



## JUNIOR WATER POLO RULES

### INTERMEDIATE SCHOOLS

- **Your Team** - A team consists of 6 players in the water at one time – 1 goalie and 5 field players. A team can have up to 5 substitutes who can either be interchanged 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 approximately 2 minutes.
- **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 ball must be passed to a teammate before a goal can be scored.
- **Goal**- A goal is scored when the whole ball crosses the line of the front 2 posts (*the ball does not need to touch the back of the net*). The ball carrier can shoot from anywhere in the pool.
- **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 referee's whistle, the player with the ball must play the ball before a goal can be scored.
- **Corner Throw** - A corner throw (*taken from beside the red 2 meter cone*) will be awarded if - the goalie touches the ball and it goes out of play  
- if a defender throws the ball out behind the goal line  
(If a defender blocks the ball and it goes out of play behind the goal line it will be the Goalies ball)
- **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 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 inside 6m. After committing a foul, the defender 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 inside their 5 metre cone)
- 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 make illegal contact with the player holding the ball
- An offensive player cannot fend away a defensive player

- **Playing the ball** - After all infringements the player with the ball must play the ball straight away, this means the ball must leave their hand and either catch it themselves or pass to another player. As soon as the ball has been played the game continues.
- **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.  
**NO splashing, sinking, holding or pulling back** – or a major foul/exclusion for 20 seconds will be enforced.
- **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 the referee (*aggression is defined as deliberately striking or attempting to strike a fellow player*).
- **Team** - Substitutes are to sit behind the rope holding the goal. Players are not to wear jewellery, goggles, glasses or anything that could cause harm or injury to another player or themselves.
- **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 6m cone if attacking, or behind the goal line if 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 as long as they are behind their 5m cone.
- **No Ball = Walk    Ball = Swim or Pass**  
The pool is shallow, (approx. 1 meter) allowing most 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.
- **Jumping off the bottom of the pool** - There is to be no jumping off the bottom of the pool to intercept the ball or when passing/shooting the ball, the only exception is the goalie who may jump to catch the ball but not to pass. A small hop may be permitted.
- **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*)
- **Contact** - Any Head contact is not allowed. A player cannot swim on or over an opponent's legs. A defensive player may only contact an attacking player from the front (the defender may not use the attacking player's shoulder to push off to reach the ball), an offensive player cannot fend away a defensive player – if this occurs, a minor foul/free throw is awarded.
- **Penalty 5 metre** - A penalty shot will be awarded if a defending player illegally stops a probable goal. Examples of this are when a defensive player contacts an attacking player that is inside 6m swimming toward the goal from behind. A field player blocking the ball with two hands inside 6m. The goalkeeper taking the ball under water to keep it away from the attacking team
- **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.

- **Goalie Possession** - No player is allowed to attack the ball while the goalie has **clear** possession. The referee will use their discretion if they feel that the goalie is delaying the play of the ball and may award a free throw to the other team.
- **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, the same side as their goalie; the referee 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 and 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.
- **Any injuries while in the pool facility must be reported to the pool staff.**

## **FAIRPLAY**

**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.**