

WP 1 FIELD OF PLAY & EQUIPMENT

WP 1.1 The promoting organisation shall be responsible for the correct measurements and markings of the field of play and shall provide all stipulated fixtures and equipment.

WP 1.2 The layout and markings of the field of play for a game officiated by two referees shall be in accordance with the following diagram:
Diagram of pool

WP 1.3 In a game officiated by one referee, the referee shall officiate on the same side as the official table, and the goal judges shall be situated on the opposite side.

WP 1.4 The distance between the goal lines shall be not less than 20 metres and not more than 30 metres. The width of the field of play shall be not less than 10 metres and not more than 20 metres. The boundary of the field of play at each end shall be 0.30 metres behind the goal line.

WP 1.5 For FINA events the dimensions of the field of play, water depth and temperature, and light intensity shall be as set forth in FR 7.2, FR 7.3, FR 7.4 and FR 8.3.

WP 1.6 Distinctive marks shall be provided on both sides of the field of play to denote the following:

white marks - goal line and half distance line

red marks - 2 metres from goal lines

yellow marks - 4 metres from goal lines

green marks - 7 metres from goal lines

WP 1.7 A red mark shall be placed at each end of the field of play, 2 metres from the corner of the field of play on the side opposite to the official table, to denote the re-entry area.

WP 1.8 Sufficient space shall be provided to enable the referees to have free movement from end to end of the field of play. Space shall also be provided at the goal lines for the goal judges.

WP 1.9 The secretary shall be provided with separate red, white and blue flags, each measuring 0.35 metres x 0.20 metres.

WP 2 GOALS

WP 2.1 Two goal posts and a crossbar, rigidly constructed, rectangular with a dimension of 0.075 metres facing the field of play and painted white shall be located on the goal lines at each end, equal distances from the sides and not less than 0.30 metres in front of the ends of the field of play.

WP 2.2 The inner sides of the goal posts shall be 3 metres apart. When the water is 1.50 metres or more in depth, the underside of the crossbar shall be 0.90 metres from the water surface. When the water is less than 1.50 metres in depth, the underside of the crossbar shall be 2.40 metres from the floor of the pool.

WP 2.3 Limp nets shall be securely fastened to the goal posts and crossbar to enclose the entire goal area and shall be attached to the goal fixtures in such a manner as to allow not less than 0.30 metres clear space behind the goal line everywhere within the goal area.

WP 3 THE BALL

WP 3.1 The ball shall be round and shall have an air chamber with a self-closing valve. It shall be waterproof, without external strapping or any covering of grease or similar substance.

WP 3.2 The weight of the ball shall be not less than 400 grammes and not more than 450 grammes.

WP 3.3 For games played by men, the circumference of the ball shall be not less than 0.68 metres and not more than 0.71 metres, and its pressure shall be 90-97 kPa (kilo Pascal's)(13-14 pounds per square inch atmospheric).

WP 3.4 For games played by women, the circumference of the ball shall be not less than 0.65 metres and not more than 0.67 metres, and its pressure shall be 83-90 (kilo Pascal's) (12-13 pounds per square inch atmospheric).

WP 4 CAPS

WP 4.1 Caps shall be of contrasting colour, other than solid red, as approved by the referees, but also to contrast with the colour of the ball. A team may be required by the referees to wear white or blue caps. The goalkeepers shall wear red caps. Caps shall be fastened under the chin. If a player loses the cap during play, the player shall replace it at the next appropriate stoppage of the game when the player's team is in possession of the ball. Caps shall be worn throughout the entire game.

WP 4.2 For Olympic Games, World Championships and other FINA events, caps shall be fitted with malleable ear protectors. It is recommended that caps fitted with ear protectors be used for all other competitions. The ear protectors shall be the same color as the team's caps except that the goalkeeper may have red protectors.

WP 4.3 Caps shall be numbered on both sides with numbers 0.10 metres in height. The goalkeeper shall wear cap no. 1 and the other caps shall be numbered 2 to 13. A substitute goalkeeper shall wear the goalkeeper's cap. A player shall not be allowed to change his cap number during the game except with the permission of a referee and with notification to the secretary.

WP 4.4 For international games, the caps shall display on the front the international three letter country code and may display the national flag. The country code shall be 0.04 metres in height.

WP 5 TEAMS AND SUBSTITUTES

WP 5.1 Each team shall consist of seven players, one of whom shall be the goalkeeper and who shall wear the goalkeeper's cap, and not more than six reserves who may be used as substitutes. A team playing with less than 7 players shall not be required to have a goalkeeper.

WP 5.2 All players not in the game at that time, together with the coaches and officials with the exception of the head coach, shall sit on the team bench and shall not move away from the bench from the commencement of play, except during the intervals between periods or during timeouts. Teams shall only change ends and benches at half time and before the start of the first period of any extra time. The team benches shall both be situated on the side opposite to the official table.

WP 5.3 The captains shall be playing members of their respective teams and each shall be responsible for the good conduct and discipline of his team.

WP 5.4 Players shall wear non-transparent costumes or costumes with a separate undergarment and before taking part in a game shall remove any articles likely to cause injury.

WP 5.5 Players shall not have grease, oil or any similar substance on the body. If a referee ascertains before the start of play that such a substance has been used, he shall order it to be removed immediately. The start of play shall not be delayed for the substance to be removed.

If the offence is detected after the play has started, the offending player shall be excluded from the remainder of the game and a substitute permitted to enter the field of play immediately from the re-entry area nearest to his own goal line.

WP 5.6 At any time in the game, a player may be substituted by leaving the field of play at the re-entry area nearest to his own goal line. The substitute may enter the field of play from the re-entry area as soon as the player has visibly risen to the surface of the water within the re-entry area. If a goalkeeper is substituted under this Rule, the substitute shall be required to wear a goalkeeper's cap. No substitution shall be made under this Rule between the time a referee awards a penalty throw and the taking of the throw, except at a timeout.

WP 5.7 A substitute may enter the field of play from any place:

during the intervals between periods of play, including any periods of extra time;

after a goal has been scored;

during a timeout;

to replace a player who is bleeding or injured.

WP 5.8 A substitute shall be ready to replace a player without delay. If he is not ready, the game shall continue without him and, at any time, he may then enter the field of play from the re-entry area nearest to his own goal line.

WP 5.9 A goalkeeper who has been replaced by a substitute may, if he returns to the game, play in any position.

WP 5.10 Should a goalkeeper retire from the game through any medical reason, the referees shall allow an immediate substitution, subject to one of the players taking the goalkeeper's cap.

WP 6 OFFICIALS

WP 6.1 For FINA events the officials shall consist of two referees, two goal judges, timekeepers and secretaries, each with the following powers and duties. Such officials shall also be provided wherever possible for other events, except that in a game refereed by two referees and no goal judges, the referees shall assume the duties (but without making the specified signals) allocated to the goal judges in WP 8.2.

[Note. Depending on the degree of importance, games can be controlled by teams of four to eight officials, as follows:

(a) Referees and goal judges:

Two referees and two goal judges; or two referees and no goal judges; or one referee and two goal judges.

(b) Timekeepers and secretaries:

With one timekeeper and one secretary: The timekeeper shall record the periods of continuous possession of the ball by each team, in accordance with WP 20.17. The secretary shall record the exact periods of actual play, timeouts and the intervals between periods, maintain the record of the game as set out in WP 10.1 and shall also record the respective periods of exclusion of players ordered from the water in accordance with the Rules.

With two timekeepers and one secretary: Timekeeper No. 1 shall record the exact periods of actual play, timeouts and the intervals between periods. Timekeeper No. 2 shall record the periods of continuous possession of the ball by each team, in accordance with WP 20.17. The secretary shall maintain the record of the game and perform all other duties as set out in WP 10.1.

With two timekeepers and two secretaries: Timekeeper No. 1 shall record the exact periods of actual play, timeouts and the intervals between periods. Timekeeper No. 2 shall record the periods of continuous possession of the ball by each team, in accordance with WP 20.17.

Secretary No. 1 shall maintain the record of the game as set out in WP 10.1(a). Secretary No. 2 shall carry out the duties set out in WP 10.1(b), (c) and (d) relating to the improper re-entry of excluded players, improper entry of substitutes, exclusion of players and the third personal foul.]

WP 7 REFEREES

WP 7.1 The referees shall be in absolute control of the game. Their authority over the players shall be effective during the whole time that they and the players are within the precincts of the pool. All decisions of the referees on questions of fact shall be final and their interpretation of the Rules shall be obeyed throughout the game. The referees shall not make any presumption as to the facts of any situation during the game but shall interpret what they observe to the best of their ability.

WP 7.2 The referees shall whistle to start and restart the game and to declare goals, goal throws, corner throws (whether signalled by the goal judge or not), neutral throws and infringements of the Rules. A referee may alter his decision provided he does so before the ball is put back into play.

WP 7.3 The referees shall refrain from declaring a foul if, in their opinion, such declaration would be an advantage to the offending player's team. The referees shall not declare an ordinary foul when there is still a possibility to play the ball.

[Note. The referees shall apply this principle to the fullest extent. They should not, for example, declare an ordinary foul in favour of a player who is in possession of the ball and making progress towards his opponents' goal, because this is considered to give an advantage to the offender's team.]

WP 7.4 The referees shall have the power to order any player from the water in accordance with the appropriate Rule and to abandon the game should a player refuse to leave the water when so ordered.

WP 7.5 The referees shall have the power to order the removal from the precincts of the pool any player, substitute, spectator or official whose behaviour prevents the referees from carrying out their duties in a proper and impartial manner.

WP 7.6 The referees shall have the power to abandon the game at any time if, in their opinion, the behaviour of the players or spectators, or other circumstances prevent it from being brought to a proper conclusion. If the game has to be abandoned the referees shall report their actions to the competent authority.

WP 8 GOAL JUDGES

WP 8.1 The goal judges shall be situated on the same side as the official table, each on the goal line at the end of the field of play.

WP 8.2 The duties of the goal judges shall be:

(a) to signal by raising one arm vertically when the players are correctly positioned on their respective goal lines at the start of a period;

(b) to signal by raising both arms vertically for an improper start or restart;

(c) to signal by pointing with the arm in the direction of the attack for a goal throw;

(d) to signal by pointing with the arm in the direction of the attack for a corner throw;

(e) to signal by raising and crossing both arms for a goal;

(f) to signal by raising both arms vertically for an improper re-entry of an excluded player or improper entry of a substitute.

WP 8.3 Each goal judge shall be provided with a supply of balls and when the original ball has gone outside the field of play, he shall immediately throw a new ball to the goalkeeper (for a goal throw), to the nearest player of the attacking team (for a corner throw), or as otherwise directed by the referee.

WP 9 TIMEKEEPERS

WP 9.1 The duties of the timekeepers shall be:

- (a) to record the exact periods of actual play, timeouts and the intervals between the periods;
- (b) to record the periods of continuous possession of the ball by each team;
- (c) to record the exclusion times of players ordered from the water in accordance with the Rules, together with the re-entry times of such players or their substitutes;
- (d) to audibly announce the start of the last minute of the game and of the last minute of the second period of any extra time;
- (e) to signal by whistle after 45 seconds and at the end of each timeout.

WP 9.2 A timekeeper shall signal by whistle (or by any other means provided it is distinctive, acoustically efficient and readily understood), the end of each period independently of the referees and his signal shall take immediate effect except:

- (a) in the case of the simultaneous award by a referee of a penalty throw, in which event the penalty throw shall be taken in accordance with the Rules;
- (b) if the ball is in flight and crosses the goal line, in which event any resultant goal shall be allowed.

WP 10 SECRETARIES

WP 10.1 The duties of the secretaries shall be:

- (a) to maintain the record of the game, including the players, the score, timeouts, exclusion fouls, penalty fouls, and personal fouls awarded against each player;
- (b) to control the periods of exclusion of players and to signal the expiration of the period of exclusion by raising the appropriate flag; except that a referee shall signal the re-entry of an excluded player or a substitute when that player's team has retaken possession of the ball;
- (c) to signal with the red flag and by whistle for any improper re-entry of an excluded player or improper entry of a substitute (including after a signal by a goal judge to indicate an improper re-entry or entry), which signal shall stop play immediately;
- (d) to signal, without delay, the award of a third personal foul against any player as follows:

- (i) with the red flag if the third personal foul is an exclusion foul;
- (ii) with the red flag and a whistle if the third personal foul is a penalty foul.

WP 11 DURATION OF THE GAME

WP 11.1 The duration of the game shall be four periods each of seven minutes actual play. Time shall commence at the start of each period when a player touches the ball. At all signals for stoppages, the recording watch shall be stopped until the ball is put back into play by the ball leaving the hand of the player taking the appropriate throw or when the ball is touched by a player following a neutral throw.

WP 11.2 There shall be a two-minute interval between periods. The teams, including the players, coaches and officials, shall change ends before starting the third period and the first period of any extra time.

WP 11.3 Should the scores be level at full time in any game for which a definite result is required, any continuation into extra time shall be after an interval of five minutes. There shall then be played two periods each of three minutes actual play with an interval of one minute for the referees to change sides. If at the end of the two periods of extra time the score is equal, there shall be a penalty shoot out to determine the result.

[Note. If a penalty shoot out is necessary, the following procedure shall be followed by each team shooting five penalty shots at its opponent's goal in alternate succession. The first team shall take its first penalty shot and then the other team shall take its first penalty shot, etc. If a tie shall exist after that procedure, each team shall then take alternate shots until one team scores and the other misses. Different members of the team must shoot each shot]

WP 11.4 Any visible clock shall show the time in a descending manner (that is, to show the time remaining in a period).

WP 12 TIMEOUTS

WP 12.1 Each team shall be entitled to three timeouts in any game. The third timeout may only be requested during extra time. The duration of the timeout shall be one minute. A timeout may be requested at any time by the coach of the team in possession of the ball calling "timeout" and signalling to the secretary or referee with the hands forming a T-shape. If a timeout is requested, the secretary or referee shall immediately stop the game by whistle.

WP 12.2 Play shall be restarted on the whistle of the referee by the team in possession of the ball putting the ball into play on the half distance line, except that:

- (a) if the timeout is requested before the taking of a penalty throw or corner throw, that throw shall be maintained;
- (b) if the timeout is requested after a goal has been scored, the referees shall restart the play in accordance with WP 15 (Restarting after the Goal) and then immediately stop the play for the requested timeout.

[Note. The possession clock continues from the recommencement of the play after the timeout.]

WP 12.3 If the coach of the team in possession of the ball requests an additional timeout to which the team is not entitled, the game shall be stopped and play shall then be restarted by a player of the opposing team putting the ball into play on the half distance line.

WP 12.4 If the coach of the team not in possession of the ball requests a timeout, the game shall be stopped and a penalty throw awarded to the opposing team.

WP 12.5 At the restart following a timeout, players may take any position in the field of play, subject to the Rules relating to the taking of penalty throws and corner throws.

[Note. If a timeout is called, the players shall return immediately to their respective halves of the field of play.]

WP 13 THE START OF PLAY

WP 13.1 Before the start of the game and in the presence of the referees, the captains shall toss a coin, the winner to have the choice of ends.

WP 13.2 At the start of each period, the players shall take up positions on their respective goal lines, about one metre apart and at least one metre from the goal posts. Not more than two players shall be allowed between the goal posts. No part of a player's body shall be beyond the goal line at water level.

WP 13.3 When the referees are satisfied that the teams are ready, a referee shall blow the whistle to start and then release or throw the ball into play on the half distance line.

WP 13.4 If the ball is released or thrown giving one team a definite advantage, the referee shall call for the ball and award a neutral throw on the half distance line.

WP 14 METHOD OF SCORING

WP 14.1 A goal shall be scored when the entire ball has passed fully over the goal line, between the goal posts and underneath the crossbar.

WP 14.2 A goal may be scored from anywhere within the field of play; except that the goal keeper shall not be permitted to go or touch the ball beyond the half distance line.

WP 14.3 A goal may be scored by any part of the body except the clenched fist. A goal may be scored by dribbling the ball into the goal. At the start or any restart of the game, at least two players (of either team but excluding the defending goalkeeper) must intentionally play or touch the ball except at the taking of:

- a. a penalty throw;
- b. a free throw thrown by a player into his own goal;
- c. an immediate shot from a goal throw; or
- d. an immediate shot from a free throw awarded outside 7 metres.

[Notes. A goal may be scored by a player immediately shooting from outside 7 metres after his team has been awarded a free throw for a foul committed outside 7 metres. If the player puts the ball into play, a goal can then only be scored if the ball has been intentionally touched by another player, other than the defending goalkeeper.

If at the award of a foul the ball is closer to the defending team's goal, a goal may be scored under this Rule if the ball is returned without delay to the place where the foul was committed and the shot is then immediately made from that position.

A goal may not be scored under this Rule direct from the restart following:

- a. a timeout
- b. a goal
- c. an injury, including bleeding
- d. the replacement of a cap
- e. the referee calling for the ball
- f. the ball leaving the side of the field of play
- g. any other delay.]

WP 14.4 A goal shall be scored if, at the expiration of 35 seconds possession or at the end of a period, the ball is in flight and enters the goal.

[Notes. In the circumstances of this Rule, if the ball enters the goal after hitting the goal post, crossbar, goalkeeper or other defending player, and/or bouncing off the water, a goal shall be allowed. If the end of the period has been signalled and the ball is then played or touched intentionally by another attacking player on its way into the goal, the goal shall not be allowed.

If the ball is in flight towards the goal in the circumstances of this Rule and the goalkeeper or another defending player pulls down the goal, or within his own 4 metre area a defending player other than the goalkeeper stops the ball with two hands or arms or punches the ball to prevent a goal being scored, the referee shall award a penalty throw if, in his opinion, the ball would have reached the goal line if the offence had not occurred.

If the ball which is in flight towards the goal in the circumstances of this Rule lands on the water and then floats completely over the goal line, the referee shall award a goal only if the ball floats over the goal line immediately due to the momentum of the shot.]

WP 15 RESTARTING AFTER A GOAL

WP 15.1 After a goal has been scored, the players shall take up positions anywhere within their respective halves of the field of play. No part of a player's body shall be beyond the half distance line at water level. A referee shall restart the game by blowing the whistle. At the time of the restart, actual play shall resume when the ball leaves the hand of a player of the team not having scored the goal. A restart not taken in accordance with this Rule shall be retaken.

WP 16 GOAL THROWS

WP 16.1 A goal throw shall be awarded:

- a. when the entire ball has passed fully over the goal line excluding between the goal posts and underneath the crossbar, having last been played or touched by a player of the attacking team;
- b. when the entire ball has passed fully over the goal line between the goal posts and underneath the crossbar, or strikes the goal posts, crossbar or the defending goalkeeper direct from:
 - i. a free throw awarded inside 7 metres;
 - ii. a free throw awarded outside 7 metres not taken immediately;
 - iii. a goal throw not taken immediately;
 - iv. a corner throw.

WP 16.2 The goal throw shall be taken by the defending goalkeeper from anywhere within his 2 metre area. If the goalkeeper is out of the water, the goal throw shall be taken by another defending player. A goal throw not taken in accordance with this Rule shall be retaken.

[Note. There should be no undue delay in taking a free throw, goal throw or corner throw, which must be taken in such a manner so as to enable the other players to observe the ball leaving the thrower's hand. Players often make the mistake of delaying the throw because they overlook the provisions of WP 19.4, which permit the thrower to dribble the ball before passing to another player. The throw can thus be taken immediately, even though the thrower cannot at that moment find a player to whom he might pass the ball. On such an occasion, he is allowed to take the throw either by dropping it from a raised hand on to the surface of the water (figure 1) or by throwing it in the air (figure 2) and he can then swim with or dribble the ball. In either case, the throw must be taken so that the other players are able to observe it.]

WP 17 CORNER THROWS

WP 17.1 A corner throw shall be awarded when the entire ball has passed fully over the goal line excluding between the goal posts and underneath the crossbar, having last been played or touched by a player of the defending team.

WP 17.2 The corner throw shall be taken by a player of the attacking team from the 2 metre mark on the side nearest to which the ball crossed the goal line. The throw need not be taken by the nearest player but shall be taken without undue delay.

[Note. For method of taking throw, see note to WP 16.2]

WP 17.3 At the taking of a corner throw no players of the attacking team shall be within the 2 metre area.

WP 17.4 A corner throw taken from the wrong position or before the players of the attacking team have left the 2 metre area shall be retaken.

WP 18 NEUTRAL THROWS

WP 18.1 A neutral throw shall be awarded:

(a) when, at the start of a period, a referee is of the opinion that the ball has fallen in a position to the definite advantage of one team;

(b) when one or more players of each team commit a foul at the same moment which makes it impossible for the referees to distinguish which player offended first;

(c) when both referees blow their whistles at the same moment to award ordinary fouls to the opposing teams;

(d) when a player of each team commits an exclusion foul simultaneously, whether during actual play or in dead time. The neutral throw is to be taken following the exclusion of the offending players;

(e) when the ball strikes or lodges in an overhead obstruction.

WP 18.2 At a neutral throw, a referee shall throw the ball into the field of play at approximately the same lateral position as the event occurred in such a manner as to allow the players of both teams to have equal opportunity to reach the ball. A neutral throw awarded within the 2 metre area shall be taken on the 2 metre line.

WP 18.3 If at a neutral throw the referee is of the opinion that the ball has fallen in a position to the definite advantage of one team, he shall call for the ball and retake the throw.

WP 19 FREE THROWS

WP 19.1 A free throw shall be taken at the place where the foul occurred, except:

- a. if the ball is further from the defending team's goal, the free throw shall be taken from the location of the ball;
- b. if the foul is committed by a defending player within his 2 metre area, the free throw shall be taken on the 2 metre line opposite to where the foul was committed or, if the ball is outside the 2 metre area, from the location of the ball;
- c. where otherwise provided for in the Rules.

A free throw taken from the wrong position shall be retaken.

WP 19.2 The time allowed for a player to take a free throw shall be at the discretion of the referees; it shall be reasonable and without undue delay but does not have to be immediate. It shall be an offence if a player who is clearly in a position most readily to take a free throw does not do so.

WP 19.3 The responsibility for returning the ball to the player who is to take the free throw shall be that of the team to which the free throw is awarded.

WP 19.4 The free throw shall be taken in a manner to enable the players to observe the ball leaving the hand of the player taking the throw, who shall also then be permitted to carry or dribble the ball before passing to another player. The ball shall be in play immediately when it leaves the hand of the player taking the free throw.

[Note. For method of taking throw, see note to WP 16.2]

WP 20 ORDINARY FOULS

WP 20.1 It shall be an ordinary foul to commit any of the following offences (WP 20.2 to WP 20.18), which shall be punished by the award of a free throw to the opposing team.

[Note. The referees must award ordinary fouls in accordance with the Rules to enable the attacking team to develop an advantage situation. However, the referees must have regard to the special circumstance of WP 7.3 (Advantage).]

WP 20.2 To advance beyond the goal line at the start of a period, before the referee has given the signal to start. The free throw shall be taken from the location of the ball or, if the ball has not been released into the field of play, from the half distance line.

WP 20.3 To assist a player at the start of a period or at any other time during the game.

WP 20.4 To hold on to or push off from the goal posts or their fixtures, to hold on to or push off from the sides or ends of the pool during actual play or to hold on to the rails except at the start of a period.

WP 20.5 To take any active part in the game when standing on the floor of the pool, to walk when play is in progress or to jump from the floor of the pool to play the ball or tackle an opponent. This Rule shall not apply to the goalkeeper while within his 4 metre area.

WP 20.6 To take or hold the entire ball under the water when tackled.

[Note. It is an ordinary foul to take or hold the ball under the water when tackled, even if the player holding the ball has his hand forced under the water, with the ball, as a result of the opponent's challenge (figure 3). It makes no difference that the ball goes under the water against his will. What is important is that the foul is awarded against the player who was in contact with the ball at the moment it was taken under the water. It is important to remember that the offence can only occur when a player takes the ball under when tackled. Thus, if the goalkeeper emerges high out of the water to save a shot and then while falling back takes the ball under the water, he has committed no offence; but if he then holds the ball under the water when challenged by an opponent, he will have committed an infringement of this Rule and if his actions prevented a probable goal, a penalty throw must be awarded under WP 22.2.]

WP 20.7 To strike at the ball with a clenched fist. This Rule shall not apply to the goalkeeper while within his 4 metre area.

WP 20.8 To play or touch the ball with two hands at the same time. This Rule shall not apply to the goalkeeper while within his 4 metre area.

WP 20.9 To impede or otherwise prevent the free movement of an opponent who is not holding the ball, including swimming on the opponent's shoulders, back or legs. "Holding" is lifting, carrying or touching the ball but does not include dribbling the ball.

[Notes. The first thing for the referee to consider is whether the opponent is holding the ball, because if he is doing so, the player making the challenge cannot be penalized for "impeding". It is clear that a player is holding the ball if he holds it raised above the water (figure 4). The player is also holding the ball if he swims with it held in his hand or makes contact with the ball while it is lying on the surface of the water (figure 5). Swimming with the ball (dribbling), as shown in figure 6, is not considered to be holding.

A common form of impeding is where the player swims across his opponent's legs (figure 7), thus reducing the pace at which he can move and interfering with his normal leg action. Another form is swimming on the opponent's shoulders. It must also be remembered that the foul of impeding can be committed by the player who is in possession of the ball. For example, figure 8 shows a player keeping one hand on the ball and trying to force his opponent away to gain more space for himself. Figure 9 shows a player in possession of the ball impeding his opponent by pushing him back with his head. Care must be taken with figures 8 & 9, because any violent movement by the player in possession of the ball might constitute striking or even brutality; the figures are intended to illustrate impeding without any violent movement. A player may also commit the offence of impeding even if he is not holding or touching the ball. Figure 10 shows a player intentionally blocking his opponent with his body and with his arms flung open, thus making access to the ball impossible. This offence is most often committed near the boundaries of the field of play.]

WP 20.10 To push or push off from an opponent who is not holding the ball.

[Note. Pushing can take place in various forms, including with the hand (figure 11) or with the foot (figure 12). In the cases illustrated, the punishment is a free throw for an ordinary foul. However, referees must take care to differentiate between pushing with the foot and kicking - which then becomes an exclusion foul or even brutality. If the foot is already in contact with the opponent when the movement begins, this will usually be pushing, but if the movement begins before such contact with the opponent is made, then this should generally be regarded as kicking.]

WP 20.11 For a player of the team in possession of the ball to commit an offence under WP 20.9 (to impede an opponent) or WP 20.10 (to push or push off from an opponent) before a free throw, goal throw or corner throw is taken.

WP 20.12 To be within two metres of the opponents' goal except when behind the line of the ball. It shall not be an offence if a player takes the ball into the 2 metre area and passes it to another player who is behind the line of the ball and who shoots at goal immediately, before the first player has been able to leave the 2 metre area.

[Note. If the player receiving the pass does not shoot at goal, the player who passed the ball must immediately leave the 2 metre area to avoid being penalized under this Rule.]

WP 20.13 To take a penalty throw other than in the prescribed manner.

[Note. See WP 23.4 for method of taking a penalty throw.]

WP 20.14 To delay unduly when taking a free throw, goal throw or corner throw.

[Note. See note to WP 16.2]

WP 20.15 For a goalkeeper to go or touch the ball beyond the half distance line.

WP 20.16 To send the ball out of the side of the field of play, including the ball rebounding from the side of the field of play above water level.

WP 20.17 For a team to retain possession of the ball for more than 35 seconds of actual play without shooting at their opponent's goal. The timekeeper recording the possession time shall reset the clock:

- d. when the ball has left the hand of the player shooting at goal. If the ball rebounds into play from the goal post, crossbar or the goalkeeper, the possession time shall not recommence until the ball comes into the possession of one of the teams;
- e. when the ball comes into the possession of the opposing team. "Possession" shall not include the ball merely being touched in flight by an opposing player;
 - a. when the ball is put into play following the award of an exclusion foul, penalty foul, goal throw, corner throw or neutral throw.

Visible clocks shall show the time in a descending manner (that is, to show the possession time remaining).

[Note. The timekeeper and referees must decide whether there was a shot goal or not but the referees have the final decision.]

WP 20.18 To waste time.

[Notes. It is always permissible for a referee to award an ordinary foul under this Rule before the 35 seconds possession period has elapsed. If the goalkeeper is the only player of his team in his half of the field of play, it shall be deemed wasting time for him to receive the ball from another member of his team who is in the other half of the field of play.

In the last minute, the referees must be certain that there is intentional wasting time before applying this Rule.]

WP 21 EXCLUSION FOULS

WP 21.1 It shall be an exclusion foul to commit any of the following offences (WP 21.4 to WP 21.17), which shall be punished (except as otherwise provided by the Rules) by the award of a free throw to the opposing team and the exclusion of the player who committed the foul.

WP 21.2 The excluded player shall move to the re-entry area nearest to his own goal line without leaving the water. An excluded player who removes himself from the water (other than following the entry of a substitute) shall be deemed guilty of an offence under WP 21.11 (Disrespect).

[Notes. An excluded player (including any player excluded under the Rules for the remainder of the game) shall remain in the water and move (which may include swimming underwater) to the re-entry position nearest to his own goal line without interfering with the play. He may swim from the field of play at any point on the goal line and may swim behind the goal to reach the re-entry area provided he does not interfere with the alignment of the goal.

On reaching the re-entry area, the excluded player shall be required to visibly rise to the surface of the water before he (or a substitute) shall be permitted to re-enter in accordance with the Rules. However, it shall not be necessary for the excluded player to then remain in the re-entry area to await the arrival of an intended substitute.]

WP 21.3 The excluded player or a substitute shall be permitted to re-enter the field of play after the earliest occurrence of one of the following:

- a. when 20 seconds of actual play have elapsed, at which time the secretary shall raise the appropriate flag provided that the excluded player has reached his re-entry area in accordance with the Rules;
- b. when a goal has been scored;
- c. when the excluded player's team has retaken possession of the ball (which means receiving control of the ball) during actual play, at which time the defensive referee shall signal re-entry by a hand signal;
- d. when the excluded player's team is awarded a free throw or goal throw, the referee's signal to award the throw qualifies as the re-entry signal, provided that the excluded player has reached his re-entry area in accordance with the Rules.

The excluded player or a substitute shall be permitted to re-enter the field of play from the re-entry area nearest to his own goal line, provided that:

- a. he has received a signal from the secretary or a referee;
- b. he shall not jump or push off from the side or wall of the pool or field of play;
- c. he shall not affect the alignment of the goal;
- d. a substitute shall not be permitted to enter in the place of an excluded player until that player has reached the re-entry area nearest to his own goal line.

After a goal has been scored an excluded player or a substitute may re-enter the field of play from any place.

These provisions shall also apply to the entry of a substitute when the excluded player has received three personal fouls or has otherwise been excluded from the remainder of the game in accordance with the Rules.

[Notes. A substitute shall not be signalled in by a referee and nor shall the secretary signal the expiration of 20 seconds exclusion period until the excluded player has reached the re-entry area nearest to his own goal line. This shall also apply to the re-entry of a substitute who is to replace a player excluded from the remainder of the game. In the event of an excluded player failing to return to his re-entry area, a substitute shall not be permitted to enter until a goal has been scored or at the end of a period.

The primary responsibility for giving the signal for the re-entry of an excluded player or a substitute is with the defensive referee. However, the attacking referee may also assist in this regard and the signal of either referee shall be valid. If a referee suspects an improper re-entry or the goal judge signals such an improper re-entry, then he should first satisfy himself that the other referee had not signalled the re-entry. Before giving the signal for the re-entry of an excluded player or a substitute, the defensive referee should wait momentarily in case the attacking referee whistles to restore possession to the opponent's team.

A change of possession does not occur merely because of the end of a period, but an excluded player or substitute shall be eligible to re-enter if his team wins the ball at the swim up at the start of the next period. If a player is excluded when the end of a period is signalled, the referees and the secretary shall ensure that the teams have the correct number of players before signalling for the restart.]

WP 21.4 For a player to leave the water or sit or stand on the steps or side of the pool during play, except in the case of accident, injury, illness or with the permission of a referee.

WP 21.5 To interfere with the taking of a free throw, goal throw or corner throw, including:

- a. intentionally to throw away or fail to release the ball to prevent the normal progress of the game;
- b. any attempt to play the ball before it has left the hand of the thrower.

[Notes. A player is not to be penalised under this Rule if he does not hear the whistle as a result of being under the water. The referees must determine if the actions of the player are intentional.

Interference with a throw may take place indirectly when the ball is hampered, delayed or prevented from reaching the player who is to take the throw, or it may occur when the execution of the throw is interfered with by an opponent blocking the direction of the throw (figure 13) or by disturbing the actual movement of the thrower (figure 14). For interference with a penalty throw, see also WP 21.16]

WP 21.6 To splash in the face of an opponent intentionally.

[Notes. Splashing is frequently used as an unfair tactic but is often only penalised in the obvious situation when players are facing one another (see figure 15). However, it can also occur less obviously when a player produces a curtain of water with his arm, seemingly without deliberate intent, in an attempt to block the view of the opponent who is about to shoot at goal or to make a pass.

The punishment for intentionally splashing an opponent is exclusion under WP 21.6 or a penalty throw under WP 22.2 if the opponent is inside the 4 metre area and is attempting to shoot at goal. Whether to award a penalty throw or an exclusion is decided solely by the positioning and actions of the attacking player; whether the offending player is inside the 4 metre area or outside is not a decisive factor.]

WP 21.7 To hold, sink or pull back an opponent who is not holding the ball. "Holding" is lifting, carrying or touching the ball, but does not include dribbling the ball.

[Note. The correct application of this Rule is very important both as to the presentation of the game and in arriving at a proper and fair result. The wording of the Rule is clear and explicit and can only be interpreted in one way: to hold (figure 16), sink (figure 17) or pull back (figure 18) an opponent who is not holding the ball is an exclusion foul. It is essential that referees apply this Rule correctly, without personal arbitrary interpretation, to ensure that the proper limits to rough play are not exceeded. In addition, referees must note that an infringement of WP 21.7 within the 4 metre area which prevents a probable goal must be punished by the award of a penalty throw.]

WP 21.8 To kick or strike an opponent intentionally or make disproportionate movements with that intent.

[Notes. The offence of kicking or striking can take a number of different forms, including being committed by a player in possession of the ball or by an opposing player; possession of the ball is not a decisive factor. What is important is the action of the offending player, including if he makes disproportionate movements in an attempt to kick or strike, even if he fails to make contact.

One of the most serious acts of striking is elbowing backwards (figure 19), which can result in serious injury to the opponent. Similarly, serious injury can occur when a player intentionally heads back into the face of an opponent who is marking him closely. In these circumstances, the referee would also be justified in punishing the offence under WP 21.10 (Brutality) rather than under WP 21.8]

WP 21.9 To be guilty of misconduct, including the use of foul language, violent or persistent foul play, etc. The offending player shall be excluded from the remainder of the game, with substitution after the earliest occurrence referred to in WP 21.3.

[Note. Persistent foul play refers to play which is unacceptable within the spirit of the Rules and which is likely to bring the game into disrepute. Persistent foul play is entirely different and unrelated to "persisting in an ordinary foul".]

WP 21.10 To commit an act of brutality (including kicking or striking or attempting to kick or strike with malicious intent) against an opponent or official, whether during play (including any stoppages or timeouts) or the intervals between periods of play. The offending player shall be excluded from the remainder of the game and shall not be substituted.

[Notes. In the last minute of the game, the referees may delay declaring a brutality offence until the next change of possession.

This Rule shall also apply if an act of brutality occurs during the intervals between periods, except that the free throw shall not be awarded. The offending player shall be excluded from the remainder of the game, without substitution, and his team shall continue the game with one less player. These provisions shall not apply, however, before the game has actually commenced.

In the case of brutality at any time by a substitute who is not in the water during the play, the offending player shall be excluded from the remainder of the game. The captain of the team shall be ordered to remove from the water a player of his choice and the team shall continue with one less player. The player who has been removed can subsequently be used during the remainder of the game as one of his team's remaining players in the water and no personal foul shall be awarded in relation to his removal from the water.]

WP 21.11 To refuse obedience to or show disrespect for a referee or official. The offending player shall be excluded from the remainder of the game, with substitution after the earliest occurrence referred to in WP 21.3.

[Note. If a member of a team commits an act of disrespect prior to the restart of play after the opposing team has scored a goal, during the interval between periods or during a timeout, the player shall be excluded from the remainder of the game and the player's team shall be permitted to restart the game with seven players.]

WP 21.12 For a player of the team not in possession of the ball to commit any of the following offences before a free throw, goal throw, corner throw or penalty throw is taken or for a player of either team to commit any of the following offences before a neutral throw is taken:

WP 20.9 - to impede an opponent

WP 20.10 - to push or push off from an opponent

WP 21.4 to WP 21.11 - to commit an exclusion foul

The original throw (including any neutral throw) shall be maintained. The player shall be excluded from the remainder of the game where the Rules so provide.

WP 21.13 For a player of each team to commit any of the following offences simultaneously before a free throw, goal throw, corner throw, penalty throw or neutral throw is taken:

WP 20.9 - to impede an opponent

WP 20.10 - to push or push off from an opponent

WP 21.4 to WP 21.11 - to commit an exclusion foul

Both players shall be excluded and a neutral throw awarded; except that if the offences are committed simultaneously at the taking of a penalty throw, the penalty throw shall be maintained. Players shall be excluded from the remainder of the game where the Rules so provide. *[Notes. In the circumstances of this Rule, a change of possession is deemed not to have occurred merely because one team gains possession of the ball from the neutral throw. The players excluded under this Rule shall not be permitted to re-enter until the next earliest occurrence referred to in WP 21.3 following the neutral throw.*

However, this only applies to the two players who were excluded simultaneously and any other players who were already excluded shall be permitted to re-enter if the neutral throw results in a change of possession.

If the two players who have been excluded under this Rule are eligible to re-enter before they have reached their respective re-entry areas, the defensive referee may wave in each player as soon as he is ready to re-enter. The referee does not have to wait until both players are ready to re-enter.]

WP 21.14 For a player of the team in possession to commit an offence under WP 21.4 to WP 21.11 (exclusion fouls) before a free throw, goal throw, corner throw or penalty throw is taken; except that:

- a. the player shall be excluded from the remainder of the game where the Rules so provide;
- b. if the offence is committed at the taking of a penalty throw, the penalty throw shall be maintained.

WP 21.15 For an excluded player to re-enter or a substitute to enter the field of play improperly, including:

- a. without having received a signal from the secretary or referee;
- b. from any place other than his own re-entry area, except where the Rules provide for immediate substitution;
- c. by jumping or pushing off from the side or wall of the pool or field of play;
- d. by affecting the alignment of the goal.

If this offence occurs in the last minute of the game or the last minute of the second period of extra time, the offending player shall be excluded from the remainder of the game, with substitution after the earliest occurrence referred to in WP 21.3, and a penalty throw awarded to the opposing team.

[Note. It shall be an improper re-entry if an excluded player re-enters or a substitute enters without having received the referee's signal, even if the referee should have given the signal earlier.]

WP 21.16 To interfere with the taking of a penalty throw. The offending player shall be excluded from the remainder of the game with substitution after the earliest occurrence referred to in WP 21.3 and the penalty throw shall be maintained or re-taken as appropriate.

[Note. The most common form of interference with a penalty throw is when an opponent aims a kick at the player taking the throw, just as the throw is about to be taken. It is essential for the referees to ensure that all players are at least 2 metres from the thrower, to prevent such interference taking place. The referee should also allow the defending team the first right to take position.]

WP 21.17 For the defending goalkeeper to fail to take up his correct position on the goal line at the taking of a penalty throw having been ordered once to do so by the referee. Another defending player may take the position of the goalkeeper but without his privileges or limitations.

WP 21.18 When a player of each team commits an exclusion foul or a penalty foul simultaneously during actual play, both players shall be excluded and a neutral throw awarded.

[Note. See also notes to WP 21.13]

WP 21.19 When a player is excluded, the exclusion period shall commence immediately when the ball has left the hand of the player taking the free throw or when the ball has been touched following a neutral throw.

WP 21.20 If an excluded player intentionally interferes with play, including affecting the alignment of the goal, a penalty throw shall be awarded to the opposing team and a further personal foul awarded against the excluded player. If the excluded player does not commence leaving the field of play almost immediately, the referee may deem this to be intentional interference under this Rule.

WP 21.21 In the event of the game continuing into extra time, the exclusion period of any excluded player shall also continue into the extra time. Personal fouls awarded during the periods of normal time shall also carry forward into extra time and any player excluded under the Rules from the remainder of the game shall not be permitted to take part in any periods of extra time.

WP 22 PENALTY FOULS

WP 22.1 It shall be a penalty foul to commit any of the following offences (WP 22.2 to WP 22.9), which shall be punished by the award of a penalty throw to the opposing team.

WP 22.2 For a defending player to commit any foul within the 4 metre area but for which a goal would probably have resulted.

[Notes. In addition to other offences preventing a probable goal, it is an offence within the meaning of this Rule:

- a. for a goalkeeper or other defending player to pull down or otherwise displace the goal (figure 20);
- b. for a defending player to play the ball with two hands (figure 21);
- c. for a defending player to play the ball with a clenched fist (figure 22);
- d. for a goalkeeper or other defending player to take the ball under the water when tackled.

It is important to note that while the fouls described above, and other fouls such as holding, pulling back, impeding, etc., would normally be punished by a free throw (and exclusion if appropriate), they become penalty fouls if committed within the 4 metre area by a defending player if a probable goal would otherwise have been scored.]

WP 22.3 For a defending player within the 4 metre area to kick or strike an opponent or to commit an act of brutality. In the case of brutality, the offending player shall also be excluded from the remainder of the game, without substitution, in addition to the award of the penalty.

WP 22.4 For an excluded player intentionally to interfere with play, including affecting the alignment of the goal.

WP 22.5 For a goalkeeper or any other defending player to pull over the goal completely with the object of preventing a probable goal. The offending player shall also be excluded from the remainder of the game, with substitution after the earliest occurrence referred to in WP 21.3.

WP 22.6 For an excluded player to re-enter or a substitute to enter the field of play improperly prior to or at the expiration of an exclusion period with the object of preventing a goal. The offending player shall also leave the field of play to complete any of the original exclusion period remaining, if appropriate.

[Note. In the circumstances of this Rule, if the attacking team is in a position to shoot at goal, the referee shall wait to see if a goal is scored before stopping the play. If a goal is scored, the penalty throw is not awarded, but a personal foul is recorded against the offending player. If a goal is not scored, the referee shall then immediately award a penalty throw in accordance with this Rule.]

WP 22.7 For an excluded player to re-enter or a substitute to enter the field of play improperly during the last minute of the game or the last minute of the second period of any extra time. The offending player shall also be excluded from the remainder of the game, with substitution after the earliest occurrence referred to in WP 21.3.

WP 22.8 For a player or substitute who is not entitled under the Rules to participate in the play at that time to enter the field of play. The offending player shall also be excluded from the remainder of the game with substitution, where appropriate, after the earliest occurrence referred to in WP 21.3. This Rule shall not apply to an excluded player who re-enters or a substitute who enters the field of play before the earliest occurrence referred to in WP 21.3.

[Note. If an excluded player and a substitute both enter after the earliest occurrence referred to in WP 21.3, whichever player entered last shall be the player to be penalised under this Rule. If both players enter simultaneously, it shall be the substitute who is to be penalised.]

WP 22.9 For the coach of the team not in possession of the ball to request a timeout or for a team official to take any action to prevent a probable goal; except that no personal foul shall be recorded for this offence.

WP 23 PENALTY THROWS

WP 23.1 A penalty throw shall be taken by any player of the team to which it is awarded, except the goalkeeper, from any point on the opponents' 4 metre line.

WP 23.2 All players shall leave the 4 metre area and shall be at least two metres from the player taking the throw. On each side of the player taking the throw, one player of the defending team shall have the first right to take position. The defending goalkeeper shall be positioned between the goal posts with no part of his body beyond the goal line at water level. Should the goalkeeper be out of the water, another player may take the position of the goalkeeper but without his privileges and limitations.

WP 23.3 When the referee controlling the taking of the throw is satisfied that the players are in their correct positions he shall signal for the throw to be taken, by whistle and by simultaneously lowering his arm from a vertical to a horizontal position.

[Note. The lowering of the arm at the same time as the signal by whistle makes it possible under any conditions, even amidst noise by spectators, to execute the throw in accordance with the Rules. As the arm is lifted, the player taking the throw will concentrate, for he knows that the signal will follow immediately.]

WP 23.4 The player taking the penalty throw shall have possession of the ball and shall immediately throw it with an uninterrupted movement directly at the goal. The player may take the throw by lifting the ball from the water (figure 23) or with the ball held in the raised hand (figure 24) and the ball may be taken backwards from the direction of the goal in preparation for the forward throw, provided that the continuity of the movement shall not be interrupted before the ball leaves the thrower's hand.

[Note. There is nothing in the Rules to prevent a player taking the throw with his back to the goal while he adopts a half screw or full screw action.]

WP 23.5 If the ball rebounds from the goal post, crossbar or goalkeeper it remains in play and it shall not be necessary for another player to play or touch the ball before a goal can be scored.

WP 23.6 If at precisely the same time as the referee awards a penalty throw the timekeeper whistles for the end of a period, all players except the player taking the throw and the defending goalkeeper shall leave the water before the penalty throw is taken. In this situation, the ball shall immediately be dead should it rebound into play from the goal post, crossbar or the goalkeeper.

WP 24 PERSONAL FOULS

WP 24.1 A personal foul shall be recorded against any player who commits an exclusion foul or penalty foul. The referee shall indicate the offending player's cap number to the secretary.

WP 24.2 Upon receiving a third personal foul, a player shall be excluded from the remainder of the game with substitution after the earliest occurrence referred to in WP 21.3. If the third personal foul is a penalty foul, the entry of the substitute shall be immediate.

WP 25 ACCIDENT, INJURY AND ILLNESS

WP 25.1 A player shall only be allowed to leave the water, or sit or stand on the steps or side of the pool during play in the case of accident, injury, illness or with the permission of a referee. A player who has left the water legitimately may re-enter from the re-entry area nearest his own goal line at an appropriate stoppage, with the permission of a referee.

WP 25.2 If a player is bleeding, the referee shall immediately order the player out of the water with the immediate entry of a substitute and the game shall continue without interruption. After the bleeding has stopped, the player is permitted to be a substitute in the ordinary course of the game.

WP 25.3 If accident, injury or illness, other than bleeding, occurs, a referee may at his discretion suspend the game for not more than three minutes, in which case he shall instruct the timekeeper as to when the stoppage period is to commence.

WP 25.4 Should the game be stopped through accident, injury, illness, bleeding or other unforeseen reason, the team in possession of the ball at the time of the stoppage shall put the ball into play at the place of stoppage when the play is resumed.

WP 25.5 Except in the circumstances of WP 25.2 (bleeding), the player shall not be allowed to take further part in the game if a substitute has entered.