevents a probable goal.

**38. Rule 25-4 Unconscious Player**

A player rendered unconscious or apparently unconscious during a game shall not be permitted to resume participation that day without written authorization from a physician (MD/DO).

**Rationale:** This is an important safety rule and is consistent with the language in other NFHS rules books.

**39. Appendix A-2 Instructions for the Use of Two Referees**

**NOTE:** Whenever possible, the referees shall position themselves on opposite sides of the pool. If the two sides of the pool are parallel and do not have significant obstructions, each referee shall referee to the right. If this is not possible, due to an obstruction on one side of the pool, each referee shall referee to the left.

**Rationale:** This restores directions that were formerly in the rules book for the position of referees in a pool that has a major obstruction on one side of the pool. If the pool is L-shaped, the referees usually will have to be on the same side of the pool in order to have the best vantage point of the game.

**40. ~~Appendix A-10 Simultaneous Exclusion Foul and Penalty Foul~~**

Delete entire instruction and renumber.

**Rationale:** This deletion is due to the deletion of Rule 21-18-3 in the 2008-9 rules book.

**41. Appendix A-11 Simultaneous Exclusion Fouls**

When players of both teams commit an exclusion foul simultaneously during play, the offending players shall be excluded. The referee shall call the ball from the water and make sure both teams and the secretaries know who is excluded. The shot clock is reset and play is restarted with a free throw awarded to the team that had possession of the ball at the time the simultaneous exclusion fouls were called. The free throw is taken at the point of the foul or behind. If neither team had possession of the ball when the simultaneous exclusions were called, play shall be restarted with a neutral throw.

**Rationale:** This change makes the instructions for putting the ball into play after simultaneous exclusion fouls conform with the changes in Rule 21-12.

**42. Appendix B, Fig. U, Signal for Expiration of 30 Seconds Possession Time**

To indicate the ordinary foul of keeping the ball for more than 30 seconds of actual play without shooting.

**Rationale:** The foul is to keep the ball more than 30 seconds without shooting. Therefore, "wasting time" was deleted from this description.