

Wisdom of a Wednesday (on a Thursday)
September 9, 2021

Welcome back to a fall men's water polo season! I hope this finds you and your loved ones doing well. Please find below some thoughts from the opening weekend of play and some areas to give more attention. The very best referees will be clear, consistent and correct in all that they do.

Ball In Play

KEYS:

- CLEAR separation of the ball, hand and water or the player can swim with the ball - one stroke with the ball is considered in play.
- Free throws are to be taken in a REASONABLE amount of time without UNDUE DELAY.
- Ball NOT in play (a few examples):
 - Ball floating on the water - player touches ball then raises hand off the ball.
 - Spinning the ball without clear separation from the ball, hand and the water.
 - Water polo move where the ball is not clearly separated from the hand and the water.

TOOLS:

- Body position.
- Position on deck.
- Coverage area awareness.
- Partner collaboration.

A reasonable amount of time should include allowing the player taking the free throw to gain control of the ball after the foul and quickly scan the pool and attempt a shot or a pass. Should the player decide not to pass or shoot quickly, they then must immediately and CLEARLY put the ball in play.

- If you think you are allowing them too much time to put the ball in play, you probably are.
- If you think you are not giving them enough time, you probably are not.

Free Throws

KEYS:

- Defense must allow the free throw to be taken unimpeded.

- o By rule, "ANY attempt to play the ball before it has left the hand of the thrower" is an exclusion foul.
- The referee must be sure to observe the free throw while also paying attention to their coverage area.
- Before advancing with the ball or improving the angle of attack, the ball must be put in play clearly and free from interference by the defense.
- Once the ball is in play, the referee should drop their horizontal arm as an indication to the clock operator and the field of play that the ball is in play.

TOOLS:

- Body position.
- Position on deck.
- Coverage area awareness.
- Partner collaboration.
- Hierarchy of fouls.

Bottomline, make it a part of your mechanics to watch the free throw, require both offense AND defense to adhere to the rules and monitor your entire coverage area.

Initiation of Contact - Perimeter

KEYS:

- Position yourself so you can monitor your entire coverage area.
- Whistle the initial contact and make the appropriate call.
 - o Usually ordinary, contra or exclusion.
- Anticipate the action but not your call.
- Missed initiation fouls can lead to player frustration.
 - o Player frustration can lead to harder fouls or embellishment and even simulation.

TOOLS:

- Body position.
- Position on deck.
- Coverage area awareness.
- Partner collaboration.
- Hierarchy of fouls.

Given the newer rules about making oneself live after a foul outside 6 meters, there should be little to no reason to withhold an ordinary foul, especially outside 6 meters **if a foul is committed**. Our advantage rule dictates that we should whistle the ordinary foul as it would be most advantageous for the

offense to have a free throw and then choose to pass or shoot without interference by the defense.

When inside 6 meters, a bit more patience may be required if you see an advantage situation that would be enhanced by not whistling a foul.

Position On Deck

A good general rule is to stay even with the last matched pair of players in your coverage area yet always be prepared to advance or retreat quickly if the ball changes possession or if your partner needs your assistance.

Body Position

Ensure that your shoulders are angled toward the field of play so all of the players can see both of your shoulders (excluding the goalkeeper of the team in possession of the ball). This should allow you to observe your coverage area more readily.

Coverage Area Awareness

Anticipate the play so you know where the ball is most likely to go next. In addition to monitoring the free throw, you should be looking at the next most likely positions in your coverage area to receive the ball. Knowing which side the center has sealed or where a dropped player came from will assist in anticipating play, however, we must always also pay attention to the ball/free throw itself. Just like a player, think ABCs...Area - Ball - Center.

Partner Collaboration

Communicate with your partner to ensure all pairs are accounted for and being watched. Talk before, during and after the game to ensure you are collaborating effectively.

Hierarchy of Fouls

Referees must apply the appropriate foul for the action:

- Ordinary
- No call
- Contra/turnover
- Exclusion
- Minor act of misconduct
- Penalty
- Misconduct

- Flagrant misconduct

Penalty Throws

Keys:

- Defenders AT LEAST 2 meters away.
- No part of the goalkeeper's body beyond the goal line at water level UNLESS it is a wall goal and then their hips are to be on the goal line.
- Shooter must be releasing the ball when they cross the 5 meter line on the shot.
- Do not allow the defenders or the offense to delay the taking of the penalty throw especially after having been warned; use your tools.

Tools:

- Whistle/verbal warning.
- MAM/yellow card
- Misconduct prior to the taking of the penalty throw.
- Game exclusion (not misconduct) if during the throw itself.

Where you choose to stand during the penalty throw is not defined in our rules book. I strongly suggest that you remain stationary when you blow your whistle so you can more accurately judge the movement by the shooter, defenders and goalkeeper while not moving yourself.

A technique to try (just a suggestion, not required):

- Line up the shooter and the defenders while standing at 5 meters.
- Once satisfied they are positioned correctly, walk to about the 2 meter line.
- From the 2 meter line, ensure the goalkeeper is in the correct position.
 - Stay stationary.
- Check on the shooter and defenders one more time.
- Raise your hand then blow your whistle while simultaneously dropping your arm.
 - Stay stationary.
- Being at 2 meters should allow you to:
 - be close enough to make a goal line call.
 - judge if the shooter advanced beyond the 5 meter line prior to releasing the ball.
 - decide if the defenders interfered with the shot.

Endeavor to be the very best referee you can be by ALWAYS being a student of the game. If you have not already, embrace the college game and all of the challenges and rewards that come with it.

As always, more to come...

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