



**REPORT OF THE
NCAA MEN'S AND WOMEN'S WATER POLO RULES SUBCOMMITTEE
MAY 13-14, 2024, ANNUAL MEETING**

ACTION ITEMS.

1. Legislative items.

- None.

2. Nonlegislative items. The NCAA Men's and Women's Water Polo Rules Subcommittee approved the following rules change proposals for the 2024-25 and 2025-26 seasons. The Men's and Women's Water Polo Rules Subcommittee requests approval from the NCAA Playing Rules Oversight Panel for the following items:

a. Field of Play and Equipment (Rule 1).

(1.) Recommendation. Currently, NCAA water polo rules refer to the "2-meter area" as the area bounded by the goal line, the 2-meter line, and the side lines. Under this proposed rule change, the "2-meter area" will be supplemented by a "Goal Area" defined as the rectangular area in front of the goal bounded by the goal line, the 2-meter line and lines located two meters outside of each goal post. It will no longer be a foul for an offensive player to go inside the 2-meter line ahead of the ball if the player is located outside the Goal Area. It will be a foul for an offensive player to go inside the Goal Area ahead of the ball.

This change will require new markings of the field of play. Due to cost considerations, the requirement for new markings delineating the Goal Area will be implemented in a phased manner. During the first phase, beginning September 1, 2024, temporary markings such as, for floating goals, red tape, red paint, red foam markers, or a red towel tied on the goal line lane line at a distance of 2 meters outside of each goal post can be used. For wall goals, a cone on the deck and/or red tape or a red paint stripe 2 meters outside of each goal post will be acceptable as temporary markers. Continuous red markings will be required by September 1, 2025. These markings will include, for floating goals, continuous red buoys on the goal line lane line for a distance of 2 meters outside of each goal post. For wall goals, the continuous marking can be placed using red deck edge markers. Some schools have already provided these markings in conformance with other rule sets and in anticipation of the adoption of this proposal.

This change will also require approximately a dozen revisions to rules pertaining to matters such as players moving inside 2-meters vs. the Goal Area, free throws when the ball is inside 2-meters vs. the Goal Area, and other details that have been identified and enumerated by the NCAA Water Polo Secretary/Rules Editor for use in the event that this proposal is adopted.

- (2.) Effective date. 2024-25. However, the proposal allows for the delayed implementation due to the financial impact as noted above. Guidance is provided to those that may need to make the necessary purchases to be in compliance with the rules change starting in 2025-26.
- (3.) 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 adjustments. (Note: For institutions needing assistance, USA Water Polo has a grant program to assist with the cost associated with the rules change that can be found [here](#).)
- (4.) Estimated budget impact. This rule change will have a budget impact. The proposal has a delayed implementation and will be effective starting in 2025-26. As noted above, the rule change provides guidance on how to administer the rule change. The estimated cost is listed per single item.
- Pool Paint (1 gallon.) – \$100-\$250.
 - Cones - \$20-\$100.
 - Tape (~30-50 meters) - \$10-\$50.
 - Foam Marker - \$20-\$50.
 - Towel - \$10-\$30.
- (5.) Student-athlete impact. None.

b. Numbers on Caps (Rule 1.25.2).

- (1.) Recommendation. A change in cap number shall be reported to the referees by the head coach. The referees shall notify the Game Secretary and the opposing team bench of the change. Failure to notify the referees of the change shall result in a warning for the first offense. For the second offense the referee shall issue the next available card to the head coach.
- (2.) Effective date. Immediately.
- (3.) Rationale. This change clarifies who is responsible for reporting a change in cap number, which is not currently specified. The requirement for the referees to notify the game secretary and the opposing team bench of the cap number change ensures that

all participants are aware of the change. Additionally, the associated penalty for failing to report a cap number change is now specified.

(4.) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5.) Student-athlete impact. None.

c. Entry of Substitute (Rule 2.7).

(1.) Recommendation. If a coach repeatedly delays in making substitutions after a goal has been scored, the referee may issue a warning to the coach. If the delays continue, the referee may issue the next available card to the coach for interfering with the progress of the game.

(2.) Effective date. Immediately.

(3.) Rationale. To formalize the authority of the referees to control repeated delays in substitutions.

(4.) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5.) Student-athlete impact. None.

d. Referees – Control Over Conduct (Rule 3.6).

(1.) Recommendation. The person who is excluded from the remainder of the game for flagrant or who receives a Red Card shall be removed from sight and sound of the venue both for the remainder of the current game for any subsequent suspended game(s).

(2.) Effective date. Immediately.

(3.) Rationale. This change is consistent with other NCAA sports and aides the game officials in their ability to officiate the remainder of the contest without the potential of further disruption. It also removes the opportunity for fans to engage with the ejected individual and aides host personnel in avoiding any potential game management issues. Some water polo conferences already have this enhanced rule in place; however, some do not. Instituting this rule change provides consistency across all conferences as well as for any institutions that may be competing as independents.

(4.) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5.) Student-athlete impact. None.

e. Correctable errors (Rule 3.11.3).

- (1.) Recommendation. To add the following language to Rule 3.11 (Correctable Errors) as Article 3. During an extra player situation, if: a) A warm-up ball enters the field of play where the extra player situation is being played; b) A goal comes loose and moves or is blown over by wind; and c) The game is stopped for lightning, a clock malfunction, or a similar event that affects play, the game shall be stopped. The game clock shall be reset to the time of the exclusion, and the shot clock shall be reset.
- (2.) Effective date. Immediately.
- (3.) Rationale. The procedure to be followed under these circumstances is not currently specified in the NCAA water polo rules. This rule change addresses these situations.
- (4.) Estimated budget impact. None.
- (5.) Student-athlete impact. None.

f. Correctable Errors (Rule 3.11.4).

- (1.) Recommendation. To add the following language to Rule 3.11 (Correctable Errors) as Article 4. If a signal is not given at the proper time by the exclusion secretary for the entry of an excluded player, and a goal is subsequently scored, the game shall be stopped, the game clock shall be reset to the entry time, the shot clock shall be reset to the appropriate time, the goal shall not be counted, and play shall resume from the entry time with the excluded player in the exclusion area until play restarts.”
- (2.) Effective date. Immediately.
- (3.) Rationale. The procedure to be followed to correct the error of a late entry signal for an excluded player is not currently specified in the NCAA water polo rules. Furthermore, no provisions exist in the rules under which the referees can determine the action to take if the delay in the entry signal is clearly not significant enough to affect play. This omission in the rules has resulted in goals being taken away in situations where the delay in the entry signal was not significant enough to affect play. This rule change will address these issues.
- (4.) Estimated budget impact. None.
- (5.) Student-athlete impact. None.

g. Goal Judges – Balls (Rule 3.16.2).

(1.) Recommendation. Identify the current text of Rule 3, Section 16 as Article 1 and add the following paragraph as Article 2: "If the bench repeatedly delays in throwing the ball in for the counterattack, the referee may issue a warning to the coach. If the delays continue, the referee may issue the next available card to the coach for interfering with the progress of the game. If the bench delays in throwing the ball in for a corner throw, the provisions of Rule 8, Section 7 (Team Official Preventing Goal) may apply.

(2.) Effective date. Immediately.

(3.) Rationale. Delays in throwing in the ball for a counterattack can, under some circumstances, create an unfair advantage for the offense by delaying the start of the shot clock. Delays in throwing the ball in for a corner throw can take advantage away from the offense. This rule change formalizes the ability of the referees to control such unfair tactics.

(4.) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5.) Student-athlete impact. None.

h. Game timer duties (Rules 3.17.2.a).

(1.) Recommendation. Start the game clock at the beginning of each period when a player touches or gains possession of the ball and stop the clock each time the whistle blows.

(2.) Effective date. Immediately.

(3.) Rationale. The rules change clarifies when the timer should start the clock at the beginning of a period. The addition of the words "or gains possession of" makes Rules 3.17 and 3.18 consistent and addresses the situation that occurs when the sprint at the beginning of a period is not contested.

(4.) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5.) Student-athlete impact. None.

i. Goals – How Scored (Rule 4.21.1 Note).

(1.) Recommendation. To change to Rule 4, Section 21 (Goals – How Scored), Article 1 that revises the Note at the end of Article 1 to expand the cases in which a player with a corner throw can take a direct shot following removal of the ball from the pool? The revised note would read as follows: Note: This includes after a correctable clock error

and after the referees stop play and remove the ball from the water prior to a corner throw for any administrative reason.

(2.) Effective date. Immediately.

(3.) Rationale. The current rules limit the direct shot on a corner throw when the ball is removed prior to the throw only to correction of a clock error, replacement of a cap, or the zipping up of a suit. Because there is usually no offensive advantage prior to a corner throw, that time is often well suited for use by the officials for other administrative reasons, such as addressing an issue at the desk or a clock question. This change provides administrative flexibility for the officials by allowing a direct shot if the ball is removed for any administrative reason prior to the taking of a corner throw.

(4.) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5.) Student-athlete impact. None.

j. Entering the Field of Play Improperly or leaving the field of play (Rule 4.26).

(1.) Recommendation. A change to leaving the field of play (Rule 4.26) that adds the following language to the end of the rule before the interpretations: "If the player reenters improperly, the provisions of entering the field of play improperly (Rule 7.15) shall apply.

(2.) Effective date. Immediately.

(3.) Rationale. Rule 4.26 currently does not specify which rule is applicable if a player who voluntarily leaves the field of play reenters in a manner other than that specified. This rule change clarifies this situation.

(4.) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5.) Student-athlete impact. None.

k. Free Throws – Time Allowed (Rule 5.11).

(1.) Recommendation. When there is a counterattack, a player with a position of advantage does not have to give up the advantage to go to the ball and take the free throw. The player on that team who is next closest to the ball can take the free throw as long as there is no undue delay.

(2.) Effective date. Immediately.

(3.) Rationale. This note formalizes something that has been informally accepted as common practice for many years, i.e., that a player in a counterattack with a position of advantage should not be required to go toward their own goal or toward the sideline to take a free throw and give up the advantage simply because that player is closest to the ball. Instead, the player who is next closest to the ball can take the free throw. It would still be the case that a player who is next to the ball when the ball is awarded to the defense or who swims past the ball on a counterattack and does not put the ball into play would be called for undue delay in taking the free throw.

(4.) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5.) Student-athlete impact. None.

l. Failure to Take Position on Goal Line (Rule 7.17).

(1.) Recommendation. To change Rule 7, Section 17 (Failure to Take Position on Goal Line) that would revise the section as follows: New section title: "Failure of Defenders to Take Position During a Penalty Throw." Revised first sentence as follows: "For the defending players, including the goalkeeper, to fail to take the proper positions during the taking of a penalty throw as required in Rule 9, Section 2."

(2.) Effective date. Immediately.

(3.) Rationale. Rule 7.17 as currently written applies only to a defending goalkeeper who fails to take the required position on the goal line. This change expands the requirement to apply also to all other defensive players who fail to maintain the required minimum distance from the player taking the penalty throw.

(4.) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5.) Student-athlete impact. None.

m. Kicking or Striking Within 6-Meter Area, Flagrant Misconduct or Fighting (Rule 8.3).

(1.) Recommendation. New section title: "Kicking, Striking or Other Physical Misconduct Within 6-Meter Area, Flagrant Misconduct or Fighting." Revised first paragraph of the rule as follows: "For a defending player within the 6-meter area to kick or strike an opponent or commit any act of physical misconduct against an opponent, or for a player at any location in the pool to commit an act of flagrant misconduct or to engage in a fight.

(2.) Effective date. Immediately.

(3.) Rationale. This rule change adds violations that constitute physical misconduct, such as overaggressive fouls, to the list of penalty fouls in the 6-meter area and gives the referees the authority to exclude the offender from the remainder of the game when appropriate. This provides the referees with an additional tool to control excessively physical play.

(4.) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5.) Student-athlete impact. None.

n. Penalty Fouls (Rule 8.9).

(1.) Recommendation. A change to Rule 8 (Penalty Fouls) that adds the following language as a new Section 9: "It shall be a penalty foul for a defending player to foul or impede from behind an attacking player who has the ball and an open path to the goal within the 6-meter area regardless of whether the player is holding the ball. The only way a defender can defend in this situation is to touch only the ball or the hand holding the ball. If the defending player's actions prevent the attacking player from continuing the action, a penalty must be called.

(2.) Effective date. Immediately.

(3.) Rationale. The new section conforms the NCAA Water Polo Rules with all other rules sets in regard to awarding a penalty throw to a player inside 6-meters who has the ball with a defender behind and an open path to the goal. The change is also consistent with the principle of offensive advantage – reward the offense for good play by calling the penalty.

(4.) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5.) Student-athlete impact. None.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS.

- 1. Welcome and announcements.** Daniel Leyson, chair of the Men's and Women's Water Polo Rules Committee, welcomed the subcommittee and invited guests and thanked them for their time.
- 2. Review schedule, agenda, committee procedures and Playing Rules Oversight Panel directive.** The rules committee reviewed the meeting schedule, agenda and operations manual, which included the NCAA conflict of interest policy, guidance for committee members regarding meeting reports, notes and email, voting procedures, principles for rules writing, and experimental playing rules guidelines. The rules committee was reminded of the directive of PROP from 2014. This directive encourages all rules committees to strongly consider providing at least a one-year delay for institutions, particularly those with members from Division II and Division III, before implementing any rules changes that have financial or facility implications.
- 3. Approval of 2023 annual meeting report.** The report was approved as written.
- 4. NCAA Sport Science Institute Injury Surveillance Presentation.** The rules committee heard a presentation from the NCAA Sport Science Institute Injury Surveillance program and its role in supporting NCAA committees with the data it collects.
- 5. National coordinator of officials' report.** The rules subcommittee heard a report from the national coordinator of officials, which focused on recruiting and retaining water polo officials for the future.
- 6. Secretary-rules editor report.** The rules subcommittee heard a report from the secretary-rules editor, which focused on the clarifications and interpretations from 2022-23 and 2023-24.
- 7. Review of 2024-25 and 2025-26 proposed rules changes, subcommittee's feedback and editorial revisions.** The rules subcommittee reviewed and considered 34 rules proposals as noted above in the Action Items section of this report. The rules subcommittee approved 14 rules changes during its annual meeting.
- 8. Selection of chair.** The Men's and Women's Water Polo Rules Subcommittee elected Daniel Leyson, head men's water polo coach at the University of California, Davis, as chair for a one-year term beginning September 1, 2024.
- 9. Other business.** Outgoing committee members were recognized and thanked for their service to the committee and Association.
- 10. Future meeting schedule and videoconference schedule.** The rules subcommittee is scheduled to meet May 12-13, 2025, for its annual meeting.

11. Adjournment. The meeting was adjourned at 2:10 p.m. Pacific time on Monday, May 13.

Committee Chair: Daniel Leyson, University of California, Davis
Staff Liaison(s): Stanley Broaden, Championships and Alliances, Playing Rules and Officiating

Men's and Women's Water Polo Rules Subcommittee May 13-14, 2024, Annual Meeting	
Attendees:	
David Alberstein, Secretary-Rules Editor.	
Daniel Leyson, University of California, Davis.	
Nikola Malezanov, Washington and Jefferson College.	
Ted Minnis, Harvard University.	
Erica Monteabaro, University of California, Irvine.	
Daniel Teliski, Gannon University.	
Wesley Yourth, University of the Pacific.	
Absentees:	
None.	
Guests in Attendance:	
John Abdou, Association of Collegiate Water Polo Coaches.	
Amber Drury, National Coordinator of Officials.	
Scott Voltz, Active Official.	
NCAA Staff Liaison (or Staff Support of Subcommittee) in Attendance:	
Stanley Broaden.	
Other NCAA Staff Members in Attendance:	
Avinash Chandran and Mallory Mickus.	