

Overview of new rules to be applied for 2019 National Water Polo League Season

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As most will be aware, FINA towards the end of last year approved a number of rule changes designed to improve our game. These changes are designed to make the game more skilful, to improve the consistency of referee decisions, to make the sport more appealing to TV and to make the sport easier for the sporting public to understand.

1. Physical changes

- The 5.0m line at each end has now been replaced by a 6.0m line. (Green Marker)
- 5.0m still needs to be marked as it will still be used as the distance from which a penalty will be taken. Besides the penalty mark the 5.0 m is no longer relevant.
- Where the width of the pool allows there should be a line along both sides of the pool outside the field of play to allow "Flying Substitutions". Many of our pools are too narrow for this, however due to the impact this will have on the tactics of the game we will need a line up the bench side of the pool maybe only 500 – 600 mm wide to allow for these substitutions to occur.
- The Time clocks will need to be modified to allow for the shot clocks to be reset to 30 seconds or 20 seconds.

Note: This may not be possible on some timing systems. Drummoyne have had their shot clock reset to 20 seconds and will have to reset after 10 seconds in the event of a 30 second shot clock. This is not ideal, however the count down to the end of possession time will be correct and less confusing to all involved.

Rule Changes

2. Foul outside 6.0m

If a player receives a foul outside 6.0 m and the ball has remained outside 6.0 m they are legally allowed to:

- Pick up the ball and shoot
- Pick up, play the ball, baulk and shoot or pass off
- Play the ball then swim in towards goal and shoot or pass – there is no need to pass off or have a second player play the ball

Note: If the immediate shot is not taken the ball must be clearly put into play. It must leave the hand as explained in the rule book.

- **Fouls are taken from the position of the ball, they no longer have to be taken where the foul occurred.**

3. Corner Throw

- When a team is awarded a corner throw the player taking the throw is “alive” and as is the case of a foul outside 6.0 m is now free to:
- Shoot directly from the corner
- Play the ball and swim in and pass or shoot
- Play the ball then baulk and shoot
- Again, there is no longer a requirement for the ball to be played by a second attacking player.

4. Goal Keepers.

Under the new rules Goal Keepers have been given extra privileges:

- They may be nominated to be a shooter in the event of a penalty shoot out.
- They can go over half way, but lose goalkeepers privileges of 2 hands, punching ball etc. once outside the 6.0m line.
- They can go up into attack if they wish and act as an extra field player. This means a team may attack 7 on 6 if they wish.

5. Penalty situations.

In the situation a player has achieved position where a referee deems that the result would be a probable goal and they are impeded or fouled in any way a penalty will be awarded. This is the case even if the player has the ball in hand.

The referee is entitled to allow the action to continue and allow the attacker to shoot. If the shot doesn't result in a goal, he can still award a penalty after the fact.

There are also other situations where a referee may award a penalty if he/she feels that there is a “probable” goal.

Eg,

- A player swimming towards goal with only the goal keeper to beat who has a defender attacking from behind. Previously if the defensive player stopped the progress of the player in attack before the reached the 5.0m line the referee excluded the defender, **It is now the 6.0 m line, referee will eject the defender and attacker can continue and shoot. Any interference by the excluded player will result in a penalty.**
- A defender who is defending an attacker on the perimeter in set play and manages to gain possession through a steal or turnover foul. If the previous attacker now defender was to throw the ball away to prevent a clear counter attack, the referee (if they think would have resulted in a “probable” goal) may award a penalty even if it occurred in the other half.

6. Flying Substitutions

The penalty box remains as always and is still used in the case of exclusions however the box has been extended along the bench side of the pool from the goal line up to half way. This is defined by the line defined in Physical changes.

This area can be used for general substitutions during play, it is designed to allow substitutions without jeopardising your attack.

- Substitutes may wait in the corridor outside the field of play anywhere up to half way, the player seeking substitution may swim to the side of the pool go under the side rope, surface and “high five” their replacement. The replacement may then enter the field of play. The exiting player must then leave the corridor and return to the bench immediately. They are allowed to climb out over the edge of the pool.
- Substitute players cannot be in the corridor for an extended time and must return to the bench if instructed by the referee.

7. Shot Clocks

Under the new rules an alternate reset of 20 seconds has been added, this is used when the shot clock is reset during an attack. ie where there is no change of possession. These situations include the awarding of a Corner, Exclusion of a defender.

Note: if a reset is required and the shot clock has (for example) 24 seconds on the original time, the clock should not be reset. It should only be reset if the attacking team has less than 20 seconds showing.

As always if the reset results in a change of possession, the clocks are reset to 30 seconds.

This change is very important to the game and will require all table officials to be re trained to achieve a smooth transition.

Hope this solves some of the mysteries and in time achieves and improves our game.

Regards

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Notes:

- All NL games must end in a result, penalties must continue until there is a winner
- Under new rules if the centre back is excluded off the ball the referee will no longer delay play to allow the defence to adjust it is play on. The ball can go straight to the unmarked centre forward who can shoot.
- It is not possible to shoot from a restart after a goal or a restart after a time out, It still must be played by 2 players from the same team
- Even though some pools are wide enough for a rope down each side of the pool, however, the flying substitution can only happen on the bench side of the pool which is the re-entry side.

