

# WATER POLO: TABLE OFFICIALS.

Water polo, like any other game can only be played fairly with the help of officials. The referee(s) are the most important but they need assistance in the form of “Table Officials”.

Like most jobs, the more people there are to share the duties the better. I will set out the tasks that need to be undertaken and who might do them in an “ideal world” knowing that frequently there are not sufficient “officials”, so there will be a need for “multi tasking”.

For a copy of the rules of Water Polo (which include the duties of table officials) go to Google, input Water Polo Rules, and then, take your pick. The FINA site is good, it gives you an index of the rules to start from.

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## WHO DOES WHAT?

Depends on how many there are of you! This is what the rule book says;

### One timekeeper and one secretary.

**Timekeeper 1** Should record the periods of continuous possession. (The 30 second rule)

**Secretary 1** Everything else!

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### Two timekeepers one secretary.

**Timekeeper 1** Time periods of actual play, timeouts and intervals between play.

**Timekeeper 2** Time the periods of continuous possession. (The 30 second rule)

**Secretary 1** Maintain a record of the game and all other duties left!

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### Two timekeepers and two secretaries.

**Timekeeper 1** As before.

**Timekeeper 2** As before.

**Secretary 1** Maintain record of the game, the players, the score, timeouts exclusion penalty fouls and personal fouls, in other words all the writing!

**Secretary 2** The rest (all the flag waving).

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## EQUIPMENT

Match Sheet

Score Board

Couple of pens

At least 2 stop watches

A couple of whistles

Bell (or something noisy other than a whistle).

*Hooter!*

Flags. One Blue. One White. One Red and One Yellow.

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## **TIMEKEEPER(S) DUTIES. (WP RULES 9.1)**

### **Time the periods of actual play. (WP 11.1)**

So what is actual play? When each quarter starts with the swim off, actual play starts when one of the players plays the ball (not when the referee blows their whistle to start the game). *So start the clock then.*

It continues until the referee whistles for an infringement (or goal) at that point it stops (*so stop the clock*).

It starts again when a player puts the ball back into play, by passing the ball (easy to see) or either dropping the ball from a raised hand onto the water or throwing it into the air (whichever action is chosen it must be capable of being observed by other players AND you)

OR after a goal when the referee signals a restart.

*Start the clock.*

This carries on until the teams have played 8 minutes of actual play. At that point

*Whistle for the end of the quarter. Stop the clock and reset to zero.*

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### **Time the intervals between quarters, (WP 11.2)**

There should be 2 minutes between first and second and between the third and fourth, 5 minutes at half time. (2 mins between any extra time played) How you notify the referee that those periods have elapsed is not shown so by mutual arrangement between the table and the referee.

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### **Time the “Time outs”. (See WP 12)**

They are requested by the coach of the team in possession of the ball forming a “T” with his hands and calling for a time out. The game is stopped (*whistle*) by either the referee OR the secretary (table). Remember, especially if there is only one referee that they may not hear/see the request from the coach. So you may have to do it. (So you will need a whistle)

Timeouts last for one minute, your duty is to signal by three short blasts on the whistle that 45 seconds have elapsed since the start of the time out so that the referee can arrange the restart of the game.

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### **Time the duration of “continuous possession” of the ball by either team. (WP 20.16)**

If a team retains possession of the ball for longer than 30 seconds, without shooting at goal, it is an ordinary foul, against that team and the opposition must be awarded a free throw. Timing of that 30 seconds is as per “actual play” (*The clock starts at 30 seconds and descends to zero*). The clock is reset (*to 30 secs.*) if there is;

- a. A goal. OR
- b. A shot at goal. OR
- c. Following an exclusion foul, OR
- d. Penalty foul, OR
- e. Corner, OR
- f. Neutral throw. OR
- g. If the opposition gains possession of the ball (That means control of the ball, merely touching it in flight is not enough)

The time starts again when the ball is played (so if after a shot the ball rebounds, whilst it is in the air and nobody has it, the clock remains stopped having been set back to 30 sec [*because of the shot*])

The signal that the 30 seconds is up is normally a hooter.

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### **Time exclusions – personal fouls. (20 seconds actual play) (WP 21.1-9)**

A player excluded from the game by the referee must leave the field of play at the re-entry area nearest their own goal. In most pools this will mean leaving the water at that point.

*Start the clock when the opposition have “played” the ball. Stop it if referee whistles for minor foul, start again when ball played. This keeps going until the player or a substitute is allowed to re-enter the pool. This happens when:*

- a. 20 seconds of actual play have elapsed, at which time the secretary shall raise the appropriate flag provided that the excluded player has reached the re-entry area in accordance with the Rules; OR
- b. a goal has been scored; OR
- c. the excluded player’s team has retaken possession of the ball (which means receiving control of the ball) during actual play provided that the excluded player has reached the re-entry area; OR
- d. the excluded player’s team is awarded a free throw or goal throw, the referee’s signal to award the throw qualifies as the re-entry signal, provided that the excluded player has reached the re-entry area.

*At that point, (provided the player has reached the re-entry area) THE SECRETARY (OR YOU) signal by the appropriate colour flag (blue for player on blue team etc.) for the player or a substitute to re-enter.*

If a goal has been scored in that time, or possession has changed, the player or substitute should have been signalled back into play by the referee, so *reset the clock*.

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### **Time exclusions - misconduct. (20 seconds actual play) (WP 21.10)**

If a player has been excluded from the game for an “act of misconduct” they may not take any further part in the game. Referees signal will be (fig F in appendix B) *Normal exclusion signal, then rolling arms in a wrapping motion, Red card to player, players number to table* They may be substituted after 20 seconds of actual play *signalled by a flag denoting the team’s colour*.

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### **Time exclusions - brutality. (4 minutes actual play) (WP 21.11)**

If a player has been excluded from the game for an “act of brutality” they may not take any further part in the game. Referees signal will be (fig G in appendix B) *Normal exclusion signal, then arms crossed, Red card to player, players number to table* They may be substituted after a period of 4 minutes actual play *signalled by a yellow flag AND a flag denoting the team’s colour*.

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### **Signal last minute of the game. (WP 9.1.d)**

Easy to understand, 7 minutes into the last quarter, signal, often with a bell, that there is just one minute to go. REMEMBERING TO DO IT IS THE HARD THING if you are interested in the game. It also applies to the last minute of the second period of extra time.

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## SECRETARIES DUTIES (WP RULES 10)

Do all the writing which includes keeping a record of the game, so a couple of pens required. (Just in case things get wet). The secretaries need to work in conjunction with the timekeepers to record the score, timeouts, exclusion and penalty fouls and personal fouls recorded against each player.

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Signal the **expiration of a period of exclusion** (20 seconds actual play) by raising the appropriate flag (See timekeepers section above).

Signal the **exclusion of players after 3 personal fouls**. *Players who commit three personal fouls (exclusion or penalty) are excluded from the rest of the game.* As the referee notifies a personal foul against a player and the secretary is aware that it is the players third they must signal by raising the Red Flag.

OR

Raising the Red Flag and blowing the whistle, if a penalty has been awarded. (The game will have stopped for the penalty to be taken).

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Signal any **improper entry** by raising the Red Flag and blowing the whistle.

This may be noticed by the referee, so (s)he will signal it, or by a goal judge (if there is one they should raise both arms straight up in the air [Fig W in appendix B]). If that does not happen, it is your responsibility.

So what is improper entry? Firstly you need to know when a substitute can enter the field of play from any place legally. Those occasions are; **(WP 5.7)**

- a. During the intervals between play.
- b. After a goal has been scored.
- c. During a "timeout".
- d. To replace a player who is bleeding or injured.

Normal substitution may take place at any time. **(WP 5.6)** The player leaving the field of play must do so at the re-entry area nearest his/her own goal line (Mainly in this area this will be to leave the water). They must surface in the re-entry area, or completely leave the water, before the substitute may enter the field of play.

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**Improper entry** can take a number of forms;

- a. In a normal substitution, entering the field of play before the substituted player has left it (not reached the surface in the re-entry area or left the water if they have to get out.)
- b. Jumping in.
- c. Push off from the poolside.
- d. When after an exclusion the player (or substitute) has **not** been signalled in by the referee or table. **Note** if the referee awards a free throw or goal throw to the excluded players team, that will count as a re entry signal.
- e. Affecting the alignment of the goal!!

For a player who is not entitled to take part in the game to enter the field of play, i.e. One who has received three personal fouls, or has been excluded for the remainder of the game by the referee.

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## REFEREES SIGNALS (WP RULES APPENDIX B)

### Hand signals

Referees pass their decisions to the players and to the table generally by hand signals, so you need to know what they mean. They are all contained in **appendix B** of the rules those of particular relevance to table officials are;

Fig D Exclusion of a player

Fig E Simultaneous exclusion of players.

Fig F Exclusion of a player for misconduct.

Fig G Exclusion of a player without substitution for 4 minutes.

Fig H Signal of award of a penalty.

Fig I Signal of a goal having been scored.

Fig Z Method of indicating the cap number of the player concerned. (One for each digit raised, then for 10 a clenched fist, for subsequent numbers a clenched fist plus one more for each digit raised).



**Fig. D** To signal the exclusion of a player. The referee points to the player and then moves the arm quickly towards the boundary of the field of play. The referee then signals the excluded player's cap number so that it is visible to the field of play and the table.

**Fig. E** To signal the simultaneous exclusion of two players. The referee points with both hands to the two players, signals their exclusion in accordance with Fig. D, and then immediately signals the players' cap numbers.

**Fig. F** To signal the exclusion of a player for misconduct. The referee signals exclusion in accordance with Fig. D (or Fig. E if appropriate) and then rotates the hands round one another in such a way that is visible to both the field of play and the table in addition to issuing the player with a red card. The referee then signals the excluded player's cap number to the table.

**Fig. G** To signal the exclusion of a player with substitution after four (4) minutes. The referee signals exclusion in accordance with Fig. D (or Fig. E if appropriate) and then crosses the arms in such a way that is visible to both the field of play and the table in addition to issuing the player with a red card. The referee then signals the excluded player's cap number to the table.

**Fig. H** To signal the award of a penalty throw. The referee raises an arm with five fingers in the air. The referee then signals the offending player's cap number to the table.

**Fig. I** To signal that a goal has been scored. The referee signals by whistle and by immediately pointing to the centre of the field of play.

**Fig. Z** To indicate a player's cap number. To enable the referee to communicate better with the players and the secretary, signals are made using both hands if appropriate where the number exceeds five. One hand shows five fingers with the other hand showing additional fingers to make up the sum of the player's number. For the number ten, a clenched fist is shown. If the number exceeds ten, one hand is shown as a clenched fist with the other hand showing additional fingers to make up the sum of the player's number.

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## Whistles!

It helps to know what the referee is likely to mean when (s)he blows the whistle. A single blast (peep) generally means an **ordinary foul**, possession stays with the attacking team. Normally for an **ordinary foul** the ball is awarded to the attacking player so (peep) but if it goes to the defender the ref will often blow twice, (peep peep) to draw attention to this slightly unusual occurrence.

A longer one slightly drawn out (pee'eeep) a **goal**. You will see this as well. PLUS ref points to the middle of the pitch.

Occasionally, what appears to be a **goal** may be **disallowed** (Shot inside 5 metres straight from free throw OR attacking player inside the 2 metres when ball received etc). Generally it will be a couple of blasts, (peep—peep), so watch the hand signals. If the ref, points to the centre, followed up by a hand signal of a number, then it is a goal, if they just raise one arm, pointing away from the goal, it was not "allowed".

**Exclusion foul.** Several blasts, (peep, peep, peep) so that everybody is aware that something out of the ordinary has happened. The referee will signal the player(s) out of the playing area (pool) then show the table by way of hand signals the cap number of the player(s) concerned.

**Penalty foul.** Same whistle signal but additionally ref will raise his hand showing "5" pointing to the 5 metre line with the other hand, indicating a penalty. (The penalised player will not leave the pitch [still need to show it as a personal foul] UNLESS it was their third personal foul in which case, *table raises red flag*, they may be immediately substituted.

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## **REALITY**

### **How will we deal with these duties locally?**

Well for the foreseeable future in Dorset we do not have the necessary equipment to implement the “continuous possession rule” (30 second rule). If a referee thinks that a team is “Wasting time” he can still punish them for it.

Because of pool time constraints we frequently play “actual time” instead of actual play, so there is no stopping and starting of the watch. The “length” of the quarters may be lengthened to take this into account (i.e. 9 mins actual time instead of 8 mins actual play). We have much shorter games in the K.S.2 and 3 competitions. NB Keep the “Actual play” time for “man out” it is meant as a punishment for the offending player.

The 5 minute half time interval I am informed is so that there is enough time for commercials when the event is televised. So not really important here. Often both teams and the referee are ready to start well inside the 2 minute break.

An extra duty to be performed by any of the table officials is keeping the “Scoreboard” up to date, so that players, coaches and spectators alike are fully aware of the current score.

From practical experience I have found it easier if one table official does all the writing and the other all the “stopwatch” duties, calling out the time and the occurrence to the “secretary”. You will need two watches, one to cover the length of the game, the other for the “man out” situation. As to who “waves the flags and blows the whistle” is a team decision.

The lay out of a match sheet is generally divided in half. The top for the players details, the number of goals that each score and the number of personal fouls they commit. The lower part is a, minute by minute, record of the game. *(I have personally never seen the point of this and see it as a lot of work for no reason, provided all, the upper half has been properly recorded)*

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## **PRACTICAL DEMONSTRATION**

Students in groups of 2 or 3. 1 Score sheet between each and 2 stop watches.

One student with stop watch and “Horn” Ideally the “odd” one if odd number of students. ALL acting as if table official for a match.

Teacher as ref. With whistle and ball. Run 5 minute “match”. Teacher to act as if referee. To show ball back in play throws it up and catches it.

Compare their match sheets at the end. Swop places, run again, then third time if needed!

All students asked to bring a whistle, pen and stop watch.

*Kit to be provided. For teacher. Whistle and ball.*

*For students. Match sheets hooter, “Flags” (Set of hats with extra red ones).*

# WHEN YOU'RE THE BUNNY

TIME KEEPING AND SCORING

By Don Cameron



Perhaps you've never worked on a water polo table before but you've been conned into it tonight.

You're probably asking "what's my job?" "What do I do?"  
WELL ....

## THERE ARE 4 Jobs TO DO

.... and there's supposed to be four people on the official table, but there will probably be only TWO. So, divide the jobs like this:-

- the timekeeper** <ol style="list-style-type: none;">- 1. Times length of Quarters and Intervals.
- 2. Times 30 seconds continuous possession.
- the secretary** <ol style="list-style-type: none;">- 3. Controls 20 seconds expulsions (sometimes more than one).
- 4. Maintains the score card and signals three personal personal faults with the red flag.



## IF YOU ARE THE Secretary YOU MUST

### a. Score LIKE THIS:

- i. STROKES "I" for goals.
- ii. crosses for personal faults plus  
O - offensive foul  
P - Penalty  
E - Exclusion

iii. list the officials on the back of the card.

Team	Goals	Offensive Fouls	Penalties	Exclusions	Time
Team A	1	2	1	0	15:00
Team B	0	1	0	1	15:00
Team C	0	0	0	0	15:00
Team D	0	0	0	0	15:00
Team E	0	0	0	0	15:00
Team F	0	0	0	0	15:00
Team G	0	0	0	0	15:00
Team H	0	0	0	0	15:00
Team I	0	0	0	0	15:00
Team J	0	0	0	0	15:00



### b. Time the 20 Second Exclusions

- i. TIME THE 20 SECONDS OF ACTUAL PLAY - that is STOP THE CLOCK on the referee's whistle and start it again when a throw is taken. Also, stop the clock between quarters -

- ii. SIGNAL
  - a) RE-ENTRY - by raising a flag the colour of the player excluded.
  - b) INCORRECT ENTRY - wave the red flag and blow whistle in quick blasts until referee stops the game

By the way CORRECT ENTRY POINTS are



