

Interpretations and Answers to Questions for NFHS Water Polo Rules – 10-3-07

Instructions to Referees and Points of Emphasis

Point # 20 Exposure and Rule 5-4 Apparel

Question: During a game a female player wore a low back suit with narrow straps. The referee noted that the suit permitted breast exposure by incidental contact of another player's arm. What should the referee call if breast exposure is caused by incidental contact: (1) exclusion for 20 seconds of the player who made the incidental contact; (2) a minor act of disrespect with 20 seconds exclusion of the player wearing a suit without a full back; or (3) no call?

Answer: In the case described, the referee should make no call as this exposure was caused by incidental contact. To prevent accidental or deliberate exposure, the players should be encouraged to wear suits with a full back and wide straps. However, at this time, there is no requirement in the rules for a player to wear such a suit.

Rule 1 Field of Play and Equipment

Rule 1-6 Markers

Question: Is an institution required to have correctly colored side lines, cones and long, horizontal markers of the correct color on the pool deck?

Answer: The rule is that the pool course must be marked correctly. The pool markings must all be in accordance with the new rules. For example, the side lines can not be marked for the goal line, 2 yd/m line, 4-meter line and 7-meter line (old rules) with cones on the pool deck at the goal line, 2 yd/m-meter line and 5-meter line (new rules). Correctly colored side lines are required if the pool width is such that side lines are required (a pool width that exceeds 66 feet/20 meters). If there are horizontal markings on the pool deck, it is preferable that the horizontal markings on the pool deck extend down over the side of the pool so that they are clearly visible from the water and from the other side of the pool. Cones are not required if the side lines are marked correctly and if there are correct markings on the pool deck. However, the use of cones of the correct size, color, and weight on the pool deck, in addition to the other markings, is to be encouraged as they are very easy for players, coaches and referees to see.

Rule 7 Referees

Rule 7-2 Altering Decision

Situation: The whistle was blown for a foul. One referee pointed towards one end of the pool, indicating a change in possession. The other referee pointed towards the original offensive end. Players of the team on defense turned to swim towards the opposite end of the pool. The referee pointing in that direction, however, dropped the hand and the team maintaining possession of the ball continued its offense. What should the referees have done in that situation?

Answer: If the hand signals of the two referees differ (if, for example, the referees point in opposite directions), the ball should be called out of the water; play is resumed as quickly as possible when neither team has an advantage.

Rules 7-4 Control Over Conduct

Question: The head coach approached a referee at half time, walking down to the other end of the pool past the other team's bench to the location of the referees. The referee, however, did not allow any conversation, stating that the coach could not walk past the other team's bench. Is this the correct call?

Answer: No. The head coach may address the referee at this time. The rule provides that the head coach and captain may address the referees at intervals between periods, during timeouts, or with the permission of the referee or, in the case of the head coach, when filing a protest. They may

only discuss rule clarifications and misapplication of rules with the officials at these times, not judgment calls made by the referees.

Rule 7-10 Method of Filing Protests

Question: How may a coach lodge a protest during a game?

Answer: The protest may be filed only for misapplication of rules, equipment malfunction or an error in recording information. The coach should approach the referee as soon as possible after the event occurred, without taking the advantage away from either team, and inform him of the rule or event the coach is protesting. If the referees agree that they can handle the protest at that time, they will rule on the protest immediately. If it is upheld, the clocks will be reset to the time of the event protested (see Rule 5-1 for details). The coach must file a brief written description of the protest after the game, signed by the referees, in order to have a written record of the protest. This may be done on the score sheet or on a separate sheet. If an event is not protested at the time it occurred or if the protest was not upheld at that time, it may still be protested at the conclusion of the game. If the protest is filed after the game, the coach must inform the secretary or tournament director within five minutes after the game that the coach is filing a protest. The coach must file a written protest not later than 15 minutes after the end of the game on the official score sheet or on a separate sheet. Protests must be signed by the coach and the referees and attached to the score sheet as the official record of the protest. If the protest is upheld, the game will be replayed from the time of the event protested. If the referees are unable to rule on the protest or if the coach wishes to further protest the decision, the protest may be referred to the sponsoring conference or association.

Rule 12 Timeouts

Rule 12-5 Defensive Team-Additional Timeout

Question: The team on defense called a timeout with an airhorn during a one on nobody. By mistake, the referee blew the whistle, awarding the timeout. What should be the action of the referee?

Answer: By the rules the referee should have motioned for play to continue. But since the referee awarded the timeout by mistake, the referee has three options:

- (1) start up play again with the offense putting the ball into play;
- (2) award a penalty throw under Rule 22-7: It shall be a penalty foul for the coach or other team official to take any action to prevent a probable goal; or
- (3) award a red card to the head coach of the team on defense under Rule 7-4: A red card may be issued for disruptive behavior to the head coach, assistant coaches, other team officials on the bench and to individual players on the bench.

Since the calling and the awarding of the timeout in this situation is an action which could prevent a probable goal; the referee should award a penalty throw. The referee could also award a red card to the head coach in this situation for disruptive behavior.

Rule 14 Method of Scoring

Rule 14-3 How Scored

Question: When taking a direct shot can a player pick up the ball on top using the ball for leverage to get up and out of the water if it is done in one motion?

Answer: Yes, as long as it is done in one continuous motion, without hesitation or faking.

Rule 14-3 How Scored

Question: The rule states that in order to score a goal at least two players of either team but excluding the defending goalkeeper must intentionally play or touch the ball except, for example,

at the taking of an immediate shot from a goal throw. If a goal throw is awarded after a defending field player tips the ball over the goal line, may a field player taking the goal throw take a direct shot on goal?

Answer: Yes. A goal throw can be taken by any player of the team from anywhere within the 2-meter area, but shall be taken by the player nearest to the ball (Rule 16-2).

Rule 20: Ordinary Fouls

Rule 20-6 Taking the Ball Under

Question: The offense of ball under usually occurs when a player takes the ball under when tackled. How does this statement relate to a goalkeeper taking the ball under?

Interpretation: The rule states when a goalkeeper emerges high out of the water to save a shot and then while falling back takes the ball under the water, the goalkeeper has committed no offense; but if the goalkeeper then holds the ball under water when challenged by an opponent, the goalkeeper will have committed an infringement of this rule and a penalty throw must be awarded under Rule 22-2. The opposing player does not have to force the goalkeeper to take the ball under. No player, in order to gain possession of a loose ball, may reach out and take the ball under to prevent the opposing player from gaining possession of the ball.

Rule 21: Exclusion Fouls

Rule 21-5 Interfering with Throw

Question: A defender gives the appropriate space to the offensive player for a free throw or direct shot outside the 5-meter line, but the defender is aggressively waving his/her hand behind the head in an attempt to cover more area to block a shot. Should the defender be excluded?

Answer: The rule is that the defender can not interfere with the taking of a free throw, goal throw, corner throw or direct shot on goal. There is no set distance that the defender must be away from the person putting the ball in play or taking a direct shot – the key is that the defender can not interfere. If the referee considers that the distance away is such that the defender is not interfering, the defender can wave a hand, either behind the head or directly above the head.

Rule 21-10 Misconduct

Situation: A player commits the foul of misconduct or the foul of a minor act of disrespect while exiting the pool after committing that player's third personal foul, an exclusion foul. The referee excludes the player for the remainder of the game for committing his/her third personal foul, with the substitute in the reentry area, and then awards a live-time penalty shot for the foul of misconduct or the minor act of disrespect after a third personal foul. Is this the correct procedure?

Ruling: Yes. As soon as the exclusion secretary sees the signal for misconduct or a minor act of disrespect after the third personal foul, an exclusion foul, the exclusion secretary must immediately raise the red flag and blow the whistle. The substitute may not enter for 20 seconds or the earliest occurrence of an event described in Rule 21-3, and a penalty throw is awarded. Under Progress of Game, the scorekeeper must record the third foul with time, cap number, team, and (under Remarks) E; then on the next line, at the same time, record cap number, team, and enter the foul of misconduct as E-misconduct (penalty throw) or E-MAD (penalty throw). In the top portion of the score sheet, enter E and the period in the third column under Personal Fouls. In the NOTE column following the Personal Fouls columns, enter P/M for this penalty foul awarded for misconduct or P/MAD for this penalty foul awarded for a minor act of disrespect. If the penalty shot is scored, enter the time, team, cap number and G-P under Progress of Game, and, in the upper portion of the score sheet, enter P in the attempt column and enter P in the appropriate column under goals.

Rule 21-10 Misconduct

Situation: A player commits the foul of misconduct or the foul of a minor act of disrespect while exiting the pool after committing that player's third personal foul, a penalty foul. The referee excludes the player for the remainder of the game for committing the third personal foul and then awards first a dead-time penalty shot for that penalty foul and then a live-time penalty shot for the foul of misconduct or for the foul of a minor act of disrespect after a third personal foul. Is this the correct procedure?

Ruling: Yes. As soon as the exclusion secretary sees the signal for misconduct or a minor act of disrespect after the third personal foul, a penalty foul, the exclusion secretary must immediately raise the red flag and blow the whistle. The substitute enters immediately. The first penalty throw is a dead-time penalty throw. The second penalty throw is a live time penalty throw. Under Progress of Game, the scorekeeper must enter the third foul with time, cap number, team, and (under Remarks) P; then on the next line, at the same time, cap number, team, and enter the foul of misconduct as E-misconduct (penalty throw) or E-MAD (penalty throw). In the top portion of the score sheet, enter P and the period in the third column under Personal Fouls. In the NOTE column following the Personal Fouls columns, enter P/M for this penalty foul awarded for misconduct or P/MAD for this penalty foul awarded for a minor act of disrespect. If the first penalty shot is scored, enter the time, team, cap number and G-P under Progress of Game, and enter P in the attempt column and enter P in the appropriate column under goals. If the second penalty shot is scored, enter the time, team, cap number and G-P under Progress of Game, and enter P in the attempt column and enter P in the appropriate column under goals.

Rule 21-10 Misconduct

Situation: A player is charged with a penalty foul, that player's first personal foul. The player then commits a minor act of disrespect, an exclusion foul, before the penalty shot is taken. Should the player (or substitute) be in the exclusion area for the taking of the penalty throw?

Answer: Yes. If the penalty shot is scored, the player may enter immediately. If not, the player is out until the occurrence of one of the events described in Rule 21-3. Under Progress of Game, the scorekeeper must enter time, cap number, team, and (under Remarks) P, and then on the next line enter time, cap number, team, and (under Remarks) E-MAD. On the top portion of the score sheet, enter P and the period in the first column under Personal Fouls, and then enter E and the period in the second column under Personal Fouls. If the penalty shot is scored, the scorekeeper must enter time, cap number, team, and (under Remarks) G-P. In the upper part of the score sheet enter P in the attempt column and enter P in the appropriate column under goals.

Rule 22 Penalty Fouls

Rule 22-2 Within 5-Meter Area to Prevent Goal

Situation: The goalkeeper of the white team was excluded from the remainder of the game for committing misconduct after a penalty foul. A field player from that team went into the goal for the taking of the penalty shot. As the shot was taken, this field player raised both arms out to the sides, about three inches above the water, and blocked the ball with one of the arms into the field of play. Play continued. Is this the correct call?

Answer: No. It is a penalty foul if a field player raised two hands/arms in an attempt to block a shot inside the 5-meter area, no matter how high the player raised the arms or if the player blocked the ball with one or both hands or if the player did not actually touch the ball or if the shot missed the goal completely. The player should retake the penalty shot. However, if the penalty shot scored, the goal would count and no foul would be awarded against the field player in the goal.

Rule 22-6 Player Not Entitled to Participate Entering Field of Play

Question: A team attempted a live-time substitution. However, the substitute entered the field of play from the reentry area before the departing player left the field of play at the reentry area. What should be the call of the referee?

Answer: It is a penalty foul for a player not entitled to participate to enter the field of play. This substitute was not entitled to participate before the original player left the field of play at the reentry area (since there are now eight players on that team in the field of play). Therefore, the substitute is excluded for the remainder of the game and a penalty foul is awarded. The penalty throw is taken with both teams at full strength. No substitution shall be made under this rule between the time a referee awards a penalty throw and the taking of the throw, except at a timeout (Rule 5-6).

Rule 22-8 Award of Penalty Foul in the Last Minute

Question: A penalty foul was awarded for either misconduct or for a minor act of disrespect committed after a third personal foul, an exclusion foul. If this situation occurred in the last minute of the game or in the last minute of the second overtime period or at any time during sudden-death overtime periods, may the coach elect to maintain possession of the ball in lieu of taking the penalty throw?

Answer: Yes, the coach may elect to maintain possession of the ball in this situation, in lieu of taking a live-time penalty throw, with the substitute for the excluded player in the reentry area. If the third personal foul is a penalty foul, there is immediate substitution, and the first penalty throw is a dead-time penalty throw. The second penalty throw is a live-time penalty throw and the coach may elect to maintain possession of the ball in lieu of taking that live-time penalty throw. If the coach does elect to maintain possession of the ball, the team will be awarded a free throw on or behind the half-distance line with a new possession clock and will start play as after a timeout.

Rule 23 Penalty Throws

Rule 23-2 Position of Other Players and Goalkeeper

Situation: A penalty foul is awarded against a player on the white team. Not wanting to call a timeout to substitute in the starting goalkeeper for the backup goalkeeper currently in the goal, the head coach of the blue team directed one of the field players to take the goalkeeper's place in the goal for the taking of the penalty throw. Should the referee allow this?

Interpretation: No. The goalkeeper is the only person who can defend a penalty throw, provided that there is a player in a goalkeeper's cap in the water at that time. The rule that states this most clearly is Rule 23-2: "With floating goals, the defending goalkeeper shall be positioned between the goal posts, with no part of the goalkeeper's body beyond the goal line at water level....Should the goalkeeper be out of the water, another player may take the position of the goalkeeper but without the goalkeeper's privileges and limitations."

Rule 23-4 Taking of a Penalty Shot, Rule 21-16 Interference with Penalty Throw

Question: After the referee blew the whistle for the penalty shot but before the ball left the hand of the shooter, the defensive players on either side of the shooter moved forward towards center cage. Is this permitted?

Answer: Yes. After the whistle but before the ball is released, the defensive player on either side of the shooter may move forward at an angle towards the goal as long as the player does not interfere with the penalty shot. After the ball is released, the defensive players may move towards the shooter.

Rule 25 Accident, Injury and Illness

Rule 25-1 Player Leaving Water

Question: The goalkeeper swam behind the goal to retrieve a ball shot over the goal and reentered the playing course next to the goal without the permission of the referee. What should be the action of the referee?

Answer: The referee should exclude the player for 20 seconds for reentering at a site other than the reentry area without the permission of the referee.

Appendix B Signals to be Used by Officials

Appendix B, Fig. CC Signal for a Minor Act of Disrespect

Question: What is meant by a “half-rolling motion with one arm” for the signal for a minor act of disrespect?

Answer: To signal misconduct or other game exclusion, the referee rotates both hands/forearms round one another. To signal a minor act of disrespect, the referee rotates one hand/forearm. The drawing shows the correct signal.