



**NCAA MEN'S AND WOMEN'S WATER POLO PLAYING RULES
INTERPRETATIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS
2024 – 2025**

July 23, 2024

Clarification:

This information is provided in addition to the recent rules change related to the Goal Area (Rule 1 – Field of Play and Equipment, Section 8 – Goal Area). The following language will be included in the 2024-25 and 2025-26 Men's and Women's Water Polo Rules Book.

Rule 6 – Ordinary Fouls. Section 11 – Inside the Goal Area.

To be within the opponent's Goal Area, except when behind the line of the ball. It shall not be an offense if a player is inside the 2-meter line but outside the Goal Area. Any player who is behind the line of the ball can enter the Goal Area to receive a pass.

Note: An attacking player in the Goal Area cannot be in front of the line of the ball at any time. If a pass into or within the Goal Area flies forward (toward the goal line) ahead of the receiving player, an ordinary offensive foul must be called, even if the passing and receiving players were at the same line at the moment of the pass. This is especially important to apply in a player advantage situation.

It shall not be an offense if a player takes the ball into the Goal Area and passes it to another player who is behind the line of the ball and who shoots at the goal immediately, before the first player has been able to leave the Goal Area. If the player receiving the pass does not shoot at the goal, the player who passed the ball must immediately leave the Goal Area to avoid being penalized under this rule.

Referees should not penalize an attacking player who momentarily enters the Goal Area without interfering with the play. If the player continues to stay there, the player is affecting play by their very presence as that player is forcing a change in how or where the defense plays, and the foul should be called.

Rationale: Allowing offensive players to go inside the 2-meter line if the player is located outside the Goal Area will provide more room for the offense to use and allow for more movement. The results of applying this rule in international competition have confirmed that this change will add to the appeal of the game by creating new offensive strategies, promoting more scoring opportunities, and enhancing spectator appeal. This rules change also includes adjustments to rules pertaining to the location of the free throw for fouls with the ball inside the Goal Area vs. inside the 2-meter line, violations of the Goal Area vs. the 2-meter line, and other similar adjustment. This change to Rule 6.11 is the most extensive among those adjustments.