

**Written By:** Ryan McEwen at the request of New Zealand Water Polo. This summarized report is based on a report presented to NZWP by FINA School 2019 attendants Jason Nicol, David Couper, Ryan McEwen and Caspar Rollo and includes the views of those 4 individuals mentioned above. Please be advised NZWP will be referring to the FINA rules for competitions as stated in the FINA rules and bylaws, unless specifically stated otherwise.

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide an update to the New Zealand water polo community following the recent FINA School held in Brisbane, Australia from January 9-11 2019. This report will cover the amendments to the water polo rules, as well as instruction from FINA on impeding, violence, contra fouls and double exclusions, and observations of the TWPC.

## WATER POLO RULE AMENDMENTS

The amendments to the water polo rules essentially have the objective of enhancing the style and speed of water polo by increasing goals, shots and actions as well as having less violations, whistles and stoppages. The rule amendments are as follows:

- Possession time (shot clock) to be reset to 20 seconds after a corner throw, rebound after a shot which does not result in a change of possession and after an exclusion.
  - **Comments:** This situation usually occurs in front of the goal and the aim is to produce more action. For an exclusion, the shot clock is reset to 20 seconds unless there is more time on the shot clock, in which instance the greater time will remain so as not to disadvantage the attacking team. Note that the exclusion time has not changed, and an excluded player or substitute will be permitted to enter after 20 seconds has elapsed, or at another time permitted by the rules.
- Inside the six (6) metre area, when a player is swimming with and/or holding the ball and is impeded from behind during an attempt to shoot, a penalty foul must be awarded unless only the ball is touched.
  - **Comments:** This is designed to allow attackers to shoot when in front of the goal and to stop defending teams from deliberately fouling in a **probable goal situation**. The key elements of this amendment are that the player must be attacked from behind, inside six (6) metres, during an attempt to shoot and it must be a **probable goal situation** as penalties are only awarded in probable goal situation. Other considerations include the position of the attacker and the actions of the defender. Ball and hand contact are fine from the defence, but anywhere else is not. This amendment essentially allows referees to call a penalty when the ball is in the attacker's hand, however, referees should still delay their call slightly to see if the player can finish their action before intervening. The penalty throw will still be taken from five (5) metres, with a cone designating the line from where the penalty throw will be taken.

- A free throw shall be taken from the location of the ball, except in the situation that the foul occurs inside two (2) metres.
  - **Comments:** This is implemented with the aim to speed up the game. This also practically means, a referee will not indicate to the team in possession to take the ball back to where the foul was committed.
- A goal may be scored from a free throw outside six (6) metres from a direct shot, or, after putting the ball into play.
  - **Comments:** Both the ball and the free throw must be outside the six (6) metre line for this rule to be applicable. When putting the ball into play, the ball must be seen to leave the hand. A player who plays the ball inside the six (6) metre line will not be permitted to shoot without passing to a teammate. When this situation is close to the six (6) metre line, the referee will signal that a direct shot is allowed, as the foul and ball are outside six (6) metres, by raising their hand above their head. There is no need to do this if it is obvious that the ball and foul are outside the six (6) metre line.
- A player taking a corner throw may shoot directly or put the ball into play and shoot without passing.
  - **Comments:** This is to not restrict players taking corner throws. It is also important that corner throws are played from the corner and not closer to the goal and/or inside the two (2) metre line. Players may not shoot under this rule when the referee has taken the ball out of the pool, therefore the referee should try not to take the ball out in a corner throw situation, have the player hold the ball or ask the goal judge to delay throwing the ball into the field of play.
- An additional substitution re-entry area will be at any place between the goal line and half way for flying substitutions.
  - **Comments:** This will be used where appropriate and where the pool set up allows this in NZ. The substitute must enter the water behind the goal line and swim to the substitution area; no player may walk along the side of the pool and players must exit the pool behind the goal line. Substituting players must visibly touch hands above the water whilst they are both out of the field of play but in the substitution area. Should a substitute push off the wall, this would still be improper re-entry if consequential.
- Each team may request two (2) timeouts during the game whilst in possession of the ball, and a timeout calling device should be used to request a timeout.
  - **Comments:** The timeout button is now the responsibility of the team and is designed to reduce the lag between the requesting and calling of a timeout. The only restriction for requesting timeouts is that the team must be in possession of the ball, and not on a penalty throw.
- The goalkeeper may move beyond and touch the ball beyond the half distance line.
  - **Comments:** The goalkeeper may now take penalties, and participate as a shooter in a penalty shoot-out. The privileges of the goalkeeper are applicable within the six (6) metre line.
- There shall be a three (3) minute interval between the second and third periods of play.

## INSTRUCTION FROM FINA ON IMPEDING, VIOLENCE, CONTRA FOULS & DOUBLE EXCLUSIONS

**Impeding:** This is to be strictly enforced; key examples of this are holding players with two hands, holding and restricting before the ball arrives and preventing free movement.

**Violence:** There is no place for violence in water polo and it occurs as a direct result of letting the game escalate; it is very rare that violence occurs out of the blue. Referees need to be in control, understand the actions during the game and have a feeling for the game, staying at the same level

of the game. Everything that is violent above the water must be punished with a brutality; if it occurs underwater it may not be brutality but must be punished as exclusion with substitution.

**Contra Fouls:** The number of contra fouls should be minimised every game and there are two types of contra fouls; at the ball and away from the ball. 90% of contra fouls called in a game should be at the ball and there should be no easy contra fouls called. Referees should always look at who made the first contact and/or movement, and wait for the ball to get there and then give a contra foul if there is an advantage gained. Contra fouls should be clear and understandable, mostly at the ball.

**Double Exclusion:** On a double exclusion, the referee should wait with the ball until both players are relatively close to the re-entry area; both excluded players should have an honest chance to get there.

### OBSERVATIONS OF THE TWPC

Below are some additional comments/observations of the FINA Technical Water Polo Committee (TWPC).

- Clarity and consistency are key – everybody has to be clear on what referees are calling. Referees should use signals that are in the rule book and be consistent throughout the game.
- Referees must communicate before and during the game, and are a team. Talk about how they are to divide the pool prior to the game and discuss issues between periods and at the end of a game.
- There must always be an intervention where there is violence and/or brutality. It is not acceptable to simply not see it.
- Exclusions must be fouls that deserve to be punished with an exclusion, in order to compensate a loss of advantage caused by a foul.
- Advantage is the priority, referees shouldn't intervene unnecessarily.
- Protect the movement of players, especially in situations such as a foul to prevent a drive, two handed holding and fouling before the ball arrives at a player.
- The centre must get an opportunity to shoot the ball and an ordinary foul is always an option to keep possession when an exclusion is not necessary. Possible factors to warrant ordinary foul instead of exclusion are positioning in relation to the goal and presence of other defenders. An exclusion must justify the advantage lost.
- Procedure for an exclusion of the centre defender when the ball is not there – as long as the referee is clear and there is no confusion, there is no need to stop the game, however the attack should wait until the referee finishes making their call.
- Holding suits is a contra foul on attack and an exclusion on defence as this creates an unfair advantage, especially in women's games.
- Contact is allowed and touching such as hand on shoulder must be visible to the referee. Holding and/or impeding whilst moving/swimming or blocking is impeding. Impeding movement is to be punished with an exclusion.

- Illegal timeouts are punished with a penalty and a loss of the requested timeout. A yellow card is possible in this situation.
- A ball under on the goalkeeper is only a penalty when there is an intent to prevent a goal, near the goal, and/or a probable goal.
- An excluded player may leave the field of play and go to the re-entry box whilst staying in the water.
- An illegal player is the eighth (8) player in the pool and is punished with a penalty and exclusion with substitution to the last player to enter the field of play.

For further questions, please contact National Events Manager Fabian Wanrooij on [competitions@waterpolo.org.nz](mailto:competitions@waterpolo.org.nz) , or National Director of Referees John Waldow on [referees@waterpolo.org.nz](mailto:referees@waterpolo.org.nz)