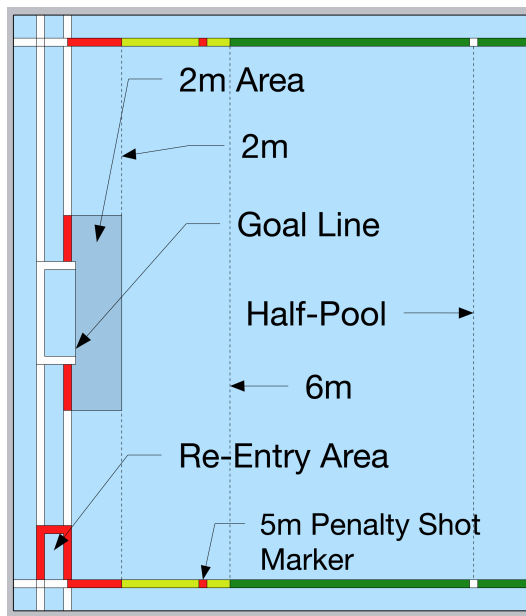


Water Polo Spectator's Cheat Sheet

In the game of water polo, two teams of 6 field players and 1 goalkeeper try to score goals on each other. Each goal is worth 1 point. The game is played over 4 periods, each lasting 8 minutes, with a 30 second shot clock. Each team also has 2 time-outs. The team with the most points at the end of the game wins. If there is a tie, a shootout occurs.

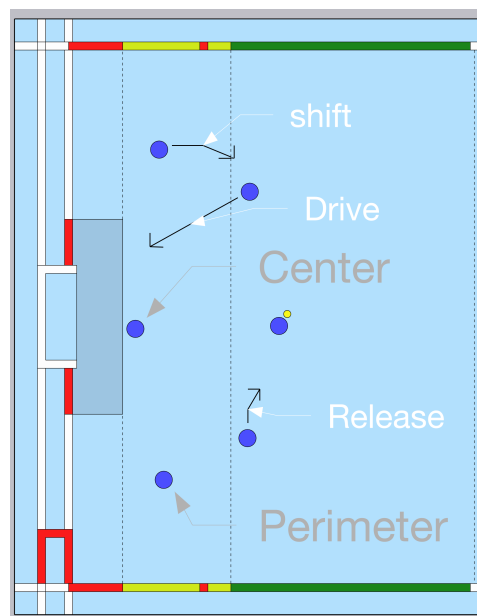
Marked Areas and Basic Play:

Simple attack strategy is to pass the ball to the man in front of the goal, called the **center**, and have them take the shot from close. This is similar to a basketball center and the play is physical.



If that is not available, players on the **perimeter** (everywhere except the center) will work to get open while moving closer to the goal and improving their shot angle. These players then can take an **outside shot**. To receive the ball, the players will often make short movements to the ball called **releases**.

If no one is open, players will **drive** by swimming toward the goal looking to get open. This changes their position and the other players must shift to maintain spacing. This movement creates opportunities for someone to be open and opportunities to draw exclusion and penalty fouls.



Fouls:

Fouls are signaled by whistles and gestures by the referee. Some of these are listed in the last section. The table below shows the three foul types, what happens afterward and some common examples of infractions.

Type	Ordinary	Exclusion	Penalty
Result	Free Throw	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Free Throw Defensive player sent to the re-entry (penalty) area for 20 seconds 	Penalty Shot
Common Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tackling the ball handler Taking the ball under water Delayed restart after a foul Expired shot clock 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Holding, sinking, or pulling back a player without the ball Interfering with a free throw, goal throw or corner throw 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any foul inside 6m that stops a probable goal A foul from behind while inside 6m

There will be a lot of ordinary fouls when the ball is on the perimeter where defense will tackle the ball-handler to prevent easy shots. In the center or when players are driving, the likelihood of an exclusion foul increases. On an exclusion foul, the defensive player must go to the re-entry area for 20 seconds, giving the offensive team a numbers advantage. Lastly, if a player gets into a position inside 6m with the ball where a goal is likely, penalty fouls are possible, resulting in penalty shots.

Personal Fouls:

Exclusion and penalty fouls are called on specific players and count as personal fouls. After a player receives their 3rd personal foul, they are excluded for the remainder of the game and must sit on the bench (called being red flagged).

Throws:

After certain events, a **throw** must be taken. A throw is either a pass to a teammate or to oneself (pop). A throw must happen without delay or it's a foul in the other direction. The player cannot move until the throw occurs. The player cannot shoot before or after the throw until a second player (offense or defense) touches the ball.

Event	Result
Ordinary or Exclusion Foul	Free Throw
Goalie deflection out of bounds	Corner Throw
Shot out of bounds	Goal Throw

A **free throw** occurs after an ordinary or exclusion foul. Depending on the location of the ball **after** the foul occurs, the rules are modified. If the ball is outside 6m, the player can shoot immediately. If they don't, they must "throw" the ball normally, but the ball does not need to be touched by a second player before a shot. If the ball is inside of 2m, the ball must be moved to the 2m line before the throw is taken.

Out of Bounds:

An ordinary foul is called against a player who knocks a ball out of bounds on the sides of the pool. If it goes out of bounds on the ends of the pool (goal sides), there are special rules. If the goalie is last to touch the ball, a **corner throw** is awarded. A corner throw is taken at the side of the pool on the 2m line and has the same rules as a free throw outside of 6m.

If the ball is shot out of bounds, a **goal throw** is awarded. This is a turnover and the throw must be taken from inside of their own 2m line by any player (typically the goalie) on the team that was just on defense. Note that a deflection of the shot by a defensive player still awards a goal throw. A goal throw has the same rules as a free throw outside of 6m (i.e. there can be an immediate full-pool shot).

Starts and Restarts:

At the start of each period there is a sprint to see who gets first possession. The teams line up on their goal line and swim to capture the ball. The clock starts as soon as the ball is touched. After a goal, there is a restart with a free throw at the half-pool line.

Common Referee Whistles and Gestures:

Event(s)	Whistles	Gestures
Start of Period or Restart	1 whistle	Arm starts vertical and is dropped
Goal	1 whistle	Arm points to center of pool
Corner Throw	1 short whistle	One arm points in the direction of offense, the other at the corner
Ordinary Foul by Defense	1 short whistle	Arm points in the direction of offense
Ordinary Foul by Offense	2 short whistles	Arm points in the direction of defense (now offense after turnover)
Goal Throw	2 short whistles	One arm points in the direction of defense (now offense), the other at the goal
Exclusion Foul	1 short whistle, followed by a series of whistles	Arm points at player and then sweeps to the side of the pool. Then the player number is displayed on the fingers and held up.
Penalty Foul	1 short whistle, followed by a long whistle	Arm is held vertically with all 5 fingers splayed open. Then the player number is displayed on the fingers and held up.