

NEW USA WATER POLO RULE CHANGES FOR 2024

Effective: January 1, 2024

Updated: December 11, 2023

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Question: Are these the same rules that were approved by World Aquatics earlier this year?

Answer: USAWP adopted the majority of the new rules but not all. Please refer to the USAWP rules.

2. Question: Will the new goal area be implemented for 12U and 10U?

Answer: No, 12U and 10U will still have the standard 2-meter area as before and the rules regarding “inside the 2-meter” will stay the same. Only ages 14U and above will use the new goal area rule and interpretations.

3. Question: Leaving the Field of Play: Won't a team gain an advantage by the player leaving the water, running on the deck, and then jumping into the re-entry area for a substitute to re-enter?

Answer: No, because the player who leaves the water will be excluded for the remainder of the game. The substitute of this player must serve the 20 second exclusion period before they are allowed to enter the game. The excluded player must still get to the re-entry area before the substitute is allowed to re-enter, regardless if 20 seconds have already elapsed. The only way the substitute can re-enter after 20 seconds have elapsed without the excluded player getting to the re-entry area is if a goal is scored or a timeout has been called.

4. Question: In the new rules document, does ordinary foul also mean offensive foul?

Answer: Yes. Contra fouls (offensive fouls) are categorized as ordinary fouls against the offense. We have updated the document to include “contra foul” next to ordinary fouls against the offense.

5. Question: Can a player on offense go to the “1 meter” line but outside the goal area and stay there without being penalized?

Answer: Yes, players can now go anywhere outside of the goal area without being penalized.

6. Question: Clarification on the goal area and receiving a pass that flies forward. So even if the player that is receiving the pass is behind the line of the ball, they cannot swim and “meet” the ball to catch and shoot in the goal area?

Answer: Correct. The ball can never go forward (toward the goal line) within the goal area without being a 2-meter violation. This is similar to a “lateral” pass in football. The pass must be on an even straight line or thrown backwards, never forward within the goal area.

7. Question: Can you clarify where the free throw is taken if a foul is awarded inside the goal area?

Answer: If a foul is awarded and the ball is inside the goal area, the free throw must be taken outside of the goal area. As shown in the illustration, it can be taken opposite where the ball is (yellow star in the illustration) or laterally toward the sideline outside the goal area. The most expedient direction should be taken.

8. Question: Tactical Foul: Does every ordinary foul put a player in jeopardy of getting excluded? What about a foul and drop? Are those going to be exclusions now?

Answer: No, these are specific fouls that stop the flow of attack and take away the advantage. If a regular ordinary foul is committed, the attacking player should be able to recover the ball, make a pass, and continue the attack. In that case, only an ordinary foul should be rewarded. Tactical fouls are specific fouls that are listed in the rule that are intended to stop the attack and kill the advantage. The most common tactical fouls are the aggressive, two-handed fouls that the attacking player cannot recover in time to continue the attack.

9. Question: Is going under water on offense an automatic offensive foul?

Answer: No. It is a contra foul only when an attacking player gains an advantage by going underwater when competing for position. The mere fact of going underwater and resurfacing exactly where you were is not a violation. Also, underwater plays are not a violation of this rule. This rule only applies when players are competing for position.