



Official Inner Tube Water Polo Rules

Revised 5/31/16

I. Team Requirements -

7 vs 7

1. A team consists of up to 12 players.
2. No more than 7 players are allowed in the pool at any given time (one of which is the goalkeeper).
3. Teams may play with a minimum of 5 players.
4. A team must have at least 2 females and 2 males in the pool at a time.

9 vs 9

1. A team consists of up to 12 players.
2. No more than 9 players are allowed in the pool at any given time (one of which is the goalkeeper).
3. Teams may play with a minimum of 6 players.
4. A team must have at least 3 females and 3 males in the pool at a time.

II. Equipment -

1. SBS will provide inner tubes, game ball, nets, and a referee for each game.

2. Shoes, hats, casts, shirts, jewelry and/or any other item deemed to be dangerous by a referee must be removed prior to game play.

III. Substitutions –

1. Teams may substitute at any time but current player in pool must exit the pool before a new player enters.

IV. Length of Game and Timing –

1. Each half will be 23 minutes in length with a continuous running clock.
 - Half-time will be 5 minutes. Teams will change ends at half-time.
2. To start each half, both teams line up at opposite ends of the pool until the official drops the ball into the playing area and signals to begin play.
3. On the official's whistle, both teams may propel their inner tubes toward the ball.
 - Pushing off the wall to start is legal.
4. The Official blowing his/her whistle warrants a dead ball.
5. Games ending in a tie will result in a tie.
 - There is no overtime or shootout due to time restrictions.

V. Rules Clarifications –

- 1)** *Free throws are awarded for violations from a point nearest (and behind) the spot of the infraction.*

1. During a free throw, the offense has 5 seconds to pass the ball to a teammate.
2. A goal may not be scored from a free throw.
3. The defense must remain at least 3 feet away until the ball is released.

2) Goal Box Restrictions

1. The area that extends 5 feet from the goal line and extends the entire width of the playing area is the goal box.
2. No offensive player may enter the goal box until an offensive player with the ball has entered the box.
 - This violation occurs when any part of the player's inner tube or body breaks the plane of the goal box before the ball has entered the box.
 - It is legal to enter the box with the ball. Once the defense clears the ball out of the box, offensive players must also leave the box.
 - Violations result in a turnover of possession. (*Think off-sides in hockey*)
3. No defensive player, other than the goalie, may remain stationary near the goal (*think defensive 3 seconds in Basketball*).
4. A violation occurs when a player purposely attempts to block a shot from within the goal box. This is to prevent two goalies.
 - It is legal to enter the box to defend a player with the ball.
 - Violations result in a penalty shot at the spot of the foul.

3) Goalie Restrictions

- 1. The goalie may not leave his/her tube in an attempt to block a shot from entering the goal.**
 - If the shot is unsuccessful, this will result in a Penalty Shot for the offended team.
- 2. After a score, the ball will be put into play by the goalie.**
 - The goalie must wait for the Official's whistle to re-start play.
- 3. A team may only defend the goal with one goalie.**
- 4. A goalie may never pass the ball beyond the mid pool line.**

4) *A goal is scored when a legal shot completely crosses the goal line.*

- 1. A player scoring a goal must remain in his/her tube until the ball crosses the goal line or the score will be disallowed.**

5) *Players may travel with the ball in any manner except for holding the ball completely underwater.*

- 1. Players may not deliberately hold the ball for more than 5 seconds without attempting to advance.**
 - At the Official's discretion, a delay of game violation will be issued.
- 2. Violations result in a free throw for the offended team.**

6) *All players must sit in a horizontal position, face up, inside the inner tube.*

- 1. If a player falls out of their tube, the player may not attempt to influence the game in any way.**

2. The player may not make a play on the ball until he/she is properly positioned on the inner tube.

7) A Free Throw will result when the ball passes out of bounds.

1. A ball that travels out-of-bounds within the goal box is given to the goalie for a free throw.

8) Stall Warning

1. Teams must make a discernable effort, in the eyes of the referee, to advance the ball in an offensive manner. Failure to do so will result in the referee calling a “stall warning”.
2. This is a 10 second countdown. If by the end of the countdown, you have not made an effort to score, it is a turnover.
3. A free throw is taken by the other team following a stalling penalty.

VI. Fouls and Misconduct

1. Flipping is legal. The only permitted contact is pushing down on the top of the tube or lifting straight up from the bottom.
2. **DO NOT GRAB AND HOLD ON TO SOMEONE’S TUBE. IT POPS TUBES AND HURTS GAMEPLAY.**
3. Inner tube to inner tube contact is legal. Incidental inner tube to body contact is legal.
4. A defending player may touch the ball when it is in possession of an opposing player by swatting the ball out of player’s hand.

- Any illegal contact between players will result in a free throw.
- Bottom line, keep it clean
- Make a play on the ball.
- Do NOT tackle the person with the ball.

5. You may NOT use your feet to push off another player's inner tube to create distance between you and another player.

- You may not try to flip players with your feet.
- You may not use your feet for anything besides swimming and getting back into a tube.

1) *Offensive Flipping*

1. The person in possession of the ball may flip a defender to defend the ball.

- If it gets out of hand an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty may be called at the ref's discretion.

2) *Defensive Flipping*

1. The defense may ONLY flip the person in direct possession of the ball.

- Not the person who last touched the ball
- Not the person about to touch the ball

2. Flipping should be done in a flirty manner, not in an aggressive manner.

3. Remember, this is a social league.

3) *Penalty Shots*

1. Penalty shots shall be taken by the offended player 10 feet away from the goal-line.

2. Defensive players must be at least 3 feet from the shooter and behind or to the side of the shooter.

3. Offensive players must shoot immediately following the official's whistle.

- No delays or pump fakes.

4. If the result of the penalty shot is not a goal, the ball remains in play.

4) *Any flagrant, malicious, or violent fouls*

1. The offending player will be ejected and a Penalty Shot will be awarded to the offended team.

5) *If the referee determines that a player intentionally splashed another player it will result in a Penalty Shot for the offended player.*

1. This could mean in an attempt to distract them or cause them to lose control of the ball

2. There is chlorine in the water, no need to get that in someone's eyes.

VII. Shootouts (Playoffs Only)

1. Five players from each team will be selected by the team to shoot

- Goalkeepers may be one of the shooters.

2. Shooters do not have to have been in the pool at the end of regulation.

3. A coin flip will decide which team has the option of shooting first or last.

4. Each team has a total of 5 penalty shots and will alternate each shot.

- No rebounds are allowed.

5. The thrower must wait for the Official to start the play on each throw.

6. If the score is tied at the end of the first shootout, another shootout will be conducted.

- During the second shootout, the game is won if, after ANY equal number of shots, the tie is broken.
- Players who shot in the first round are not eligible to shoot in the second round until all players have shot.

7. Teams must alternate shots on goal between male and female.

- Possible penalty shot combinations are M – F – M – F – M or F – M – F – M – F.
- In the case that a tie exists after the first 5 penalty shots, the opposite gender will be eligible to try a penalty shot.

***In case there is a two-way tie between teams, the following tiebreaker system will be used:**

- Head-to-head matchup
- Strength of Schedule