



What is water polo?

Water polo is a contact-heavy, competitive team sport played in water between two teams of 6 field players and 1 goalkeeper. Passing, blocking, fouling, and shooting are all a part of the sport. The team that gets the most goals wins!

How long are the games?

Depending on your level, quarter (or period) times may vary. All games consist of 4 quarters, about a minute break in between each quarter, and a halftime in between the second and third quarters.

10U: 5 minute period

12U: 6 minute period

14U: 6 minute period

16U: 7 minute period

18U: 7 minute period

Collegiate: 8 minute period

Are the players touching the bottom of the pool?

Nope! All of the movement you see is a combination of swimming and “egg beating”, both key components in water polo.

Is my child hurt?

There is always a possibility of your child getting hurt in any sport. The referee’s top priority is your children’s safety, so the likelihood is low. Remember, your child knows whether they are hurt better than anyone else. Although it may look aggressive, contact is part of the sport!

Should that action have been called by the referee?

Referee’s are trained to watch for your child’s safety. Their visibility of the pool is far better than yours, especially since they know what to look for. Although you may see some questionable movements, trust that the referee knows and understands their training.

Why wasn’t that a goal?

Let’s imagine this scenario: your child shoots the ball and you see it go in, but the referee motions for a change in possession and the game continues. What happened?! One big thing is perspective. While you are in the stands, the referee is on the goal line. If the ENTIRE ball does not pass the posts of the goal, the shot doesn’t count.

Should I voice my concerns about the game?

Unless your child is injured and is trying to voice their pain, physicality and contact are a part of the sport. No coach, athlete, or referee wants to see your child hurt. We all love the game and want you to enjoy it, too!



What are the rules?

Although these are not ALL of the rules, these are the basic rules that will help you follow the game. Feel free to ask anyone else around you to understand too!

- Each goal is worth one point.
- Every period starts with a swim-off.
- An ordinary foul is given if the offender lets go of the ball and their defender is aggressively holding them.
- Players must “pop-up” the ball after a foul, turnover, and exclusion.
- If excluded, the player must spend 20 seconds in the exclusion zone.

What to watch and listen for?

Try not to only watch the ball. A lot of action also happens around the field of play!

Listen to the various whistles by the referee and see if you can interpret each call!

If you wish for a completed rule guide, scan this QR code for the direct link to the completed rules sheet!



Don't forget to check us out at <https://www.patriotaquatics.org>



**Water Polo
Explained!**

A Spectator's Guide

