

**FINA Technical Water Polo Committee**  
**Observations, Instructions and Clarifications**  
**October 2019**

1. Strict application of WP 22.8: *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.*
  - 1) To protect the free movement of an opponent, the action and flow of the game is a key concept in water polo.
  - 2) Strict application of this rule is required in the following situations:
    - a) Any foul to prevent the free movement of an attacking player driving towards the goal area.
    - b) The tactical play of 'pressing' whereby free movement is impeded.
    - c) Use of two hands for holding and/or blocking the movement.
    - d) Continuous or frequent contact of the opponent's body which prevents free movement.
    - e) Swimming on/over the opponent's shoulders, back or legs preventing free movement.
  
2. To clarify the situation about exclusion without ball within 6 m. area, the instructions are:

**Centre Forward without Ball**

When the ball is at the perimeter and an exclusion foul by the defense is committed in the center forward area, to avoid any misunderstanding who is excluded and to keep the flow in the game, the correct procedure to signal the exclusion is:

If there is an exclusion of the Center Forward Defender when the ball is in the perimeter, the referee should:

- a. signal the exclusion by whistle,
- b. signal the number of the excluded player both to the player and official table,  
after which the free throw can be taken immediately.

The referee should avoid delaying the game by stopping it with his whistle and reducing the advantage of attack unless there is an unclear situation for example when an excluded player is under water.

Always the referee must signal the kind of foul which he punished, using the appropriate Figure from Appendix B from the Rule Book.

If the free throw is taken too quick, before the referee finishes the signalisation of the exclusion and corresponding number of the player, the referee has to indicate that the free throw has to be retaken (from the spot where the ball is).

### **KEY WORDS for leading the game in a proper way:**

- Protect the movement
- Punish impediment

### **Other Clarifications:**

#### 1. Leaving the Field of Play

#### **FINA Water Polo Manual 2019-2021:**

**WP 5.6** At any time during the game, a player may be substituted by leaving the field of play at the team's designated substitution areas. The substitute may enter the field of play from the exclusion re-entry area as soon as the player has visibly risen to the surface of the water within the re-entry area. Substitution from the designated lateral substitution area is allowed when both players, the exiting player and the substitute, are in the water, outside of the field of play and touch hands above the water.

#### **Note:**

*In the case that a player, on his own initiative, leaves the field of play in a place other than the Re-entry Area or Flying Substitution Area as mentioned in the rules, this player will not be punished for leaving the field of play. However, as this player did not leave the field of play through one of the designated re-entry areas mentioned in the rules, he/she or a substitute, can only (re-)enter the field of play at the end of the period, during a time-out, after a goal **or with permission of the referee.***

2. Substitution of the goalkeeper at an Exclusion for 20 sec. and at an Exclusion for Brutality:

To be consistent in the interpretation of the rules concerning the substitution of a goalkeeper by a substitute goalkeeper after an exclusion, it will be allowed whenever it is in accordance with the rules.

3. Taking of a free throw, putting the ball in play.

It may be the case that in some situations the ball is away from the place where the free throw is awarded. In all cases, the player with the ball, in static or swimming position, must put the ball in play clearly visible for all involved (referees, players, coaches, desk officials etc).

Throwing the ball from left to right hand is considered to put the ball in play.

Due to rule WP 20.4, which says "*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, .....*" it is not allowed to put the ball in play by foot.

4. A direct shot at the goal taken after a free throw has been awarded inside the 6 metre line (or a shot taken improperly outside of the 6 meter area) is considered to be an ordinary foul and the referee is to award a free throw to the opposing team, whether this shot has entered the goal or whether the ball has been diverted outside the field of play by a defender or goalkeeper.

**However, if the ball rebounds into the field of play outside of the 2m area, in this specific situation, WP 20.1 is to be applied and** the ball should be put in play at the location of the ball.

5. Reminder: after a penalty throw is awarded no substitution is allowed, from any re-entry area, before the penalty is taken.

## **6. Possession of the ball.**

A team has possession of the ball when one of its players is holding or swimming with the ball and when a team has **control over the ball.**

Control over the ball means when the ball is floating on the water and there is not any doubt that the ball is closer to one (player of the) team.

For this reason, this situation is considered to be in possession of the ball for that team.

Also, when the ball is surrounded by players of one team, while the other team is not able or willing to play the ball, it is considered to be in possession for that team.

In these cases, it's not necessary that a player is touching the ball. Possession of the ball will define the moment when a coach can call for a time out and when the referee can allow an excluded player or the substitute to (re)enter the field of play.