

Changes to National Federation Water Polo Rules for 2005-06

8-30-05

1. Warning prior to Rule 1: The Federation is calling to the attention of all schools the following risk management warning:
PLAYERS SHALL ENTER THE WATER FEET FIRST AT ALL TIMES
Rationale: Diving of players into a shallow pool is a safety and liability issue.
2. Rule 1-1 **Equipment:** The rule as to presence of visible clocks now reads “**The** visible clocks shall display the time in descending manner...”
Rationale: This change makes it clear that there must be both a visible game clock and a visible 35-second clock at games.
3. Rule 1-2 **Field of Play:** The rule now makes it clear that this pool diagram is for a pool with floating goals.
Rationale: This clarifies the dimensions for a pool with a floating goal.
4. Rule 1-4 **Pool Dimensions:** The pool dimensions are revised to make it clear that there are two primary types of pools (those with floating goals and those with wall goals). The rule reads: For pools with floating goals, the length of the pool from goal line to goal line shall be 25 yards (25m). For pools with wall goals, the length of the pool from wall to wall shall be 25 yards (25m).
Rationale: This distinguishes between the dimensions for a pool with floating goals and the dimensions for a pool with wall goals.
5. Rule 1-10 **Use of Artificial Communication Devices:** A rule is added concerning the prohibition of use of megaphones or mechanical devices by a coach to communicate with the team during play.
Interpretation: the coach can use an air horn to call a timeout.
Rationale: NFHS-requested rule as use of such devices would provide an advantage to a coach and possibly interfere with the communication between the other coach and players.
User Note: This rule should have been shaded as it is new.
6. Rule 2-3 **Goal Backing:** A reminder is included that all floating goals must have net backing attached as of July 1, 2006. Schools were first informed of this in the 2003-04 rule book.
Rationale: This type of goal backing enables referees, goal judges, desk workers and spectators to more readily determine if a goal was scored.
7. Rule 4-1 **Cap Color:** Orange was added to the list of colors which may not be used for home team caps.
Rationale: This change is to improve the visibility of cap numbers on the caps and also to eliminate confusion with the color of the ball.

8. **Rule 4-1 Cap Divisions** : The caps of the home team field players may be divided into thirds, quarters, or other divisions such as alternating panels, with the panels consisting of two colors, one a dark color such as navy blue or black, and the other one a color such as powder blue, medium blue, orange or green, provided that the caps are clearly distinguishable from the caps of the goalkeepers (the caps of field players may not be divided with red and white panels or with red and dark panels), that the number on the cap are white or yellow, are clearly visible, are of the correct size and that the numbers are on the darker portion of the cap.
Rationale: This allows teams to possibly use school colors on home team caps.

9. **Rule 4-1 Replacement of Caps** : An interpretation was added to the rule to clarify when the cap should be replaced if a player loses the cap during play.
Interpretation: The referees shall apply the advantage rule (Rule 7-3) in this situation. The referees should not stop play to replace a cap if there is still the possibility to play the ball. Stopping play to replace a cap when a player is making progress towards the goal would be considered to give an advantage to the offender's team.
Rationale: This clarifies for the referee when to stop play for the replacement of a cap.

10. **Rule 4-2 (page 81) Color of Ear Guards** : The rule will read: The color of the ear guards on the field players' caps must match the color of the caps as closely as possible: dark on dark caps, white on white caps. The color of the ear guards of the goalkeeper must be the same as those on the caps of that team's field players: dark for the home goalkeeper, white for the visiting goalkeepers: The ear guards on the home goalkeeper may be red only if the home team caps are red
Rationale: This makes it easier to distinguish between the caps of the home and of the visiting goalkeeper.

11. **Rule 4-3 Goalkeeper Caps** : The caps of the goalkeepers must be divided into quarters, thirds or other divisions such as alternating panels. The caps of the home goalkeeper must be divided into red and dark quarters, thirds or alternating panels, with dark ear guards and white or yellow cap numbers; the caps of the visiting goalkeeper must be divided into red and white quarters, thirds or alternating panels, with white ear guards and dark cap numbers.
Rationale: The interpretation made during the 2004-05 school year providing for other types of goalkeeper caps is now being incorporated into the rule book.

12. **Rule 4-4 Cap Numbers:** Orange is now included in the list of prohibited colors of cap numbers on white caps.
Rationale: This change will improve the visibility of cap numbers on white caps.

13. **Rule 4-4 Cap Numbers** : Cap numbers must be of block number format. They may have a very narrow border. The rule reads: The large central part of the number on the dark cap must be white or yellow. The number may have a very narrow border of light gray, for example. The large central portion of the number on the white caps shall be a dark color as listed in the rule; it may have a very narrow border of light gray, for example.

Rationale: This NFHS change will allow the school in some cases to use school colors but it must not interfere with the visibility of cap numbers.

14. Rule 4-5 **Swim Caps:** If a player wears a swim cap under the water polo cap, the color of the swim cap shall match the color of the water polo cap as closely as possible (white with white caps, dark with dark caps and red with goalkeeper caps).

Rationale: This change stresses that the color of the swim cap must match the color of the water polo cap as closely as possible to avoid confusion on the part of the referee if the water polo cap comes off during the game.

15. Rule 4-6 **Cap Compliance:** the following rule is added: If the team's caps do not meet specifications in the rule book regarding cap color, earguard color, cap number color, design of the caps for goalkeeper and field players and visibility of cap numbers, the team will be required to change caps unless there is mutual agreement of both teams that the game will be played with non-conforming caps and with the agreement of the referees that the cap numbers are clearly visible. Otherwise the game will be declared a forfeit and the incident reported to the appropriate competent authorities as defined in Rule 7-6. In addition, the referee must notify the conference of the offending team of the offense and whether the game was played.

Rationale: This clearly defines what action should be taken by the referee if a team has non-conforming caps. This also allows the referees to decide that the team must change caps if the numbers are not visible. The 2004-05 rule was ambiguous (i.e., the team may be required.....).

16. Rule 5-2 **Location of Substitutes:** In inclement weather, with the mutual consent of both coaches, substitute players may be in the water behind the goal line outside of the exclusion area, at least 2 meters from the goal, provided that this is possible at both ends of the field of play. If a substitute player in this location interferes with play, Rule 21-20 will apply. A penalty shot shall be awarded to the opposing team and a personal foul awarded against the offending player.

Rationale: This permits players to be located in the water instead of seated on the bench in inclement weather.

17. Rule 5-2 with appropriate references to Rule 11-2, Rule 11-3 and Appendix A-2 **Referee Change of Sides:** In a shallow-deep pool, if requested by one coach that the teams change ends each period, the referees will change sides before the second period, the fourth period, before the first period of any overtime and before the first sudden victory overtime period, if any.

Rationale: This change ensures that the same referee will not call the shallow end the entire game.

18. Rule 5-4 **Apparel:** The rule was revised to read: Players shall wear non-transparent swim suits. Suits shall be of one-piece construction and shall completely cover the buttocks and breasts. The suits shall bear only a single manufacturer's trade name or logo not exceeding 2¼ square inches and not exceeding 2¼ inches in any dimension. The suits may include the name of the school or mascot.

Rationale: The NFHS added a description of legal swim suit attire.

19. **Rule 5-4 Prohibited Articles:** The list of articles and substances that cannot be worn by the player during the game was increased: Players, before taking part in a game, shall remove any articles likely to cause injury, including, but not limited to, the following: jewelry, medical or religious medals, watches, and sharp fingernails or toenails. The referees shall order the removal of any item they consider likely to cause injury, either to the player wearing the item or to the other players in the game.
Rationale: The NFHS recommended adding a more specific list of articles to the rule.
20. **Rule 5-5 Pregame Meeting:** The wording was changed to the following: A pregame meeting of captains, head coaches and referees shall be held prior to the game to discuss the ground rules, the fingernail rule... as well as the rule concerning the absence of foreign substances such as oil or grease or similar substances on their body or ball, the prohibition of jewelry, and to answer any questions. The referees shall ...inspect all players for articles possibly causing injury, such as toenails and fingernails that are sharp/dangerous and jewelry, for oil, grease or similar substances on the ball/body and the color of the swim cap...
Rationale: This defines more clearly the duties of the referee in the pregame meeting.
21. **Rule 6-3 Protests:** A final sentence was added: If the schools involved do not belong to the same league or conference, the matter being protested shall be referred to the appropriate governing authority.
Interpretation: The appropriate governing authority shall be the league or conference of the host school.
Rationale: Clarification is needed of the decision-making authority.
22. **Rule 7-1 Referee Authority:** Coaches and team officials were added to the list of those included under referee authority. The rule reads: The authority of referees over the players, coaches and team officials shall be effective during the whole time that the referees, players, coaches and team officials are within the precincts of the pool.
Rationale: This is needed to more exactly define the extent of the referee authority.
23. **Rule 7-1 Referee Uniform:** Uniform and equipment for referees consist of a white shirt or jacket, white trousers, and white footwear, a whistle, a watch, red and yellow cards and a coin.
Rationale: NFHS recommended adding the equipment needed by the referee to properly conduct the game to the rule.
24. **Rule 7-5, Rule 6-1, Rule 11-2, Rule 22-9 Definition of Official and Team Officials:** In several places the rule book uses official or team official without definition and without clearly distinguishing which is meant. In order to distinguish between coaches and referees, “coach and other team officials” is used when the rule is referring to coaching staff, and “referee”, “game official” or “table official”, as appropriate, is used when official refers to the referee or to the desk personnel.

Rationale: This change clarifies which type of official is meant in the various references..

25. Rule 7-6 **Abandonment or Temporary Stoppage of Game** : The following was added: Referees shall have the power to stop or to temporarily stop the game at any time if weather-related conditions such as lightning or other severe weather conditions prevent it from being brought to a proper conclusion. There is a reference referring to lightning rules on page 5 in the front of the book (30-second or less flash to bang time and 30 minute rule).

Rationale: NFHS added a special section in the front of the rule book on lightning guidelines to minimize risk to the participants.

26. Rule 7-7 **Referee Responsibility**: A new section was added requiring the referee to report any issues with field of play, non-conforming caps, issuance of red cards, abandonment or forfeit of game, etc., committed by a competing institution to the conference office(s) and assigning authority.

Rationale: There was no responsibility to report such violations for the conference offices to address so that they may be corrected.

27. Rule 11-6 **Tournament Variations**: In a tournament there may be variations in the length of game periods, length of overtime periods, type of overtime, requirement for overtime (for example, if in a tournament with the group system of play, games can end in a tie) and number and duration of timeouts in a tournament, provided that the teams are notified in advance of any special tournament rules. The teams also shall be notified in advance which team shall wear dark caps in each game, by a statement such as the first team listed wears dark caps.

Rationale: There was no provision for tournament variations in the rule book; NFHS requested this addition.

28. Rule 12-3 **Timeouts**: If the team calling the timeout is ready to resume play at the proper time at the conclusion of the timeout, but the other team is not and is still at the side of the pool, the referee must warn the coach of the offending team on the first offense. After the warning, on the second offense the referee will ask the coach if the coach wants to call a timeout or to receive the appropriate card. Upon subsequent offenses, the referee will ask the coach if he wants to call a timeout or to receive the appropriate card.

Interpretation: If, on the second offense, the coach uses his final timeout, instead of receiving a yellow card, the coach will then receive a yellow card on the third offense. On a subsequent offense the coach will be awarded a red card.

Rationale: There was no penalty for the team not calling the timeout to be ready to start after the timeout.

29. Rule 12-5 **Awarding a timeout to the team not in possession of the ball**: The wording of the interpretation is changed to: The referee blows the whistle for a timeout called by the team with blue caps when neither team has possession of the ball.

Although the referee should have ignored the call, the referee must award the ball to the team that did not call the timeout, the team with the white caps in this example.

Rationale: This corrects an error in the 2004-05 rule book.

30. Rule 13-1 **Coin Toss:** The wording was changed to the following: If there are not preassigned starting ends of the pool for a game, the referee, in the presence of the captains, shall perform the coin toss at least 10 minutes before the start of the game, the winner to have choice of ends.
Interpretation: The coin toss may occur prior to the finish of the previous game.
Rationale: The timing of the coin toss was not previously covered in the rule book.
32. Rule 14-3-g **Direct Shot on Goal:** Examples were added to rule: A goal may not be scored from an immediate shot from a free throw awarded outside 7 meters direct from the restart following any other delay, such as issuance of a red or yellow card or correcting a clock error.
Rationale: Examples of “any other delay” are now included.
33. Rule 14-4, Rule 20-8 and Rule 22-2 **Two Hands:** The “Two Hand’s rule is clarified: by making the definition of two hands the same in all three places listed. In each case the wording will be two hands or two arms. Wrists and forearms will no longer be included in the rule as they are considered to be part of the arms.
Rule 14-4: or within the 4-meter area, a defending player other than the goalkeeper stops the ball with two hands or arms...
Rule 20-8: to play or touch the ball with two hands or arms at the same time... A field player violates the two-hands rule if contact with the ball is made simultaneously with two hands, two arms, with one hand of one arm and with the other arm, etc. It is not a violation to move the ball quickly from one hand to the other.
Rule 22-2-b ... for a defending player to play the ball with two hands or arms
Rationale: These changes make the wording consistent in all three rules.
34. Rule 19-4 **Method of Taking Free Throw:** The method of taking a free throw is included in Rule 19-4 (Free Throws) as well as in Rule 16-2 (Goal Throws).
Rationale: The method of taking a free throw appropriately belongs in both sites.
35. Rule 20-6 **Tackling:** A definition of tackling was added to the rules: The foul of taking the ball under when tackled refers to taking or holding the ball under water when, through bodily contact, the player in possession of the ball is forced to take the ball under against his will or purposely takes the ball under and there is contact by the defender on the shoulder or arm or hand holding the ball.
Rationale: This clarifies the ball-under call.
36. Rule 20-18 **Wasting Time:** Wasting time was clarified by adding the word **pass:** It is the responsibility of the team on offense to advance the ball towards the offensive end; it is not necessary for the team to **pass or** shoot the ball.
Rationale: This change specifies that the ball must be advanced, but the team does not have to pass or shoot the ball to avoid a stalling call.

37. Rule 21-7 **Holding, Sinking, Pulling Back**: A note was added to the rule stating that is an exclusion foul to hold, sink or pull back an opponent even if the ball is not being passed to that player.
Rationale: This note is necessary to clarify the rule as the figures in the rule book all show the ball in the air being passed to the player being held, sunk, or pulled back. Referees shall apply the advantage rule as described in rule 7-3 in this situation.
38. Rule 21-9 **Overaggressive Fouls**: Overaggressive fouls were added to misconduct. Overaggressive fouls are hard fouls unacceptable within the spirit of the rules, including deliberate elbowing to the head, face, or neck or head butting an opponent.
Rationale: This addition clarifies that overaggressive acts are examples of misconduct and will be game exclusions.
39. Rule 21-10 **Brutality**: A player who commits an act of brutality must leave the team bench (the player may sit in the spectator stands during the remainder of that game but may not communicate with the players, coach, other team officials or referees by any means) and may not be substituted for during that game. The player is also suspended from the next game and, if present, must sit in the spectator stands but may not communicate with the players, coaches, other team officials or referees.
Rationale: This suspension from the next game increases the punishment for brutality. During the next game, the team plays with the usual number of players.
40. Rule 21-11 **Minor Acts of Disrespect**: A minor act of disrespect includes a player directing minor comments to a referee such as “Call the foul,” or “Where is the push-off” or “He’s inside the two”, acts not sufficient to justify removal from the remainder of the game for disrespect. Minor acts of disrespect will be treated the same as all other exclusion fouls (20-second exclusion), meaning that the special signal for a minor act of disrespect, special notification of the secretary and coaches and reference to the removal of the player for the remainder of the game if that player commits a second minor act of disrespect were removed. If a player commits a minor act of disrespect immediately after receiving an exclusion foul, the player will be excluded for the remainder of the game for disrespect. Note reference in 5-1-3 to minor acts of disrespect.
Rationale: Minor acts of disrespect will be treated like other exclusion fouls.
41. Rules 21-13 **Simultaneous Dead-Time Exclusion Fouls**: When a player of each team commits an exclusion foul simultaneously during dead time, both players shall be excluded and the team on offense shall retain possession of the ball. The referee shall take the ball out of the pool and return it to the near vicinity where the double exclusion occurred and award a free throw to the team on offense when neither team has an advantage. The 35-second clock shall be reset. If the offenses are committed simultaneously at the taking of a penalty throw, both players are excluded, and the penalty throw shall be maintained. If the penalty throw is scored, both players shall re-enter. If it is not scored, the excluded players shall not be permitted to reenter until the next earliest occurrence referred to in Rule 21-3 following the penalty shot

Rationale: Formerly when double dead-time fouls as listed in the rule were committed, the players would be excluded and a neutral throw awarded. This new change means that the team on offense retains possession the ball instead of possibly losing possession of the ball during a neutral throw. Appendix B-Figure E was also changed to agree with these rule changes.

User Note: This part of Rule 21-13 should have been shaded as it is new, just as it is shaded in Rule 21-18. In addition, an interpretation has been made that if the double exclusion fouls are committed prior to or during the taking of a neutral throw, both players are excluded and the neutral throw taken.

42. Rule 21-18-1 **Simultaneous Live Time Exclusion Fouls.** When a player of each team commits an exclusion foul simultaneously during actual play, both players shall be excluded and the team on offense shall retain possession of the ball. The referee shall take the ball out of the water and return it to the near vicinity where the double exclusion occurred and award a free throw to the team on offense when neither team has an advantage. The 35-second clock is reset.

Rationale: Previously in this rule, a neutral throw was awarded. This change ensures that the team on offense will retain possession of the ball as that team would otherwise risk losing possession of the ball during a neutral throw.

Note: An interpretation has been made that if neither team has possession of the ball (if for example the ball is floating in “no man’s land” between the teams when a double exclusion foul is called), both players are excluded and a neutral throw awarded.

43. Rule 21-18-2 **Simultaneous Dead or Live Time Penalty Fouls.** When a player of each team commits a penalty foul simultaneously during actual play or in dead time, the penalty throws shall be maintained. The first penalty throw shall be taken by the team last in possession of the ball. After the second penalty throw has been taken, the game shall be restarted with a neutral throw on the half-distance line.

Rationale: This is the current rule; it is included to reinforce that this rule is retained.

44. Rule 21-18-3 **Simultaneous Exclusion and Penalty Fouls:** When one referee awards an exclusion foul and at the same moment the other referee awards a penalty foul but for opposing teams, both offending players shall be excluded, the referee shall take the ball out of the pool and award a free throw to the offensive team in the near vicinity where the double foul occurred when neither team has an advantage and the 35-second clock reset.

Rationale: This ensures that the team on offense retains possession of the ball..

45. Rule 25-2 **Bleeding:** A reference to page 8 in the front of the NFHS rule book on Communicable Disease Procedures was added to the note in this rule concerning treatment of bleeding and open wounds.

Rationale: NFHS added this reference to decrease the potential for transmitting infectious disease in the case of injury.

46. **Rule 25-4 Stoppage of Game:** The changed rule refers to stoppage by accident, illness, bleeding, weather-related conditions, or for other unforeseen reasons with reference to the NFHS rule on page 5 for lightning guidelines in the new rule book. **Rationale:** This clarifies that if a game is stopped for lightning, the game resumes where it was stopped.