

Major Differences Between 2008-10 NCAA and 2009-10 NFHS Water Polo Rules
Rev. 7-01-09

1. Risk management warnings
NCAA – There are no risk management warnings concerning diving into pool or emergency procedures.
NFHS – Risk management warning: Referee Points of Emphasis #1 and: above Rule 1-1. Players shall enter the water feet first at all times and there are general directions for referees related to summoning emergency assistance.
2. Length of course (Rule 1-4)
NCAA - Maximum length of course in pools with floating goals from goal line to goal line men 30 meters, women 25 meters; maximum length of course in pools with wall goals from wall to wall men 30 meters, women 25 meters; responsibility of host institution to provide a field of play that meets as closely as possible the maximum measurements for length and width and equals or exceeds the minimum depth required.
NFHS – Length of course in pools with floating goals shall be 25 meters (25 yards) for men and women, as measured from goal line to goal line; length of course in pools with wall goals shall be 25 meters (25 yards) for men and women, as measured from wall to wall. State associations may require maximum course length with floating goals for championships.
3. Video (Rule 1-12)
NCAA – There is no playing rule that prohibits a non-participating institution from videotaping games. Conference or local rules may prohibit this action. Video review is not permitted during the course of a game. However, conferences may have rules allowing the conference to utilize video after a game to determine if an incorrect student-athlete is serving a postgame suspension, etc.
NFHS – The use of electronic equipment to visually record games competition is not prohibited by the rules. Individual state associations may develop policy regarding the electronic recording of games and uses. However, it is considered unsporting to use electronic equipment for visual replay for coaching purposes during the game or any intermission. Further, the use of replay, television monitoring or any electronic equipment by the officials to make decisions related to the game is prohibited.
4. Number of balls (Rule 3-5)
NCAA - At least five game-quality balls must be available for all games.
NFHS - Five game-quality balls must be available for all championship games and are recommended for all games.
5. Description of caps numbers (Rule 4-4)
NCAA - Must be a single solid color with no border.
NFHS - Numbers may have a very narrow inconspicuous border, such as light grey. The large central part of the number on the dark cap must be white or yellow. The large central part of the number on the white cap must be a dark color (colors permitted listed).
6. Co-head coaches (Rule 5-2)
NCAA – No written regulations but in practice is the same
NFHS – One of the co-head coaches must be designated as head coach before each game. This coach is the only coach who can stand during play, move up to the 5-meter line while on offense, and speak to the referees at the times permitted. They can alternate in subsequent games but must inform referee before the game who is the head coach for that game.

7. Apparel (Rule 5-4)
NCAA - Players shall wear non-transparent one-piece costumes. The women's suit must have a high back with broad straps. The goalkeeper may wear a competitive one-piece suit that has an open back with shoulder straps at least one inch in width (straps may not be spaghetti straps).
NFHS - Players shall wear non-transparent one-piece costumes. Suits shall completely cover the buttocks and breasts. The women's suit must have a solid high back with broad straps. Goalkeeper suits may be this type or a competitive one-piece suit with straps at least one inch in width (straps may not be spaghetti straps).
8. Size of commemorative patch (Rule 5-4)
NCAA – Size not to exceed 2 1/4 square inches.
NFHS – Size not to exceed four square inches.
9. Articles likely to cause injury (Rule 5-4)
NCAA - Medical and religious medals not specifically included as articles likely to cause injury; remainder of list the same. Procedure established for use of prescription goggles of type designed for contact sports and for other similar items.
NFHS – Articles likely to cause injury include jewelry, medical or religious medals, watches, swim goggles, protective helmets and sharp fingernails and toenails. State associations should develop a procedure for use of items such as prescription goggles, face mask, etc. The state association should be contacted by the school representative should an item be prohibited by a referee which is designed for an injury or accommodation for a disability, should there be a question on permission to wear the article.
10. Tournament committee (Rule 6-3) and tournament variations (Rule 11-5)
NCAA – No description of tournament committee, although in practice there is one at major tournaments; however, it is usually not composed of tournament coaches. No tournament variations are allowed - each game must be of standard duration with no ties.
NFHS – It is recommended that the coaches of the teams and/or the officials in the tournament compose a committee that will make immediate decisions not covered by the rules. Tournament variations are allowed.
11. Time of beginning of jurisdiction of referee (Rule 7-1) (In both organization jurisdiction of referee ends 5 minutes after end of game or after any protest filing procedure is complete)
NCAA – Jurisdiction begins 30 minutes before game.
NFHS – Jurisdiction begins 15 minutes before game. Referees must arrive at pool at least 15 minutes before start of game.
12. Referee uniform (Rule 7-1) – Shorts and sandals are not permitted.
NCAA – A tournament director, assigner, head referee or conference commissioner may authorize shorts if required by weather conditions. Both referees must dress alike.
NFHS – When a state association must deal with extreme heat and humidity, the individual state associations may make a temporary adjustment and permit the wearing of white shorts to address heat-related issues.
13. Institutional representative on team bench (Rule 7-4)
NCAA – There must be a representative of the institution on the bench at all times. It may be declared before the game, or, if not declared then, two minutes will be allowed for an IR to

become available to assume coaching responsibilities. The head coach, assistant coach, trainer, strength coach, AD or faculty representative are examples of IR. If none available, game will be declared a forfeit.

NFHS – There shall be at least one authorized school staff member, such as a head coach, assistant coach, athletic administrator, etc., on the bench to oversee the team and bench personnel at all times. Only those persons meeting the state association standards shall be eligible to meet this requirement. If the head coach receives a red card, the referees shall allow two minutes for an authorized school staff member to take the bench to assume coaching responsibilities. If no authorized school staff member is available, the game shall be declared a forfeit.

14. Time of award of red card (Rule 7-4)

NCAA – Referee may award a red card to a coach, team official or player for disruptive behavior at any time from 30 minutes before the game to five minutes after the conclusion of the game or until any protest filing procedure has been completed.

NFHS – No specific time stated. However, rules do not preclude a referee from giving a red card to a coach, other team official, or player who accosts a referee after a game.

15. Location of player, coach or team official receiving a red card (Rule 7-4) or who was excluded for brutality/flagrant misconduct (Rule 21-11) during the remainder of that game in which event occurred

NCAA – The player, coach, or team official must leave the bench and may sit in bleachers during rest of game but can not communicate with team or referees during the remainder of the game until after the jurisdiction of the referees.

NFHS – The player must leave the bench and must sit in the bleachers, under supervision; coach or team official must leave the pool facility during that game. Coach or team official or player must have no contact with team in game in which flagrant misconduct occurred or red card was received until after the jurisdiction of the referees after the game.

16. Location of player, coach, or team official receiving a red card or who was excluded for brutality/flagrant misconduct) during the subsequent game in which the suspension is being served (Rule 7-4 and Rule 21-11)

NCAA – The person receiving the red card (coach, other team official, player) or who committed brutality may be in the bleachers but may not communicate with the team, team officials or referees from 30 minutes before the game, during that game, and up to 5 minutes after the conclusion of the game or until any protest filing procedure has been completed. Rules regulate type of game in which next-game suspension may be served.

NFHS - Athlete or coach or other team official may be in the stands during that game but

may not communicate with the team, team officials or referees; however, a state association may have specific rules governing if athlete or coach or team official may be in audience or pool area during the next game in which the game suspension is being served. There are no specific rules regulating type of game in which the-game suspension may be served. Associations may have specific rules.

17. Protest (Rule 7-10)

NCAA - Protests may be lodged only for misapplication of rules, equipment malfunction, and errors in recording information or other desk errors.

NFHS - Protests may be lodged only for misapplication of rules, equipment malfunction and errors in recording information.

18. Resetting shot clock (Rule 9-2)
NCAA – If a player throws the ball into a vacant corner before the expiration of 35 seconds, the referee shall blow the whistle to stop both clocks for stalling. The shot clock is reset.
NFHS – If a player throws ball into a vacant area of pool before expiration of 30 seconds, the referee shall not blow the whistle until the shot clock expires. The shot clock is then reset.

19. Length of each period of play (Rule 11-1)
NCAA – Eight minutes actual play.
NFHS – Seven minutes actual play for varsity; recommended 6-minute periods for junior varsity, 5-minute periods for freshman-sophomore games.

20. Interval at half-time (Rule 11-2)
NCAA – Interval can be longer than 5 minutes with agreement of both coaches.
NFHS – Interval can not be longer than 5 minutes.

21. Name for sudden-death overtime (Rule 11-3)
NCAA – Called sudden-death overtime.
NFHS – Called sudden-victory overtime.

22. Tournament variations (Rule 11-5):
NCAA – Are no tournament variations; each game must be standard (including overtime).
NFHS – Can be tournament variations as long as are announced ahead of time; these include length of periods, duration of period breaks, number, type and length of timeouts, type and duration of overtime, and requirement for overtime (for example, in a tournament with the group system of play, games may end in a tie).

23. 30-second timeout (Rule 12-7)
NCAA – One per game.
NFHS – No 30-second timeout except as a tournament variation (see Rule 11-5).

24. Display of timeouts remaining (Rule 12-1)
NCAA – Number of timeouts remaining shall be visible to both teams.
NFHS – No such requirement.

25. Television timeouts (Rule 12-8)
NCAA - Description included
NFHS - Description not included

26. Start of game (Rule 13-3)
NCAA – Rule same, although unstated
NFHS – Rule states that no player may pull end line forward or, if center sprint is used, the sprinter must not push off the goal.

27. Using two hands (Rule 20-8)
NCAA – It is an ordinary foul to play or touch the ball with two hands. It is exclusion foul (or penalty foul if inside 5-meters) to attempt to block a shot with two hands.
NFHS – It is an ordinary foul to touch the ball with two hands. It is an exclusion foul (or penalty foul if inside 5-meters) to attempt to block a shot or pass with two hands.

28. Offensive dead-time foul (Rule 20-11)
NCAA – It is an ordinary foul for a player of the team in possession of the ball to impede or push off before a free throw, goal throw or corner throw is taken.
NFHS – Rule eliminated as not needed since the penalty is same for the ordinary fouls of impeding or pushing or pushing off from an opponent if committed by either the offense or defense or if committed before or after the ball is put into play. This is how rule is currently called.
29. Possession time
NCAA: 35 seconds (Rule 20-17)
NFHS: 30 seconds (Rule 20-16)
30. Wasting time (NCAA Rule 20-18)
NCAA – It is the responsibility of the team on offense to advance the ball toward the offensive end
NFHS – Rule eliminated. Team may keep ball for 30 seconds without restriction
31. Blocking a pass or shot with two hands (Rule 21-6)
NCAA – It is an exclusion foul to attempt to block a shot with two hands outside the 5-meter area.
NFHS – It is an exclusion foul to attempt to block a pass or shot with two hands outside the 5-meter area.
32. Definition of flagrant misconduct (Rule 21-11)
NCAA - Brutality is used for the foul as defined in Rule 21-11. Violent play is included in definition of misconduct.
NFHS – Violent play is moved to flagrant misconduct (term used instead of brutality)
33. Dead-time foul (NCAA Rule 21-12)
NCAA – It is an exclusion foul for player of team not in possession of the ball to commit foul of impeding, pushing or pushing off or an exclusion foul before a free throw, goal throw, corner throw or penalty throw is taken. Original throw maintained. Although this is the written rule, in practice the ball is put in play at the point of the exclusion foul or behind; in addition, fouls of impeding or pushing off are usually considered to be ordinary fouls as opposed to exclusion fouls.
NFHS – NCAA Rule deleted. Impeding and pushing or pushing off are ordinary fouls if committed either before ball is put in play or after ball is put into play and if committed by offense or defense. Free throw is usually taken at the point of foul or behind. Procedures for an exclusion foul are covered in Rules 21-4 through 21-11.
34. Double dead time foul (NCAA Rule 21-13),
NCAA: - If player of each team impedes, pushes or pushes off from opponent or commits double exclusion fouls before ball is put into play (dead time); both players are excluded and original throw maintained. In practice, the ball is put into play at the point of foul or behind and impeding and pushing are usually regarded as ordinary fouls.
NFHS – NCAA Rule 13 is deleted and all simultaneous personal fouls are covered in NFHS Rule 21-12. If double exclusion fouls are committed during play (before or after the ball is put into play), the ball is put into play at point of foul or behind.

35. Offensive exclusion foul committed during dead time (NCAA Rule 21-14)
NCAA – Player on offense is excluded for 20 seconds for exclusion foul committed during dead time
NFHS – Rule deleted as not needed as the punishment is the same for exclusion foul committed by offense or defense, during dead time or live time. Player on offense would be excluded for 20 seconds and ball turned over.
36. Simultaneous personal fouls (NCAA Rule 21-18)
NCAA – Rule 21-18 covers simultaneous personal fouls, whether committed during dead time or live time. Rule 21-18-a covers simultaneous exclusion fouls; Rule 21-18-b covers simultaneous penalty fouls; Rule 21-18-c describes penalty if one referee awards an exclusion foul and at the same time the other referee awards a penalty foul.
NFHS – Section a and b of this rule are included in Rule 21-12; section c, simultaneous exclusion foul and penalty foul, is deleted.
37. Within 5-meter area to prevent a probable goal (Rule 22-2)
NCAA – It is a penalty foul for a defending player to intentionally play or attempt to play the ball or block a shot with two hands.(Rule 22-2-b); it is a penalty foul for a defending player to intentionally block or attempt to block a pass with two hands (Rule 22-2-c)
NFHS – It is a penalty foul for a defending player to attempt to block a shot or pass with two hands (Rule 22-2-b). For a defending player to play the ball with two hands is listed separately in 22-2-c. Rules are essentially the same.
38. Bleeding (Rule 25-2)
NCAA – After the bleeding has stopped, the player is permitted to be a substitute in the ordinary course of the game.
NFHS – After the bleeding has stopped, the wound covered, the suit or body appropriately cleaned and/or the suit is changed, the player may return to competition as a substitute.
39. Loss of consciousness (Rule 25-4)
NCAA – No rule
NFHS – A player rendered unconscious or apparently unconscious during a game shall not be permitted to resume participation that day without written authorization from a physician.
40. Instructions for use of two referees (Appendix A-2, Note)
NCAA – If the two sides of the pool are parallel and do not have significant obstructions, each referee shall referee to the right.
NFHS – If the two sides of the pool are parallel and do not have significant obstructions, each referee shall referee to the right. If this is not possible, due to an obstruction, each referee shall referee to the left.