

Water Polo rule changes January 2023

World Aquatics (formerly FINA) has agreed a set of changes to Water Polo rules with effect from January 2023. LEN has also issued new instructions for applying these rules.

Summary of key changes

WP1.2 and WP21.10 A new 'Goal area' is defined as a rectangular box extending to 2 metres from the lateral outsides of the goal posts to the 2m line. Ordinary foul if a player goes within the goal area except behind the line of the ball. Players can go inside the 2m line if outside the goal area.

WP5.6 and WP22.2 At any flying or rolling substitution, including in the re-entry area and swapping an excluded player, the two players must visibly high-five each other while in the re-entry area.

WP5.11 (New rule) A player leaving the field of play from the wrong place can come back into play only if waved in by the referee, or after a goal, time out or at the start of the next period.

WP17.2 When there is a counter attack, a player with advantage does not have to give up the advantage to go to the ball and take the free throw, goal throw or corner throw. The next closest player can take the throw as long as there is no undue delay.

WP21.6 Ordinary foul if a player deliberately hides the ball from the opposing team.

WP21.18 (New rule) Ordinary foul if a player goes under the water to gain positional advantage.

WP22.11 Tactical foul: Exclusion foul if a defending player commits a foul on an opponent with the intent to stop the flow of the attack, anywhere in the field of play.

WP22.14 The wording 'Violent action' replaces 'act of brutality'.

WP23.2 Penalty fouls: The referee can delay whistling and wait to see if the attacking player scores a goal in the same action. If the player does not score, the referee should award the penalty. The referee may raise an arm indicating a possible penalty.

WP23.8 A penalty may be awarded if a defending player deliberately throws the ball away to prevent a probable goal, including if he flicks it into the 6m area to prevent a direct shot.

WP23.9 If a defender fouls from behind as described in WP23.9, the referee **must** delay the penalty call until the attempted shot is completed. The referee **must** award a penalty unless the attacking player scores.

WP24.2 At the taking of a penalty throw, all other players must be at least 3m from the thrower and outside the 6m area. The defending team has the first right to take positions on the 6m line.

LEN Instruction 3: Penalty foul if the goalkeeper puts the ball under water within the rectangular area 2 metres outside the goal posts and out to his 6m line. Exclusion foul if he commits any tactical foul outside this area. Ordinary foul if he puts the ball under outside this area when challenged.

LEN Instruction 4: Penalty foul if an excluded player goes towards his re-entry area and, before reaching it, returns to the game after his team gain possession. As there has been a change of possession, this player will remain on the field of play during the penalty throw.

References

Summary of FINA changes and official document:

<https://wwpra.org/2022/08/07/fina-technical-water-polo-congress-2022-proposals-for-changes/>

LEN Instructions:

<https://www.len.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/New-Instructions-2022-23.pdf>

Issue

Version 1 (20th December 2022)

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