



# FINA WATER POLO REFEREES MANUAL

INSTRUCTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS FOR REFEREES, COACHES and  
NATIONAL FEDERATIONS.

2019-2021





## FINA WORLD LEAGUE

### 4.2.2 Specific WPWL Rules

#### 4.2.2.1 Field of Play

The Field of Play (FOP) for Men shall be 30 x up to 20 metres and for Women 25 x up to 20 metres. In case there is not enough space along the side line to create a lateral substitution area ("flying substitution area"), 1 metre may be deducted from the width of the field of play to create this lateral substitution area.

#### 4.2.2.2 Points Awarded

The following points will be awarded per match to each team:

Match won:	3 points
Match won by penalty:	2 points
Match lost by penalty:	1 point
Match lost or forfeited:	0 points

In the case of a tie in Preliminaries, Semi Finals and Final Games:

In all the matches there will be a winner.

If at the end of the fourth quarter the score is tied, then the winner shall be resolved by each team shooting five penalty shots from the 5m line in alternate succession. Each team shall select five players to take the penalty shots. The first team shall take its first penalty shot and then the other team shall take its first penalty shot, etc. If a tie shall exist after that procedure, each team shall then take alternate shots until one team scores and the other misses. [Different members of the team must shoot each shot, rotating through the selected players].

CLARIFICATION:

- \* A goalkeeper can now go past the center line and can shoot the ball from anywhere instead of passing it.
- \* The Goalkeeper loses his/her privileges outside the 6 m line.
- \* During a penalty shoot-out, if two teams are involved the respective coaches of the teams will be requested to nominate five players and a goalkeeper who will participate in the penalty shoot-out, the goal keeper may be one of the shooters
- \* The goalkeeper may be changed at any time during the penalty shoot-out provided the substitute was listed amongst the team list in that game, however he cannot be substituted as one of the shooters.
- \* During a penalty shoot-out it is not allowed to enter the water for any other players than the goalkeepers and the shooters of both teams.

#### 4.2.2.3 Tie Breaking for double rounds:

If two (2) teams shall have equal points following the Preliminary Rounds, a further classification shall be established as follows:

The team winning the games between them shall be placed higher.

If the games between them were shared, then the first comparison shall be based on goal difference, and if still tied, then based on goals scored. For the purpose of calculating either goal difference or goals scored, the goals in any penalty shoot-out will not be taken into consideration.



### 5.13.3 SUPER FINAL

#### 5.13.3.1 Nominations:

The referee with the team will be appointed by the FINA TWPC Commission.

Four (4) Neutral Referees will be nominated by the FINA TWPC Commission. The HF/LOC must cover the expenses related to the accommodation and meals of the Neutral Referees. FINA will cover the travel expenses (economy fare). Arrival to be 2 days before the commencement of the Super Final

**5.13.3.2 Selection:** At the discretion of the TWPC, any referee may be used as a referee for the competition, a desk official, a time out official or a goal judge.



## 5.14 REGULATIONS FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF REFEREES

### APPOINTMENTS

- 1.1 Neutral referees can referee in all different groups.
- 1.2 The performance of the referee shown in previous games will influence the designation of later assignments with reference to the difficulty of a game.
- 1.3 No referee can expect to referee a certain number of games. Based upon level of performance, an attempt will be made to appoint a referee at least every second day of competition.
- 1.4 Referees must accept being used as timekeepers, goal judges or time out officials in the matches of the host country or in any other matches.
- 1.5 Referees are to be present at the pool one (1) hour prior the beginning of the match (regard will be given to transportation schedule, if necessary).
- 1.6 If there are no problems during the competition day, the referees of the next day's matches will usually be announced immediately before the end of the last game. The referees of the first day of competition will be announced at the end of the Referees Meeting, (or one day prior to the beginning of the competition).

### SUPERVISION

- 1.7 The referees will be supervised by members of the TWPC, and there may be a conversation with the referees to discuss the game and the application of the rules, and the instructions from the FINA Water Polo School for Referees, if necessary, and to pass a constructive criticism of their work.
- 1.8 If a referee is late, or not present, for officials' meetings or assignments, or receives a deficient rating, the referee will be sanctioned by the TWPC



## 5.15 EXPLANATIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS FOR REFEREES

### WP 1 FIELD OF PLAY AND EQUIPMENT

The Field of Play (FOP) for Men shall be 30 x up to 20 metres and for Women 25 x up to 20 metres.

The width of the field of play shall be not less than 10 meters and not more than 20 meters.

In case there is not enough space along the side line to create a lateral substitution area (“flying substitution area”), 1 metre may be deducted from the width of the field of play to create this lateral substitution area.

Before the game, the referees shall ensure that the field of play and any audible equipment comply with the rules. They shall also satisfy themselves regarding the signals made by any electronic equipment.

### WP 4 CAPS

Referees must ensure that the caps of each team comply with the rules and that each team has a replacement set of caps. Referees should not tolerate the situation when the players of one team repeatedly lose their caps or have untied caps. When a cap is lost or untied, the referee shall call for the ball at the first appropriate stoppage.

### WP 5 TEAMS & SUBSTITUTES

- (a) The Team Coach shall be allowed to stand and to move and when their team is in attack, to advance to their team’s 6 metre mark. When their team is defending, the coach must return to the bench.



(b) If the Team Coach makes any remarks to the referee, the Team Coach shall be warned by the referee. Any further misbehaviour by the Team Coach shall be dealt with as appropriate by the referee or delegate.

The Yellow Card/Red Card system to control the Team Bench must be adopted at all FINA Water Polo Competitions and will be administered as follows, namely:

- that the issuing (signalling) of the “Yellow Card” by the referee is an official warning to the Team Coach.

- A referee who is signalling a Yellow Card must be sure that the other referee and the jury table have noticed this

- that the subsequent issuing (signalling) of the “Red Card” by the referee is the signal that the Team Coach and/or Team Official on the bench must retire to the dressing room or to such designated place as determined by the TWPC. (It should be noted that, should the actions of the Team Coach and/or Team Official necessitate, the referee may issue (signal) the “Red Card” without having issued (signalled) the “Yellow Card”, which in normal circumstances would be the initial warning)

When the Team Coach is excluded from the game, another Team Official may take over his task, however without the privileges of the Team Coach i.e. he is not allowed to stand and to move and to advance to the 6 m. line when his team is attacking.

- From APPENDIX A - INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE USE OF TWO REFEREES:

7. If, in the referee’s opinion, a player persists in playing in an unsporting manner or engages in simulation, the referee shall show a yellow card to the offending team and point to the offending player. Should the action continue, the referee will issue the player with a red card visible to both the team and the table as this is deemed to be misconduct. The referee then signals the excluded player’s cap number to the table.

(c) The Team Coach may freely advance along the pool side when making substitutions after a goal has been scored-

(d) All players, coaches and team officials excluded for the remainder of the game under WP 22.13 (Misconduct or Disrespect), WP 22.14 (Brutality) and/or in receipt of a Red Card must immediately leave the competition area. On their way to the dressing room the excluded person must refrain from any interference during the game, i.e. coaching, signalling, communicating, etc

(e) In addition to the captain’s responsibilities, the coaches shall also be responsible for the good conduct and discipline of their teams and all persons on the bench. Smoking shall not be permitted.

(f) when a team official or a player who received a red card refuses to leave the competition area, the referee should stop the game until he/she obeys the rules. When this situation should happen, an additional sanction may be applied.

**WP 5.1.1** For Olympic Games only: Each team shall consist of a maximum of eleven players with at least one goalkeeper. A team shall start the game with not more than seven players, one of whom shall be the goalkeeper and who shall wear the goalkeeper’s cap. Four reserves may be used as substitutes. One of the reserves may also be used as a substitute goalkeeper but must wear a red cap. A team playing with less than seven players shall not be required to have a goalkeeper.



**WP 5.5** Players shall not have grease, oil or any substance on the body. If a referee ascertains before the start of play that such a substance has been used, the referee shall order it to be removed immediately. The start of play shall not be delayed for the substance to be removed. If the offence is detected after the play has started, the offending player shall be excluded from the remainder of the game and a substitute permitted to enter the field of play immediately from the team's exclusion re-entry area. This rule must be applied for any foreign substance, including any anti-slip substances placed upon the body or the hands.

**WP 5.6** At any time in the game, a player may be substituted by leaving the field of play at the team's designated substitution areas. The substitute may enter the field of play from the exclusion re-entry area as soon as the player has visibly risen to the surface of the water within the re-entry area. Substitution from the designated lateral substitution area is allowed when both players, the substitute waiting in the water and the exiting player risen with his head above the water, are outside of the field of play and touch hands above the water. **The lateral substitution area is called "flying substitution area" and the procedure is called "flying substitution"**

CLARIFICATION:

- \* There is no restriction on the number of substitutes a team may have at the side of the pool, and there is no limit for number of players to be substituted at one time. This area cannot be used as "warming-up" area.
- \* In order to move along the side of the pool, a substitute must enter beside the re-entry area without diving – in the same manner as if entering the water for the re-entry area.
- \* Players must visibly touch hands above the water once both, the player who is leaving the water and the substitute, are outside of the field of play.
- \* The player must leave the field of play and rise with his head above the water surface before the substitute may enter.
- \* The player who is leaving must swim along the side of the pool until behind the goal line.
- \* When a player does not comply with the correct procedure (concerning entering or leaving the flying substitution area) the referee must warn the responsible coach and if the situation continues the referee must use his card(s)
  
- \* Substitution can occur anywhere between the team's goal line and the center line, and it can occur anytime during the game.
- \* No substitution will be allowed after a penalty throw is awarded. If there is an injury or when the offending player has three personal fouls, substitution is allowed ONLY through the Re-entry Box.
- \* Any of the referees or the designated official at the table can signal a violation of this rule, and the sanction for improper entry (WP 22.16) has to be applied.
- \* Players can stay in the substitution area for a reasonable amount of time. This is similar approach as for the players staying in "old" exclusion box.
- \* This flying substitution area should be at least 0.5 m. wide

[NOTE: In the case that a player, on his own initiative, leaves the field of play in a place other than the re-entry / substitution area as mentioned in the rules, this player will not be punished for leaving the field of play.

However, this player or a substitute, can only (re-)enter the field of play after a goal, after a time out, at the start of the next period **or with permission of the referee]**

A player cannot be substituted after the calling (awarding) of a penalty throw unless in accordance with WP 24.2, thus a request for a time-out will not be awarded. If a goalkeeper is substituted under this Rule, it must only be by the substitute goalkeeper. The substitute goalkeeper must wear a red cap numbered 13.



**CLARIFICATION:**\* A goalkeeper can now go past the center line and can shoot the ball from anywhere instead of passing it.

\* The Goalkeeper loses his/her privileges outside the 6 m line.

\* During a penalty shoot-out, if two teams are involved the respective coaches of the teams will be requested to nominate five players and a goalkeeper who will participate in the penalty shoot-out, the goal keeper may be one of the shooters

\* The goalkeeper may be changed at any time during the penalty shoot-out provided the substitute was listed amongst the team list in that game, however he cannot be substituted as one of the shooters.

\* During a penalty shoot-out it is not allowed to enter the water for any other players than the goalkeepers and the shooters of both teams.

*[NOTE: In the event that the goalkeeper and substitute goalkeeper are not entitled or able to participate, a team playing with seven players shall be required to play with an alternative goalkeeper who shall wear the goalkeeper's cap.*

*During a game should a team have no more substitutes apart from the substitute goalkeeper either the goalkeeper or substitute goalkeeper may play as a field player].*

Please note that if during a game a player is excluded, the excluded player in the re-entry area is to be considered as part of the team, which means the team is still considered to have seven (7) and not six (6) players.

After a goal is scored, the referee should not restart the play until satisfied that all substitutions have been completed.

For substitutions during play, the referees should take care not to miss fouls and other incidents while observing that the substitution is made correctly. The secretary is also responsible to ensure that substitutions during play are made correctly.

## WP 6 OFFICIALS

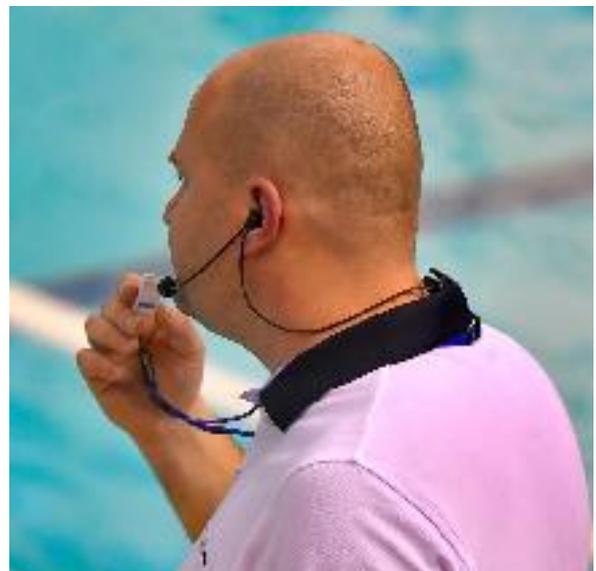
In the case of technical errors by either referees or desk officials, there should be no impact on the game. For example, if no signal is given for the re-entry of an excluded player and a goal is scored, the game shall be stopped, the time re-set to the re-entry time, the goal shall not be counted and play shall re-commence from the re-entry time. The referees must decide whether a technical error has occurred.

## WP 7 REFEREES

The use of audio equipment by the referees of the match.

During the match, both referees shall have an audio headset for communication between themselves.

The delegate will also have a headset only to receive information for the official table and to ensure clarity.





**WP 7.1** The referees shall be in absolute control of the game. Their authority over the players shall be effective during the whole time that they and the players are within the precincts of the pool. All decisions of the referees on questions of fact shall be final and their interpretation of the Rules shall be obeyed throughout the game. The referees shall not make any presumption as to the facts of any situation during the game but shall interpret what they observe to the best of their ability.

**WP 7.2** The referees shall whistle to start and restart the game and to declare goals, goal throws, corner throws (whether signaled by the goal judge or not), neutral throws and infringements of the Rules. A referee may alter a decision provided it is done before the ball is put back into play.

The referees must use the signals provided in the Rules of Water Polo Appendix B – Signals to be Used by Officials.

**WP 7.3** The referees shall refrain from declaring a foul if, in their opinion, such declaration would be an advantage to the offending player's team. The referees shall not declare an ordinary foul when there is still a possibility to play the ball.

This rule is very clear instruction to referees to play advantage at all times. A referee must not call any ordinary or exclusion foul if it clearly disadvantages the attacking team. The objective of the referee is to give the attacking team the opportunity to finish the attacking action.

If the referee sees an ordinary foul, exclusion foul or a penalty foul but the player is able to continue the action to move toward the goal or to shoot, the referee must follow the action and whistle only if the player cannot continue the action.

In regards to the possibility for a referee to award a foul which would maintain the advantage to the attacking team an example (and maybe the only example) would be awarding an ordinary foul to the centre forward when the centre forward loses the ball in action. This would mean that the attacking team maintains possession.

Currently many referees call either exclusion or nothing at all at centre forward and centre back position which in most instances clearly advantages the defending team.

It is not necessary to award a free throw to an attacking player other than the player with the ball, so long as their team is in possession of the ball. However, a free throw shall be awarded if the player loses possession as a result of a foul or if there is real advantage for their team.

The referees shall conduct the game in such a way as to assist the teams to develop the play in accordance with the spirit of the rules.

**WP 7.4** The referees shall have the power to order any player from the water in accordance with the appropriate Rule and to abandon the game should a player refuse to leave the water when so ordered.

Referees must speak with respective coaches and captains prior to the match and draw their attention to some important aspects relating to the Rules particularly concerning correctness and how it relates to participants and how this will be applied throughout the match.



**WP 7.5** The referees shall have the power to order the removal from the precincts of the pool of any player, substitute, spectator or official whose behaviour prevents the referees from carrying out their duties in a proper and impartial manner.

**WP 7.6** The referees shall have the power to abandon the game at any time if, in their opinion, the behavior of the players or spectators, or other circumstances prevent it from being brought to a proper conclusion. If the game has to be abandoned, the referees shall report their actions to the competent authority.

## **WP 8 GOAL JUDGES**

**WP 8.1** The goal judges shall be situated on the same side as the official table, each on the goal line at the end of the field of play.

**WP 8.2** The duties of the goal judges shall be:

- (a) to signal by raising one arm vertically when the players are correctly positioned on their respective goal lines at the start of a period;
- (b) to signal by raising both arms vertically for an improper start or restart;
- (c) to signal by pointing with the arm in the direction of the attack for a goal throw;
- (d) to signal by pointing with the arm in the direction of the attack for a corner throw;
- (e) to signal by raising and crossing both arms for a goal;
- (f) to signal by raising both arms vertically for an improper re-entry of an excluded player or improper entry of a substitute.

The referees shall be responsible for the award of goals, goal throws and corner throws irrespective of the signals of the goal judges.

**WP 8.3** Each goal judge shall be provided with a supply of balls and when the original ball has gone outside the field of play, the goal judge shall, on the signal of the referee, throw a new ball to the goalkeeper (for a goal throw), to the nearest player of the attacking team (for a corner throw), or as otherwise directed by the referee.

## **WP 11 VIDEO ASSISTANT REFEREE**

**WP 11.1** The duties of the Video Assistant Referee shall be: to assist the match referees by preparing the re-play footage, choosing the best camera and identifying the start of review moment for the required situations.

The referee will have the final responsibility for the decisions he makes after a Video Review.

The VAR Equipment will be used:

- At doubtful Goal / No goal situations
- When a goal is scored at shot clock expiration or time expiration at the end of a period and it was not 100% clear that the ball had left the hand before the time had expired.
- When a shot was made at the end of a period and there is an excluded player. To define whether there was a change of possession, i.e. if there is still an excluded player or the teams will be even at the start of the next period
- In case of Jury table errors and failures of the electronic system (including time out buttons or future electronic re-entry system); the VAR equipment can also be used for review to resolve other problems.



When there is a situation to be reviewed and the ball is taken out of the water, the referee at the jury table's side will go the VAR to assess the situation.

During a Video Review no substitution is allowed from any re-entry area before the referee communicates his decision after the Video Review.

This referee himself will use the device to replay the situation to come a final decision.

After the review, returning to the catwalk, the referee shall go to the halfway line and clearly indicate which decision was taken followed by a clear indication how the match will continue.

## WP 12 DURATION OF THE GAME

### WP 12.3

(c) *if two teams are involved the respective coaches of the teams will be requested to nominate five players and goalkeeper who will participate in the penalty shoot-out, the goal keeper may be one of the shooters; the goalkeeper may be changed at any time provided the substitute goalkeeper was listed amongst the team list in that game, however he cannot be substituted as one of the shooters*

(f) *if the goalkeeper is excluded during the penalty shoot-out, a player from the nominated five players may substitute for the goalkeeper but without the privileges of the goalkeeper; following the taking of the penalty shot, the player may be substituted by another player or alternate goalkeeper. If a field player is excluded during the penalty shoot-out, the player's position is removed from the list of the five players participating in the penalty shoot-out, and a substituted player is placed in the last position on the list*

## WP 13 TIME OUTS

**WP 13.1** Each team may request two timeouts per game, also in the same period and even directly after each other. The duration of the time out shall be one minute. A time out may be requested at any time, including after a goal, by the coach of the team in possession of the ball calling "time out" and signalling to the secretary or referee with the hands forming a T-shape. If a time out is requested, the secretary or referee shall immediately stop the game by whistle and the players shall immediately return to their respective halves of the field of play. The timeout request can also be made by any device authorized for use in the game.

N.B. As in almost all cases whenever the time out is called, play is developing on the other side of the field of play. The referees, delegate and persons on the official table are looking at the side of play and not in the direction where the coach of the attacking team is sitting. It is recommended, when there is no T-out device integrated in the timing system, that on the official table one person should take care of the time outs and pay attention ONLY to the bench of the attacking team to see when the coach calls for a time out.

At a time out, the defensive referee should take the ball. Other balls may not be used by the players during a time out.





[NOTE: A time out cannot be requested after a penalty throw has been awarded.]

**CLARIFICATION:**

A time out may be requested at any time by the coach of the team in **possession of the ball.**

\*A team has possession of the ball when one of its players is holding or swimming with the ball and when a team has **control over the ball.**

\*Control over the ball means when the ball is floating on the water and there is not any doubt that the ball is closer to one (player of the) team.

For this reason, this situation is considered to be in possession of the ball for that team.

\*Also, when the ball is surrounded by players of one team, while the other team is not able or willing to play the ball, it is considered to be in possession for that team.

In these cases, it's not necessary that a player is touching the ball.

\*Possession of the ball will define the moment when a coach can call for a time out and when the referee can allow an excluded player or the substitute to (re)enter the field of play.

**RESTARTING AFTER CALLING OF A TIME OUT**

The defensive referee with the ball takes position at the half distance line of play. The timekeeper should make a "WARNING" signal by whistle 15 seconds before the end of the time out. Both teams must stay in their respective half-fields of play; teams may only take up their position to restart following a time out on the "WARNING" signal from the timekeeper (following the expiration of 45 seconds). The time out must be the full 60 seconds. Immediately when the time out ends, the defensive referee will throw the ball at the centre, on or behind the half distance line of the field of play and whistle for the restart of the game. The team in possession of the ball shall put the ball into play on or behind the half distance line (all players may take any position in the field of play, which they deem to be most advantageous).

**WP 13.2** Play shall be restarted on the whistle of the referee by the team in possession of the ball putting the ball into play on or behind the half distance line, except that if the time out is requested before the taking of a corner throw, that throw shall be maintained.

A goal cannot be scored directly from a free throw by which the game is restarted after a time out, including the restart after a time out with a corner throw. However, if the player puts the ball into play, a goal can be scored, also after faking (simulating a shot) or swimming with the ball.  
(see WP 15.3 note).

**CALLING OF AN INCORRECT OR ILLEGAL TIME OUT**

**WP 13.3** If the coach of the team in possession of the ball requests an additional time out to which the team is not entitled, the game shall be stopped and play shall then be restarted by a player of the opposing team putting the ball into play on or behind the half distance line.

All players may take any position in the field of play that they deem to be most advantageous.

**WP 13.4** If the coach of the team not in possession of the ball requests a time out, the game shall be stopped and a penalty throw shall be awarded to the opposing team.

[NOTE. After requesting this illegal time-out, the coach has lost the right to request a legal time-out (if he still should have one).]

**CLARIFICATION:**



\*The time out button will be the sole responsibility of the team, i.e., one of the (three) team officials occupying the team bench.

\*Pressing the time-out button, even by accident, will result in a call for a time-out will all consequences depending on the ball possession and the number of time outs which the team has to its availability

**WP 13.5** At a restart following a time-out, players may take any position in the field of play, subject to the Rules relating to the taking of corner throws.

## **WP 14 THE START OF PLAY**

At the start of the game and at the restart of each period the referees will position themselves on the respective five (5) meter line. The starting referee shall wait with a raised arm in the vertical position for the signal of the other referee that both teams are correctly positioned on the goal line. This signal shall be made by raising one hand (above the head) when both teams are positioned correctly. The starting referee shall then signal immediately for the start by blowing the whistle and lowering the arm to a horizontal position. This procedure should reduce the possibility of a false start.

The referees shall ensure that the correct number of players are in the water before starting play. Should play be started with additional players not entitled to be in the water, play shall be started again and the time shall be reset.

## **FALSE START**

Although this should never happen if there is correct signalisation by both referees, if it does happen, the start shall be retaken.

## **WP 15 METHOD OF SCORING**

**WP 15.3** A goal may be scored by any part of the body except the clenched fist. At the start or any restart of the game, at least two players (of either team but excluding the defending goalkeeper) must play or intentionally touch the ball except at the taking of:

- (a) a penalty throw;
- (b) a free throw thrown by a player into his/her own goal;
- (c) an immediate shot from a goal throw;
- (d) an immediate shot from a free throw awarded outside 6 meters; or
- (e) a free throw awarded and taken outside 6 metres when the player has visibly put the ball into play;
- (f) an immediate shot from a corner throw.

For the purposes of this Rule, start or restart means 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. After a swim up, timeout, or other commencement of play outside the 6m area, a player may put the ball into play *and then shoot, fake or swim with the ball and score a goal according to WP20.1*

*NOTE: A goal may be scored by a player immediately shooting from outside 6 meters after the player's team has been awarded a free throw for a foul committed outside 6 meters. If the player puts the ball into play, a goal can be scored after faking (simulating a shot) or swimming with the ball.*

*After a corner throw or goal throw is awarded and the player puts the ball into play, a goal can be scored after faking (simulating a shot) or swimming with the ball.]*



*A goal may not be scored under this Rule direct from the restart following the ball leaving the side of the field of play*

However, if a team receives a free throw as a result of the ball leaving the side of the field of play outside of the 6m. area, a player can, after putting the ball in play, shoot, fake or swim with the ball and score a goal.

Inside the 6m. area, the player taking the free throw always has to pass the ball to another player before a goal can be scored.

## SHOT AT GOAL FROM FREE THROW OUTSIDE 6 METRES

### SCORING A GOAL

A goal may be scored by a player shooting from outside 6 metres after that player's team has been awarded a free throw for a foul committed outside 6 meters and the free throw is taken outside the 6 meter area

The defensive referee can assist by taking a position near the 6 meter line whenever possible to confirm whether the shot was taken inside or outside the 6 metre area by using the signal demonstrated in Fig. V as shown in Appendix B of the WP Rules.

### CLARIFICATION:

\*If the ball and the free throw are both outside 6m., the player can choose to shoot immediately or visibly putting the ball into play.

\*After the player visibly puts the ball into play, the player can fake and shoot or swim and shoot.

\*Once the player visibly puts the ball into play, it is the sign that the time keeper must (re)start the clock and that the defender can attack the player with the ball.

\*Visibly putting the ball into play means that the ball must leave the hand of the player with the ball. (See WP 17, figure 1 and 2).

\*Visibly passing the ball from one hand to the other is considered to put the ball into play

\*In a doubtful situation near the 6m. line the referee must indicate if the ball was inside or outside the 6m. area with the signal indicated by figure V in Appendix B, raising one hand in the air.

\* When the referee makes the signal, the signal indicates that the player is allowed to shoot.

\* If there is no signal made by the referee, it means that the player is not allowed to shoot because either the foul or the ball was inside the 6m. area



The player may not score by a direct shot in the following circumstances:

- a) after a swim up or the commencement of a period
- b) restarting after a goal
- c) restarting following injury including bleeding
- d) restarting after any delay where the referee has stopped the play and called for the ball

**However, when** the ball is visibly put into play outside the 6 m. area, the player is allowed to shoot, to shoot after faking (simulating a shot) or to swim with the ball and shoot.



In any situation, where a free throw is **awarded** outside 6 m and the player visibly puts the ball into play, a goal can be scored by the player shooting, shooting after faking (simulating a shot) or swimming with the ball and shooting. A second player doesn't have to play the ball.

A direct shot at the goal taken after a free throw has been awarded inside the 6 metre line is considered to be an ordinary foul and the referee is to award a goal throw to the opposing team, whether this shot has entered the goal or whether the ball has been diverted outside the field of play by a defender or goalkeeper.

**However, if the ball rebounds into the field of play outside of the 2m area, in this specific situation, WP 20.1 is to be applied and the ball should be put in play at the location of the ball.**

When a defender tries to intercept a pass following a free throw taken by the attacking team inside the 6m. and, by deflection, the ball enters the goal or crosses the goal line or the side line, the resulting goal, corner throw or free throw shall be awarded to the attacking team

CLARIFICATION:

Direct shot after interval time:

\*After interval time it is not allowed to take a direct shot at the goal

\*When a referee takes the ball out of the water, for cap replacement, injuries or other matters, this is considered to be interval time. After the matter is solved and the ball is returned to a player and no direct shot at the goal is allowed according to the rules.

\*However after interval time, when the ball is returned to a player taking a corner throw or to a player outside the 6m. area, after a stoppage for cap replacement, injuries or other matters, after putting the ball in play, this player can shoot at the goal (or fake, or swim) and score.





## WP 16 RESTARTING AFTER A GOAL

After a goal is scored, both referees take up a position on the half-distance line. When both referees are satisfied that any substitutions have been completed, the referee who is to control the attacking play shall raise their hand and advance along the pool side to the right, and the other referee shall restart the play.

The referees shall ensure that the correct numbers of players are in the water before restarting play. Should play be started with additional players not entitled to be in the water, play shall be started again and the time shall be reset.

## WP 17 GOAL THROWS

**WP 17.1** A goal throw shall be awarded:

- (b) when the entire ball has passed fully over the goal line between the goal posts and underneath the crossbar, or strikes the goal posts, crossbar or the defending goalkeeper direct from:
  - (i) a free throw awarded inside 6 metres;
  - (ii) a free throw awarded outside 6 metres not taken in accordance with the Rules;
  - (iii) a goal throw taken incorrectly by the opposite team.

**However, if the ball rebounds into the field of play outside of the 2m area, in this specific situation, WP 20.1 is to be applied and the ball should be put in play at the location of the ball.**

## WP 18 CORNER THROWS

At the taking of a corner throw on the side opposite to the attacking referee, the defensive referee shall ensure that the throw is taken from the correct position by going to the 2 meter line, pointing with one arm to where the ball has to be put into play. If one referee signals for a corner throw, and the other signals for a goal throw, the corner throw shall be awarded.

A player taking a corner throw may:

- a) shoot directly,
- and after putting the ball in play:**
- b) swim, fake and shoot without passing or may
  - c) pass to another player

## WP 19 NEUTRAL THROWS

If referees award free throws simultaneously for ordinary fouls for opposing teams, the award shall be a neutral throw. (A referee should only change the decision under these circumstances if the referee realises a mistake occurred).

At a neutral throw a referee shall throw the ball into the field of play at approximately the same lateral position as the event occurred in such a manner as to allow the players of both teams to have equal opportunity to reach the ball. Referees are reminded that should the players touch the ball before it reaches the water, there is no foul and play should continue.



## WP 20 FREE THROWS

A free throw shall be taken without undue delay.

Referees are reminded that it is an offence if a player who is clearly in position most readily to take a free throw does not do so.

- It may be the case that in some situations the ball is away from the place where the free throw is awarded. In all cases, the player with the ball, in static or swimming position, must put the ball in play clearly visible for all involved (referees, players, coaches, desk officials etc.).
- Throwing the ball from left to right hand is considered to put the ball in play.
- Due to rule WP 20.4, which says “*The free throw shall be taken in a manner to enable the players to observe the ball leaving the **hand** of the player taking the throw, .....*” it is not allowed to put the ball in play by foot.

### WP 20.1 TAKING OF A FREE THROW

A free throw shall be taken at the location of the ball, except:

if a foul is committed by a defending player within their 2 meter area, the free throw shall be taken on the 2 metre line opposite to where the foul was committed or, if the ball is outside the 2 metre area, from the location of the ball.

**WP 20.2** A player awarded a free throw shall put the ball into play immediately, including by passing or by shooting, if permitted by the Rules. It shall be an offence if a player who is clearly in a position most readily to take a free throw does not do so. A defending player having committed a foul shall move away from the player taking the free throw before raising an arm to block a pass or shot; a player who fails to do so shall be excluded for “interference” under WP 22.5.

The defending player who committed the foul must move away from the player taking the free throw to allow space for the player to take the free throw without interference. Whilst exact distance has not been specified, the notional distance is 1 metre. Accordingly, a defending player within 1 metre of the player taking the free throw gives the referee the opportunity to exclude the defending player.

## WP 21 ORDINARY FOULS

Apply the advantage Rule (WP7.3) to the fullest extent. An ordinary foul for the team in possession of the ball should only be called if it will give an advantage to the attack, or if it will assist in controlling the physical play of the game.

It is not in the spirit of the game, if a team losing possession of the ball through a bad pass is then rewarded by the awarding of a free throw for another foul somewhere else.

If you whistle an exclusion, it must be for a foul which deserves exclusion. When you whistle an exclusion, you are giving an advantage to compensate for the loss of an advantage taken away by a foul. It is an exclusion when any foul clearly destroys the advantage or the possibility of the attacking player to shoot or to move toward the goal. Don't call any ordinary foul, offensive foul or exclusion foul which has no relationship with the game and the location of the ball, unless absolutely necessary.

**WP 21.6** To take or hold the entire ball under the water when tackled.

The referees should not call a ball under against a player who takes the ball under for a very short moment and this action does not stop his opponent from playing the ball



To hold the ball under the water with the intention to hide it from the opposing team has to be punished in the same way as when to hold the entire ball under the water when tackled.



**WP 21.14** For a team to retain possession of the ball for more than:

- (i) 30 seconds of actual play, or
- (ii) 20 seconds in the case of an exclusion, corner throw or rebound to the attacking team after a shot, including after a penalty shot, without shooting at the opponent's goal.

The timekeeper recording the possession time shall reset the clock:

- a) When the ball has left the hand of the player shooting at goal. If the ball rebounds into play from the goal post, crossbar or the goalkeeper, the possession time shall not recommence until the ball comes into the possession of one of the teams. The clock shall be reset to 20 seconds if the ball comes into possession of the attacking team. It shall be reset to 30 seconds if it comes into possession of the defending team;
- b) When the ball comes into the possession of the defending team, the clock shall be reset to 30 seconds. "Possession" shall not include the ball merely being touched in flight by an opposing player;
- c) When the ball is put into play following the award of an exclusion foul to the defending player, the clock shall be reset to 20 seconds unless there are more than 20 seconds of possession time remaining, in which case the time shall continue and not be reset;
- d) When the ball is put into play following the taking of a penalty throw without a change of possession or corner throw, the clock shall be reset to 20 seconds;
- e) When the ball is put into play following the award of a penalty throw with a change of possession, a goal throw or neutral throw, the clock shall be reset to 30 seconds.

Visible clocks shall show the time in a descending manner (that is, to show the possession time remaining).

*[Note. The timekeeper and referees must decide whether there was a shot or not but the referees have the final decision.]*

**CLARIFICATION:**

\*If there is a double exclusion, the time is not to be reset and the time on the possession clock will remain the same.

\*The shot clock will be reset to 30 sec after a neutral throw

\*In the last minute of the game the coach may choose not to take a penalty shot and chooses for a new ball possession.

In this case the game will be restarted from the halfway line, or behind, as after a time out and the shot clock will be reset to 30 seconds.

\* When there was a double brutality during live play, the shot clock will be reset to 30



seconds after the second penalty has been taken and the match will restart from the half line as after a goal.

**WP 21.15** To waste time.

*[Note. It is always permissible for a referee to award an ordinary foul under this Rule before the 20 or 30 seconds' possession period has elapsed.*

*In the last minute of the game, the referees must be certain that there is intentional wasting time before applying this Rule.*

*If there is only one player of the team on his own the half of the field of play, it shall be deemed wasting time for that player to receive the ball from another member of that team who is in the other half of the field of play.]*

The goalkeeper or any other player cannot receive the ball from any player when all attacking players are over half distance line.

Progressing the ball forward in the field of play is not deemed wasting time however staying with the ball in a static position (for example by the goalkeeper) is deemed wasting time and should be penalised accordingly. Players are allowed to incorporate their goalkeeper in the play however once the goalkeeper has received the ball the goalkeeper must progress it forward in the field of play by either swimming or throwing the ball.

Please note that in the last 30 seconds of the game should the team in possession of the ball make no endeavour to progress the ball forward in the field of play the referee should immediately award an ordinary foul against the team in accordance with WP 21.15

**WP 21.16** To simulate being fouled.

*[Note. Simulation means an action taken by a player with the apparent intent of causing a referee to award a foul incorrectly against an opposing player. A referee may issue a yellow card against a team for repeated simulation and may apply WP 22.13 (persistent fouling) to sanction offending players.]*

It is an ordinary foul to simulate being fouled. For repeated simulation the referee may issue a yellow card which is a warning to a team for repeated simulation following which the referee may apply WP 22.13 (misconduct) for offending players.

**See also: APPENDIX A - INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE USE OF TWO REFEREES:**

7. If, in the referee's opinion, a player persists in playing in an unsporting manner or engages in simulation, the referee shall show a yellow card to the offending team and point to the offending player. Should the action continue, the referee will issue the player with a red card visible to both the team and the table as this is deemed to be misconduct. The referee then signals the excluded player's cap number to the table.

NOTE: Hiding under water and stealing the ball from under the water was always a part of the game. There is no rule which disallows this.

However, when two players are struggling for position (in static or swimming situation) and one of them is ducking under and takes positional advantage, this cannot be done without impeding and must be punished by the referee.



## WP 22 EXCLUSION FOULS

Most often, the point of complaint and criticism of the referee's decisions by the coach, players and the fans is the lack of consistency by the referee.

The referee who has the right attitude in mind and behaviour will try to find their level and maintain it throughout the game.

It is most important that the referees apply the Rules appropriately and be consistent from the beginning to the end of game. The referees should not call inconsistent fouls, the foul must be part of the action however an exclusion foul for over aggressive or violent play including misconduct and brutality, must be called, whether committed by an attacking or defending player, and in any part of the field of play. The referee must apply this Rule and cannot interpret it otherwise.

**WP 22.1** It shall be an exclusion foul to commit any of the following offences (WP 22.4 to WP 22.18) which shall be punished (except as otherwise provided by the Rules) by the award of a free throw to the opposing team and the exclusion of the player who committed the foul.

Should the exclusion foul occur within the defending team's 6 metre area the referee must apply the following procedure, also when the ball is in the perimeter, namely:

- a. signal the exclusion by whistle,
- b. signal the number of the excluded player both to the player and official table, after which the free throw can be taken immediately.

Avoid putting the game to a stop by whistle and taking the flow out of the game unless there is an unclear situation.

At the end of this procedure, the referee must signal the kind of foul using the appropriate Figure from Appendix B from the Rule Book

If the free throw is taken too quick, before the referee finishes the signalisation of the exclusion and corresponding number of the player, the referee has to indicate that the free throw has to be retaken (from the spot where the ball is).

**WP 22.3** The re-entry of an excluded player must be permitted immediately when the referee indicates a change of possession and/or direction of play. The interpretation of this is that the signal by the referee of change of direction allows re-entry of the excluded player and the referee does not have to display any other signal; that clearly it is still applicable that the secretary may signal re-entry of the excluded player should exclusion period elapse without a score or change of possession.

**WP 22.8** 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. *[Note. This Rule can also be applied to advantage the attacking team. If a counter attack is in progress and a foul is committed which limits the attack, the offending player shall be excluded.*

*The first thing for the referee to consider is whether the opponent is holding the ball, because if the player is doing so, the player making the challenge cannot be penalised for "impeding". It is clear that a player is holding the ball if it is held raised above the water (figure 9). The player is also holding the ball if the player swims with it held in the*



hand or makes contact with the ball while it is lying on the surface of the water (figure 10). Swimming with the ball (dribbling), as shown in figure 11, is not considered to be holding.



Figure 9



Figure 10



Figure 11

A common form of impeding is where the player swims across the opponent's legs (figure 12), thus reducing the pace at which the opponent can move and interfering with the normal leg action. Another form is swimming on the opponent's shoulders. It must also be remembered that the foul of impeding can be committed by the player who is in possession of the ball. For example, figure 13 shows a player keeping one hand on the ball and trying to force the opponent away to gain more space. Figure 14 shows a player in possession of the ball impeding the opponent by pushing the opponent back with the head. Care must be taken with figures 13 & 14, because any violent movement by the player in possession of the ball might constitute striking or even brutality; the figures are intended to illustrate impeding without any violent movement. A player may also commit the offence of impeding even if the player is not holding or touching the ball. Figure 15 shows a player intentionally blocking the opponent with the player's body and with the arms flung open, thus making access to the ball impossible. This offence is most often committed near the boundaries of the field of play.]

This rule was previously applied as an ordinary foul accordingly this is a significant change but it refers only to an opponent not holding the ball.

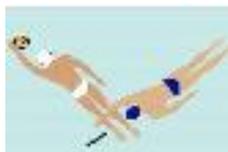


Figure 12



Figure 13



Figure 14



Figure 15

This is to apply anywhere in the field of play and is not restricted to the centre forward – centre back position.

Also, similarly if the foul is by the attacking player (centre forward) against the defending player (centre back) the referee should simply award an ordinary foul against the attacking player, that is an offensive or contra foul awarded against the attacking player.

Protecting the movement, the action and the attack of the player is a key concept to the playing of water polo.

Accordingly, the referee must be very strict to whistle exclusion in these situations:

- any foul to prevent the movement of the player to drive to the 6 m. area
- when there is "pressing" that impedes the movement of an attacker
- when using one or two hands to hold
- when touching the body continuously, or consistently, to prevent free movement of an attacker
- when swimming on the opponent's shoulders, back or legs to impede movement



**WP 22.9** To hold, sink or pull back an opponent not holding the ball.  
This includes holding the suit of another player.

Referees must recognize the difference between the men's and the women's game. Grabbing the swimsuit is huge factor in the women's game because it creates an unfair advantage for the player holding the suit – therefore, the punishment should be severe. Grabbing or holding of the swimsuit is a major violation of the rules. Grabbing of the swimsuit should be exclusion in defence and a contra foul in attack.



**WP 22.10** To use one or two hands to hold an opponent anywhere in the field of play. This is a clear reinforcement of the interpretation of WP 22.9. A defending player using one or two hands to hold an attacking player who is not holding the ball must be excluded.

**WP 22.11** Upon a change of possession, for a defending player to commit a foul on any player of the team in possession of the ball, anywhere in the attacking team's half of the field of play.

*[Note. This Rule is to be applied if the team losing possession of the ball attempts to restrict the attack of the other team by committing a foul on any attacking player anywhere in the field of play]*

This is a clear reinforcement of WP 22.9 and further emphasised with the inclusion of new WP 22.11 as an exclusion foul. Any foul with the simple objective to stop the flow of the game especially the counter attack must result in an exclusion of the player committing the foul. This kind of foul is also known as a 'professional foul' or a 'tactical foul'. Anywhere in the field of play when a defender is stopping the flow of the game by a tactical foul, this instruction should be applied.



Again, as with the instructions for WP 22.8 this is to apply only to a player not holding the ball and should the attacking player lose possession of the ball and the defending player cannot avoid impeding the attacking player in this action an ordinary foul should be awarded under this Rule.

If however the attacking player was never holding the ball or the foul has clearly the objective of stopping the counter attack an exclusion foul should be awarded under this Rule.

**WP 22.13** All of the various parts of this rule must be applied consistently, especially aggressive or persistent foul play. By applying this rule, behaviour against the rules, which are likely to bring the game into disrepute, can be sanctioned.

Any form of misconduct or disrespect towards the referee by a player, whether by word or action, should be punished by exclusion with substitution. The referee should carefully consider the level for this exclusion foul because it is a definitive decision. A referee should not be too narrow-minded to interpret every critical look, word or gesture of a player as disrespect, but any personal insult should be dealt with by this Rule.

*[Note. If a player commits any offence mentioned in this rule during the interval between periods, during a time out, after a goal or after the referee has taken the ball out of the water, the player shall be excluded for the remainder of the game and a substitute shall be eligible to re-enter immediately prior to the restart of the game as all these situations are considered to be interval time. Play will restart in the normal manner.]*

***A good referee is SENSIBLE but not SENSITIVE.***

Control of coaches and benches and yellow and red cards must be applied from the first minute of the game, if appropriate, and not only at the end of the game.

**WP 22.14** To commit an act of brutality (including to play in a violent manner, kicking, striking or attempting to kick or strike with malicious intent) against an opponent or official, whether during actual play, during any stoppages, time outs, after a goal has been scored or during intervals between periods of play.

Should this occur during the game the offending player shall be excluded from the remainder of the game and must leave the competition area and a penalty throw awarded to the opposing team. The offending player may be substituted when four minutes of actual play have elapsed.

Should the incident occur during the interval between periods, during a time out, after a goal, after the award of a penalty throw or after the referee has taken the ball out of the water, the player shall be excluded for the remainder of a game and must leave the competition area. No penalty throw shall be awarded. The offending player may be substituted when four (4) minutes of actual play have elapsed and play will restart in the normal manner.

If the referee/s call simultaneous brutalities or actions of play in a violent manner on players of opposing teams during play, both players are excluded for the remainder of the game with substitution after four minutes of actual play have elapsed. The team, which had possession of the ball, will first shoot a penalty throw followed by the other team shooting a penalty throw. After the second penalty throw, the team which had possession of the ball, will restart play with a free throw on or behind the half distance line (as after a goal) with 30 seconds on the shot clock.



It should not be possible with two referees to miss situations of violence and brutality. There is no excuse with two referees for not seeing a situation of violence or brutality. If you see brutality and violence, you must always intervene!

The VAR Equipment will be used for Post-Match Review to identify and sanction incidents of brutality or extreme violence that occurred but were not, or not appropriately, punished or identified during a game.

#### CLARIFICATION:

- \* The purpose is to retroactively sanction players for violent play that was not, or not appropriately, punished by the referees during the game.
- \* The result of the game will not be changed.
- \* As an example, upon review of the official video, if the TWPC determines that an incident should have been sanctioned by a brutality call, then the player involved will be suspended by the TWPC in the same manner as if the player had been sanctioned by the referees i.e. for at least 1 match.
- \* The result of the game will not be changed but the team will have to play the next game with one player less, in the case of a 1 match suspension, or for more games if the suspension is longer.
- \* Any team that wishes a video review of an incident must make a formal Video Review Request by using the appropriate form together with a payment of 500 Swiss Francs, or the equivalent, within 30 minutes after the conclusion of the match in which the incident is alleged to have occurred.
- \* This Video Review Request has to be filed in the same manner as a protest.
- \* The TWPC, on its own initiative, may also review any incident.
- \* The TWPC must communicate any decision to suspend a team or one or more of its players, prior to its next game.

**WP 22.15** In the case of simultaneous exclusion of players of opposing teams during play, both players are excluded for 20 seconds. The possession clock is not reset. Play is restarted with a free throw to the team which had possession of the ball. When neither team has possession at the time of the simultaneous exclusion, for example when after a shot the ball rebounded off the goalkeeper and was floating 'in no-man's-land', the possession clock is reset to 30 seconds and play is restarted with a neutral throw.

It is important for referees to establish if there was ball possession or not at the time of the simultaneous exclusion.

The referees must ensure that both excluded players reach their respective re-entry area before putting the ball back into play.

**WP 22.18** For the defending goalkeeper to fail to take up the correct position on the goal line at the taking of a penalty throw having been ordered once to do so by the referee.

When the referee has given one warning in the game, it's not necessary to repeat the warning again and the goalkeeper may be excluded for 20 seconds at the next time he fails to take up the correct position.

#### **CENTRE FORWARD POSITION**

The referee must give the centre forward an opportunity to finish his action. When the centre forward has the ball, the referee must delay the whistle a little, it's better to give a possibility to shoot than to whistle exclusion.

Any backward movement of the centre forward outside the shoulder line, and especially out of the water, is a contra foul to be awarded to the defender.



**To award an Ordinary Foul** is an option at the centre forward position when there is no immediate threat to score, or when there are 2 or more defenders around; in this situation, the referee has this alternative as well as to whistle exclusion or apply “no call”.



### SOME GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

If a player is under the water when the referee awards a free throw and may not have heard the whistle, the referee shall immediately repeat the whistle when the player has resurfaced.

In the case of splashing, it is the position of the attacking player, which determines whether a penalty throw or exclusion is awarded. If the attacking player is inside the 6 metre area and a probable goal is prevented by a defending player splashing, it is a penalty, irrespective of whether the defending player is inside or outside the 6 metre line. In all other cases, the correct decision is exclusion.

When the ball is in flight and directed towards an attacking player, sinking committed by the defending player must be punished by exclusion. If the attacking player loses the ball or loses the opportunity to receive the ball, because of an ordinary foul by the defending player, the referee shall award a free throw.

Contact between opposing players is permitted.

The referees should allow opposing players to compete for position and should only intervene to penalise a foul committed by a player of the team in possession of the ball, or to award an exclusion foul or in certain circumstances for an ordinary foul.

An excluded player must leave the field of play immediately and without generating any interference and/or problem to the team in possession of the ball; if the excluded player does not commence leaving the field of play almost immediately and/or causes interference the referee should award a penalty throw to the opposing team.



## WP23 PENALTY FOULS – THE PROBABLE GOAL

When there is a penalty situation, one referee shall control the players (both of the attacking and defending team) during the penalty procedure, the other referee shall control the other players in the field of play.

NOTE: In addition to what is described in **WP 24**, the following must be taken in account:

- The goalkeeper cannot move from his position beyond the goal line until the referee has blown the whistle, after the whistle, he can move forward, jump etc.
- None of the players outside the 5 m area can enter this area or approach the shooter before the ball has left the hand of the shooter, after the ball has left the hand of the shooter, the defenders can move from their position as the ball is live.

In case a defender interferes before the ball has left the hand of the shooter, the referee shall apply **WP 22.17**

**See also:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FzIVDAMPD4s>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M8VI-HzBkNo>

**WP 23.2** This rule says very clearly “ANY FOUL COMMITTED” and this includes also fouls, which in other cases, are only regarded as ordinary fouls. So, the most important decision is to decide what is “probable”. The application used for many years is that the attacking player must be in a position facing the goal or must make movements towards the goal, either in possession of the ball or awaiting a pass so the player can shoot.

It is sometimes critical to decide quickly, whether the attacking player releases the ball and the defending player releases the attacking player more or less at the same moment.

It is the referee who has to decide if it is a lazy attacking player or a good actor (simulator) who wants the penalty as a gift or if it is an attacking player who wants to score and is still hindered from doing so by any foul.

This situation may occur either after a struggle between the centre forward and their defending player or by a player swimming in. But the application is clear, in a side position (not swimming towards the goal) or a position with the back to the goal, the referee can imply a probable goal and award a penalty only when the goalkeeper is completely out of the goal (this is the above mentioned exception).

Position or swimming towards the goal implies that it is absolutely forbidden to award a free throw to the attacking player. The principle should also be applied in a side position when the player is in a good position to score. As this is a dangerous position for the defending player, the attacking player very often is held by the defending player, which means exclusion foul, while a defending player usually tries to commit only ordinary fouls when the attacking player has their back to the goal.

A penalty throw must always be awarded when a foul committed by a defending player inside the 6 meter area prevents a probable goal, and in the other situations described in WP 23.2 to WP 23.8.

However, the referee should not award a penalty throw if:

- (a) the attacking player has their back to the goal;
- (b) the ball is legitimately intercepted by a defending player, or when a bad pass is made (including the ball being too high);



(In these situations, the referee shall not make any award in favour of the attacking player, even if the player has been fouled.)

(c) the attacking player is not in a position to score a probable goal.

If the attacking player, holding the ball, turns the defending player in front of the goal, no offence has been committed. If the attacking player releases the ball and the defending player immediately then releases the attacking player, there is still no offence.

However, if the attacking player makes an attempt to regain the ball and is prevented from doing so by a foul committed by the defending player, then a penalty throw is awarded.

#### CLARIFICATION:

INSIDE THE 6M. AREA, IN A PROBABLE GOAL POSITION AND WITH THE INTENTION TO SCORE:

\*If an attacking player with the intention to shoot has front position on a defender while moving toward the goal, the defender is not allowed to commit a foul without giving away a potential penalty shot to the attacker.

\*This is stopping a probable goal and falls within the meaning of WP 23.2.

The only way to defend from behind in this situation is for the defender to make contact only with the ball.

\*This will eliminate the potential decision and call of the referee that the 'ball was in the hand' that we saw in the past and which was incorrect in many cases.

\*The referee should delay the call to see if the player is able to complete the action.

\*If the player is not able to complete **the action**, the referee must apply this rule.

**\*If the defender is trying to play the ball without any further touching or impeding the attacker and the referee does not observe that the fingers are touched, the referee must award this intention to play "clean defense" and not award a penalty.**

\*When an attacking player is in front of the goal with the ball on the water and his hand on top of the ball and the goalkeeper in this situation puts the hand and the ball under water this is correct, the goalkeeper attacked from in front and not from behind, so in this situation no penalty should be called but a free throw in favor of the goalkeeper.

After a penalty throw is awarded, no substitution is allowed from any re-entry area, before the penalty is taken.

**WP 23.7** For the coach, or any team official of the team not in possession of the ball to request a time out. No personal foul shall be recorded for this offence. The team requesting a time out while not in possession of the ball will lose one time out of his total number of time outs and a penalty throw shall be awarded to the opposing team.

**WP 23.8** For the coach, any team official or player to take any action with intent to prevent a probable goal or to delay the game. No personal foul shall be recorded for this offence if committed by the coach or a team official.

**NOTE:** The above mentioned is related to persons outside of the water

Any player inside the water who takes any action with intent to prevent a probable goal or to delay the game will receive a personal foul in relation to the penalty caused by him/her



'To delay the game' means while the game is in progress and should a coach, team official or player take any action with intent to prevent a probable goal or to delay the game a penalty throw shall be awarded to the opposing team.

'To delay the game' does not relate to interval time such as between periods or after a time out. A coach delaying the game after the end of interval time or following a time out (by not having his team lining up on time for example) should receive a yellow card but no penalty throw is awarded.

*Example 1:* This rule should also be applied to the situation where a defending player deliberately delays the game such as when the attacking team has a 6 on 5 advantage with limited time remaining in the game and a defending player deliberately throws the ball before the recommencement of the game to a position in the field of play that makes it impossible for the attacking team in the remaining time to establish or create a scoring opportunity. In this situation a penalty throw shall be awarded to the opposing team.

*Example 2:* This rule should also be applied to the situation where a defending player takes an action such as fouling an attacking player outside the 6m line and pushing deliberately the ball inside the 6m area by which the opportunity for a direct shot is taken away. If there is a probable goal situation, with no defenders except the goal keeper in the shooting line, a penalty throw shall be awarded.

**WP 23.10** If in the last minute of the game a penalty throw is awarded to a team, the coach may elect to maintain possession of the ball and be awarded a free throw. The timekeeper recording possession time shall reset the clock to 30 seconds, and the game will be restarted as after a time out.

## **KICK, STRIKE, BRUTALITY**

All referees should note that to kick strike or commit an act of brutality is ALWAYS a penalty, no matter where it occurs if within the 6 metre area.

### **BRUTALITY**

In the Rules there are three similar but different types of exclusions (WP 22.12; WP 22.13 and WP 22.14) with three different sanctions for kicking, striking, aggressive or persistent foul play and brutality.

As in the Rules WP 22.12 and WP 22.14 the criterion "intention" is mentioned, the difference between these fouls must be the degree or gravity of fouling. On the other hand, the criterion to distinguish between violence and brutality must be the "intention" to cause an injury.

The player excluded for brutality must leave the pool (refer comments to WP 5 (d)).



## WP 24 PENALTY THROWS

Take good notice of what is mentioned in the NOTE mentioned in WP 23 of this Manual

**WP 24.1** A penalty throw shall be taken by any player of the team to which it is awarded from any point on the opponents' 5 metre line.

It is important that referees ensure that the penalty throw is taken on the opponents' 5 metre line as there is a tendency for the player taking the penalty shot to move forward in the action of the penalty throw such that the shot actually occurs from within the opponents' 5 metre.

During a penalty throw, depending if the shooter is right- or left-handed, one referee shall control the penalty area and the execution of the penalty shot, the other referee shall control the other players in the field of play.

## WP 26 ACCIDENT, INJURY AND ILLNESS

The attention of referees is drawn to the special provision when a player is bleeding. The referee should stop play to allow the player leave the water.

A substitute shall be permitted to enter immediately. When the player has been treated and the bleeding has stopped, the player may return to the game under the normal substitution rules.

## AGE GROUP RULES - WATER POLO

**WPAG 1** All age group competitors remain qualified from 1 January to the following 31 December at their age at the close of day (12 midnight) on 31 December of the year of competition.

**WAPG 2** Age grouping for Water Polo for boys and girls are as follows:

- 15 and 16 years of age and under
- 17 and 18 years of age and under
- 19 and 20 years of age and under

The age for Cadet, Youth and Junior World Championships is 16 years and under, 18 years and under and 20 years and under.



## **ADENDUM WITH SOME OTHER OBSERVATIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS:**

FINA, and therefore its Technical Water Polo Committee, aims for water polo to be a dynamic, fast, creative and flowing team sport where through the correct application and interpretation of the rules static and overly physical situations are removed from the game in order to enhance player and spectator enjoyment.

The role of the referee(s) in achieving the above is pivotal; they control the game by applying the rules of our sport to make judgements on rule infringements. They act as an impartial judge. This involves an obligation to perform with consistency, accuracy, objectivity and the highest sense of integrity.

The TWPC provides management, leadership and guidance as well as oversight prior during and after competitions.

Water polo is a particular difficult sport to referee; not only must the referee apply the rules, more importantly they need to understand the spirit of these rules and the meaning and purpose behind them.

### **1. Understanding of the Game**

It is vital for the referee to judge the actions during the game correctly; to have an understanding and feeling for it. Without this understanding, especially within the context of a particular game situation, it is very difficult to make the correct decision.

Each rule infringement must be judged and called, or not be called, in relation to the action, the game and the aim of our sport as mentioned at the start of this document.

### **2. Consistency**

Consistency is the key attribute of any referee. Similar, or identical, game situations must be called in the same manner for the complete duration of the game.

### **3. Clarity**

Players, coaches and spectators must understand what kind of call was made by the referee and why. Again consistency must apply in this for the complete duration of the game.

### **4. Cooperation and Coordination between Referees**

- The referees must speak prior to the game, during the period intervals and after the game; they agree on how they will divide the field of play and which referee controls what areas as well as the transitions.

- Referees should in principle not interfere with any actions in the areas of their colleague; this to avoid confusion as to which referee supervises what area. The result of interference can easily be discrediting your colleague and it may create tension between the two referees, as well as create confusion to players, coaches and spectators. Any issues should be discussed at the end of the period.

### **5. Violent Play and Brutality**

WP 22.13 must be applied at all times; consequently and in regards to all the different situations within this rule, especially persistent or aggressive foul play.



It is unacceptable with two referees, not to observe, and therefore not to call, situations of violent play or brutality. Any and all violent play and brutality must be called. This includes situations which occur in your colleague's area of control: violent play and brutality must be called – always.

## **6. Calling Exclusion**

- 1) Only call exclusions for rule infringements that actually deserve to be penalized with an exclusion.
- 2) By calling exclusion, the referee penalizes the infringing player for taking away the advantage from the attacking team
- 3) Exclusion must be called when a foul clearly takes away the advantage or the possibility for the attacking player to SHOOT or to MOVE TOWARDS THE GOAL.
- 4) When a foul is committed, but the attacking player is not in a situation as described at point 3), a minor foul can be awarded in order to prevent loss of the ball for the attacking player.
- 5) Fouls which have no relation to the game should not be called; this goes for ordinary fouls, offensive fouls and exclusion fouls.

## **7. Advantage: do not stop the flow of the game**

- 1) If an ordinary foul or exclusion foul (and in certain situations a penalty foul) has been committed, but the attacking player is able to continue the action to shoot or move to the goal, the referee must allow the action to continue; play advantage. Only call the foul when the attacking player is no longer able to continue the action.
- 2) The opportunity to finish the action will improve our game and is therefore an objective of the referee.
- 3) Do not call fouls which do not affect the game, these calls are unnecessary and they affect the positive flow of the game.

**8. Strict application of WP 22.8: 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.**

- 1) To protect the free movement of an opponent, the action and flow of the game is a key concept in water polo.
- 2) Strict application of this rule is required in the following situations:
  - a) Any foul to prevent the free movement of an attacking player driving towards the goal area.
  - b) The tactical play of 'pressing' whereby free movement is impeded.
  - c) Use of two hands for holding.
  - d) Continuous or frequent contact of the opponent's body which prevents free movement.
  - e) Swimming on/over the opponent's shoulders, back or legs preventing free movement.

## **9. Centre Forward with Ball**

- 1) The referee must give the center forward an opportunity to shoot. When the center forward has control of the ball, you must delay your call; it is preferable to provide a possibility to shoot and score, than to call the exclusion (and in certain situations the penalty).



- 2) Movement by the center forward outside his own shoulder area, and especially out of the water, against the defender must be penalized with an offensive foul.
- 3) Awarding an ordinary foul is an option where the center forward has no immediate opportunity to shoot or where two (2) or more defenders are engaged in this situation; note an ordinary foul must of course been committed. Often referees award either all or nothing; there is a middle ground.

#### 10. Offensive (or Turnover or Contra) Fouls

- 1) When calling a turnover foul, the referee must ensure that the teams clearly understand the situation to avoid any confusion; this by correct use of whistle and signals.
- 2) Do not call turnover fouls which do not affect the game, these calls are unnecessary and they affect the positive flow of the game.
- 3) Do not call an offensive foul when a player from the perimeter tries to drive into the front court area.

Note: it is almost impossible to initiate movement without contact between players; this is water polo. In a contact situation the referee must advantage the action, the attack; priority must be given the movement of the attacking player.

#### 11. Holding of the Swimsuits

The referee must understand and recognize the difference between the men's game and the women's game. Unfortunately grabbing and holding of the swimsuit is a large factor in the women's game; this because it gives an advantage for the player holding the swimsuit. However, this advantage is unfair and an infringement on the rules of the game; therefore, the punishment should be accordingly:



Grabbing of the swimsuit should be exclusion if done by a defensive player and an offensive foul if done by an attacking player.





**KEY WORDS for leading the game in a proper way:**

- **Protect the movement**
- **Punish impeding**



**Other Clarifications:**

1. After a quick change of ball possession, the excluded player, without leaving the field of play, goes in the attack with his team.....  
The situation in question happens very rarely and there is no rule with exact wording that can be applied.  
According to the spirit of the rules the following application should be used, although the "wording" of the rule is not precise:
  - a) If excluded player didn't interfere with the game, it should be interpreted according WP 22.16
  - b) If excluded player interfered with the game WP Rule 23.4 shall be used.
2. Substitution of the goalkeeper at an Exclusion for 20 sec. and at an Exclusion for Brutality: In all situations the substitution of a goalkeeper by a substitute goalkeeper after an exclusion will be allowed whenever it is in accordance with the rules.
3. The following stoppages are considered to be interval time:
  - a) The rest time between periods
  - b) Time out
  - c) The time after a goal has been scored and before the restart after a goal
  - d) When a referee takes the ball out of the water for an injury, cap replacement, video reviews, etc.

**APPENDIX A INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE USE OF TWO REFEREES**

**COLLABORATION**

A referee who has in mind "Help your colleague and YOU help yourself", follows the right principle. Both referees should help each other to recognise and indicate goal or corner throw. The referee in the back part of the field should not normally whistle goal or corner throw but may indicate them especially in the case of uncertainty of the other referee.

There is no strict division of the field of play. Generally, the principle should be applied, but whenever the colleague cannot fully control the situation, because players are obstructing the view, the other referee should declare fouls and penalties. That referee should not indicate that these fouls have occurred in the area of the other referee.



This principle applies especially for major fouls. On the other hand, a referee shall not award anything into the other referee's area if it is clear that the colleague is controlling the situation and allowing the advantage to the attacking team.

The key word for all kinds of situations is communication, and communication in this case does not mean only to speak to each other.

Both referees are responsible for the behaviour of the players and officials on the bench. They may assist each other with the observation of the bench and intervene to assist each other.

The referees shall pay particular attention to the teams while they are changing ends.

Referees should make sure that it is obvious for everybody in the pool that they are going to officiate the game as a team, which means, to fulfil together the duties before the game, to talk with each other as to how to apply the guidelines for the two referee system, to assume together the responsibility for their decisions and to help each other as much as possible. Referees should meet at least 60 minutes before the start of the game.

For technical errors, both the referees are responsible. It is not important which referee has committed the error because the other referee has the opportunity to correct it.

If either referee displays the wrong signal, that referee shall stop the play, call for the ball, display the correct signal and allow the players to take their positions before resuming the play. If both referees simultaneously award free throws but for opposing teams, one referee should not change opinion or reverse the decision merely to avoid disagreement between the referees.

The referees shall apply the relevant Rules for simultaneous fouls.

After the game, the referees should check and sign the game sheet and leave the poolside together as a team.

## APPENDIX B SIGNALS TO BE USED BY OFFICIALS

In order to communicate better with players and the official table, the referees are to signal the number of the caps with both hands. In signalling a player's cap number from 11 to 13, a referee must show a clenched fist with one hand and the rest of the number with the fingers of the other hand. (This will enable also the public to better follow the situation).



If an incorrect signal by the referee has resulted in a change of possession, the referee should stop play and call for the ball. The referee should wait until the players have understood the new situation, taken their positions so that there is no disadvantage to any team.



## MISTAKES OF JUDGEMENT

Finally, we have to state that, as is the nature of all humans, every referee is liable to commit mistakes. Most players and most coaches at the international level accept this fact as well, although they like to criticise the referees' decisions.

But it is much more important that the referees also recognise and accept this fact.

If a referee has the impression or feeling of having made a mistake, they should never start thinking about otherwise, another mistake may occur.

It is the responsibility of the referee only to interpret what the referee observes to the best of the ability of the referee. (WP 7.1)

## APPENDIX C REGULATIONS FOR DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS IN WATER POLO

**PREAMBLE:** These Regulations contain basic regulations for fair play, ethical and moral behaviour, and general discipline in Water Polo.

These Regulations include measures related to incidents involving teams, water polo Federations, water polo sections of Member Federations, players, team leaders and officials, supporters, spectators but also involving officials or any other persons present at water polo matches.

The Regulations shall be in force from 1 August 2001 and replace the Code adopted by the FINA Bureau on 28 March 2001.

The purpose of these Regulations are to guarantee that the sport of Water Polo will be played in a fair manner without disturbance and to sanction incidents, which damage the image of Water Polo or bring it into disrepute.

### Article 1. SUBORDINATE AND SUPPLEMENTARY TO FINA RULES

**1.1** These Regulations are subordinated and supplementary to all FINA Rules adopted by the FINA Congresses from time to time and the FINA Code of Conduct.

### Article 2. OFFENCES BY OFFICIALS

**2.1** The sanctions to be imposed for offences committed by any person appointed by FINA as delegate, referee, goal judge or serving at the table at any water polo match shall be suspension from participating further in the tournament in which the match occurred and a report shall be made to the FINA Bureau, or if the Bureau is not assembled, to the FINA Executive, for consideration of additional sanctions.

**2.2** If a person, appointed by FINA as a delegate, referee, goal judge or serving at the table at a water polo match, commits an offence referred to in these Regulations or the FINA Code of Conduct and involving cheating or partiality, the person shall be suspended up to life.

### Article 3. OFFENCES AGAINST OFFICIALS

**3.1** Any offence committed by any member of a team or team official shall result in a minimum suspension of one (1) match up to a maximum suspension of all water polo matches for one (1) year period.



**3.2** If the offence includes violence resulting in serious injury, use of any hard object or any other kind of violence against the body, the minimum suspension shall be for all water polo matches for one (1) year period up to a maximum of a lifetime suspension from water polo matches.

**3.3** If the offence is an attempt to commit an offence referred to in 3.2, the minimum suspension shall be three (3) matches up to a maximum suspension of all water polo matches for one (1) year period.

**3.4** Offences in 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3 involve acts committed from 30 minutes before the beginning of the match until 30 minutes after the end of the match.

**3.5** If an offence referred to in 3.1, 3.2 or 3.3 is committed by any person other than a player or team official, the minimum sanction shall be a warning or exclusion from the venue up to a maximum sanction of suspension of the right to attend water polo matches for any period up to, and including, life.

**3.6** The minimum sanction for any offence under Article 3 may be increased for a second or subsequent offence by any individual.

#### **Article 4. OFFENCES AGAINST TEAM MEMBERS OR TEAM OFFICIALS**

**4.1** For brutality, or any offence not covered in FINA Rules WP 20-22 committed by a player against other players or team officials, the minimum suspension shall be for one (1) match up to a maximum of all water polo matches for a one (1) year period.

**4.2** For incidents of brutality or extreme violence, after the match the Management Committee is entitled to review official video of any match and is entitled to apply a sanction for the incident, notwithstanding that the referees did not make a call of brutality or extreme violence during the match.

**4.3** If the offence is committed by a team official against any player or team official, the minimum suspension shall be one (1) match up to a maximum of a lifetime suspension from water polo matches.

**4.4** If the offence is committed by any other person, the minimum sanction shall be expulsion from the venue up to a maximum of a suspension of the right to attend water polo matches for any period up to, and including, life.

**4.5** The minimum sanction for any offence under Article 4 may be increased for a second or subsequent offence by any individual.

#### **FINA WATER POLO RULE INTERPRETATIONS**

1. What if a defensive field player attempts to block a pass or shot with 2 hands?

If the player attempts to block a shot with two hands the player shall be punished with a penalty shot when the defensive player is inside the 6 metre area and an exclusion foul when the defensive player is outside the 6 metre area.

2. May a field player who replaces an excluded goalkeeper assume the privileges of the goalkeeper?



No, a field player, who replaces an excluded goalkeeper, must play the position without the privileges of the goalkeeper. If the player attempts to play with two hands a penalty throw shall be awarded.

3. What is the signal for the substitute to re-enter when brutality is called.

When a player is excluded for brutality the secretary will signal the substitute to re-enter the field of play with two flags, one yellow flag and the other flag of corresponding cap colour.

- 4a. What happens if a defensive field player deliberately deflects a pass and sends the ball out over the goal line?

Play shall be restarted with a corner throw. This action is considered as deliberately sending the ball over the goal line.

- 4b. What happens when the ball is sent out of the side of the field of play following a shot having last been touched by a field player of the defending team?

A free throw is awarded to the defending team. This situation is covered under the same Rule as a shot having last been touched by a player of the defending team and the ball going over the goal line.

5. What happens in the case of a double exclusion during play?

In the case of a double exclusion during play, both players are excluded for 20 seconds. The referees should, except in a situation of clear advantage, call the ball from the water, ensure that both teams and table know who is excluded, the 30 second possession clock is not reset and restart play with a free throw to the team which had possession. If neither team had possession when the double exclusion was called, the 30 second possession clock is reset and play will be restarted with a neutral throw on the half distance line.

6. What if there is an exclusion of a player or simultaneous exclusion of player of both teams? Is the team or are the teams able to continue the game without a goalkeeper during the period when the team or teams have less than 7 players?

A team with 7 players must have a goalkeeper. An excluded player or their substitute is considered to be one of these 7. An excluded goalkeeper's substitute may only be another goalkeeper. An excluded field player's substitute may only be another field player.

7. What happens if there is a brutality during interval time, injury time, time out, before a penalty throw or after the goal?

If a brutality is called during interval time, injury time, time out before a penalty throw or after a goal the player is excluded for the remainder of the game with substitution after 4 minutes. Play will restart in the normal manner without any penalty throw however in the situation where the brutality occurred before the taking of a penalty throw the original throw will be maintained.

- 8a. What happens if a goalkeeper commits an act of brutality during play?

If a goalkeeper commits an act of brutality during play the goalkeeper shall be excluded for the remainder of the game and must leave the competition area and penalty throw awarded to the opposing team. A player may take the position of goalkeeper but without the goalkeeper's privileges and limitations. The offending goalkeeper may be



substituted when 4 minutes of actual play has elapsed; a substitute goalkeeper may however take the position of goalkeeper following the taking of the penalty throw provided that the team is one player less for the remainder of the exclusion time.

8b. What happens if there is simultaneous brutality by a player of both teams during play?

In the case of simultaneous brutality called during play, both players are excluded for the remainder of the game with substitution after 4 minutes. The team that had possession of the ball will first shoot a penalty throw followed by the other team shooting a penalty throw. After the second penalty throw the team that had possession of the ball will restart play with a free throw on or behind the half distance line.

8c. What happens if there is a simultaneous brutality by players of both teams during the last minute of the game or during the last minute of extra time?

If a simultaneous brutality by players of both teams occurs during the last minute of the game, following the principle of WP 23.9, the coach whose team was in possession of the ball can decide whether for each team to shoot a penalty throw or elect to maintain possession and be awarded a free throw wherein the timekeeper shall reset the 30 second possession clock.

9. What happens when a defensive player enters improperly?

If a defensive player re-enters the field of play improperly the player is excluded for an additional 20 seconds and a penalty throw is awarded to the attacking team. However, on the score sheet only one additional personal foul (marked as EP) shall be recorded against the offending player.

10. What happens when an offensive player re-enters improperly?

If an offensive player re-enters the field of play improperly the player is excluded for an additional 20 seconds and a free throw is awarded to the opposing team. On the score sheet an additional personal foul shall be recorded against the offending player.

11. What happens when a team is awarded a penalty throw in the last minute of the regulation time?

If a team is awarded a penalty throw in the last minute of the regulation time a coach may request to maintain the possession in lieu of taking the penalty throw. The coach must show the referee immediately by crossing their arms in front of his chest to signal possession, or show 5 fingers to request a penalty throw. If a team requests possession play shall be restarted on the half distance line or behind the half distance line and the possession clock shall be reset.

12. What happens if a player of a team commits misconduct or any other offence (relating to WP 22.13) during the interval between periods, during time out or prior to the restart after a goal?

The player shall be excluded from the remainder of the game and the substitute shall be eligible to re-enter immediately prior the restart of the game as all three situations are considered to be in interval time.

*Note: If the exclusion is during interval time the game will restart with a swim up; after a time out a free throw to the team that requested the time out or following the goal a free throw to the defending team.*



## The FINA Cloud

This platform provides a lot of examples from different game situations

- to access the Cloud with clips about water polo situations please go to the login page:  
<http://dva.ericssports.net/login.php>
- and log in with User name:  
[finareferees@fina.ericssports.net](mailto:finareferees@fina.ericssports.net)
- Password: 13579

In case you need assistance, please contact: [dubrovnik67@gmail.com](mailto:dubrovnik67@gmail.com)

Instructions for use of the FINA Cloud, please see the following pages:

1. Go to login page <http://dva.ericssports.net/login.php> (pic. 1)
2. Write username and password then log in



3. On the right window you will find content of the cloud (pic. 2)

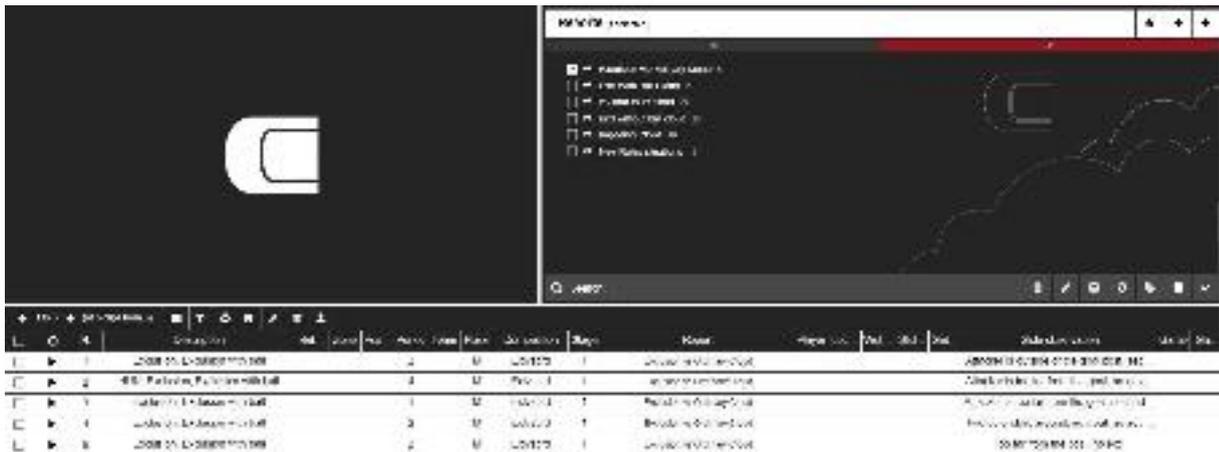


4. Click on the folder you want to see and after on checkmark (right bottom of window)

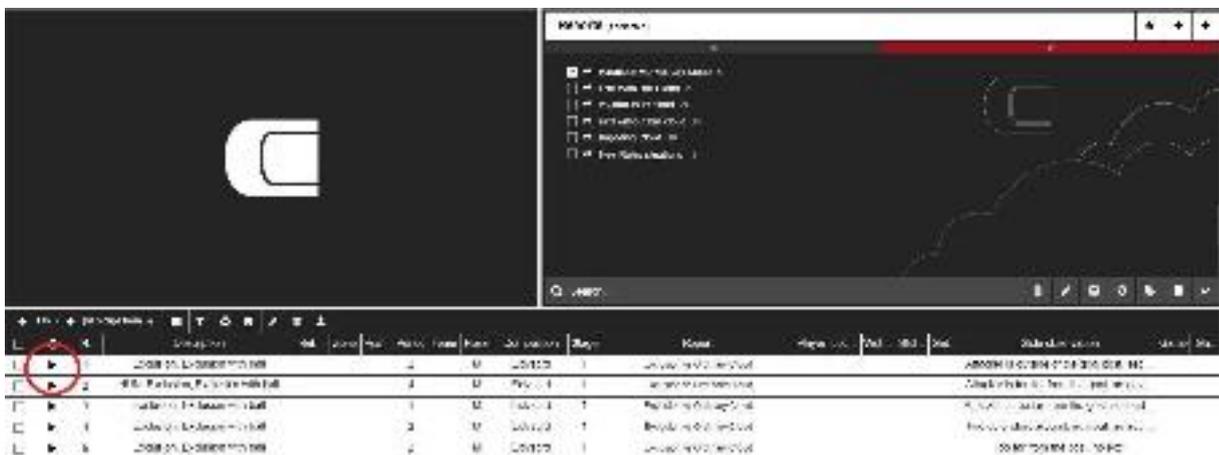




5. Below left window will appear all video clips from chosen folder



6. Mark the video you want to watch then press play (pic. 5)



7. The video will appear in the right window (pic. 6)







FÉDÉRATION  
INTERNATIONALE  
DE NATATION

FINA Water Polo Referees' Manual  
2019-2021

