



PRIMARY WATER POLO RULES

- **Team** - consists of 7 players in the water at one time – 1 goalie and 6 field players. A team can have up to 6 substitutes who can either be inter- changed after a goal has been scored and before play has started again OR at any time from their corner of the pool, but only when the player being replaced has reached his / her corner of the pool, so as to ensure there are only 6 field players in play per team at all times.
- **Game Duration** - A game is made up of 2 halves of up to 10 minutes each with teams switching ends at halftime. The break at halftime is approx. 1 minute.
- **Starting play** - To start the game, players line up along their respective goal lines. At the referees whistle, the referee drops the ball in the middle of the pool and players move to the centre line. Possession is granted to the team who reaches the ball first. The first pass must be backwards to a team mate.
- **Goal** - A goal is scored when the whole ball crosses the line of the front 2 posts (*the ball does not need to touch back of net*). The ball carrier can only shoot when they are in the attacking half of the court. It is not permissible to shoot from one's own half
- **After A Goal** - To start play after a goal is scored, players from each team must return to their own half. The ball starts at halfway with a player from the team who did not score the goal. On the referees whistle, the player with the ball must pass backwards to a team mate and then the game will continue.
- **Corner Throw** - A corner throw (*taken from beside the red 2 meter cone*) will be awarded if the ball is knocked out of play by a defending player or goalie.
- **Free Throw Infringements** - Minor foul or infringements below will result in a free throw being awarded by the referee. The free throw must be taken from the where the foul occurred or an area not closer to the attacking goal of the team awarded the foul. The player taking the free throw cannot shoot at goal after receiving a foul and defenders cannot interfere with the taking of the free throw.

All of the infringements below will result in a free throw being awarded by the referee.

- A player cannot contact the ball with 2 hands (exception being the goalie)
- A player cannot take the ball under the surface of the water
- A player cannot walk or run with the ball
- A player cannot hit ball with a closed fist
- A player cannot swim on or over an opponent's legs
- A defensive player cannot contact an attacking player
- An offensive player cannot fend away a defensive player
- Offside play

- **Major Foul Infringements** - will result in a free throw awarded to the attacking team by the referee and the defending player excluded to his/her team's corner of the pool for a period of either 20 seconds or when the referee signals the player back into the court of play.
 - **Exclusion Infringements** - Aggressive play and use of abusive language are prohibited in the game of water polo and the penalty will be exclusion for the remainder of the game WITH a substitute entering play on signal from referee (*aggression is defined as deliberately striking or attempting to strike a fellow player*).
 - **Team** - Players not in game are to sit on team bench or designated bench area. Players are not to wear items such as jewellery, goggles, glasses or anything that could cause harm or injury to another player or yourself.
 - **Coaches** - During the game coaches must be situated in the corner of the pool where their team is located and can only move between that corner of pool (*up to the 2m cone*) and the goal that his/her team is defending.
 - **One Hand Only** - Players can use only one hand only to catch, pass, shoot or defend the ball. The exception to this is the goalie, who may use both hands.
 - **No Ball = Walk;**
Ball = Swim or Pass
The pool is shallow, (approx. 1 meter) allowing players to stand on the bottom of the pool. Players are permitted to walk along the bottom if they do not have the ball. However, if in possession of the ball the player must swim or pass.
 - **Ball Under** - A player cannot take the ball under the surface of the water. (*NB the player whose hand is closest to the ball will be the player deemed to have taken the ball Under*)
 - **No Contact** - A player cannot swim on or over an opponent's legs, a defensive player cannot contact an attacking player, an offensive player cannot fend away a defensive player – if this occurs, a minor foul/free throw is awarded.
- NO splashing, sinking, holding or pulling back** – or a major foul/exclusion for 20 seconds will be enforced.
- NO aggressive play** (striking or attempting to strike another player) or use of abusive language – this results in exclusion for the remainder of the game with a substitute at the referees signal.
- **Off-Side** - An attacker will be deemed offside if the attacker enters the attacking 2 metre zone if they are not holding or following the ball. If the ball carrier enters the 2 metre zone, other attackers are then allowed to enter as long as they remain behind the line of the ball carrier. A Goalie is deemed offside if they enter their attacking half.

- **Neutral Throw** - When 2 players simultaneously gain possession of the ball, the referee will signal a neutral throw. The 2 players involved face the referee, close to the side of the pool, same side as their goalie; the referee then blows the whistle and throws the ball high in the middle of the 2 players, who attempt to gain possession by jumping and tapping the ball to a player on their team.
- **Holding the ball under the elbow when tackled** - Holding the ball under the elbow (or in the crook of the arm) when tackled by a defender, is a foul with possession being awarded to the opposing team
- **Spectator or Coach Behaviour** - The Hutt Water Polo Club's pool controller (located at the poolside table) will have the right to warn coaches or spectators about abusive behaviour and, if the behaviour continues, request the person to leave the pool facility.

FAIR PLAY

People play to participate and enjoy the game – two considerations that are often more important than winning. Bending the rules and foul play are unsporting and ruin the enjoyment for all involved. Coaches, players, referees and supporters all have a role in upholding the principles of fair play.