

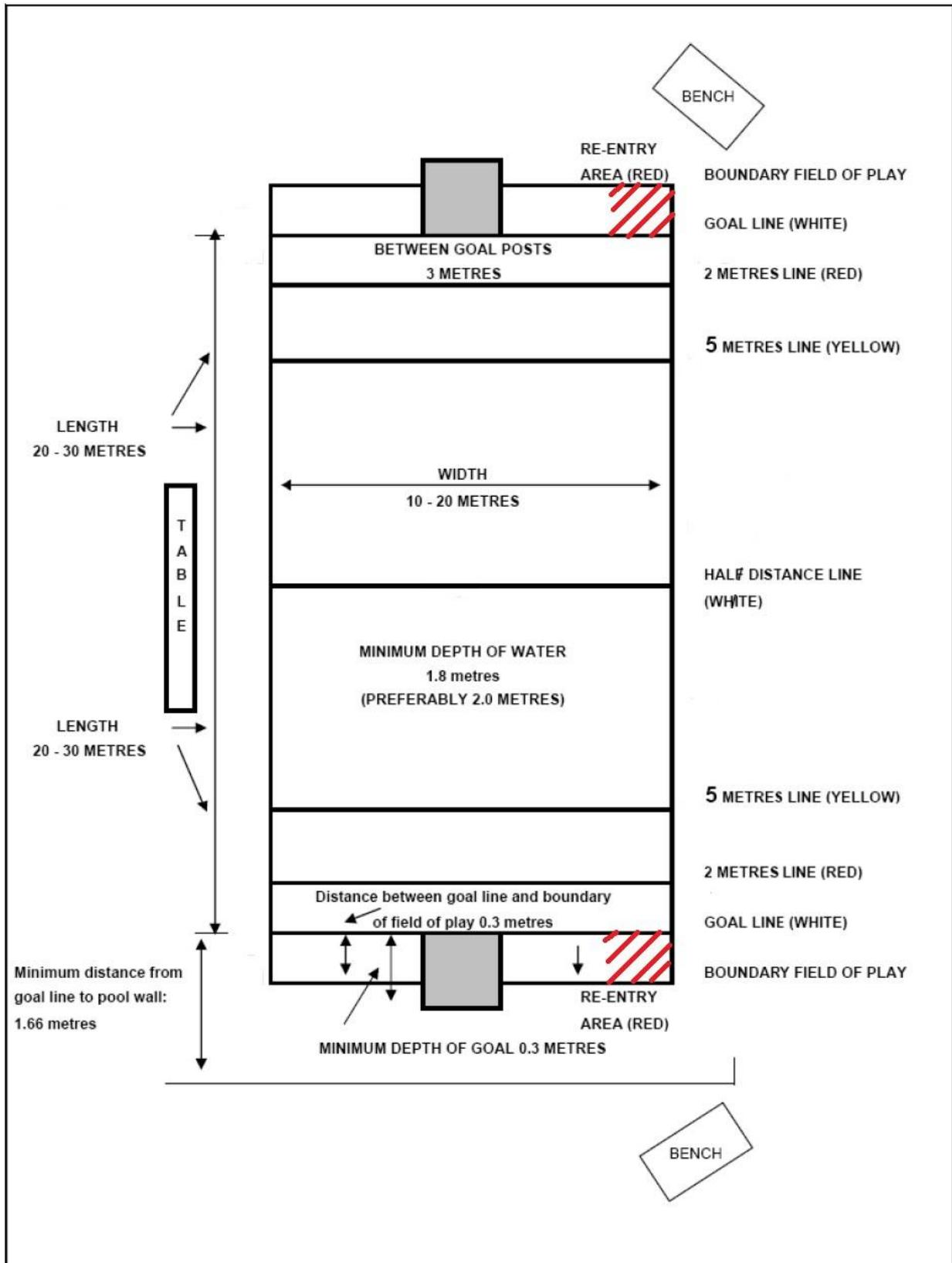
Game rules Waterpolo

Game field

The playing field can be up to 20 meters wide and 30 meters long for men and maximally 25 meters long for women. The playing field is delimited by floating lines if the swimming pool is bigger. For smaller pools dispensation is granted to the dimensions of the playing field, however the minimum size of the field must be 10 meters wide and 20 meters long. Most pools are either 25 or 50 meters long, therefore the length of the field is often 25 meters.

Minimum water depth must be least 1.8 meters, but this is not always realized due to practicalities. If the water depth is close to 1,8 meters but players are able to stand on the bottom, they are only permitted to do so if the player does not have the ball in his possession. Once a player receives the ball, he or she must swim. If they stand or push off the bottom then they will be penalized with a free-throw for the opponents. A free throw may only be directed at the goal if the player is outside of the 5 meters. If the player is within the 5 meters then the ball must be passed to an opponent before being aimed at the goal. The two goals are in the middle of the rear lines of the field. The goals are 3 meters wide, 90 centimeters high and 1 meter deep. When the swimming pool cannot accomodate a goal with a depth of 1 meter then the goal must be placed at least 0.30 meters from the pool edge. In a swimming pool with a depth of less than 1.50 meters, the distance between the bottom of the swimming pool and the bottom of the top bar must be 2.40 meters. The goalposts and crossbar must be 0,075 meters wide and painted white.

Since, no lines can be drawn in the swimming pool, the lines are marked with pawns on the side (see picture on the next page). In waterpolo, we have 4 types of lines: the goal line, the 2-meter line, the 5-meter line and the center line. The goal line is located at the front of the goal, at the height of the goal posts. If the ball has completely crossed the line, between the goalposts, it's a goal. The goal line is supposed to be indicated by white pawns. The 2-meter line is placed exactly 2 meters before the goal line and is indicated by red pawns. The 2-meter line is indicated because an attacking player may not enter the 2 meters without the ball. During an attack, an attacking player may not pass the 2-meter line. The attacking player may only come within 2 meters, if he has the ball in his possession and wants to score. A defensive player may always come within the 2 meter area. The 5-meter line is exactly 5 meters before the goal line and is indicated with yellow pawns. The 5-meter line is drawn to indicated the difference in punishment within and beyond the 5 meter. A free ball which is given within 5 meters you may not shoot on the goal. The ball must first go to a teammate. A free ball given beyond the 5-meter line may immediately be shot on the goal, provided that the player shoots in one movement. In addition, a referee can give an penalty for an offense within the 5 meter area. Read more about this later. The center line is located right in the middle of the field and is indicated by white pawns. The center is where the referee throws the ball into the water at a (re) start of the match.



The ball

The sport is practiced with a special ball. The ball that is used by men's teams is about as big as a football and has a weight of 400 to 450 grams. The ball used in women's teams is slightly smaller and lighter. Men's balls are often indicated by a no. 5 and ladies balls with a no. 4. This number can be found on the water polo balls.

An important feature of the ball is that it has a lot of grip so that despite of its size you can still hold it with one hand. If the ball is frequently used it loses its grip, and must be replaced.

The ball may only be held by field players with one hand. The goalkeepers are allowed to touch the ball with two hands inside the 5-meter zone. Players with possession of the ball may be pushed underwater, but the ball itself may not be immersed underwater. Touching the ball with two hands at once or pushing the ball under water will be punished by a free throw for the opponents. However, if this is done within the 5-meter area with the intention to prevent a goal then there will be a five-meter-ball awarded to the opponent. A 5-meter ball is a shot aimed at the goal from the 5-meter line and must be taken with one fluid movement once the referee signals with his or her whistle.

Teams:

A team consists of six field players and one goalkeeper. All players must wear caps; white for the home team and blue for the away team. Both goalies have a red cap. All players have earmuffs attached to their cap. The earmuffs are important: they must protect the ears against pressure if a hard ball is thrown against the ears. Players today often have a mouth guard, a cup, and may wear two swimsuits. There is also special water polo swimwear, which is twice as thick as regular swimwear.

The game:

A match is divided into four periods, which, depending on the age of the players, the level of competition, and the country, takes between 3 to 8 minutes per period. The time may be stopped during the game because of an offense (indicated by the whistle of one of the two referees) and for taking the ensuing free throw. All JAWS teams play 4x5 minutes. After two periods, the teams change sides. In the last period a signal indicates that there is only one minute to play left.

The referees do not swim with the players, but are on the long side of the playing field, out of the water. In league games a 30-second rule is used. This means that there must be a shot taken at the goal within 30 seconds, otherwise the ball is turned over to the counterparty. The time is monitored at the scorer's table. If after a shot at goal the ball again comes into possession of the same (offensive) team, the clock is reset back to 30 seconds. The 30-second clock is usually placed on both sides of the pool and runs from 30 to 0. This rule was introduced to make the water polo game more attractive.

30-second rule

As mentioned above, during water polo matches a 30-second rule is enforced. This means that there must have been a shot made at the goal within 30 seconds, otherwise the ball is turned over to the counterparty. There are a number of events in which the 30-second clock is reset. It involves the following events:

- A throw from the goalie
- A corner throw (2-meter ball)
- An attempt to score in the goal
- Each foul: U20, U20 / S, UMV, UMV4, S / UMV (see below)
- A neutral throw
- When the ball is seized by the counterparty
- A goal

Neutral throw:

When a referee sees a foul but does not know who makes the foul or when two players simultaneously committed an offense, the referee will give a neutral throw. A neutral throw is indicated by two thumbs in the air. Two players will lie side by side before the referee. The referee then throws the ball in the water before the players. It is then up to the players to be the first to win the ball, the game continues immediately.

Corner throw:

A corner throw is given, when the goalkeeper touches the ball last before the ball passes the goal line. This does not apply when a defender touches the ball last, unless he or she deliberately pushes or throws the ball against the back of the swimming pool or over the goal line. In the latter case, a corner throw is given as well. A corner throw is taken on the side of the pool at the height of the 2-meter line.

Fouls:

Minor offenses

Minor offenses are punished by a free-throw for the opponents. A free-throw can be used by a player to pass the ball to one of his teammates or swim with the ball. The free-throw may be shot at the goal in one movement, if the offense was committed beyond the 5 meter zone. If this is not the case, then the ball must first be played via another teammate.

Serious offenses

Serious offenses are punished by a U20. When a U20 is given by a referee, the penalized player must go to the re-entry area. The re-entry area is always located at the teams own goal line opposite to the table of the secretariat (where the scoring and time are kept). A player must remain there for 20 seconds until someone at the table holds up a flag with the color of his/her cap, unless in that time the ball is recaptured by one of his teammates or the opposing teams scores a goal. When his own team recaptures the ball, the penalized player may leave the corner on a signal of the referee. When he's not yet in the corner when the 20 seconds have passed, he must still first swim to the corner before rejoining the game. When leaving the corner, it is forbidden to push off from the edge of the pool.

When a foul inside the five-meter zone occurs with an opportunity to score, the referee awards the opposing team with a five-meter-ball (S). The five-meter ball is similar to a penalty in football.

If a player is excluded three times for 20 seconds (a U20), then he/she may no longer participate in the game. Another player may take his/her place.

A U20 is given when:

- A player interferes with a free throw, a goal throw or a corner throw
- An attempt to block or play a ball with two hands/arms outside the 5 meter area
- Intentionally splash water into the face of a opponent
- To hold, pull back, push down a player who is not holding the ball
- Making threatening movements of beating and/or kicking
- Incorrect entry or return:
 - Without a signal from the referee or secretary
 - At the wrong place (not through the re-entry area)
 - In the wrong way (jumping off the bottom or side)

An S (resulting in a 5 meter throw) is given when:

- A violation by the defending team was made within the 5 meters, which probably prevented a goal
- Water is splashed into the attacking player's face within the 5 meters, which probably prevented a goal
- Intentionally blocking a player's shot with two hands/arms within the 5 meters
- An excluded player intentionally interferes with the game

Very serious offenses

Very serious offenses are punished with a UMV or UMV4 (brutality). UMV stands for Exclusion With Replacement, where the addition "4" stands for "4 minutes". Within these 4 minutes another player may not replace the offending player and the team is forced to play 4 minutes with a one-player disadvantage. After the 4 minutes have passed a replacement may enter the field. Another player may, after expiration of the penalty replace the penalized player. The penalized player may no longer participate in the game and must leave the swimming area. The excluded player is also not allowed to take a seat in the audience.. The penalized player is required to stay out of sight of the referee. For a UMV the length of the exclusion is 20 seconds. After these 20 seconds a teammate may replace the excluded player. When UMV4 is given, the opposing team will also be awarded with a 5-meter-ball.

S/UMV is an exclusion with substitution (UMV) combined with a 5-meter-ball for the opposing team.

After each UMV or UMV4 the referee must write a report. A disciplinary committee will then decide on the sentencing. The standard penalty is a suspension for two games.

A UMV is given when:

- A player leaves the playing field without the referee's permission or while sitting or standing on the edge of the pool during a game
- When a violent game is played
- A player is guilty of misconduct, including the use of foul language or persistently disobeying the rules
- A player refuses to obey or when he or she shows lack of respect towards the referees or officials.
- Making a disturbance when a 5-meter-ball is being taken

A UMV4 is given when:

- A player is guilty of brutality against an opponent or official (including a deliberate kick or strike with the intent to inflict injury)

A S/UMV is given when:

- When a goalkeeper or other defending player, pulls the goal all the way down with the intent to prevent a probable goal
- When a player or a substitute, who has no right to participate according to the rules (an ineligible player), enters the field