REGULATIONS FOR DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS IN WATER POLO EVENTS CONDUCTED UNDER SWIM ENGLAND REGULATIONS AND TECHNICAL RULES

OBJECTIVE

These Regulations contain basic provisions for fair play, ethical and moral behaviour, and general discipline in Water Polo events conducted in any competition promoted by Swim England or any Region, association, organisation, body or club under the jurisdiction of Swim England (hereinafter referred to as "Designated Water Polo Events").

These Regulations include measures related to incidents involving players, team leaders, team officials, supporters and spectators and also involving officials or any other persons present at water polo matches conducted under Swim England Regulations and Technical Rules.

The purpose of these Regulations is to ensure 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.

The Regulations shall be in force from 1st September 2013, and, as updated, from 16th September 2026.

1. SUBORDINATE AND SUPPLEMENTARY TO SWIM ENGLAND REGULATIONS

These Regulations are subordinated and supplementary to all Swim England Judicial Regulations and the Swim England Code of Ethics.

2. OFFENCES BY MATCH OFFICIALS

The sanctions to be imposed for offences committed by any person officiating as a referee, a goal judge or table official at any water polo match held under the jurisdiction of Swim England shall be suspension from participating further in the relevant competition, league or tournament in which the match occurred and a report by the promoter shall be made to the Office of Judicial Administration by way of a Judicial Complaint under Swim England Regulation 105 for the consideration of additional sanctions.

3. OFFENCES AGAINST MATCH OFFICIALS

3.1 For any offence committed by any member of a team or team official against a match official, with the exception of World Aquatics Rule WP 10.2.2 (misconduct), the minimum suspension shall be from 2 water polo matches up to a maximum suspension from all Designated Water Polo Events for a period of 1 year.

3.2 For misconduct contrary to World Aquatics Rule WP 10.2.2, the minimum sanction shall be from a record of the event (as defined in paragraph 6.2.1.1 below) up to a maximum suspension from all Designated Water Polo Events for a period of 1 year.

3.3 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 from all Designated Water Polo Events for a period of 1 year up to a maximum of a lifetime suspension.

3.4 If the offence is an attempt to commit an offence referred to in 3.3, the minimum suspension shall be from 3 water polo matches up to a maximum suspension from all Designated Water Polo Events for a period of 1 year.

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

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

4. OFFENCES AGAINST TEAM MEMBERS OR TEAM OFFICIALS

4.1 For violent actions contrary to World Aquatics Rule WP 10.2.1 committed by a player against other players or team officials, the minimum suspension shall be from 2 water polo matches up to a maximum suspension from all Designated Water Polo Events for a period of 1 year.

4.2 For misconduct contrary to World Aquatics Rule WP 10.2.2 committed by a player against other players or team officials, the minimum suspension shall be from 1 water polo match up to a maximum suspension from all Designated Water Polo Events for a period of 1 year.

4.3 If the offence in either 4.1 or 4.2 is committed by a team official against any player or team official, the minimum suspension shall be from 2 water polo matches up to a maximum of a lifetime suspension from all Designated Water Polo Events.

4.4 If the offence in either 4.1 or 4.2 is committed by any other person, the minimum sanction shall be expulsion from the venue up to a maximum of a lifetime suspension of the right to attend all Designated Water Polo Events.

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

5. OTHER OFFENCES

5.1 For any offence committed by any team member or team official against media representatives, spectators,pool staff or any other person present in the venue at the time of a match, the minimum suspension shall be from all Designated Water Polo Events for a period of 1 year up to a maximum of a lifetime suspension of the right to attend all Designated Water Polo Events.

5.2 For verbal or written statements of an abusive kind or nature and directed against Swim England, or any Region, County, local association or league, any organiser, authority or any other person, and which are not elsewhere covered in these Regulations, the minimum sanction shall be suspension from 3 water polo matches up to a maximum of suspension from all Designated Water Polo Events for a period of 1 year.

5.3 The minimum sanction for any offence under Section 5 may be increased for a second offence by any individual.

6. PROCEDURES FOR SANCTIONS *(see also Appendix 1 – Water Polo Discipline Process)*

6.1 Sanctions imposed by the Office of Judicial Administration or a Water Polo Delegate

6.1.1 Swim England Regulation 115 contains provisions for Swim England, through the Office of Judicial Administration or a Water Polo Delegate, to apply an automatic sanction to any member of Swim England of suspension from a specified number of water polo matches promoted by Swim England and/or the relevant Region, County, local association or league, for a breach of World Aquatics Rules regarding:

- Misconduct, including the use of unacceptable language, aggressive or persistent foul play,to refuse obedience to or show disrespect for a referee or official, or behaviour against the spirit of the Rules and likely to bring the game into disrepute (World Aquatics Rule WP 10.2.2);
- Violent Action including playing in a violent manner, kicking, striking or attempting to kick or strike with malicious intent, an opponent or official (World Aquatics Rule WP 10.2.1);

which has been committed by the member of Swim England in a match held under Swim England Regulations and Technical Rules and reported to the Office of Judicial Administration or the duly appointed Water Polo Delegate by a referee of the game.

6.1.2 The Office of Judicial Administration shall maintain and monitor a record of water polo offences. In the event that an individual incurs 3 suspensions for any offence contrary to World Aquatics Rule WP 10.2.1 (Violent Action) within a 12 months period the Office of Judicial Administration shall bring this to the attention of the Leader of the Swim England Water Polo Leadership Group, who shall consider making a Judicial Complaint under Swim England Regulation 105 on the grounds of “serious misconduct” as defined in Swim England Regulation 106.2.1.

6.2 Tariff for automatic sanctions for Misconduct or Violent Action

6.2.1 For events where a Swim England accredited Water Polo Delegate is appointed:

The Delegate, on receipt of a report from a referee, may impose an automatic sanction and log an offence with the Office of Judicial Administration in accordance with the following tariff:

6.2.1.1 Acts of Misconduct (World Aquatics Rule WP 10.2.2) by a player whether active in the water, an excluded player or a team substitute:

- For each of their first two offences within a rolling twelve month period – a warning or a one-match suspension
- For a third reported offence within twelve months – two-match suspension.
- For a fourth reported offence within twelve months – three-match suspension.
- Over four reported offences within twelve months – a Water Polo Complaint as defined in Swim England Regulation 116 will be submitted to the OJA in addition to an automatic three-match suspension.
- The Delegate may impose an immediate automatic sanction if they deem the Act of Misconduct sufficiently grave.

6.2.1.2 Acts of Misconduct (World Aquatics Rule WP 10.2.2) by a coach or other team official, including the receipt of a Red Card:

- For each of the first two reported offences within twelve months – one-match suspension.
- For a third reported offence within twelve months – two-match suspension.
- For a fourth reported offence within twelve months – three-match suspension.
- Over four reported offences within twelve months – a Water Polo Complaint shall be submitted to the Swim England Office of Judicial Administration (OJA) in addition to an automatic three-match suspension.

6.2.1.3 Violent Actions against another player (World Aquatics Rule WP 10.2.1):

- For the first reported offence within twelve months – two-match suspension.
- For a second reported offence within twelve months – three-match suspension.
- For a third reported offence within twelve months – five-match suspension.
- Over three reported offences within twelve months – a Water Polo Complaint shall be submitted to the OJA in addition to an automatic five-match suspension.

Note: Delegates will be supplied with a list of names and offences recorded in the previous 12 months so that they can summarily impose any increased automatic sanction for a further offence.

6.2.2 For events where a Swim England accredited Water Polo Delegate is not appointed:

No automatic sanctions will be applied. If the referee deems the misconduct offence sufficiently serious to warrant more than an informal warning about future behaviour, the referee should complete a Sanction Report form and submit to the Office of Judicial Administration who will apply the following tariff and notify the offender. The referee shall always submit a Sanction Report form for a Violent Action.

6.2.2.1 Acts of Misconduct (World Aquatics Rule WP 10.2.2) by a player, coach or other team official including the receipt of a Red Card:

- For each of the first two reported offences within twelve months – one-match suspension.
- For a third reported offence within twelve months – two-match suspension.
- For a fourth reported offence within twelve months – three-match suspension.
- Over four reported offences within twelve months – the OJA will consider the report as a Water Polo Complaint in addition to an automatic three-match suspension.

6.2.2.2 Violent Actions against another player (World Aquatics Rule WP 10.2.1):

- For the first reported offence within twelve months – two-match suspension.
- For a second reported offence within twelve months – three-match suspension.
- For a third reported offence within twelve months – five-match suspension.
- Over three reported offences within twelve months – the OJA will consider the report as a Water Polo Complaint in addition to an automatic five-match suspension.

6.3 Serious misconduct

Nothing in the foregoing or in any regulations shall prevent a referee or any member of Swim England making a Complaint about the incident under Swim England Regulation 105.

6.4 Violent actions against Match Officials

Actual or attempted violent actions against a referee or any other match official shall be the subject of a Water Polo Complaint to the Office of Judicial Administration. In such cases, and where the reported offence is proven before the Dispute Resolution Panel, the level of sanction to be applied shall take into account the suggested penalties in Section 3 above.

6.5 Reporting

6.5.1 Reported offences shall apply to an individual regardless of the competition in which the offence occurred.

6.5.2 Reported offences shall remain in force for 1 year from the date of the notification confirming the sanction.

6.5.3 Reported offences shall remain on file for a period of 6 years from the date of the notification confirming the sanction.

6.6 Rights of Appeal

6.6.1 There is no right of appeal against a summary minimum sanction imposed by a duly appointed Water Polo Delegate or by the Office of Judicial Administration.

6.6.2 There is a right of appeal against a decision on a Water Polo Complaint in accordance with Judicial Regulation 119.

6.7 Serving suspensions

6.7.1 Suspensions imposed by a Water Polo Delegate shall normally be served in the next following match(es) promoted by the same body that promoted the match in which the suspension was incurred and in which the offender would otherwise have been eligible to participate representing the same club.

6.7.2 Suspensions imposed by the Office of Judicial Administration, following a referee's report, shall normally be served in the next following match(es) from the starting date specified in the letter confirming the sanction, promoted by the same body that promoted the match in which the suspension was incurred and in which the offender would otherwise have been eligible to participate representing the same club.

6.7.3 In either case:

6.7.3.1 Suspensions shall normally be served in the same team and in the same capacity (player, coach, team official etc.) as that in which they were incurred, subject to the following conditions:

6.7.3.2 If an offender with an outstanding suspension changes their club, for whatever reason, the outstanding suspension shall be served in the next following match(es) promoted by the same body and in which they would otherwise have been eligible to participate for the new club.

6.7.3.3 If the club of an offender with an outstanding suspension, for whatever reason, ceases to be eligible to play in matches promoted by the body that promoted the match in which the offender was suspended, the suspension shall be served in the next following match(es) in the highest level competition in which the club is entered and in which the offender would otherwise have been eligible to participate.

7. SOME PROVISIONS FOR AND CONSEQUENCES OF AUTOMATIC SUSPENSIONS

7.1 A suspended person may not participate in any way in the match(es) from which they have been suspended. This includes any involvement as a player, team leader, coach, other official or physician of the team from 30 minutes before the start of the match, including any team talk or warm-up or warm-down sessions on land or in the water, until 30 minutes after the conclusion of the match. Neither may they act as a delegate, referee, goal judge or any table official.

7.2 A suspended person may not go or remain on the area of the poolside reserved for competitors during this period but, with the agreement of the Delegate (or Referee if a Delegate is not appointed), may watch from the spectator seating on the balcony or, if this is not available, on the poolside always provided that they remain in a location away from the team benches as specified by the Delegate or Referee.

7.3 A suspension may only be served in relation to a match that is actually played i.e. both teams have been in the water at the same time and played against each other. If a match during which a suspension (or part thereof) would have been served is not played, that suspension (or part thereof) is held over until the suspended person's team next plays a match promoted by the relevant body and that part of the suspension is then served. A fixture that has been scheduled but has not been fulfilled for whatever reason does not count towards serving a suspension or any part of it.

8. THE USE OF YELLOW AND RED CARDS AGAINST TEAM OFFICIALS

This Section relates to the use by referees of yellow and red cards against team coaches and other team officials on the team bench. See also World Aquatics Rule WP18 (Yellow and Red Cards).

8.1 Yellow Card

8.1.1 A yellow card is issued as a warning and should be shown only to the team coach. When the coach is shown the yellow card they continue with their responsibilities and privileges, namely to coach the team, to request the timeouts, and to have the right to move around and up the field of play to the 6m mark nearest their team bench when their team is in attack.

8.1.2 A yellow card is not carried forward to subsequent matches or tournaments.

8.2 Red Card

8.2.1 Upon any repetition of misconduct during a match at which they have already been shown a yellow card, the coach shall be shown the red card and shall leave the team bench.

8.2.2 A red card may be shown to the coach or other team official without them previously having been shown the yellow card, should the situation warrant immediate suspension.

8.2.3 If the coach is suspended, another team official may take over the position of the coach, but without their stated privileges. This team official has to remain seated on the bench and is only allowed to request timeouts.

8.2.4 If any of the other team officials on the team bench misbehave, there is no warning for them; they shall be shown the red card immediately and sanctioned accordingly.

8.2.5 Persons suspended in accordance with this section shall move to a place indicated to them by the Referee, or the Delegate if one is appointed, without passing any remarks to the Referee(s) or instructions to their team.

8.2.6 In default of 8.2.5, the Referee or the Delegate may order the persons concerned out of the swimming pool and submit a Water Polo Complaint in accordance with Swim England Regulation 116.

8.3 Sanction

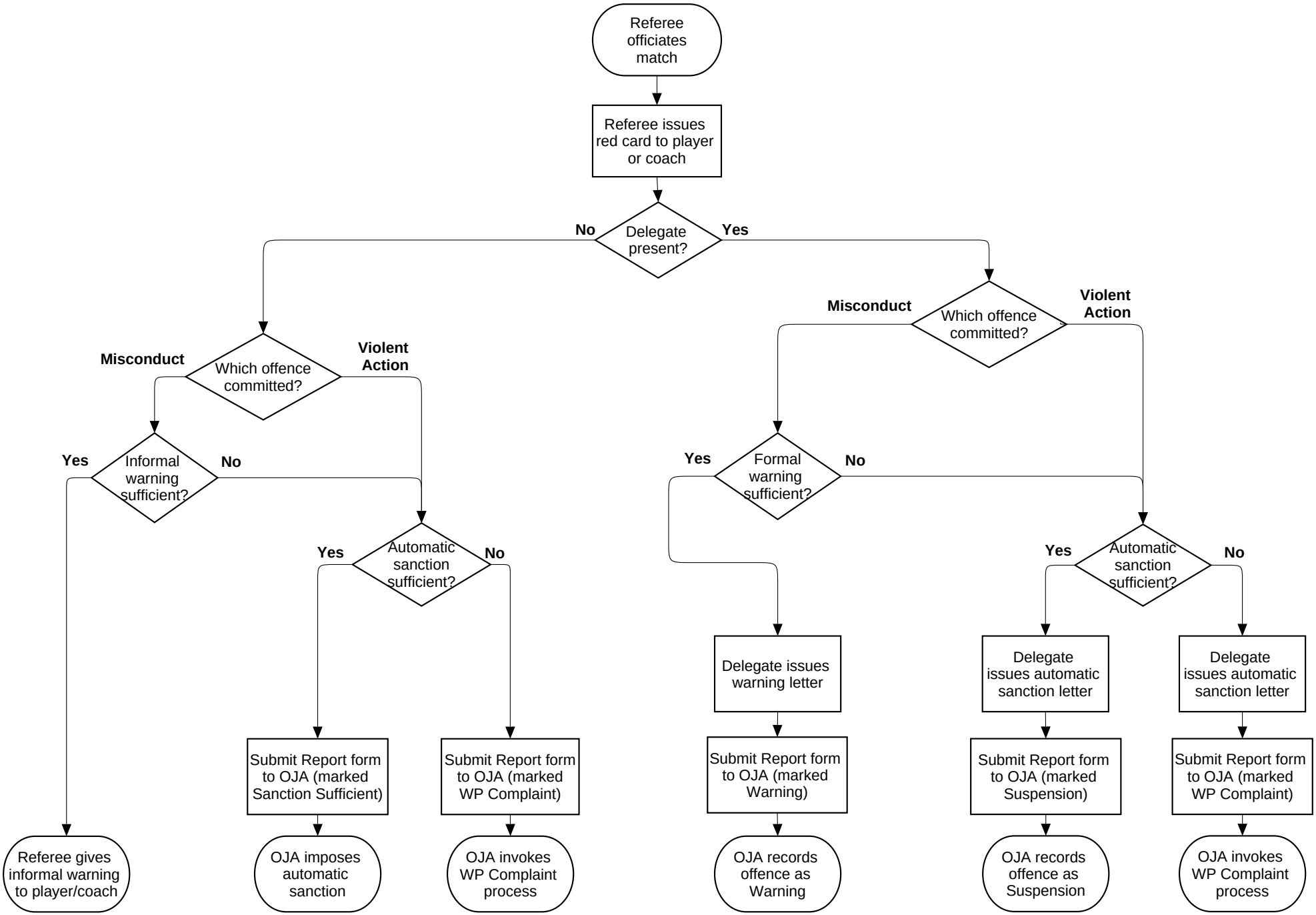
8.3.1 If a coach (or other team official) is shown a red card, it shall be deemed to be an offence of misconduct contrary to World Aquatics Rule WP10.2.2. The automatic sanctions for this particular offence are defined in section 6.2.1.3 above. Also see Section 6.7 above for the relevant provisions for serving the suspension.

8.3.2 If a Referee or the Delegate considers that the automatic sanction is insufficient having regard to the circumstances, they may submit a Water Polo Complaint under Swim England Regulation 116.

8.3.3 Referees and/or Delegates should ensure that any red or yellow cards issued to the coach or any other team official are recorded on the match sheet.

8.3.4 If a coach is suspended from a match following the issue of a red card in the previous match, any other person associated with the team (other than another suspended person) may act as coach at that match and be subject to the limitations and privileges normally granted to the coach.

Swim England Water Polo Leadership Group

(first issued September 2013 and updated September 2026)

Appendix 1 - Water Polo Discipline Process (September 2026)