

MEMORANDUM

December 4, 2006

TO: Head Men's and Women's Water Polo Coaches, Commissioners and Officials.

FROM: Carin Crawford, Chair
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Subject: Rules Questions and Interpretations.

1. **Question:** In the 2005-06 Rules Book in the section entitled Instructions to Referees and Points of Emphasis, page 13, No. 13, concerning fouls at set, stated that "It is also correct to call an ordinary foul at set when the ball is on the perimeter and the two players are starting to get overly physical. This call can be thought of as a warning to the two players, and the next time an offensive foul or exclusion can be called." In the 2006-07 Rules Book, in the same Point of Emphasis, now numbered 17, page 13, the two sentences above are not included. Is there significance to this omission? Should a referee call an ordinary foul at set when the ball is on the perimeter and the two players are starting to get overly physical as a warning to the two players at set and the next time an offensive foul or exclusion foul can be called?

Answer: No: These two sentences were removed from the points of emphasis for 2006-7 for several reasons:

1. This call is confusing to the team on offense. The players at set do not know this is intended as a warning to them. The ball would be put in play on the periphery where the ball is, so the players would not know the whistle was meant for the players at set. Even if they did look up at the referee, he would be pointing where the ball is to be put into play, which is on the periphery, not at set. In fact, if the referee did point at set to indicate that the players there are overly physical, the player on the periphery could think that this is where the ball is to be put into play and pass the ball there for the free throw.

2. The call takes away the advantage from the offense. Rule 7-3 states that the referees shall refrain from declaring a foul if, in their opinion, such declaration would be an advantage to the offending player's team. If the play is overly physical at set, the referee should make the appropriate call there (an offensive foul or an exclusion foul or a double exclusion foul).
 3. The direction commonly given to referees that a referee may call this a few times in a game as a warning is not appropriate as, if the action is a foul, it should be called. If it is not a foul, it should not be called. A coach should not have to warn players that this may be called a few times a game so don't be surprised.
2. **Question:** May a referee call an exclusion foul if a player uses two hands to prevent a pass outside the 5m area.
Answer: No, the referee may not call an exclusion foul if a player outside the 5-meter area uses two hands to prevent a pass outside the 5-meter area. The referee may call an exclusion foul only if the player uses two hands in an attempt to block a shot in this area (Rule 21-6).
 3. **Question:** Is it permissible to allow a player shooting from outside 5 meters (after that player's team has been awarded a free throw for a foul committed outside 5 meters) a brief amount of time to look at the goal prior to taking an immediate shot on goal?
Answer: Yes. The interpretation in Rule 14-3 states the player may look in the general direction of the goal and then take an immediate shot at the goal.
 4. **Question:** A player is fouled outside the 5-meter line. Given that all other conditions are legal, can the shooter pick up the ball with the left hand, immediately transfer the ball to the right hand and shoot the ball. There is otherwise no fake, hesitation or delay in the direct shot.
Answer: No. The player must pick the ball up with the hand with which he/she intends to shoot. Transferring the ball from one hand to the other is putting the ball into play as far as a referee or defending player can tell (Rule 14-3 Note). However, if the foul is awarded outside 5 meters with the ball inside 5 meters and the player must get the ball and move back to the line of the foul, the player may transfer the ball to the other hand while getting back to the correct position to take the free throw.
 5. **Question:** A penalty throw is awarded. The player picks up the ball with the left hand and immediately transfers the ball to the right hand and then waits for the referee's signal for the penalty throw. May the player transfer the ball from one hand to the other in this situation?

Answer: Yes. The referee does not signal for the penalty throw to be taken (by whistle and by lowering the arm) until the referee is satisfied that the players are in their correct positions (Rule 23-3). If the player transfers the ball to the right hand before the referee signals for the throw, there is no violation of the rule that the player shall immediately throw the ball with an uninterrupted movement directly at the goal. If the player transfers the ball from one hand to the other after the referee signals for the penalty throw to be taken, then the throw will be disallowed and the ball turned over (Rules 23-4, 20-13).

6. **Question:** On a free throw, is there a certain distance a defensive player needs to be away from the offensive player with his/her hand up behind the head? Is the field player allowed to stay within inches of the player if the hand is behind his/her own head?

Answer: There is no set distance the defensive player has to be away from the offensive player with his/her hand up behind the head. The rule is that the defensive player can not interfere with the free throw (Rule 21-5). The raised hand might be behind the head of the defensive player, but if that defending player is so close that the offensive player cannot make a throwing motion without hitting the defensive player, the defender has to back away or be called for interfering with the free throw. However, the offensive player may not unnecessarily lean or make some extraordinary arm motion into the defender to create this contact; that is, the free throw should be in a normal throwing motion.

7. **Question:** The goalkeeper is excluded and, on the way out, interferes with play, resulting in the award of a penalty throw. A field player takes the place of the goalkeeper in the goal with the goalkeeper in the exclusion area during the taking of the penalty throw. Can that field player come forward with both hands outstretched to the side in an attempt to block the penalty throw?

Answer: No. The field player in the goal does not have the privileges of a goalkeeper (Rule 23-2). That field player may not have both hands outstretched in an attempt to block the penalty shot as the player is then attempting to block a shot within the 5-meter area with two hands. The player must have one arm down (Rule 22-2-b).

8. **Question:** On the penalty throw described in Question No. 7, the defensive field player in the goal blocks the ball with one hand out-of-bounds over the goal line. Should a corner throw be awarded?

Answer: No. A goal throw should be awarded to the defensive team since the player in the goal is a field player, not a goalkeeper (Rule 16-1). The goal throw may be taken by this field player (Rule 16-2).

9. **Question:** A timeout is called during regular play. After the warning whistle at 1:45, the teams line up to resume play as after a timeout. The referee throws the ball on the half-distance line even though the player taking the free throw is considerably behind half. Where should the referee throw the ball in this instance?

Answer: After a timeout (with the exception of a timeout called before a corner throw or penalty throw), the players may take any position in the field of play and the team in possession of the ball puts the ball in play at or behind the half-distance line (Rule 12-3). The referee should throw the ball to the player who signals that he is the player putting the ball into play, even if that player is behind the half-distance line. The player should be able to put the ball into play where the player desires as long as it is in conformance with the rules for the restart after a timeout.

10. **Question:** The coach of the team on defense calls a timeout by sounding the air horn during a counterattack by the other team. The referee stops play. The coach explains that one of his players seems to be injured. What should the action of the referee be?

Answer: Even though the referee should not have stopped play for the timeout called by the team on defense (Rule 12-5), the referee must restart play with a free throw to the team on offense. If the referee felt that this action was a deliberate act to stop the counterattack, the referee may award the coach a red card or even a penalty shot (Rule 22-7). (If a player is injured, the coach may call out to draw the attention of the referee or the injured player may swim towards the side of the pool to get the referee's attention. However, the referee is the only person who may stop play for bleeding, injury, etc.)

11. **Situation:** The referee excludes white player cap No. 2 for 20 seconds. White player cap #3 starts to leave the field of play by mistake. The referee calls for the ball and signals to white player No. 3 that he was not excluded. The player, however, not understanding, splashes water which reaches the referee. The referee signals exclusion of that player from the remainder of the game for misconduct (disrespect) by rolling his arms (Appendix B, Figure F). How should the referee restart play?

Answer: Player No. 2 (or substitute) and the substitute for player No. 3 should both be in the exclusion area and play should be resumed by the blue team with a 6-on-4. Even though the referee removed the ball from the field of play, the substitute for Player No. 3 may not start play at this time since Rule 21-10 only provides for this immediate substitution if the misconduct was committed during an interval between periods, a timeout (as defined in Rule 12), and prior to restart after a goal, no matter which team committed the foul. The act of a referee taking a ball out of the pool to clarify which player was excluded is not a timeout.

12. **Question:** Could player No. 3 have been excluded for a minor act of disrespect for making a minor gesture to the referee?

Answer: The referee has the sole power to determine if this act of disrespect was minor or major (Rule 21-10). The referee would restart play in either case with a 6 on 4 in this situation.

13. **Question:** If the referee had determined that the splashing was a minor act of disrespect, should the referee have awarded a penalty shot?

Answer: No. A penalty shot is awarded only if the same player commits a minor act of disrespect on the way out immediately after receiving an exclusion foul (Rule 21-10).

14. **Question:** Should the referee have merely straightened out the situation in No. 11 (an incorrect player leaving the field of play - Rules 21-2, 7-9-e) as opposed to exclusion of the player for the remainder of the game for misconduct?

Answer: No, since the referee determined that the act of splashing the referee constituted disrespect (misconduct). The rule regarding the referee stopping play, correcting the situation, and resetting the clocks assumes that the player leaving by mistake does not commit misconduct.

15. **Situation:** If the coach of the losing team in the situation described in Question 11 filed a protest after the game within the correct time period because play was actually restarted with a 6-on-5 instead of a 6-on-4, and if the protest was upheld at the site, should the entire game be replayed at a later date or should play be resumed at the point of the error the same night?

Answer: Play should resume at the point of the error that same night and all goals and fouls assessed during this time period (from the error to the end of the game) shall not count, except that the following cards and fouls shall remain as issued: any issuance of a yellow or red card, any instance of misconduct excluding minor acts of disrespect, and any instance of brutality, including fighting. This is the procedure described in Rule 5-1 for a similar error.

16. **Question:** If, for example, a referee stops play for an injury, malfunctioning equipment or to replace a cap, can the active players hang on the side of the field of play? Is the answer different if the side of the field of play is the pool wall or if the player goes under the lane line to reach the wall?

Answer: The referee must indicate to the players if they can hang on the side of the pool or if they must remain within the field of play. If the referee does not indicate that the players can leave (as is usually the case with a cap off or missing or for resetting a clock), the referee usually requires the players to stay within the confines of the pool course. If there is a lengthy equipment malfunction, the referee may indicate that the players can go to their bench. Otherwise, players should not leave the field of play nor hang on the sides/lines, etc., without the referee's permission. (Rule 25-1).

17. **Question:** A player is excluded for 20 seconds. The player is waved in at the proper time (both the game clock and the shot clock showed that 20 seconds had elapsed at the time of the wave-in) and the player comes under the lane line with 14 seconds remaining on the shot clock as a goal scores. Should this be regarded as a late entry(Rule 7-9-b)?

Answer: No. In order to disallow a goal, the error must have affected play. In this case the flag was not late and the player coming under the lane line at 14 seconds on the shot clock would be a typical response time.

18. **Situation:** A player outside the 5-meter line is fouled and her defender excluded. The player picks up the ball, which is also outside the 5-meter line, and takes a direct shot on goal, which the goalie catches and immediately throws to the excluded player who does not realize she is excluded and is making no effort to leave the pool. What is the appropriate action of the referee in this situation?

Answer: If no player leaves the field of play, the referee should remove the ball and should immediately correct the situation by removing the excluded player since a goal has not been scored (Rules 21-2 and 7-9-e). The clocks must be reset and the ball put in play by the original player. That player may not start play with a direct shot on goal as the referee removed the ball from the pool to remove the excluded player (Rule 14-3-e) while correcting the situation. (See also Interpretations 10-20-06, No. 1.)

19. **Question:** At what point does a team have to forfeit a game for not showing up on time even if the team contacted the home team that it will arrive late due to transportation problems?

Answer: If a team is not ready to start the game within 30 minutes of the announced starting time, unless there is mutual consent between the competing institutions, the game is declared a forfeit (Rule 7-11). A game is also declared a forfeit if one team decides for any reason not to complete the game. A game that is forfeited shall be counted in a team's won-loss record.

20. **Question:** The goalkeeper wears a swim cap under the water polo cap. May this cap match the color of the swim caps of that team's field players (i.e., white or dark)?

Answer: No. Rule 4-5 states that the swim cap must match the color of the water polo cap as closely as possible (white with white caps, dark with dark caps and red with goalkeeper caps). Therefore, the goalkeeper must wear a red swim cap, if the goalkeeper wears any swim cap, under the water polo cap.

21. **Question:** A coach kicks over a desk marker cone in anger. The referee decides to award him a yellow card. The non-offending team is countering down the pool. When should the referee stop play to award the yellow card?

Answer: Rule 7-4, p.38, states that the referee shall whistle to stop play to administer a red or a yellow card without taking the advantage away from the non-offending team. Therefore, the referee should wait until the conclusion of the counterattack, stop play, call the ball out of the pool and show the appropriate card. The referee should then put the ball back into play. A goal may not be scored by a direct shot on goal in this instance.

22. **Question:** Both the head coach and assistant coach receive red cards in a game. There is no other team official on the bench. Would the team have to forfeit this game because there is no coach on the bench?

Answer: The answer varies depending upon which rules are being used. In NCAA games, the Rules Book does not specify that there must be a coach on the bench during the remainder of this game. However, conferences may have their own rules governing this situation. (During the next game, neither of these coaches may be on the team bench, but another coach or faculty member may be the designated coach on the bench.) In high schools, the associations usually require that a certified coach from that school or other official representative of that school (such as the athletic director) must be on the bench or the game will be forfeited. In FINA no coach is required to be on the bench. In United States Water Polo, the game may proceed if there is one coach on one bench.

BK:nkb