

November 15, 2007

To: Head Men's and Women's Water Polo Coaches, Commissioners and Referees  
From: John Zeigler, chair, Water Polo Rules Subcommittee  
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Subject: 2007-08 NCAA Water Polo Rules Interpretations and Questions

This is the third set of interpretations and answers to questions. The previous two were distributed August 27, 2007, and October 3, 2007. These are also available on the NCAA water polo web site.

## **Rule 1 Field of Play and Equipment**

### **Rule 1-6 Markers and Point of Emphasis #23**

**Situation:** A pool used for a game was 25 yards wide. No side lines were used. What is the responsibility of the referee in this situation?

**Answer:** The width of the water polo course may not exceed 20 meters (66 feet). The referee must inform the coach before the game of the requirement to have side lines (marked correctly) in place to decrease the size of the pool to the correct maximum width. After the game the referee must report to the conference and assigning authority the lack of the required side lines.

### **Rule 1-6 Markers and Point of Emphasis #23**

**Situation:** A pool was of the correct dimensions, but the side lines were not marked in accordance with Rule 1-6. In addition, the markings on the pool deck and the color and placement of cones were not in agreement with each other (a painted mark on the side of the pool was 6 inches from the change in color of the side line which was slightly different from the location of the cone). What is the responsibility of the referee in this situation?

**Ruling:** One type of boundary marking (side lines, cones, or deck markers) does not take precedence over the other markings: the color and length of each marked area on the side lines, the length and color of each deck marker, and the color and placement of cones must all be in agreement. If deck markers are used, the markers must be of the required length and color; if marks are painted on the pool deck, they must be at the correct location; if cones are used, they must be of the correct color and be placed on the goal line, 2-meter line, 5-meter line and half-distance line; and if side lines are required, the colors of the side lines must be white from the boundary line to the goal line, red from the goal line to the 2-meter line, and yellow from the 2-meter line to the 5-meter line. The referee must inform the coach before the game of the problem with the pool markings. Any possible change in markings should be made at that time and both teams informed which marking is the correct marking if they still differ. After the game the referee must report to the conference and assigning authority this issue with the field of play. The discussion with the coach and the conference reporting responsibilities with regard to facilities are required in order to alleviate these problems. The rules relating to required pool markings were effective July 1, 2007.

### **Rule 1-7 Reentry Area**

**Situation:** The reentry area in the host pool was not marked on the end line at either end of the pool. An excluded player from the visiting team entered the field of play during play at the signal of the referee for a change in possession. At the next stoppage, without taking away the advantage, the home team coach protested, saying that the player was outside the exclusion area and should have been punished for entering the field of play improperly (Rule 21-15). What should be the action of the referee?

**Ruling:** Since the area was not marked at either end of that coach's pool and since neither the referee nor the exclusion secretary considered the player to be outside the unmarked boundary, the protest should be denied. The referee, however, should have noted this deficiency during the pre-game inspection of the facility and should not have started the game until the exclusion area was marked at the correct position by using a towel or cone, etc. The referee should report the lack of required pool markings to the association or conference and the assigning authority in order that this be permanently corrected.

## Rule 1-7 Reentry Area

**Situation:** The reentry area on the end lines or pool wall was marked in red at one meter at both ends of the field of play, instead of at the required two meters. An excluded player reentered the field of play outside the marked area at approximately 1.5 meters. The exclusion secretary blew the whistle for an improper reentry. What should be the action of the referee?

**Answer:** Since the player entered the field of play outside the marked reentry area, the reentry shall be considered an improper reentry and Rule 21-15 shall be applied. The referee, however, should have noted this error in pool marking during the pre-game inspection of the facility and should have had the exclusion areas marked correctly before the game began. The referee should report the lack of required pool markings to the coach, the assigning authority, and to the association or conference in order that this be immediately corrected.

## Rule 1-12 Use of Video

**Situation:** Brutality and a fight, accompanied by the entrance of players into the field of play from one bench area, occurred near the end of a game. The referees imposed the correct penalties for brutality and fighting, and assessed the fighting penalty for players who left the bench area during a fight (Rule 21-11). The referees informed the conference of their action. In this conference players who commit brutality or engage in a fight are suspended for the next two games. The question was raised after the game as to whether brutality, in fact, did occur and if the players who entered actually participated in the fight (automatic two-game suspension in that conference). May the conference commissioner use video review to confirm the occurrence of brutality and fighting in order to impose the appropriate post-game suspensions?

**Answer:** Yes. Since the conference has a rule allowing the use of videotape after a game to determine if brutality and/or a fight occurred and who participated in this action, the commissioner can, based on observation of the players' actions in the video, impose the appropriate penalty for the actions that actually occurred.

## Rule 5 Teams and Substitutes

### Rule 5-1 Number of Players, Illegal Player

**Situation:** A player received a third personal foul, an exclusion foul, at 6:04 in the fourth period and was immediately substituted. The scorekeeper raised the red flag and lowered it after the substitution. Later in the period a goal was scored at 1:04. The player with the third personal foul entered the field of play at that time after the goal and was observed by the desk at 0:46, just as a goal was scored by that team. What should be the action of the referee?

**Answer:** The referee should remove the player for the remainder of the game, remove the goal scored at 0:46, reset the game clock to 1:04, reset the shot clock, and award a penalty throw (Rule 22-6), with the substitute in the reentry area until the earliest occurrence of an event described in Rule 21-3

### Rule 5-1 Number of Players, Illegal Player

**Situation:** In the above situation what actually happened was that the referees stated that the red flag was not raised at the desk at 6:04. Assuming other conditions are as above, what action should the referee take at 0:46 when the illegal player is discovered in the pool?

**Answer:** The clock should be reset to 1:04, the time when the player with three personal fouls reentered the field of play, the shot clock reset, the goal scored at 0:46 removed, and play restarted even-up without a penalty shot. In order to prevent disagreement concerning if the red flag was raised or not, the scorekeeper and exclusion secretary should follow Rule 10-1: The scorekeeper should inform the referee, as soon as possible after the substitution, that the player has three personal fouls to ensure that the referee is aware that the player would be an illegal player if the player reenters the pool later in the game... The exclusion secretary should keep the red flag raised for a sufficient period of time to make certain that the coach, player and referees see the flag.

#### Rule 5-4 Apparel

**Question:** May an injured player wear a nose guard or face mask made of high impact plastic and soft rubber during a game to protect the nose or orbit from further injury?

**Ruling:** Although these would be regarded as articles likely to cause injury either to the player wearing the article or to an opposing player, the nature of these particular protective devices is that they would be more likely to cause injury to the player wearing the device in the case of a blow to the face, rather than to the opposing player and, moreover, that the design will most likely prevent injury to the wearer. Therefore, after informing the player, parents, prescribing physician and institution of the rules and interpretations regarding the use of this type of appliance and obtaining a signed release which covers the NCAA, the appropriate conference commissioner, and referees from any liability, the player could use this type of device. (Sample of release document available)

#### Rule 5-4 (and Rule 4-1)

**Question:** May a memorial patch be placed on a uniform? If yes, is there a size restriction?

**Answer:** There is no rule prohibiting a memorial patch from being placed on a team uniform, nor is there a restriction on size or placement. The size of the patch is recommended not to exceed the maximum size of a manufacturer's logo/trademark/reference, i.e., 2¼ square inches. The color and placement (for example, on a cap) should not interfere in any way with the referee's ability to distinguish between the two teams.

#### Rule 5-6 Method of Substitution

**Situation:** A live-time substitution occurred during a game as soon as the ball turned over and that team was counterattacking down the field of play. The player leaving the pool swam under the lane line halfway between the goal and the side line. The substitute entered from the reentry area as soon as that player left the field of play. What should be the call of the referee?

**Answer:** The rule states that in a live-time substitution, the player must exit the field of play at the reentry area nearest that player's own goal line and that the substitute may not enter the field of play at the reentry area until the player has visibly risen to the surface of the water within the reentry area. The substitute who entered the field of play is, therefore, considered to be a player not entitled to participate in the play at that time (Rule 22-6). The player is excluded for the remainder of the game and a penalty throw is awarded. The substitute for this player may reenter after the earliest occurrence of an event described in Rule 21-3. No foul is charged against the player who left the field of play.

#### Rule 5-6 Method of Substitution

**Question:** Would the answer to the above question be different if the substitute had waited in the reentry area until the player who left the field of play halfway between the goal and the side line arrived correctly in the reentry area?

**Answer:** Yes. Even though this situation is not covered in the description of the live-time substitution, the substitute would be able to enter the field of play when the player arrived in the reentry area. However, if the player left the playing area and walked down the deck to the reentry area, that player would be excluded for the remainder of the game for misconduct (Rule 21-2). The substitute would be allowed to enter at the appropriate time. If the player leaving the field of play did not go into the reentry area, however, the substitute may not reenter until after a timeout, a goal or at the start of the next period (Rule 21-2, second interpretation).

#### Rule 5-7 Entry of a Substitute

**Situation:** A player on the white team was excluded. A player on the blue team immediately took a direct shot on goal. The shot went over the goal line and the referee blew the whistle to award the ball to the white team. The excluded player turned, before reaching the exclusion area, and started to swim towards the other end of the pool. Before the ball was put into play, the coach of the white team called a timeout.

Should the referee exclude this player for not going to the reentry area before reentering and swimming towards the other end of the pool?

**Answer:** No. During a timeout or between periods or after a goal, an excluded player is not required to go to the reentry area before meeting with the team. Play should be restarted after the timeout even-up.

#### Rule 5-7 Entry of a Substitute

**Question:** Should the excluded player in this situation have been charged with a penalty foul for interfering with play (Rule 21-20) after the exclusion, based on the fact that the player, although starting to swim towards the corner, immediately turned on the change of possession, and started swimming towards the offensive end.

**Answer:** No. The player was not considered to interfere in this example, as the direct shot was taken immediately after the exclusion. The excluded player, who was on the way to the reentry area, turned when the referee blew the whistle when the ball passed over the goal line. This action was immediately followed by the coach now on offense calling timeout before the restart of play. However, if the excluded player had interfered with the direct shot or with any of the players then on offense on the player's way towards the reentry area, a penalty foul should be called.

### Rule 7 Referees

#### Rule 7-1 Authority, Uniform

**Question:** May a referee wear sandals during a game?

**Interpretation:** No. Rule 7-1 states that white footwear is part of the uniform of the referee. The intent of the rule is that the referee must wear white shoes, not white (or any other color) sandals. This type of footwear is not considered to be professional.

#### Rule 7-4 Control Over Conduct

**Situation:** The referee awarded a yellow card to the bench because players were standing. One player on the bench later commented loudly on a referee's call. What should be the action of the referee?

**Answer:** The referee should award a red card to that player. No warning or yellow card is issued to an individual athlete. That player is excluded for the remainder of the game and the next game.

#### Rule 7-8 Checking and Signing Score Sheet

**Question:** This rule recommends that one of the referees check the score sheet after each period, particularly for score and number of timeouts taken. Should the referee keep track of the number of fouls awarded each player and inform a coach, when asked, how many personal fouls a player has?

**Answer:** No. The referee is not responsible for keeping track of the number of personal fouls awarded to each player and should not answer such a question. Each team may have an observer at the desk who may convey this information to the coach. If a coach is uncertain of the number of fouls charged to a particular player and if there is not an exclusion board, a team official may check with its representative at the desk or, at an appropriate moment, with the scorekeeper, but may not ask the referee.

#### Rule 7-8 Checking and Signing Score Sheet

**Situation:** Brutality, a fight, and players entering the field of play during the fight occurred near the end of a game (situation described on page 2, Rule 1-12 and page 12, Rule 21-11). The referees imposed the correct penalties but did not notify the game secretary of the ruling of brutality/fighting as required in Appendix B, Fig. G, and the secretary recorded these as exclusion fouls, not as brutality or fighting on the score sheet. The referees signed that score sheet after the game.

**Interpretation:** The score sheet is the official record of the game. The referees erred in signing a score sheet that did not have the correct notation of these reportable fouls. The referee must check to verify that yellow and red cards, misconduct, brutality, fighting, minor acts of disrespect and any punishment (penalty fouls) awarded subsequent to a third personal foul are recorded on the score sheet. In this case the use of the referees' report on the game, together with the video, helped establish the facts and the appropriate punishment, but that would not be possible in many cases without a correct score sheet.

## Rule 14 Method of Scoring

### Rule 14-3 How Scored

**Situation:** A foul is awarded outside 5 meters. A left-handed player takes a direct shot on goal in the following manner: the ball is near the right hand of the player, the player sweeps (pushes) the ball with his right hand over the surface of the water (without picking the ball up with the right hand) to the left hand, raises the arm, and shoots with one continuous motion. Should the resultant goal be allowed?

**Answer:** Yes, provided that the action is in one continuous motion and that the ball was not picked up with the right hand.

### Rule 14-3 How Scored:

**Situation:** A foul is awarded outside 5 meters. The ball is to the left of a right-handed shooter. The player picks the ball up with the right hand and moves in one continuous motion counterclockwise to shoot a direct shot. Should the resultant goal be allowed?

**Answer:** Yes, provided that the action is in one continuous motion.

### Rule 14-3 How Scored:

**Situation:** A foul is awarded outside 5 meters with the ball behind the player (i.e., farther from the goal). The player turns, picks up the ball, turns 180 degrees to face the goal and takes a direct shot on goal. Should the resultant goal be allowed?

**Answer:** Yes, provided that the action is in one continuous motion.

## Rule 17 Corner throws

### Rule 17-1 When Awarded

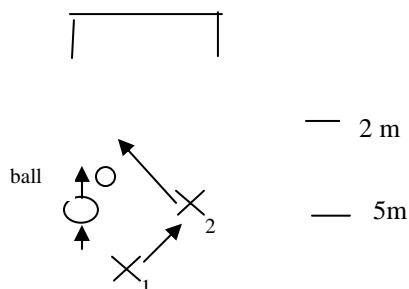
**Question:** A defensive player deflects a pass over the goal line. What should be the action of the referee?

**Answer:** The referee should reset the shot clock and restart play with a corner throw. The action of the defensive player is considered to be deliberately sending the ball over the goal line.

## Rule 20 Ordinary Fouls

### Rule 20-3 Assisting a Player

**Situation:**



It is an ordinary foul to assist a player at the start of a period or at any other time during the game. Player X<sub>1</sub> swam towards Player X<sub>2</sub> and pushed the player at an angle so the defensive player cut off the offensive player. This action assisted that player to gain a defensive advantage. What action should the referee take?

**Answer:** Considering the advantage rule (Rule 7-3), the referee must decide if the player on offense has lost the possibility of scoring a goal due to this action, when deciding whether to award an ordinary foul, an exclusion foul, a penalty foul or make no call.

## **Rule 20: Ordinary Fouls**

### **Rule 20-6 Taking the Ball Under**

**Question:** What is the definition of “challenged” in the interpretation issued October 3, 2007?

***October 3 Question:** The offense of ball under usually occurs when a player takes the ball under when tackled. How does this statement relate to a goalkeeper taking the ball under?*

***October 3 Interpretation:** The rule states when a goalkeeper emerges high out of the water to save a shot and then while falling back takes the ball under the water, the goalkeeper has committed no offense; but if the goalkeeper then holds the ball under water when challenged by an opponent, the goalkeeper will have committed an infringement of this rule and a penalty throw must be awarded under Rule 22-2. The opposing player does not have to force the goalkeeper to take the ball under. No player, in order to gain possession of a loose ball, may reach out and take the ball under to prevent the opposing player from gaining possession of the ball.*

**Answer:** “If the goalkeeper holds the ball under water when challenged” refers to the situation where the goalkeeper continues to hold the ball under water if the defense goes after, chases, approaches, etc., the goalkeeper.

## **Rule 21 Exclusion Fouls**

### **Rule 21-10 Misconduct**

**Question:** If a player commits misconduct while exiting the pool after committing that player’s third personal foul, an exclusion foul, the player is excluded for the remainder of the game, the substitute may not enter for 20 seconds, and a penalty throw is awarded. What punishment, however, should be awarded if a player commits another act of misconduct while exiting the pool after being excluded from the remainder of the game for misconduct, that player’s first personal foul?

**Answer:** The player is excluded for the remainder of the game and a penalty throw is awarded. If the player continues to be disrespectful to the referee, the referee should also award a red card to the player. The player receiving the red card is also excluded from the next game. The substitute may enter after the earliest occurrence of an event described in Rule 21-3.

### Rule 21-10 Misconduct

**Question:** A minor act of disrespect is considered to be an exclusion foul with a 20-second period of exclusion. What is the appropriate action for the referee to take in each of the following cases where a player commits a minor act of disrespect immediately following a personal foul?

**Answer:** The appropriate action in each instance is summarized in the following chart.

<b>A player commits a minor act of disrespect immediately after each of the following personal fouls:</b>	<b>Appropriate action of the referee in each case:</b>
A player receives his/her first personal foul, an exclusion foul	Player awarded another personal foul (his/her second) and excluded for 20 seconds
A player receives his/her first personal foul, a penalty foul,	Player awarded another person foul (his/her second); player excluded for 20 seconds, and live-time penalty throw conducted
A player receives his/her second personal foul, an exclusion foul	Player awarded another personal foul (his/her third) and excluded for remainder of game; substitute out for 20 seconds
A player receives his/her second personal foul, a penalty foul	Player awarded another personal foul (his/her third) and excluded for remainder of game, substitute out for 20 seconds and the live-time penalty throw conducted
A player receives his/her third personal foul, an exclusion foul	Player excluded for remainder of game, substitute out for 20 seconds, a live-time penalty throw awarded
A player receives his/her third personal foul, a penalty foul	Player excluded for remainder of game, substitute enters immediately as the third foul was a penalty foul; first penalty throw is a dead time penalty throw, second is a live time penalty throw.

### Rule 21-11 Brutality, Including Fighting

**Question:** The referee called a double exclusion when the blue team had possession of the ball. The two players immediately started to fight. One player from the white team who was already in the field of play swam over to the site of the fight and became involved in the fight. Three players from the white team immediately left the bench area and swam to the site of the fight. What action should the referee take?

**Answer:** The rule provides that any player who leaves the bench area during a fight shall be assessed a brutality foul as well as those who are actually involved in the fight. Therefore, the referee should exclude the six players from the remainder of the game for fighting, as well as exclusion from the next game. The blue team is awarded five dead-time penalty throws and the white team one dead-time penalty throw. The teams shoot the dead-time penalty throws in alternate succession at their opponent's goal, beginning with the blue team, the team in possession of the ball at the time of the double exclusion, concluding with the team awarded the greater number of penalty shots (the blue team). Any member(s) of a team, with the exception of the fight participants, may take the penalty throws in any sequence. After the last penalty throw has been taken (made or missed) the game shall be restarted with a free throw on or behind the half-distance line by the team that last had possession of the ball (the blue team) as after a timeout, with the substitutes (one from the blue team and five from the white team) in their respective exclusion areas until the earliest occurrence of one of the events described in Rule 21-3. If a goalkeeper was involved in the fight, the substitute goalkeeper must be in the exclusion area.

## **Rule 22 Penalty Fouls**

### **Rule 22-6 Player Not Entitled to Participate Entering the Field of Play**

**Situation:** A player was removed for the remainder of the game upon the award of a third personal foul. The red flag was raised properly and was observed by the referees. Later in the game, the player entered during live time after a change in possession as a substitute for an excluded player and was observed by the desk shortly after. What should the exclusion secretary and referee do?

**Answer:** The exclusion secretary should blow the whistle as soon as the player with three personal fouls is observed. The referee should remove the player, the substitute for that player should be in the reentry area, a penalty throw is awarded, and the substitute may enter after the earliest occurrence of an event described in Rule 21-3.

Rule 22-6 Player Not Entitled to Participate Entering Field of Play (This is a slight correction to the answer to the question on page 5 of the October 3, 2007, interpretations.)

**Question:** A team attempted a live-time substitution. However, the substitute entered the field of play from the reentry area before the departing player left the field of play at the reentry area. What should be the call of the referee?

**Answer:** It is a penalty foul for a player not entitled to participate to enter the field of play. This substitute was not entitled to participate before the original player left the field of play at the reentry area and there are now eight players on that team in the field of play. Therefore, the substitute is excluded for the remainder of the game and a penalty foul is awarded. The penalty throw is taken with a player in the reentry area.

## **Rule 23 Penalty Throws**

### **Rule 23-4 How Taken**

**Situation:** Defending players were on either side of the penalty shooter, 2 meters away. Another defensive player was a similar distance behind the shooter. After the referee blew the whistle for the penalty shot, the player behind the shooter moved forward towards the shooter. None of these players shouted, whistled, or hit the player's arm. Should the player behind the shooter be called for interfering with the penalty throw?

**Interpretation:** If, in the opinion of the referee, the defender behind the player taking the penalty shot did not interfere with the taking of the penalty shot, no foul should be assessed against that player.