



LEN TWPC INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE LEN CLUB COMPETITIONS 2022/2023

Dear Colleagues, dear Referees and Delegates,

As the beginning of the new LEN Club Competitions 2022/2023 season is just in front of us, we would like to please you to pay attention on the following important objectives related to the Water Polo Rules and their applications.

OBJECTIVES:

- Protect the free movement of players, apply the advantage
- Protect the skills of the players making the game more attractive
- Prevent aggressive play

Water Polo has to be faster, with movement, intelligent, attractive and, especially, less physical game.

Protect the movement and the skills of the players

To protect the movement and skills of the players, the referee must apply the rules consistently.

In situations where a player is committing a foul to hold, sink or pull back an opponent clearly reducing his advantage or the advantage of the team, the referee must sanction the corresponding major foul.

This is especially important in movement situations where the attacking player is swimming to gain an advantage and the defender is impeding their progress

Whistle the game, not the faults

The referee must understand how the game is developing (the flow of the game) and should not be limited to just whistle the fouls. Calling fouls, whether necessary or not, unrelated to play and advantage, can lead to a game where the players are more concerned about the fouls than the game, since they have understood that it is easy for them to get a foul and therefore a game starts simulation game and "theater".

Refraining from calling fouls in the name of a misunderstood law of advantage when players are playing against the opponent instead of the ball can lead to overly aggressive, even violent play.

Thus, the referee must understand the flow of the game and whistle the necessary faults, no more and no less.

Whistle only when is necessary

Is important the concept "whistle when is necessary" and needs to be applied consistently throughout the match.

When a foul occurs, the referee will take care not only the foul, but also the advantage that may be lost as a result of the foul. To do this, he must know where the ball is, what the team can do with it and, if as a result of the foul, the team is losing a clear advantage to develop the attacking game.

Thus, it is just as important to call fouls correctly as it is to know when that foul does not need to be called in order to correctly apply the advantage.

Refrain from whistling outside the game, without the ball, only if necessary

An important point to make the game more attractive and more understandable is to refrain from calling fouls without the ball and away from the game. These fouls should only be sanctioned when is really necessary, either because it is an overly aggressive foul or because it is clearly reducing the advantage of the team receiving the offense.

In the case of a foul committed on a player who does not have the ball, the referee may briefly delay his whistle to check the impact of this action. For example, if the center commits a foul against the defender, the referee may delay his whistle for 2-3 seconds to check if the player receives the ball or if he is causing another defender to come and mark him, damaging the defensive game. Or when an attacking player who takes advantage in movement and receives the ball an instant later. The referee will have waited for this moment to signal the fault.

Prevent aggressive play

However, aggressive, excessively physical, even violent play must be prevented.

The referee must distinguish when the players are competing for the ball, for position, for advantage or when the players are playing against the opponent with no relation to the ball or the game.

In this case, since the players are not competing for advantage but provoke or fighting each other, the referee should stop this bad play immediately. It makes little sense to apply advantage when players are not competing for advantage.

What must we do to provide the conditions for Water Polo games as above mentioned?

First, we must have a clear and correct application of the movement between attacking and defending player.

- It's necessary to correctly apply the impeding rule and penalize the incorrect defense.
- It's necessary to give opportunity for the attacker to move. Giving of easy contra fouls are one of the main points which is reducing the movements of the attackers.

But it's very important to realize and penalize when players play unfair.

- When players don't care about the ball, the advantage, the position, and they are playing against the opponent, without the ball and without relation with the game, they are playing unfair.
- When the players play too aggressive against the opponent, with provocation or simulating, they are playing unfair.

This is essential to enforce the Water Polo rules and games as the spirit of the game requests.



1. IMPEDING RULE

To obstruct an opponent not in possession of the ball, to prevent free movement and progress of the action is impeding and must be penalized with exclusion. Impeding can be with holding, sinking, blocking, two hands foul or swimming on the body.

In the perimeter area, every time a referee should give an exclusion foul when defender is holding his opponent, before ball arrives, and when attackers moving with intention to participate in the action and active play.

In case that defender impeding with stretched arm an attacker from moving forward, exclusion must be called on time. This must be applied as well as on center position when center swimming towards the goal to get a position and to participate in the action.

The most dangerous part of impeding is pressing as a tactic of play.

During the games we can recognize the two types of pressing:

1.1 NOT allowed pressing IMPEDING (holding, preventing movement)

1.2 Allowed pressing (controlling the attacker's movement, touching the attacker with one hand)

1.1 NOT allowed pressing:

NOT allowed pressing is IMPEDING and it's in use as a tactic for killing speed and the action.

This kind of play prevents intelligent players to play and increases violent play.

Any holding, sinking, or blocking the attacker who is moving (swimming), with one or both hands, must be penalized with an exclusion.

Physical play by a defender using both hands on a body of attacker, with the intention of making a foul and without any idea to get the ball, must be penalized with an exclusion.

Any kind of foul which is clearly reducing the advantage of the player, which is stopping the player to progress the action must be considered as impeding and penalized with exclusion.

1.2 Allowed pressing:

Allowed pressing is when defender is in horizontal position (lying on the water and moving with his body-swimming) has position from which he can control the movement of the attacker, by swimming next to him, and eventually with the simple short touch, by arm to the body of attacker, check the position of the attacker.

It's not necessary to always give exclusion for simple contact with arm of defender on body of attacker. If this contact doesn't stop the player progressing the action, there is no need to give an exclusion if there is not interference to the progress of the action.

Impeding in men up situations, offensive fouls in men up situations

During the actions at the "men up" situations Referees must pay attention on play of defending players on the 2-meter line.

Any kind of impeding against the attacking players must be sanctioned with exclusion of defending player who commits impeding



In case that attacking player, during the action in “men up” situation, commits any kind of obstructing of free movement of defender in aim to prevent a defence an offensive foul should be given.

2. OFFENSIVE FOUL

With the new rule, that re-start of the game after a foul, is from where the ball is, offensive foul can be very important call!

Many times, the defender is "invading" the space of the attacker. When the attacker starts to move, it's possible he touch the defender by his movement. But if he doesn't reduce his possibilities to defend, this is not an offensive foul, it's only a contact. The referees whistle offensive foul only if attacker movement is preventing defenders to play in defense (always without aggressive play or provocation).

This means, that attacker gets unallowed advantage and offensive foul should be called.

2.1. Allowed movement

There can be contact between attacking player, swimming towards, with defending player. If attacking player shows clear intention to move, to swim, he is always allowed to do it, even if by this movement he is in contact with defender. If attacking player clearly and intentionally swims directly on defender and over him, that is not allowed.

Movement is a key point to develop the good play; the referees should avoid to penalizing the movement and should permit the correct contact during the movement.

2.2 NOT allowed movement

- NOT allowed movement is to go directly to the opponent, impede him or jump over him. The NOT allowed movement always is against the opponent, clearly reducing his possibilities to play or with aggressive or provocative play
- Referee must follow all actions. Attacking player MUST be allowed to move. Any impeding from defending player on free movement of attacker must be punish according to the rules. Referee cannot whistle only reaction of attacking player, which is usually offensive foul, but must see also first action, which can be impeding from defending player.
- If the attacker uses an exaggerated movement against the defender or is too aggressive or, even, provocative, must be penalized.
- If the attacker is playing very hard to the opponent, the referees can give an exclusion in attack.

2.3 Ordinary foul:

Ordinary foul should be whistle ONLY when a player cannot proceed with his action and loses advantage, because of unallowed physical contact of an opponent.

2.4 Tactical fouls – prevent attack, pass, action

Those all are exclusion foul:

- Raisings both hands
- To interfere with a free throw
- Pushing the ball after a free throw
- Fouls with two hands
- Aggressive foul to prevent advantage
- Physical fouls while men up situation is in progress

3. CENTER FORWARD AND DEFENDER

During the game we must pay attention on the following situations:

- 3.1 Play without the ball – competing for position
- 3.2 Advantage of defender or attacker
- 3.3 Ordinary fouls
- 3.4 Exclusion fouls – impeding
- 3.5 Offensive fouls
- 3.6 Turnover, start in counterattack

Referees should allow players to compete, jostle for the ball or position, while they respect following guidelines:

- Not to play provocatory against the opponent
- Not to simulate
- To play on the ball and not the opponent
- Not to hold or push constantly

Referees should avoid calling any foul until the players respect the above mentioned criteria, and the committed foul has no influence on the game. On the other hand, referee must control centre forward situation all the time, to avoid that game became too physical. Centre forward is very important position so needs to be controlled well.

3.1 Play without the ball – competing for position:

It's impossible to ignore the fact that Water Polo is a contact sport.

Center and defender are on position with a lot of contacts.

If during the action, they are in contact which are not giving the advantage to any of them you will let the game to go on.

It means, until the players have opportunity to play and to compete for position (without holding, blocking, or impeding) referee should allow them to play and to continue with the action.

3.2 Advantage of defender:

When the defender is positioned on the lateral side next to the shoulder of center, he is in a very good position to take the ball from the center without a foul.



If the defender is in a horizontal position, the chances of taking the ball without a foul are increasing.

It is very important that defender has start on the ball, not on the body of center.

3.3 Ordinary fouls:

It is very important do not award an exclusion foul automatically when the ball arrives at the center position.

When a defender attempts to take the ball from the center and obstructing center movement with body, but without holding, pulling, or sinking, then the defender is committing an ordinary foul in reason that center forward may lose the control of the ball.

To give an ordinary foul to the center as opportunity to continue with the action when he is obstructed by defender (without holding, sinking, or impeding) must be applied in following situations:

- When center is turned with his back towards the goal and his position is too far from the goal (approximately 4 meters),
- When center is turned with his back towards the goal and outside the goal posts,
- When center is surrounded by other defenders and obstructing in the action with the ball which drop out from his hand.

3.4 Exclusion fouls – impeding:

Center can't be interrupted, during his swimming to the position, with a blocking by hands of defender. No matter is it continuous contact which is blocking the progress of center towards position or single (frequent) touches with pushing, defender must be excluded in a reason of impeding.

Center must have opportunity, and be free, to show the clear intention to get the ball moving towards to the ball.

Any movement of defender as jumping over the center head, holding, or sinking are exclusion fouls.

Too physical to prevent free movement by the defender on the body of the center forward in reason to stop the active play of center, without a clear intention to get the ball, must be penalized with an exclusion foul.

This situation usually occurs when the defender is in a vertical position behind the center and the ball is passed to the center.

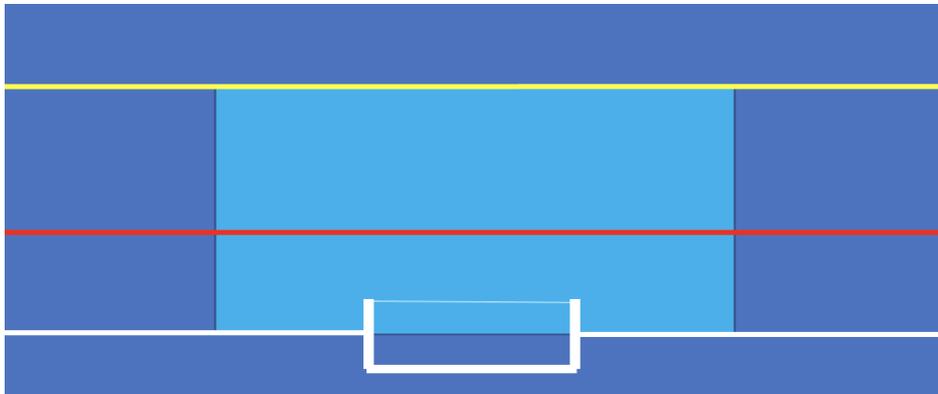
In case when defender is lying with the body on the center is impeding in reason of obstruction of the center movement in the action progress. The defender must be excluded, even if both hands are shown that he is not holding a center but with his body he is committing an impeding.

If center and defender are both holding each other under water, without clear intention to control the ball, and usually they don't even know where the ball is, a double exclusion must be given.

Exclusion without the ball on the center position.

Every time a player is excluded in the area (light blue) without the ball, the referee must proceed in a clear and definite. He will whistle the exclusion indicating the player's number together with an arm signalization of exclusion and will give the order to restart the game. The referee will try not to delay the game due to this circumstance but must ensure that his sanction is clearly understood.

Referee must avoid a lot of whistling, signalization must be short and clear, followed with immediately signalization of number of excluded players to avoid unnecessary delays. Referee must be shore that excluded player saw and hear the exclusion.



3.5 Offensive fouls:

The centre cannot play under water and get better position against defender. An offensive foul must be given if the centre gains unallowed advantage playing under the water and coming in situation to receive or receiving the ball.

Any backward movement by the centre forward in using hands (swimming with elbows back, holding the defender, jumping back) or head to push the defender away during competing for position or when the ball is passed to him, must be penalized with a contra foul.

If the centre forward is playing continuously inside two meters, without the ball, contra foul must be given.

Offensive fouls (two meters line area) - 2m rules interpretation

A player can never be in front of the line (parallel line with the goal line) of the ball at any time during the game in the 2 meters area of the opponent team.

If a player is in front of the goal area is in the front of the line of the ball even without getting the ball, he/she has a big influence on the defense and can give very big advantage for the attacking team. Two meter must be called every time. No passive 2-meter situation exist when the player is in the light blue area. (Fig 1)

If a pass within the 2-meter area flies forward (toward the goal line) 2 meter must be called, even if the two attacking players were at the same line at the moment of the pass. This is especially important to apply in men up situation. (Fig 2)

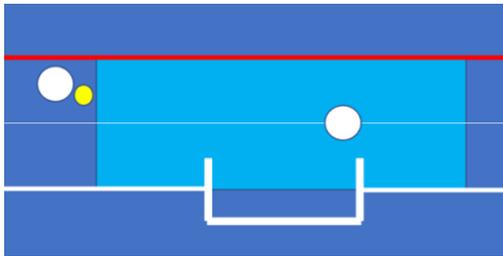


Fig 1

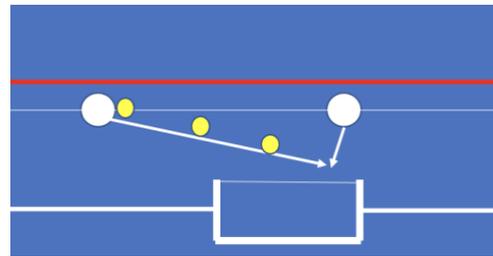


Fig 2

3.6 Turnover, start in counterattack:

Upon changing a ball possession all players must be free to move and swim.

At the center position, former defender must be free to progress in attack without any stoppage and contact with a former center

In case that center block a free movement of former defender exclusion must be called.

In case that former defender is coming in front position of center and hold or block the center to get unallowed advantage, instead to swim and progress in attack, contra foul must be called.

Referee must pay especial attention in a turnover after a shoot.

If the former defender, who starts to move over shooter immediately after the shoot, is simulating that the shooter is holding him, offensive foul should be called In this case a contra foul must be called.

When defender player is showing arms to the referee as proof that he is not touching attacker and that he doesn't have any intention to block any pass or shoot, there is no any foul against attacker. If the attacker continues simulating that he is fouled, the referee must give an offensive foul because simulation

4. PENALTY FOULS (with the ball in the hand):

Penalty must be called in situations when defending player, or goalkeeper, impeding an attacking player from behind, inside the six meters area, when the attacking player is facing to the goal and making a shooting action.

If the defending player's action prevent the attacking player from shooting, a penalty must be called.

The only way to defend from behind in this situation is for the defender to make contact only with the ball.

The crucial point is that the contact happened inside the 6 meters area, in a probable goal position and with the intention of the attacker to score.

If an attacking player with the intention to shoot has front position on a defending player while moving toward the goal, the defender is not allowed to commit a contact from behind with the arm or body of the attacking player.

The referee could delay calling the penalty in reason to be sure if the attacking player is fully able to complete the action with attempt to score a goal. If the attacking player is losing the opportunity to complete the action the penalty must be called.

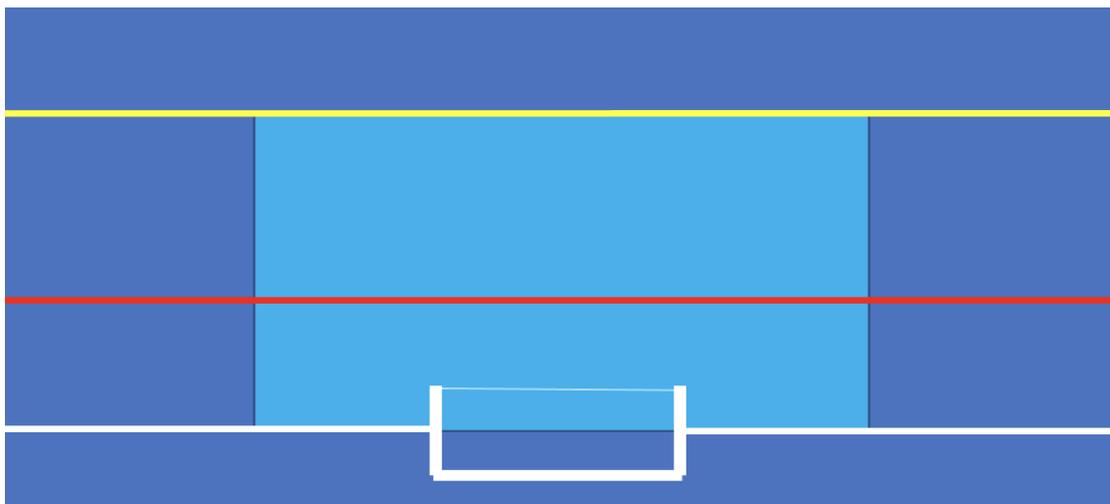
Before the referee will whistle a penalty, he must be sure that:

- **The attacking player is inside 6 meters area with movement towards a goal post.**
- **The attacking player has clear intention to progress with the action and shoot on the goal post.**
- **The attacking player is completely faced to the goal post.**
- **There is not any defending player between attacking player with a ball in the hand and goalkeeper.**
- **Contact from behind between defending player and attacking player with a ball in the hand is preventing a probable goal scoring.**

In case that goalkeeper is coming from the front to the attacking player, with the ball in the hand, a penalty can't be called!

Ball under situation with the goalkeeper.

- If the goalkeeper commits any foul including puts the ball under the water within his own 6 meters area inside of the light blue area are considered as a penalty fault.
- If the goalkeeper commits any foul outside of the light blue area are considered as a tactical foul and should be sanction with exclusion.
- If the goalkeeper puts the ball under the water outside the light blue area, when he is attacked by the opponent player, an ordinary foul will be awarded in the favor of the opponent team (WP 21.6).



Interference to the Penalty shot

Referees must pay a full attention to provide a regularity of the Penalty shot.

Special attention must be paid to:

- **Distance between a shooter and defender that no any interference can be committed**
- **Position of the goalkeeper that who must remain on goal line**

An excluded player doesn't leave the play of the field after changing ball possession.

An excluded player who goes towards his re-entry area and, before reaching it, returns to the game, is an excluded player who interferes in the game and, consequently, the penalty should be awarded. As there has been a change of possession, this player will remain on the field of play during the penalty shoot.

Excluded player without a cap.

- An excluded player or substitute without a cap must not reenter the play of the field. It must be considered as improper reentry. If they have no possession, it is a penalty, if they have possession, it is an exclusion.
- After time out or a goal the referee cannot restart the game with a player without cap and this player should be substituted. Cannot be any delay for these circumstances.

The position of a player

The position of the player must be determined by the head of a player. This body part is almost all the time above the water and easy to determine where it is.

Following situations are important:

- Swim off (head under the crossbar)
- Penalty shot (goalkeepers head under the crossbar)
- 6m free throw (attacking player's head must be out of 6-meter zone)
- 2m situation (the head of the player with the ball should be the closest to the goal line)
- Enter from the reentry area and the flying substitution zone

5. Red Card: Unfair play, illegal player, ...

For all exclusions for the remainder of the game the Referee must show the red card and write this in the official sheet.

5.1 Aggressive play and provocative play

The referee should penalize all the aggressive or provocative play immediately, in any part of the field and in any moment of the game. The referee cannot accept this kind of play which is against the spirit of the Rules and likely to bring the game into disrepute. The referee can give and advice to one player or to the teams (captains) in the first provocation, but, if persist, must apply the rule.

All intentional actions against opponent player as:

- **Touching the face**
- **Pulling the cap**

- **Touching or holding a neck**

are considering as aggressive play and must be sanctioned under the WP 22.13 rule.

If the opponent player simulate that this kind of foul occurred on him the WP 21.17 rule will be applied, and yellow card shown to the player.

5.2 Brutality

"To commit an act of brutality (including to play in a violent manner, kicking, striking or attempting to kick or strike with malicious intent)".

The referees must apply this Rule very strictly, in any part of the field and in any moment of the game.

6 GRABBING THE SWIMSUITS

The referee must recognize the difference between the men's and the women's game. Grabbing the swimsuit is huge factor in the women's game because it creates an unfair advantage for the player holding the suit – therefore, the punishment should be severe.

Grabbing or holding of the swimsuit is a major violation of the rules.

Grabbing of the swimsuit should be exclusion in defense and a contra foul in attack.

The referee must recognize what sometimes happens under water by interpreting the movement and body position of the players involved.

Grabbing of the swimsuit in defense must be exclusion!

Grabbing of the swimsuit in attack must be a contra foul!

Holding the swimsuit by an attacking player must be penalized with offensive foul!