



Schools Water Polo South Africa

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Re: FINA Water Polo Rule Amendments – effective from 1 January 2019

Dear Provincial Chairpersons' and SWPSA Executive Committee Members

The Water Polo rule changes Approved at the FINA Extraordinary Congress on 10 December 2018 (in Hangzhou, China), which are being implemented by Schools Water Polo South Africa (“SWPSA”), effective 1 January 2019, for all Inter-School, Regional and Provincial matches including the SWPSA Tournament are as follows:

1. Rule WP 5 – Teams and Substitutes

Existing rule: WP 5.6 - “At any time in the game, a player may be substituted by leaving the field of play at the re-entry area nearest to the player’s own goal line. The substitute may enter the field of play from the re-entry area as soon as the player has visibly risen to the surface of the water within the re-entry area.”

New rule: An additional substitution re-entry area will be at any place between the goal line and the centre field line on the teams half of the field of play (for flying substitutions).

[Note: an excluded player or the substitute must always re-enter via the re-entry box in the corner]

There will be some restrictions in the application of this rule:

- a) In order to move along the side of the pool (outside of the field of play), 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.
- b) There is no restriction on the number of substitutes a team may have at the side of the pool.
- c) Players must visibly touch hands above the water once both the player exiting and the substitute are outside of the field of play. The player must exit the field of play before the substitute may enter.
- d) The player exiting must swim along the side of the pool until behind the goal line.
- e) Substitution can occur anywhere between the team’s goal line and the centre line, and it can occur anytime during the game.

[Note: In practice this is likely only applicable to pools that have lane rope borders]

2. Rule WP 11 – Duration of the Game

Existing rule: WP 11.2 – “There shall be a five-minute interval between the second and third periods”

New rule: There shall be a three-minute interval between the second and third periods.

3. Rule WP 12 – Time Outs

Existing rule: WP 12.1 - “Each team may request one timeout in each period of play”

New rule: Each team may request 2 time-outs during the game at any time, except after the awarding of a penalty throw, by the coach of the team in possession of the ball.

The timeouts can be called in the same period or back to back. There are no restrictions on when the team may call them, as long as the team has possession of the ball.

4. Rule WP 14 – Method of scoring

Existing rule: WP 14.2 – “A goal may be scored from anywhere within the field play, except that the goal keeper shall not be permitted to go or touch the ball beyond the half distance line”

New rule: The goal keeper is allowed to move beyond and touch the ball past the half distance line.

A goalkeeper can now go past the centre line and can shoot the ball from anywhere instead of passing it. The goalkeeper is also entitled to take a penalty shot or to be one of the players shooting in a shootout.

5. Rule WP 14 – Method of scoring

Existing rule: WP 14.3(d) – “A goal may be scored by (d) an immediate shot from a free throw awarded outside 5 metres”

New rule: A goal may be scored from a free throw taken and awarded outside 6 metres from a direct shot or after fake or dribble or putting the ball on the water. (Referees shall use signals if the foul happened outside the 6 metre line).

Both the ball and the free throw have to be outside of 6 metres. If the ball is inside 6 metres the player cannot shoot. If the free throw was awarded inside 6 metres and the ball is outside 6 metres the player cannot shoot.

If the ball and the free throw are both outside 6 metres, the player can choose to shoot immediately or to visibly put 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, 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.

As a result of the change to the above Method of Scoring rule the original restriction that was put in place by SWPSA (which has been effect since 1 July 2013) for the Boys Under 15 and Below and Girls Under 16 and Below age groups has been amended to only restrict the application of the rule to the Boys and Girls Under 14 and Below age groups for all Inter-School, Regional and Provincial matches including the SWPSA Tournament.

6. Rule WP 17 – Corner Throws

Existing rule: WP 17.2 – “The corner throw shall be taken by a player of the attacking team from the 2 metre mark on the side, nearest to which the ball crossed the goal line. The throw need not be taken by the nearest player but shall be taken without undue delay”

New rule: A player taking a corner throw may a) shoot directly, b) swim and shoot without passing or c) pass to another player.

The intent of the rule is that the player taking the corner throw will not be restricted in taking actions, including shooting.

7. Rule WP 19 – Free Throws

Existing rule: WP 19.1 – “A free throw shall be taken at the place where the foul occurred”

New rule: A free throw shall be taken from the location of the ball, except a) if the foul is committed by a defending player within the defender’s 2 metre area, the free throw shall be taken on the 2 metre line opposite to where the foul was committed and b) where otherwise provided for in the Rules.

This change is intended to speed up the game by not requiring the return of the ball to the place of the foul.

8. Rule WP 20 – Ordinary Fouls (corner throw)

Existing rule: WP 20.15 – “The timekeeper recording the possession time shall reset the clock to 30 seconds: c) when the ball is put into play after awarding a corner throw”

New rule: The timekeeper recording the possession time shall reset the clock to 20 seconds when a) the ball is put into play after awarding a corner throw, b) after a rebound after a shot which does not cause change of possession and c) after an exclusion.

The intent of the rule is that, from the start of static play, or a second possession in the same sequence, a team will have a maximum of 20 seconds of possession time left.

If there is a corner throw awarded, the shot clock is reset to 20 seconds.

If there is a rebound and the shooting team retakes possession of the ball, the shot clock is reset to 20 seconds. If there is a rebound and the defending team takes possession of the ball, the shot clock is set to 30 seconds. If there are more than 20 seconds on the clock at the time of the shot, the time will be reset to 20 seconds.

If there is an exclusion, the time will be reset to 20 seconds, unless there was more time on the shot clock. If there is more than 20 seconds on the shot clock at the time of the exclusion, that greater time will remain. The team is not to lose time as a result of the exclusion, nor is the offending team to benefit from a reduction in possession time.

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

Given that software and hardware changes will be required to be made to the majority of water polo playing schools clocks and scoreboard monitoring systems an extension to the full implementation of this rule has been granted until 30 April 2019.

9. Rule WP 22 – Penalty Fouls

New rule: Attacking a player from behind by a defender in the 6 metre area.

Inside the 6 metre area, when a player is swimming with and / or is holding the ball and is impeded (attacked) from behind during an attempt to shoot, a penalty foul must be awarded unless only the ball is touched by the defender.

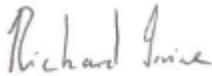
If an attacking player with the intention to shoot has front position on a defender while moving toward the goal, the defender is not allowed to commit a foul without giving away a potential penalty shot to the attacker. This is stopping a probable goal and falls within the meaning of WP 22.2.

The only way to defend from behind in this situation is for the defender to make contact only with the ball / hand of the attacking player. If the defender contacts the arm, back or shoulder, a penalty must be awarded. This will eliminate the potential decision and call of the referee that the “ball was in the hand” that we saw in the past. 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 it, the referee must apply the rule.

Please could you urgently arrange for this communication to be distributed to the MICs of Water Polo of the Schools that fall within your Province / Region.

Should you wish to discuss any aspect of this letter or require clarification on any of the rule changes please do not hesitate to give me a call on my cellular (082-820-5800).

Yours sincerely



Richard Irvine
Chairman: Schools Water Polo South Africa