

2020 NFHS WATER POLO RULE CHANGES

No.	Page	Rule Ref.	Proposed Changes with Rationale	Pass	Fail	No Action
1.	8	1-6-1	<p>ART. 1 . . . Distinctive marks shall be provided on both sides of the field of play to denote the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. white marks - goal line and half distance line b. red marks - 2 meters from goal line c. yellow marks - <u>6.5</u> meters from goal line d. <u>red marks shall be placed 5 meters from goal lines to indicate the point from which a penalty shot must be taken.</u> 	11-0		
	8	1-6-2	<p>ART. 2 . . . Sidelines: If the pool is more than 20 meters wide, properly colored sidelines are required. The sideline from the end line to the goal line shall be colored white (0.3 meters); from the goal line to the 2-meter line shall be colored red; from the 2-meter line to the <u>6.5</u>-meter line shall be colored yellow; from the <u>6.5</u>-meter mark to the half-distance mark shall be colored green or a color other than yellow or red. A white mark shall be placed at the half-distance line. Measurements for the markers shall be taken from the front edge of the goal line and include the marker.</p>			
	43	4-21-1	<p>ART. 1 . . . A goal may be scored by any part of the body except the clenched fist. A goal may be scored by dribbling the ball into the goal. At the start or any restart of the game, at least two players (of either team, excluding the defending goalkeeper) must intentionally play or touch the ball except at the taking of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. a penalty throw; b. a free throw thrown by a player into that player's own goal; c. an immediate (direct) shot from a goal throw; or d. an immediate (direct) shot from a free throw awarded outside <u>6.5</u> meters. 			
	43	4-21-2	<p>ART. 2 . . . A goal may be scored by a player immediately shooting from outside <u>6.5</u> meters after the player's team has been awarded a free throw for a foul committed outside <u>6.5</u> meters. If the player puts the ball into play, a goal can then only be scored if the ball has intentionally been touched by another player other than the defending goalkeeper.</p>			
	43	4-21-3	<p>ART. 3 . . . If a free throw is awarded for a foul outside, but within one meter of the <u>6.5</u>-meter line, the referee administering the free throw will point with one arm horizontal to the body in the direction of the attacking team and shall point with the other arm diagonal to the body to the <u>6.5</u>-meter line to indicate that the player is eligible to shoot a direct shot on goal after that player's team has been awarded a free throw for a foul committed outside <u>6.5</u> meters.</p>			
	43	4-21-4	<p>ART. 4 . . . If, at the award of a foul outside <u>6.5</u> meters, the ball is inside <u>6.5</u> meters or closer to the defending team's goal, a goal may be scored</p>			

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			<p>under this rule if the ball is returned without delay to either the place where the foul was committed, to any place on the same line as the foul or to any place behind the line of the foul, provided the shot is then immediately made from that position. This article does not apply to a free throw awarded for an offensive foul called on a player outside <u>6.5</u> meters with the ball inside <u>6.5</u> meters, as the free throw for an offensive foul shall be taken at the location of the ball when the foul is awarded.</p> <p>Rationale: This change follows current national trends of the sport. By introducing a 6-meter line, it spaces out the players in the front court which allows offensive players more room to showcase individual skills. It also provides the center forward more room to receive the ball.</p>			
2.	13	1-26 (NEW)	<p><u>SECTION 26 OTHER EQUIPMENT</u> <u>Players are permitted to wear a soft padded cap but it must meet the requirements of rules 1-20 through 1-24, and 2-4.</u></p>	11-0		
	13	1-21	<p><u>SECTION 21 SWIM CAPS</u> A player may only wear a swim cap under the water polo cap; the color of the swim cap shall match the color of the water polo cap as closely as possible. The swim cap worn by a goalkeeper shall be red or a color which matches the color of the water polo cap of the goalkeeper as closely as possible (red or dark for the home goalkeeper or red or white for the visiting goalkeeper).</p> <p>Rationale: Headgear is required by NFHS rules in some sports and is permissive in others. Coaches, athletes and parents/guardians should review the manufacturers' warnings about proper usage and performance limits of such products.</p>			
3.	28	3-11-3	<p><u>SECTION 11 CORRECTABLE ERRORS</u> ART. 3 . . . In the special case where there is a correctable clock error that results in the referee taking the ball out of the water following a foul that would have made the offensive player eligible for a direct shot, the ball is returned to play closest to the spot of the foul, and a direct shot may be taken beyond the 5-meter line. Examples of correctable errors include, but are not limited to:</p> <p>Rationale: The offensive player should not be able to take a direct shot if the referee takes the ball out of the water as a result of a correctable error. However, the offensive player can put the ball into play and then shoot.</p>		0-11	
4.	33	3-18-3	<p><u>SECTION 18 30 -SECOND SHOT CLOCK TIMER - DUTIES</u> ART. 3 . . . The timekeeper shall reset the shot clock: a. after a goal or goal attempt <u>in which the ball makes contact with the goalie, goal posts or cross bar.</u> Reset the shot clock</p>		1-10	

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			<p>when the ball leaves the hand of the shooter. If the ball rebounds into the field of play after an attempt, reset the shot clock again and start the shot clock when either team gains possession of the ball;</p> <p>Rationale: If a field player blocks the ball on a shot and the offense retains the ball off the blocked shot just doesn't seem fair to the athlete who played good defense.</p>			
5.	34	3-20-2a	<p>ART. 2 . . . The scorekeeper shall record on the scoresheet:</p> <p>a. the date, <u>location</u> place, and starting and ending time of the game. <u>Names of officials</u>, team names, <u>full</u> player names and corresponding cap numbers in numerical order for all players. This information must be submitted to the secretary <u>a minimum 15 minutes prior to</u> before the start of the game;</p> <p>Rationale: Games often begin with no names on the official scoresheet and frequently only first or last names are listed. This change clarifies that full names written on the scoresheet are required prior to the start of the game.</p>	11-0		
6.	41	4-14	<p>SECTION 14 INTERVAL TIME Interval time is defined as:</p> <p>a. time between periods; b. during a time-out; c. before the restart after a goal; or d. before a penalty throw is taken; <u>or</u> e. <u>any time the ball is removed from the water by the referee.</u></p>	11-0		
	64	7-12-2	<p>ART. 2 . . . If a player of either team commits misconduct or any other offense relating to Rule 7-11 during interval time, (the time between periods, during a time-out, before the restart after a goalor, before a penalty throw is taken, <u>or the ball taken out of the water by the referee</u>), no matter which team committed the foul, the player shall be excluded from the remainder of the game and the teams start even up:</p> <p>a. If misconduct occurs during the interval between periods, the game restarts even up with a sprint; b. If misconduct occurs during a time-out or when the ball is taken out of the water by the referee, the game starts even up with a free throw by the team in possession of the ball at the conclusion of the time-out; NOTE: The shot clock is not reset if misconduct occurs during a time-out. c. If misconduct occurs after a goal, the game starts even up at half as after a goal with a free throw by the team which was defending before the goal was scored; <u>or</u> OR</p>			

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			d. If misconduct occurs before a penalty throw is taken, the game starts even up with the taking of the penalty throw.			
	66	7-13-4	ART. 4 . . . If a player of either team commits a minor act of misconduct during interval time (the time between periods, during a timeout, before the restart after a goal, or before a penalty throw is taken, <u>or when the ball is taken out of the water by the referee</u>), no matter which team committed the foul, the player shall be excluded from the game for 20 seconds with immediate substitution, the teams start even.			
	69	7-14-4	ART. 4 . . . In the case of a double flagrant misconduct foul committed during play, both players are excluded for the remainder of the game and a dead-time penalty throw awarded each team. . . . If a double flagrant misconduct foul occurs during a time-out, or after a goal, <u>or when the ball is taken out of the water by the referee</u> both players are excluded for the remainder of the game with their substitutions in the re-entry areas. The first dead-time penalty shot is taken by the team which would normally have possession of the ball, followed by the second. The referee will then award a free throw on or behind the half-distance line as after a time-out to the team that would have had possession of the ball after the time-out or after the goal. Both substitutes must remain in the re-entry areas until the earliest occurrence of one of the events. (7-3) Rationale: This change follows current national trends of the sport. It makes sense to consider identifying this as interval time.			
7.	43	4-20	SECTION 20 GOALS – GOALKEEPER RESTRICTION PRIVILEGES A goal may be scored from anywhere within the field of play. except that the goalkeeper shall not be permitted to go or touch the ball beyond the half distance line. <u>The goalkeeper may move beyond and touch the ball past the half distance line. The goalkeeper may shoot from anywhere in the pool and may take a penalty shot and/or participate in a shootout.</u>	11-0		
	62	7-8 (DELETE)	SECTION 8 GOALKEEPER BEYOND HALF-DISTANCE LINE It is an exclusion foul for a goalkeeper to go or touch the ball beyond the half distance line. Renumber SECTIONS 9-21. Rationale: This change follows current national trends of the sport and will create consistency benefiting players, coaches and referees. This provides more scoring options for teams.			
8.	43	4-21-1	ART. 1 . . . A goal may be scored by any part of the body except the clenched fist. A goal may be scored by dribbling the ball into the goal. At	11-0		

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			<p>the start or any restart of the game, At least two players (of either team, excluding the defending goalkeeper) must intentionally play or touch the ball except at the taking of after a free throw or restart of play inside 6 meters (except a corner throw). A goal can be scored directly after the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. a penalty throw; b. a free throw thrown by a player into that player's own goal; c. an immediate (direct) shot from a goal throw; or d. an immediate (direct) shot from a free throw awarded outside <u>6 5</u> meters; <p>NOTE: This includes after a correctable clock error.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> e. an immediate (direct) shot from a corner throw. <p>Rationale: If the foul is inside of 6 meters, the player must pass the ball to another player before a goal can be scored. Also, by allowing a direct shot on goal from a corner throw makes the player an immediate threat that the defender must account for. This opens up the center forward position which was usually double teamed since the player taking the corner throw wasn't able to shoot and makes the 2-meter more accessible.</p>			
9.	43	4-21-2	<p>ART. 2 . . . A goal may be scored by a player immediately shooting from outside <u>6 5</u> meters after the player's team has been awarded a free throw for a foul committed outside of <u>6 5</u> meters. <u>The player may visibly put the ball into play and shoot or swim anywhere and shoot. Both the foul and the ball must be outside of 6 meters. If the player puts the ball into play, a goal can then only be scored if the ball has intentionally been touched by another player other than the defending goalkeeper.</u> A goal can be scored from anywhere after visibly putting the ball into play after the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. <u>a foul outside of 6 meters with the ball located outside of 6 meters;</u> b. <u>a corner throw;</u> c. <u>a goal throw;</u> d. <u>at the start or restart of play outside of 6 meters;</u> e. <u>the ball leaving the side of play outside of 6 meters;</u> f. <u>after a goal;</u> g. <u>after a time-out;</u> h. <u>after the referee returns the ball back to the pool outside of 6 meters or to a player taking a corner throw.</u> <p>NOTE: if the ball was removed from inside of 6 meters, the player <u>cannot shoot after putting the ball into play (exception: corner throw).</u></p> <p>Rationale: This change allows players to put the ball into play outside of 6 meters or from a corner throw. This creates a faster and simpler game as well as creating more action and scoring.</p>	11-0		

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10.	43	4-21-3	<p>ART. 3 . . . If a free throw is awarded for a foul outside, but within one meter of the <u>6</u> 5-meter line, the referee administering the free throw will point with one arm horizontal to the body in the direction of the attacking team and, <u>with the other arm, shall raise a hand up vertically to indicate that the player is eligible to shoot.</u> Shall point with the other arm diagonal to the body to the 5-meter line to indicate that the player is eligible to shoot a direct shot on goal after that player's team has been awarded a free throw for a foul committed outside 5 meters.</p> <p>Rationale: The signal for awarding a free throw outside but within the 6-meter line has been altered. By changing the signal to a raised hand, the award of the free throw becomes clear to everyone on the pool deck. Previously, by pointing down to the 5-meter line, many times the spectators behind the referee could not see. This is clear and simple regardless of where the referee is located.</p>	11-0		
11.	43	4-21-4	<p>ART. 4 . . . If, at the award of a foul outside of <u>6</u> 5 meters, the ball is inside of <u>6</u> 5 meters, or closer to the defending team's goal, a goal may be scored under this rule if the ball is returned without delay to either the place where the foul was committed, to any place on the same line as the foul or to any place behind the line of the foul, provided the shot is then immediately made from that position. This article does not apply to a free throw awarded for an offensive foul called on a player outside 5 meters with the ball inside 5 meters, as the free throw for an offensive foul shall be taken at the location of the ball when the foul is awarded. a goal may not be scored directly or after the ball is put into play and the free throw must be taken at the location of the ball provided it is outside the defending 2-meter area.</p> <p>Rationale: This wording change clarifies that both the foul and the ball must be outside the 6-meter line to shoot and score. If the ball is inside 6 meters, the free throw must be taken at the location of the ball.</p>	11-0		
12.	44	4-21-5	<p>ART. 5 . . . A goal may not be scored under this rule direct from the restart following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. a time-out; b. a goal; c. an injury, including bleeding; d. the replacement of a cap or while zipping up a suit; e. the referee calling for the ball, except in the case of a correctable clock error; f. the ball leaving the side of the field of play; g. at the taking of a corner throw; <u>g. h. any other delay, such as issuance of a red or yellow card.</u> <p>NOTE: <u>Although a goal may not be scored directly, once the referee returns the ball to the water the player restarting from a corner throw</u></p>	11-0		

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			<p><u>or outside of 6 meters can visibly put the ball into play and shoot or swim and shoot.</u></p> <p>Rationale: The corner throw was removed from a list of situations in which a direct goal cannot be scored after a restart. A player taking a corner throw may shoot directly once the ball is put into play.</p>			
13.	47	5-4	<p>SECTION 4 CORNER THROWS – HOW TAKEN</p> <p>The corner throw shall be taken by a player of the attacking team from the 2-meter 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. <u>A player taking a corner throw may shoot directly or once put in play:</u></p> <p>a. <u>fake and shoot;</u> b. <u>swim and shoot without passing; or</u> c. <u>pass to another player.</u></p>	11-0		
	46	4-24e	<p>SECTION 24 GOALS – WHEN NOT COUNTED</p> <p>A goal does not count if:</p> <p>e. The ball is shot illegally. A goal in this circumstance is counted only if the ball is played (controlled) by a player of either team after the free throw and then goes into the goal. Examples include a shot on a corner throw; shot directly outside the 6 5-meter line with delay; shot on a free throw for a foul inside the 6 5-meter line; <u>direct</u> shot on a free throw after a time-out; <u>direct</u> shot on a free throw at the restart after a goal, regardless of whether the goalkeeper or another player tips the ball into the goal.</p> <p>Rationale: Allowing a direct shot on goal from a corner throw makes the player an immediate threat that the defender must account for. This opens up the center forward position which was usually double teamed since the player taking the corner throw wasn't able to shoot.</p>			
14.	49	5-10-1	<p>ART. 1 . . . A free throw shall be taken at the <u>spot of the ball location</u> where the foul occurred, except:</p> <p>a. if the ball is farther from the defending team's goal, the free throw shall be taken from the location of the ball; if the foul is committed by a defending player within the defender's 2-meter area, the free throw shall be taken on or outside the 2-meter line; and</p> <p>b. if the foul is committed by a defending player within the defender's 2-meter area, the free throw shall be taken on or outside the 2-meter line and opposite to where the foul was committed or, if the ball is outside the 2-meter area, from the location of the ball;</p> <p>c. in the event of an offensive foul, the free throw is taken at the location of the ball when the foul is awarded (ordinary offensive fouls and exclusion offensive fouls); or</p>	11-0		

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			<p>b. d. where otherwise provided for in the rules.</p> <p>Rationale: This speeds up the game by playing the ball where it lies. Previously, when the foul occurred behind the ball, the referee had to blow multiple whistles and interject themselves in the game by making the player throw the ball backward where the foul occurred which slowed the flow of the game.</p>			
15.	50	5-13	<p>SECTION 13 FREE THROWS – HOW TAKEN Any water polo move by the player taking the free throw is considered putting the ball into play. <u>Free throws (putting the ball in play) must be taken clearly and visibly.</u> This includes, but is not limited to, passing the ball to another player, dropping the ball from a raised hand into the water, throwing the ball in the air, swimming or dribbling the ball, <u>spinning the ball in the hand, or a hard ball fake, tossing or placing the ball before swimming, or transferring the ball from one hand to another above the water.</u> The mere act of picking up the ball by the player awarded a free throw does not constitute a water polo move. The referee administering the free throw must indicate ball in play by dropping an arm from horizontal to vertical position when the player taking the free throw makes a water polo move <u>clearly and visibly puts the ball in play.</u></p>	11-0		
	33	3-18-2	<p>ART. 2 . . . The timekeeper shall start the shot clock at the beginning of the period when the first player gains possession of the ball (the player need not actually touch the ball) and shall stop the shot clock each time the whistle blows. Play is resumed when the player taking the free throw makes a water polo move <u>puts the ball in play (5-13) . . .</u></p>			
	33	3-18-3g	<p>ART. 3 . . . The timekeeper shall reset the shot clock g. on a goal throw or corner throw (start the clock when player makes a water polo-related move <u>puts the ball in play</u>).</p> <p>Rationale: With players now able to make themselves live and shoot, it becomes vital for the defender to know when they are able to attack. By mandating that the ball is clear and visibly put into play, this gives the defender adequate time to defend. It also makes it clear to everyone, including the timekeeper, when the ball is in play.</p>			
16.	59	7-3-6	<p>ART. 6 . . . An excluded goalkeeper's substitute may only be another goal-keeper; an excluded field player's substitute may only be another field player. As a result, <u>if</u> a goalkeeper is excluded, a substitute wearing a goalkeeper's cap may not be substituted for an exiting field player during that exclusion period (as, for example, during a time-out or as a live-time direct substitute).</p> <p>Rationale:</p>	11-0		

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			A goalie should be treated like every other player in this situation. If they are excluded, a back-up goalkeeper should be allowed to substitute into the game provided that they are substituted in by another field player.			
17.	60	7-3-13 (NEW)	ART. 13 . . . <u>If a player voluntarily leaves the field of play, under the sideline or goal line other than their own re-entry area, they shall be permitted to re-enter the field of play from the re-entry area nearest to that player’s goal line or from anywhere after one of the following:</u> a. <u>a goal scored;</u> b. <u>a time-out;</u> c. <u>end of the period.</u>	11-0		
	60	7-4 (DELETE)	SECTION 4 LEAVING THE FIELD OF PLAY It is an exclusion foul for a player to leave the field of play to sit or stand on the steps or side of the pool during play, except in the case of accident, injury, illness or with the permission of a referee. Renumber SECTIONS 5-21. Rationale: The rule change allows the player to leave any time under the sideline. The violation occurs when the player re-enters illegally.			
18.	74	7-22 (NEW)	SECTION 22 TACTICAL FOUL (DIRECT SHOT) <u>It shall be an exclusion foul if a player on defense commits an ordinary foul outside of 6 meters and does one of the following (but not limited to) as a “tactical foul” to prevent the player from shooting a direct shot:</u> a. <u>Knocks the ball inside 6 meters;</u> b. <u>Knocks the ball further away from the goal; or</u> c. <u>Throws the ball away.</u> <u>If the tactical foul is committed in the final minute of the game to prevent a goal, it is a penalty foul.</u> Rationale: A player should not be able to shoot or put the ball in play and then shoot if a defender tactically fouls and knocks the ball into the 6-meter area. This will discourage a defender from fouling with a few seconds left in the game and then throwing the ball to the other side of the pool.	8-3		
19.	76	8-9 (NEW)	SECTION 9 ATTACKING PLAYER FROM BEHIND WITHIN 6 METERS <u>It shall be a penalty foul for a defending player to foul or impede an attacking player from behind within the 6-meter area in a probable goal situation regardless if they are holding the ball or not. The attacking player must be facing or swimming toward the goal. The only way a defender can defend in this position is to touch only the ball or the hand. If the defending player’s actions prevent the attacking player from continuing the action, a penalty must be called.</u>	11-0		

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			<p>Rationale: This change follows current national trends of the sport. It simplifies the game for all stakeholders and makes it easier for spectators to understand while promoting more scoring.</p>			
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