

-Texas A&M University-
Department of Recreational Sports
INTRAMURAL SPORTS

Innertube Water Polo Rules

A. TEAM INFO

1. Teams consist of 6 players (5 pool players plus a goalie), 3 male and 3 female for corec. A team must have 5 players to start a game (for corec there must be at least 2 of each sex).
2. A team's roster may include an unlimited number of players. For corec a team must have three members of each sex.
3. Substitutions may be made only between periods or during time-outs. Substitutes enter the water at the corner of the pool located nearest the team bench. Play resumes when the official blows the whistle. Intentionally delaying the game will be penalized by a free throw awarded to the opposing team.

B. EQUIPMENT & SAFETY

1. All players must follow Rec Center pool guidelines in order to participate.
2. All players must wear appropriate swimwear. **No eye glasses are permitted in the pool.** Goggles are allowed.
3. Jewelry: Participants are NOT permitted to wear any visible jewelry. If participants choose to wear jewelry, it must be completely covered BEFORE arriving at the game site, with a band-aid or athletic tape. The Department of Recreational Sports WILL NOT provide band-aids or athletic tape to cover jewelry items. If covered, jewelry must remain flush with the skin and not be protruding out; this is for the protection of all participants.
4. Blood Rule - Players who sustain injury causing an open wound will be required to leave the game. A player may not re-enter the contest until the flow of bodily fluids is stopped and the wound covered.

C. PLAYING AREA

1. All games will be played in the Natatorium of the Student Rec Center
2. The playing area is 25 yards long by 20 yards wide.
3. The goal box is the area that extends five yards from the edge of the pool across the entire width of the playing area. The area is marked by cones at each side of the pool.
4. The backstroke flags are considered in-play. Any ball that contacts the flags is playable (shots are still legal).

D. GAME TIME & LENGTH

1. Game time is forfeit time. A team needs at least 5 legal players to begin the game.
2. Each game will consist of **4- 7 minute quarters with a 3-minute halftime period. A running clock will be used.** The clock will stop in the last minute of each half for time-outs, out of bounds, fouls, and goals. Teams will change goals after each quarter.
3. Each team will receive one 1-minute time-outs per half. Unused time-outs do not carry over to the next period. A time-out may be called by any player whose team is in possession of the ball.
4. Mercy rule: If a team has a lead of 15 or more with less than 2 minutes remaining in the forth period, the game will be ended.

5. Overtime – There will be a 3 minute sudden-death overtime period (first team to score wins). Games still tied will go to a shoot-out...

Shoot-Out Procedures:

1. Three players from each team will be selected to shoot. Goalies may be 1 of the 3 shooters. The shooters do NOT have to have been in the pool at the end of regulation. The goalie does NOT have to have been the goalie at the end of regulation.
2. A coin flip will decide which team has the option of shooting first or selecting the goal.
3. Teams will alternate shots at the same goal.
4. Shots will follow the penalty shot procedure.
5. If the score remains tied following the first 3-player shootout, a sudden victory shootout will occur in which the game is won if, after ANY equal number of shots, the tie is broken. Players who shot in the first 3-player shootout are again eligible to shoot. Each shooter must wait for 2 other shooters from their team to shoot before they are eligible again. (i.e, 2nd shooter in first shootout can shoot 5th, 8th, and 11th...).

E. METHOD OF PLAY

1. At the start of each half, teams line up at the each end of the pool with one hand on the far wall. The ball will be tossed into the middle of the pool. On the official's whistle, both teams may propel their inner-tubes toward the ball. Pushing off the wall to start is legal.
2. Generally, teams have 2-3 players on the offensive end and 2-3 players on the defensive end.
3. Players must sit horizontally in their inner-tube with rear end in the middle of the tube and arms & legs over the side. **No player may leave his/her inner-tube.** The ball may not be touched or maneuvered when a player is out of his/her tube. Handling the ball while not in a tube is a penalty resulting in a free throw for the opposing team. The only thing you can do when not in your tube is get back in it.
4. Each team will advance the ball toward their opponent's goal by throwing, carrying, or pushing the ball. Teams will switch direction and goals at the half. For a goal to count, the shooter must remain in their inner-tube until the goal is scored.
5. Players dribble the ball by pushing it in the water, holding it between their knees, holding it with 2 hands, holding it with 1 hand in the air, holding it against their body, or holding it in their lap. One or both hands may be used to pass, catch, or throw the ball.
6. **The ball may not be held underwater.**
7. Players may not hold on to the walls or goal area while having possession of the ball.
8. Defensive players may push or dump the opponent's inner-tube. Contact with the opponent's body is NOT permitted. The defensive player may also seize or knock the ball from the possession of the player holding the ball.
9. Only a player in possession of the ball may be dumped. Possession of the ball is a judgment call by the referee. Possession is defined as having control of the ball or the ability to maneuver the ball.
10. The feet may not be used to knock the ball out of the possession of another player or to score a goal.
11. No player, other than the goalie, may enter the goal box at any time. A player is considered in the goal box when any portion of his/her inner-tube enters the box. Offensive players will be called for a technical foul when illegally entering the box. If a defensive player enters the box, he/she must get out as soon as possible. A penalty shot will be awarded when a defensive player actively plays defense from within the box on a legal thrower.
12. A ball deflected out of the pool will be awarded to a player of the opposing team nearest to the point where it left the pool for a free throw.
13. There is no offside rule.

F. SCORING & GOAL KEEPING

1. One point will be scored for each goal by a male player or two points behind the 7 yard line. Two points will be scored for each goal by a female player or three points behind the 7 yard line. The same point value is applied to penalty throws.
2. A goal is scored when a legal shot, taken outside of the goal box, completely crosses the goal line. Any shots taken from inside the goal box will be disallowed. The ball may hit the water in its path to the goal.
3. If a player falls out of his/her tube or is legally dumped **BEFORE** the ball enters the goal, the goal will NOT count.
4. Following each goal, the ball is put back into play by the goalie just scored upon.
5. The goalie MAY leave his/her tube in attempting to prevent a thrown ball from entering the goal. Once out of the tube, the goalie must get back in his/her tube before attempting to block any other shots. Offensive players may retrieve any rebounds that exit the goal box. Any rebounds that stay within the goal box must be retrieved by the Goalie. The goalie may retrieve a blocked shot that lands within the goal box before returning to his/her tube. Any other actions (blocking other shots, etc) by the goalie while he/she is out of his/her tube are illegal and will result in a the opposing team receiving the ball.
6. The goalie may NOT hold the ball, while in his/her tube, for more than 5 seconds in the goal box. The goalie may NOT throw the ball beyond the center line.

G. VIOLATIONS

1. Each of the following infractions constitutes a VIOLATION:
 - a. Starting play before the referee blows the whistle
 - b. The goalie throwing the ball across the center line
 - c. Intentionally holding the ball
 - d. Intentionally delaying the game
 - e. Stalling (any player holding the ball for more than 5 seconds with a defender within guarding distance) - When a team is penalized for stalling, the opposing team will be awarded the ball for a free throw at the edge of the goal box of the team being penalized.
 - f. Striking the ball with a clenched fist (goalie exempted)
 - g. Any player going into their opponent's goal box. If a player is forced into the box but is still making an attempt to get out, NO foul will be called.
 - h. Throwing directly at the goal on a free throw (must be first thrown to a teammate)
 - i. Holding onto the wall while in possession of the ball.
 - j. Holding the ball completely underwater.
2. The penalty for violations is a free throw at the spot of the infraction.

H. PERSONAL FOULS

1. Each of the following infractions constitutes a PERSONAL FOUL.
 - a. Unnecessary or intentional bodily contact with an opposing player.
 - b. Holding onto or dumping an opposing player's inner-tube when that opposing player is not in possession of the ball.
 - c. Contacting a player with the ball (tube may be dumped).
 - d. Deliberately splashing water in the face of an opponent.
 - e. Committing any technical foul for the purpose of scoring or preventing a score.
2. A player is disqualified on his/her 4th personal foul.
3. The penalty for a personal foul is a free throw at the spot of the infraction.
4. On the 5th personal foul (and thereafter) by a team in a half, a penalty throw will be

awarded. Team fouls do not carry over to the next period/half exception – 2nd half fouls carry over into overtime.

5. For any flagrant, malicious, or violent fouls, the offending player may be ejected and a penalty shot will be awarded to the offended team.

I. FREE THROWS & PENALTY THROWS

1. On all free throws, the ball must be passed within 5 seconds to a teammate before an attempt for a goal may be made.
2. Penalty shots will be taken by the offended player.
3. The following procedure will be followed for all penalty throws.
 - a. The player taking the throw must line up on the edge of the goal box. All other players must be at least 3 feet away from the thrower.
 - b. The official shall ensure that both the goalie and thrower are ready. The thrower shall raise the ball into the air.
 - c. On the whistle, the thrower must attempt to score a goal. NO hesitation or faking is permitted. Hesitating or faking will result in loss of the penalty shot and the ball awarded to the goalie for a throw.
 - d. Following an unsuccessful attempt, the ball remains live and in play.

Any player who uses foul language, violently protests a call, or curses an official or supervisor, will be removed from the match and will automatically be suspended until he/she meets with the Intramural Sports Graduate Assistant.

4. If at any time a team has 2 players or spectators ejected from the match, the offending team will immediately forfeit the match

J. DEFINITIONS

1. Live ball/dead ball: A live ball is a ball in play, and a dead ball is a ball not in play. The Official's whistle causes a live ball to become a dead ball.
Exceptions: A foul during the act of shooting, or the ball in the air on try for goal, permits the ball to remain live until completion of that play.
2. Possession: A player is in possession once they have obvious control of the ball with their hand(s), or it is in their lap inside the tube.
3. Holding: Use of hands, arms, legs, feet to impede progress of opponent.
4. Pushing: Use of hands, arms, legs, feet against an opponent to gain an advantage.
5. Splashing: Intentional attempt to obstruct vision or progress of opponent.
6. Tackling: Contact with ball carrier's body or inner-tube, in attempt to dislodge ball from player's possession.
7. Ball Punching: The act of dislodging the ball from a player's possession using a fist.
8. Ball Dunking: No player shall deliberately hold the ball under the surface of the water.
9. Throw-in: The act of making a dead ball live. The ball must be passed to another player before attempting to score. A player has 5 seconds to throw the ball into play, and nearest opponent must be 2 yards away until ball is released.

K. PUTTING THE BALL IN PLAY

1. Begin a period: To start a period, the teams line up at opposite ends of the pool, inside their 2-yard line (each at the goal they are defending). The referee sounds the whistle and tosses the ball from the sideline to the center of the pool. Each team advances toward the ball in an attempt to gain possession.

2. **After a goal**: When the officials allow, the ball is put in play with a throw-in by the goalie of the team scored upon.
3. **After a foul**: The ball is put in play with a throw-in by the offended player at the spot of the foul.
4. **After a violation**: The ball is put in play with a throw-in by the player of the offended team nearest the spot of the violation.
5. **In bounds/out of bounds**: A ball striking any object outside the pool lip/sidelines causes the ball to become dead. The ball belongs to the opponent of the team last touching the live ball. The ball will be put in play at the point nearest the out-of-bounds spot by the player closest to that spot. **A possession arrow will be used for dual possession or unclear possession situations.**
6. **After missed shot on goal (no defensive player touch) goes out of bounds**: goalie's throw-in.
7. **After missed shot on goal (touched by defensive player) goes out of bounds**: ball is put in play with throw-in by an offensive team player at the 2-yard line, at the sideline of the pool nearest to where the ball went out of bounds.
8. **When a goalie makes a save**: After the goalie establishes possession, they have 5 seconds to advance (throw only) the ball outside the 2-yard line. The officials will count the 5 seconds using a verbal and visible count, such as hand signals

L. OFFICIAL'S SIGNALS

1. **Single Whistle** – A violation has occurred. Referee will signal by hand who gets the free throw.
2. **Double Whistle** – Personal Foul indicated. Referee will indicate free throw and/or penalty throw.
3. **Multiple Whistles** – **Long Whistle** – GOAL!!!!!!!