



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

**August 29, 2024**

**Forward Passes into the Goal Area.**

**Background:** Rule 6, Section 11, “Inside the Goal Area,” states the following:

“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.”

Questions arose during and after the August 24, 2024, NCAA Referee School regarding whether a forward pass into or within the Goal Area that lands on the water is allowed under this rule. In this situation, could an offensive player swim to the ball where it lies in the Goal Area and play the ball if the player was at no time in front of the line of the ball while in the Goal Area?

Applicable examples that might arise include a two-on-one counterattack or situations where the center seals the center defender with inside water outside the Goal Area.

**Interpretation:** A forward pass thrown into or within the Goal Area is allowed under the following limited conditions:

- 1) The ball must land on the water in the Goal Area.
- 2) After the ball lands, offensive players may play the ball provided that they were at no time in front of the line of the ball while in the Goal Area.

For questions regarding this interpretation, please contact the NCAA Water Polo Secretary-Rules Editor, David Alberstein – [albersteind@gmail.com](mailto:albersteind@gmail.com).