

Water Polo Points of Emphasis - 2024-26

By NFHS on May 14, 2024

[water polo](#)

Inside the Goal Area Clarifications

Referees should be certain the player is inside the goal area when receiving the ball. If the referees are not certain, they should assume the player was not inside the goal area. Being on the line of the goal area is not considered being inside the goal area.

Ball in Hand (except in the case of “foul from behind within 6 meters”)

The rules book mentions in several places regarding fouls against a player “who is not holding the ball.” That is when a foul could be given. It should not be an ordinary foul or exclusion foul to “tackle” (hold, sink, pull back) an opponent in an attempt to steal the ball out of the hand of the attacker as long as those actions are not deemed violent or over-aggressive. If an attacker is holding the ball and the attacker’s arm is grabbed or pulled, which jars the ball loose from the attacker’s hand, a quick ordinary foul should not be given as no foul has been committed.

Advantage

The purpose of the advantage rule and the game itself is to score goals to win the game. The advantage rule clearly states that referees have the discretion to award or not to award any foul depending on whether the decision would advantage the attacking team. Referees are to refrain from awarding a foul if, in their opinion, awarding a foul would be an advantage to the offending team. If a player is holding the ball and/or is making progress toward a greater advantage and an opportunity to score a natural goal, the referees should allow that action to continue and not whistle a foul too quickly. The highest form of advantage is to score a goal, not to earn a foul. The advantage rule states that referees shall apply this principle to the fullest extent.