

An introduction to the rules of Water Polo... by Scott Finney

Here is a brief introduction to the rules of Water Polo, put together by Scott (and Geoff, although he is sleeping while I'm busy doing all the work). Remember, these are just the basic rules, to help give you an understanding of the game. The pictures were taken from the official rules of US Water Polo. At the bottom of the page are links to the official rules and interpretations of the official rules.

Definitions- Minor Fouls - Major Fouls - Referee Signals

Definitions:

Minor Foul - The whistle is blown **once** and play stops. If the player who is fouled has the ball, they get a free throw. If the player who is fouled is a defender, they are awarded the ball and get a free throw. The referee will point to the player who has the free throw with one arm and the direction of the team with the other.

Major Foul - The whistle is blown **twice**. Play stops, and the player who commits the foul gets ejected for 20 seconds. This usually happens to a defensive player. The referee will point to the player who commits the foul (and blow the whistle), and point to the ejection area (and blow the whistle again).

Brutality - A **brutality** is called when a player kicks or strikes (or attempts to kick or strike) an opponent or official **with malicious intent**. The player who is charged with a brutality is excluded from the rest of the game. (See WP 21.10).

Important Rules:

1. Players can touch the ball with only **ONE HAND**
2. Players cannot stand on the bottom of the pool. (This is not entirely true, but it is the way we will play).
3. Players are allowed only **TWO** major fouls during a game. On the third, the player is ejected.
4. If a defender interferes with a free throw, it is a **MAJOR** foul (ejection).

Examples of Minor Fouls:

1. When a player pushes off the side of the pool (or the bottom).
2. A "False Start" at the beginning of play.
3. Holding the ball under water (even if the defensive player is holding your arm down):



4. Touching the ball with two hands.
5. Hitting the arm or body of an offensive player who has the ball:



6. Hitting the ball with a clenched fist.
7. Pushing off of a defensive player:



8. When a player is within 2 meters of their opponent's goal (and the ball is behind them). (This is considered off-sides).
9. When the player throws the ball out of bounds.
10. If the team keeps the ball for more than 35 seconds (the length of the shot clock) without taking a shot on goal.

Examples of Major Fouls:

1. If the offensive player intentionally comes in contact with the defensive player:



2. Holding on to the offensive player:



3. Interfering with a free throw:



4. Pulling back on a player:



5. Sinking a player:



6. Misconduct (foul language, etc.)

7. Leaving the ejection area illegally.

Examples of Referee Signals:



Ball Under



Minor Foul



Off the Bottom



Ejections - Single and Double



Jump Ball (Neutral Throw)

US Water Polo Rules

These are the official US Water Polo Rules in Adobe Acrobat PDF format. Here you will find the complete (often wordy and unintelligible) rules for Water Polo. You need to have Acrobat Reader installed on your computer.

Official Interpretations of the US Water Polo Rules

Here you will find interpretations to some of the rules. They may or may not help you understand the rules. Don't worry if these seem overwhelming, they are.

A Guide To Understanding Water Polo

A little introduction to the game of Water Polo on the USWP home page.

