

## NFHS Water Polo Rules Changes for 2011-2012

(References are to rules numbers and pages in the 2011-12 NFHS Rules Book)

(Some items listed here are interpretations moved in from the 2010-11 casebook and interpretations issued throughout the year)

July 10, 2011

- 1. Points of Emphasis for Coaches and Referees (Pages 87-88)** The points of emphasis printed in the Rules Book were reduced in number from twenty to seven. Only new points of emphasis or ones needing special attention were printed in this rules book. The complete list of points of emphasis for 2011-12 can be found on the NFHS web site, [www.nfhs.org](http://www.nfhs.org).
- 2. Rule 3-1 Description of Ball (Page 92)** The ball shall be round and yellow or gold in color. The ball may have colored areas, such as panels, pentagons or circles, provided that the ball is predominantly yellow or gold in color. The colored areas must be as manufactured (not hand-painted).  
**Rationale:** The emphasis in this rule is that the ball must be predominantly yellow or gold. The use of other designs in addition to panels will meet this requirement.
- 3. Rule 4-1-1 Design of Home Team Caps (Page 93)** The caps of the home team field players may be divided into thirds or quarters, with the thirds or quarters consisting of two colors: two thirds or quarters a solid dark color such as navy blue or black, and the other one (or two in the case of a cap with four quarters) a solid color such as powder blue, medium blue, orange or green (this panel must not be white)...No logos or other designs may be in the panels with the cap numbers.  
**Rationale:** Since some caps are made with four quarters, one on each side where the ear guards are located and two running from front to back, the wording was changed to accommodate this common type of cap. This change also clarifies that no logos may be in the panels with the cap numbers.
- 4. Rule 4-1-3 Piping (Page 93)** Caps for the field players of either team and the goalkeepers may have piping of a single solid color not to exceed a width of 1 centimeter around the edges of the cap and/or on the seams of the cap (the cap strings or straps may be the same color as the piping or may match the cap color). The piping may not cross a cap number. Interpretation: The piping must be solid, not dashed or double.  
**Rationale:** This defines piping more precisely. It may only be located on the seams or edges of the cap and may only be a single solid line.
- 5. Rule 4-1-4 Manufacturer's Logo/Trademark/Reference (Page 93)** All team caps may have one visible manufacturer's logo/trademark/reference, not to exceed 2¼ square inches in area and not to exceed 2¼ inches in any dimension. This logo/trademark/reference, if present, must be located on either the front or on the back of the middle portion of the cap.  
**Rationale:** This separates the description of the manufacturer's logo from that of the team identification and describes the permitted location. It may not be located in the side panels with the cap numbers.
- 6. Rule 4-1-5 Note Team Identification on Caps (Page 93)** It is recommended, but beginning July 1, 2013 it is required, that caps may have only two types of team identification, each not to

exceed a size of six square inches. The team identification may consist of the team name, initials of the school, team logo, mascot or other similar design. Team identification may be on both the front and the back of the central panel of the cap, but may not extend across the entire top of the cap.

**Rationale:** This more precise description of the type, size and location of team identification will assist the buyers and sellers of caps. The location of the team identification on the front and/or the back of the central portion of the cap means that the team identification will not interfere with the visibility of the cap numbers.

7. **Rule 4-4-Cap Numbers (Page 94)** .Field players' caps are numbered beginning with No. 2. Caps of the same color must have different numbers. The goalkeeper's cap shall have the number 1. If there are additional goalkeepers, it is recommended that their cap numbers be 1A, 1B, etc.

**Rationale:** This wording changes the current requirement for the use of cap numbers 1A, 1B, etc. for additional goalkeepers to a recommendation for the use of cap numbers 1A, 1B, etc. The previous rule was an additional cost for the team and was not consistently followed. In addition, since the referee is required to notify the score table if there is a change in goalkeepers during the game, the previous requirement was not necessary.

8. **Rule 4-4 Cap Numbers Note 2 (Page 94)** Additional cap numbers may also be located on the middle panel of the caps, one number on the front and one on the back of the cap.

NOTE 1: The use of these additional cap numbers will assist the referees and scorekeeper identify an excluded player.

NOTE 2: As of July 1, 2013, it will be required to have these cap number on the front and the back of the cap. These numbers shall be a minimum of four centimeters in height.

**Rationale:** It is particularly difficult to identify a player swimming away to the exclusion area, since only the back of the cap is visible to the referee on the desk side and the scorekeeper.

9. **Rule 5-4-1 Suits of the Female Goalkeeper (Page 97)** Players shall wear non-transparent, one-piece swim suits. Suits shall completely cover the buttocks and breasts. The women's suit must have a solid high back with broad straps (style optional for goalkeeper). If a player's suit does not meet the specifications for suits as described in the rules, the player will be required, if possible, to change suits. If this is not possible and if the game is played with non-conforming suits, the referee must notify the state or district association of the offending team of the nature of the offense so that this deficiency will be corrected in the future. The state association will also assess the appropriate penalty.

Interpretation 1 The use of the term solid back does not preclude the use of a zipper in the field player's suit. The suit of the goalkeeper on the women's team must be a competitive one-piece suit. There is no requirement for straps of a particular width on the goalkeeper's suit.

**Rationale:** The current prohibition for goalkeepers of spaghetti straps and the requirement for a strap width of one inch is eliminated as this suit is believed by goalkeepers to restrict mobility and there has been no exposure problem with goalkeepers. This rule change means that the rule reverts back to the 2008-9 NFHS rule. The original intent of Rule 4-6, Lack of Adherence to the Cap Rule, was to provide an option to forfeiture of the game or to the removal of a player for the remainder of the game for the use of a non-compliant cap. Since this cap wording did not cover suits, the suit rule needs the addition of this same type of wording.

10. **Rule 5-4-3 Articles Likely to Cause Injury (Page 98)** Before taking part in a game, the players shall remove any articles likely to cause injury, including, but not limited to, the following: jewelry, medical or religious medals, watches and swim goggles. ~~and protective helmets.~~ Sharp fingernails and toenails shall be trimmed.  
NOTE: Each state association may, in keeping with applicable laws, authorize exceptions to NFHS playing rules to provide reasonable accommodations to individual participants with disabilities and/or special needs, as well as to those individuals with unique and extenuating circumstances. The accommodations should not fundamentally alter the sport, allow an otherwise illegal piece of equipments, create risk to the athlete/others or place opponents at a disadvantage.  
Interpretation 4: A manufactured protective foam helmet designed to protect the athlete in the event of further contact to the head may be worn following state association policy for medical accommodations. Any cap worn over the device or any painting of the number on the device itself must comply with Rule 4-6, Caps. All state association policies and procedures should be followed for clearance to wear the helmet.  
**Rationale:** Protective helmets have been removed from this list of prohibited articles. A protective helmet is designed to be used by players who have previously suffered a possible concussion with proper clearance.
11. **Rule 5-6-1, Note 2 Live-time Direct Substitution (Page 99)** In making a live-time direct substitution of a field player, if the player leaving the field of play leaves under the sideline or the end line at any place other than the re-entry area with the substitute player still in the re-entry area, the referee shall exclude the exiting player for 20 seconds for leaving the field of play without permission (Rule 21-4). That player must then swim to the re-entry area. Either that player or the substitute waiting in the re-entry area may enter at the earliest occurrence of one of the events listed in Rule 21-3.  
INTERPRETATION: A player is in the re-entry area to make a direct substitution for a player immediately after the ball turns over and that team is counterattacking down the field of play. The player leaving the pool swam under the end line halfway between the goal and the sideline. The referee blew the whistle immediately for the improper exit from the field of play just as the substitute entered from the re-entry area. The referee excluded the player who left the field of play at the wrong area for a direct substitution for 20 seconds (Rule 21-4) and removed the player who entered the field of play from the re-entry area without penalty as that player entered at that time due to the mistake of the player leaving the field of play.  
**Rationale:** This material was added to the rules from the casebook in order that the rule on direct substitution included examples of possible player errors.
12. **Rule 7-1-1 Clerical Authority of Referees (Page 102)** The referees shall be in absolute control of the game. The authority of the referees over the players, coaches, team officials, goal judges and desk officials shall be effective during the entire time that the referees, players, coaches and team officials are within the precincts of the pool. The referees retain clerical authority until the completion of any reports, including those imposing disqualifications that are in response to actions occurring while the referees had jurisdiction. State associations may intercede in the event of unusual incidents after the referees' jurisdiction has ended or in the event that a contest is terminated prior to the conclusion of regulation play.

**Rationale:** Administrative duties for the referees may need to continue after the contest to document actions which occur during the competition, such as submitting specific reports after the competition is completed. In addition it clarifies that state associations may continue to develop and implement policies that allow for review of unusual incidents that occur while the referees have jurisdiction or after the competition is completed.

13. **Rule 7-1-3 Referee Attire (Page 102)** Uniform and equipment for referees consist of a white shirt or jacket, white trousers, white shoes....INTERPRETATION 1 Unless determined otherwise by state association policy, no advertising is permitted on the referees' attire. If a tournament shirt is provided, both referees must wear this shirt or both must wear the white shirt. The tournament director or games administrator must report violations of this rule to the state association so that this may be corrected for subsequent games.

**Rationale:** This addition clarifies that no advertising is permitted on referees' attire.

14. **Rule 7-4-3-Warning Note (Page 103)** A coach may also be issued a warning if the coach, in the opinion of the referee, persistently takes too long to substitute after a goal or at other times.

**Rationale:** The length of time used for the substitution of players is becoming an increasing problem. For example, a coach may wait after a goal until the opposing coach has made substitutions before completing his/her substitutions.

15. **Rule 7-4-4 Yellow Card Note (Page 103)** A yellow card may be issued to the coach if, in the opinion of the referee, he/she persistently takes too long to substitute after a goal or at other times after a warning.

**Rationale:** The length of time used for the substitution of players is becoming an increasing problem. For example, a coach may wait after a goal until the opposing coach has made substitutions before completing his/her substitutions.

16. **Rule 7-5 Removal from Pool Note 2 (Page 104)** The referees shall have the power to order the removal from the precincts of the pool any player, substitute, spectator, coach or other team official whose behavior prevents the referees from carrying out their duties in a proper and impartial manner. ...Note: This rule applies to a spectator who persistently whistles during the game so loudly that it can be confused with the referee's whistle. After a warning to stop, the referee should request the host institution to remove the spectator from the premises. The same procedure will be followed if a spectator sounds an air horn, as an air horn may be used by a team to call a time-out or may be used by the timekeeper to signal the end of a time-out or the end of a period.

**Rationale:** This change adds spectators who whistle during a game to this rule. This is necessary as this is becoming an increasing problem at certain venues. .

17. **Rule 7-9-b Correctable Error by Exclusion Secretary (Page 106)** If a signal is not given at the proper time by the exclusion secretary for the entry of an excluded player and a goal is subsequently scored, the game shall be stopped; the game clock reset to the re-entry time; the shot clock reset to the appropriate time; the goal shall not be counted; and play shall resume from the re-entry time with the excluded player in the re-entry area until play restarts.

**Rationale:** This clarifies that the excluded player shall re-enter from the re-entry area as opposed to starting in the field of play when play resumes.

18. **Rule 7-10 Protests Interpretation (Page 107)** A protest may be filed during a game and at any time up to five minutes after the conclusion of the game. Interpretation: The coach of either team may file a protest during the game or after the game, within the time limits specified in the rules.  
**Rationale:** This clarifies that either team may file a protest, not just the losing team and is moved in from the casebook.
19. **Rule 9-3-b Goal Scored at End of Period (Page 107)** Interpretation: A shot is taken near the end of the period. The buzzer for the end of the period sounds while the ball is in the air. If the ball then crosses the goal line, the goal counts. The time of the goal is recorded as 0:00, since the goal scored after the end of the period.  
**Rationale:** This clarifies the time that the goal should be recorded in this situation. The scorekeeper does not to record a time before the end of the period (:01, for example). This is moved in from the casebook.
20. **Rule 11-5-1 Tournament Variations (Page 113)** There may be variations in the length of game periods, length of overtime periods, type of overtime .....and number, type and duration of time-outs in a tournament. NOTE: For example, the host may decide to allow only one regular and one 30-second time-out during regulation play in a tournament and no time-outs of either type during overtime.  
**Rationale:** This clarifies that the host may change the number and type of time-outs allowed during a tournament, both during regulation play and during overtime.
21. **Rule 11-6 Replay of Game (Page 113)** If a game (or portion of game) must be replayed, the goals, 20-second exclusion fouls, penalty fouls and time-outs that occurred during the time to be replayed are removed from (lined through on) the secretary's scoresheet; however, notations of misconduct, flagrant misconduct, fighting, red cards and yellow cards that occurred at any time during the game must be retained on the secretary's scoresheet. **Interpretation:** A player removed for the remainder of the game for misconduct may not play in any part of the game to be replayed, even if the misconduct occurred during the part of the game to be replayed.  
**Rationale:** This rewording clarifies which fouls are removed from a scoresheet and which remain if a game is to be replayed. It is a rewording of the previous year's rule.
22. **Rule 12-7 30-Second Time-out, Note 2 (Page 115)** The time during either type of time-out (regular or 30-second) is classified as interval time. See Rule 21-10-1 for the definition of interval time.  
**Rationale:** This clarifies that the time during both regular time-outs and 30-second time-outs is regarded as interval time. This is important as the method of starting play after misconduct or a minor act of misconduct committed during interval time is different from that committed during play.
23. **Rule 12-7 30-Second Time-out Interpretation (Page 115)** A tournament rule stated that each team is allowed two regular time-outs and one 30-second time-out in each game and none in overtime. The coach on offense called for a regular time-out in the third period when that team only had a 30-second time-out remaining. The referee shall deny the request for the regular

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the ball over.

**Rationale:** Since the coach called for a time-out, the referee must award the only time-out remaining for that team.

24. **Rule 13-3, Note 3 (Page 116); also see Rule 15-1, Note (Page 119); Rule 7-9-c (Page 106)** The referees shall ensure that the correct number of players is in the water before starting the game or for restarting after a goal, time-out or at the beginning of a period. Should play be started with an extra player in the water or with too few players in the water, the referee shall stop play, correct the situation, reset the clocks and restart play in the usual manner.  
**Rationale:** The referee must start the game, a period, or after a goal or after a time-out with the correct number of players on each team. The referee must correct these situations if there are too few players in the water as well as with too many players in the water.
25. **Rule 21-10-2 Clarification of Minor Act of Misconduct (Page 134)** More than one minor act of misconduct may be called during play during a game and more than one minor act of misconduct may be called during play on the same player in a game. The referee signals for a minor act of misconduct in each case and excludes the player for 20 seconds. If a player commits a minor act of misconduct on the way out after committing a third personal foul which is an exclusion foul, a penalty throw is awarded. The substitute may not enter until after the earliest occurrence of an event referred to in Rule 21-3. If the player commits a minor act of misconduct immediately after committing a third personal foul which is a penalty foul, an additional penalty foul is awarded. A substitute enters immediately as the third foul was a penalty foul. The first penalty shot is a dead-time penalty shot, the second is a live-time penalty shot (See Table 1. Several corrections were made in this table).  
**Rationale:** This clarifies that a player may be charged with more than one minor act of misconduct during play in a game.
26. **Rule 23-5 Rebounding Ball, Interpretation (Page 144)** A player may skip a penalty shot towards the goal. However, if the ball failed to skip and remained dead in the water two feet in front of the goal, the shooter cannot take another shot at the goal unless the ball rebounds from the goalkeeper, goal post, or crossbar. The referee should blow the ball dead for the ordinary foul of an improperly taken penalty throw.  
**Rationale:** This clarifies that the shooter may not swim forward and shoot the ball again; in addition, the goalkeeper may not swim forward and take possession of the ball.
27. **Rule 25-3 Accident, Injury, Extenuating Circumstances, Interpretation (Page 145)** “Extenuating circumstances” refers to some incident other than accident, injury, or illness, such as lightning or other weather-related condition, a crowd-control problem, such as a fight in the stands, etc. At the discretion of the referee, the game may be stopped and the incident addressed (see page Lightning Guidelines, Appendix K). No time-out is charged.  
**Rationale:** This moves the definition of extenuating circumstances from the casebook into the rules.