

Water Polo Rules

History: Water Polo originated as a form of rugby played in rivers and lakes in England and Scotland. It first appeared as an Olympic sport for men in the 1900 games and in the 2000 Sydney games for women.

Pool: The dimensions of an official water polo pool are not fixed and vary in size between 20 meters x 10 meters and 30 meters x 20 meters. The minimum water depth is 6 feet.

Goals: 3 meters wide and 90 cm high.

Objective: To advance the ball legally into your opponent's goal.

Scoring: Each goal is worth 1 point.

Periods: Olympics / college: 4 periods that are 8 minutes in length.

Overtime: If tied at the end of regulation: 2 overtime periods that are 3 minutes in length.

Shootout: If tied at the end of overtime: 5 players from each team will have a penalty shot 1 on 1 with the goalie. If it is still tied, penalty shots become sudden-death until a winner is determined.

Organization: Two teams of 7 each, including 6 field players and 1 goalie.

Goalie: The last line of defense – he must be agile, skillful in blocking the ball, and mentally alert. The goalie is the only player that can catch the ball with 2 hands, strike the ball with a closed fist, and touch the bottom of the pool (depends on depth of pool). The goalie is also the only player that cannot cross the center of the pool.

Substitution: Free substitution is allowed in front of the team's bench while the game is in progress.

Skills: Swimming, ball-handling (catching / throwing), treading water, reflexes / awareness

Ball-handling:

Players move the ball by throwing it to a teammate or swimming while pushing the ball out in front of them.

Note: Field players cannot touch the ball with 2 hands and cannot push the ball underwater.

Passes:

Dry pass: Thrown to a teammate in the air.

Wet pass: Thrown into the water for a teammate to receive.

Shots:

“Skip” / bounce shot: Thrown into the water with great force so that the ball will bounce back up off of

the water.

Lob shot: Thrown with less force high over the goalie.

Direct shot: Thrown straight at goal sometimes from different arm angles such as sidearm.

Start of period procedure: Each team lines up on the endline with three players on each side of the goal with the goalie in the middle. The referee will blow the whistle and toss the ball directly into the middle of the pool. The team that swims to the ball first starts with possession of the ball.

After goal procedure: The team that got scored on starts with the ball at ½ pool and gets a free pass. Teams usually pass backwards so that their players can swim forward into their offensive positions.

Out of Bounds: The ball completely exits the pool onto the deck.

Over the side-deck: Free one-handed pass from the point the ball went onto the deck. Players cannot score off of free passes.

Over the end line off the offense: Goalie free pass. Goalie may throw the ball with one or two hands and cannot score directly off of the pass.

Over the goal line off the defense: The offense takes a corner throw from the nearest corner that the ball went onto the deck.

Violations: Result in a free pass from the point of the infraction.

1. Touching the ball with 2-hands.
2. Exiting the pool
3. Hanging on the pool deck
4. Shot clock: Teams must shoot within 30 seconds of gaining possession of the ball.
5. Players can only have possession of the ball for 5 seconds at a time.

Fouls: Occur when a player impedes the free movement of an opponenet.

Types: dunking, splashing, holding, swimming on a players back, pulling someone away from the ball.

Note: All fouls result in a free pass for the non-offending team.

Brutality fouls: Player kicks or strikes an opponent. Player receives a 2 minute penalty in which they are removed from the game until time expires on the penalty or the other team scores a goal.

Penalty Shot: Player fouled in the act of shooting or a violation occurs when a sure goal was about to be scored. Penalty shots are 1 v 1 with the goalie from 5 meters away.