

Pioneer Women's Water Polo scoring table instructions¹

These instructions are written for water polo parents who know little or nothing about the game. Consequently, they contain short-cuts and words of advice that might not be appropriate for more seasoned experts. But, those experts can easily recognize these compromises and adjust accordingly.

Contents: Scoring, spotting, game clock, shot clock

Scoring (Recording)

The official document for the game is not what appears on the scoreboard, but rather is a hard copy form that is filled out by the recorder and signed by a referee. The form contains both rosters, and there are several spots on the form to record who scored, the time the score occurred, who was ejected and the time the ejection occurred, when and by whom timeouts were taken, and who won the sprint each quarter. At the end of each quarter, the recorder should confirm that the scoreboard and written record of the goals are the same.

Here are more detailed instructions for being a recorder:

Set up

Enter the team names (for white and dark) and list the cap numbers for each team. Ideally you also want to list each player's name with her cap number, from a list provided by each coach, but sometimes such lists are not available or there is not time for this. At minimum, be sure you have all the cap numbers for each team (the names can be backfilled later if necessary). Sometimes even this is difficult because the first time you see the team may be when they are warming up in the water, and it is easy to miss a cap. In that case, if you can estimate the highest cap number you can just list 1 through that number. That way, you will get them all although some lines will not be used if there is no cap with that number (there is no real problem with that).

List the sprinter cap #'s for each team (at bottom of page) when they get in position to start each quarter.

Game start

Circle the "winning" sprinter (their team gets first control of the ball).

During the game

¹ This note was written by Bill Lovejoy during the 2010 water polo season by merging previous existing water polo instructions with his own experiences at the scorers' table. Being new to the game, he may have introduced some errors into the instructions. Bill takes responsibility for these and encourages would-be editors to contact him for the source file to update and complete as required to keep this document current and accurate.

Keep track of all goals, time-outs, kick-outs and other events on the right hand side list. When one of these occurs:

Enter the time of the event

Enter the team

Enter the cap #

Enter the event: Goal, T/O (time out), Eject, etc.

Reconcile this list with double-entries elsewhere (see below)

Goals: Keeping track of these is all-important

What really matters in a game is who won. So, keeping an accurate record of all goals scored is the most important task you've got.

When a goal is scored, enter the following data on the right-hand-side:

Time, Cap number, Team

Remark = Goal type:

GN = goal natural (6 on 6)

G/X: Man Extra, Goal when up one (6 scores on 5)

G/D: Man Down, Team with 5 scores on team with 6

This should be right, but if you are just starting and confused by it all and you enter all G's that's probably ok (not ideal), as long as you count all the goals. So, focus on that. For example, it is easy to miss a goal if you're entering a kick-out, because goals often come one or two seconds after a kick-out as teams take advantage of the open girl before the other team can adjust their defense. Sometimes goals are waved off for one reason or another. It does not seem like it would be easy to miss a goal, but it happens. Be attentive.

Enter each goal in the right hand list as mentioned, then also enter it into the little table at the bottom on the RHS, and give the girl (by team and cap #) credit in the LHS list under the proper period.

At the end of each period reconcile these entries to be sure they are correct:

Add up the far right column of W's and B's goals

Check that this equals the hash marks in the lower RHS

Add up the goals for that period by each team in the LHS list of cap numbers

Check that this equals the number of goals entered in the RHS list

Check that this equals the scoreboard

It is important to reconcile any differences. Remember, keeping track of the score and who won the game is the most important function at the scorers' table.

Kick-outs

Enter in the RHS list. Enter the time, the girl's cap number, team, and type of kick-out.

Most are 20 second exclusions (E), but there can be more (e.g. brutality = B, penalty = P).

In the LHS tables enter for the cap # the type of kick-out and period, e.g. E1 for eject period 1, E2 for eject period 2, etc.

With 3 ejects the girl must leave the game, so let the referee know if somebody has 2 already (so they can be warned) and definitely let the referee know if any girl gets 3. That girl must leave the game. The spotter should be wielding a red flag to let the referee and teams know a girl must leave the game (see below).

Time-outs:

These can be 30 seconds or a full minute. Enter these in the time-out table at the bottom.

Differentiate 30 sec from full minute time-outs in some way, so the refs can keep track for each team. Each team gets a limited number of time-outs per game, but the rules can differ between college and high school, and year to year, so check with the referees. Currently, each team gets 3 two-minute time outs, and sometimes an additional 30-second time out, during a four-quarter game. There is an additional two minute time out per team during overtime. Again, check with the referees to be sure everybody is on the same page.

Spotting

The spotter is another set of eyes for the scorer. The spotter should observe and call out all goals, ejects and time outs (call out the time and cap number for goals and ejects, and team and whether 30-second or 2-minute time outs). The scorer enters these on the score sheet. A single person can both score and spot, but it is easy to miss things. It is common, for example, for a goal to be scored shortly (seconds) after an ejection, while the scorer has his or her head down entering the ejection. Essentially, the spotter tracks the action and clock and can give that information to the scorer as needed (so, it is useful for the spotter to know how to score). Two sets of eyes are better than one.

It is useful to know the sign language that the referees use to communicate cap numbers. Learn it if you have time.

There are also flag responsibilities for the spotter (white or blue flags mean an ejected player may return to the game, a red flag means the girl has had 3 ejections and must leave the game). Sometimes new parents do not use these, because they have enough to do without worrying about flags. Tell the referees if that is the case. The girls will have to know themselves (or be signaled by the ref) when they can return to the game. However, even if you are not using the flags, you must alert the referee if a girl has 3 ejects because she has to leave the game.

Game Clock

The thumb plunger starts and stops the game (and shot) clock. When setting up the plungers, the game clock plunger wire goes into the same box as the shot clock plunger wire. They should be marked.

Set up:

Make sure the right period is showing, and the right time for the period, all eject clocks are zero. If the team names are not showing on the scoreboard, ask the coach how to enter those. This is not done at the scorers' table.

Game clock:

Start the clock when the first sprinter touches the ball, not when the whistle is blown for the game to start. The game clock is stopped whenever a whistle occurs – whether due to a foul, a kick-out, referee-called turnover (e.g. when a ball under is called), five meter penalty, goal scored, or when the ball goes out of bounds. After a whistle is blown, the game clock should not be restarted until the ball is put in play (e.g., passing the ball or swimming with the ball). Generally, when the referee blows the whistle he or she will also raise his/her arm to signal a clock stop, and then drop it to signal start again. So, theoretically one should be able to run the game clock watching only the referees' arm. However, in reality the two referees will not coincide on either of these two actions so some judgment is required. Usually after a clock stop about 3 seconds should be allowed for the girl to put the ball in play.

The clock should stop (and this should be indicated by the referees) on goals, kick-outs, ball out of bounds, penalties, time outs, or if the referee stops the game for any other reason (e.g. the game or shot clock need adjustment, an injury or other special circumstance).

Keep in mind that when a kick-out occurs (so you stop the clock), the team with possession will often very quickly put the ball in play in which case the game clock should be started immediately.

Stop the clock on goals, and wait until the ref whistles to signal the beginning of play again. The game clock should not be restarted until the ball leaves the hand of the player whose team did not score.

On a jump ball start the clock when a player touches the ball.

You can visually check the score board, the shot clock, or the console to see if the clock is running.

When a team scores, enter "Score +1" for the appropriate team.

Ejects:

For the appropriate team, press the Eject button beneath A for the first eject, and if another girl from the same team is ejected *before* the first has re-entered the game press B, and if a third (very unlikely) press C. Pressing this puts 20 seconds on the penalty clock, which is the column of little numbers (initially zeros) on both sides of the scoreboard. This time counts down as the game clock advances. It will clear automatically in 20 seconds, but you need to clear it manually

on a goal or turnover. To do this, press *both* of the “Clear Eject” buttons simultaneously and then check that the penalty clock shows zero.

Changing periods:

At the end of a period, a sign will pop up on the console saying that pressing any key will advance the clock to the next period and reset clock. Press any key. This usually works ok.

Time-outs:

Theoretically, time-outs can be handled by the game clock console. In practice we tend not to use this feature. Here is why. In theory, upon a time-out one would press the appropriate TO button and the time-out period should begin running. If the game is ready to resume prior to the time-out, pressing the yellow TO button will clear the time-out. These features seem to work ok, but we’ve noticed at times that using the TO feature on the console seems to screw up something else (like, it says it is period 1 when it is period 4, and you can’t edit it). This is mysterious behavior, so we tend not to use the TO features on the console and let the refs use their judgment about how long the teams can be in time-out. Future technical folks can figure this one out, and revise these instructions as necessary.

Recovering from a mistake:

To reduce an incorrect score enter “Score -1”. You can clear scores by entering “Score -1” repeatedly.

Sometimes the ref will ask that more time or less time be put on the game clock. Press the “Edit Game Clock” button and then enter the right time on the number pad. I think you need following zeroes to get it right for the game clock, down to .01 seconds. For example, 6 minutes, which should show 6:00 on the game clock, would be entered as 60000. I do not believe these trailing zeroes are needed for editing the shot clock (see below). Experiment. You can always Edit Game Clock again to recover from a mistake.

If you are entering something and want to stop, or it does not allow you to enter anything, or in other ways is acting strangely, try hitting “Cancel” to start over.

Shot clock

The operator of the shot clock sits to the left of the game clock operator. When a team gains possession of the ball it has 30 seconds to take a shot on goal and if they do not take a shot in that window they lose the ball. A thumb plunger is used to reset the shot clock for a new 30 seconds. The shot clock person cannot stop or start the shot clock, all they can do is reset it. The shot clock is paused and restarted by the game clock person.

Here are the rules. The shot clock should be reset whenever one of the following occurs:

- a) There is a change of possession, regardless of the reason (e.g. interception, steal, turnover called by ref, etc.)
- b) A shot is taken on goal, whether or not the goal is made.
- c) An ejection occurs and a defensive player is ejected (this is almost always the case). On very rare occasions an offensive player is ejected, and I do not believe this should call for a reset, which would give the offensive (and offending) team an advantage it did not earn. But, I am not sure on this rule.
- d) A five meter penalty occurs.
- e) A jump ball.
- f) A 2-meter is called (the ball went out of bounds over the goal line and was last touched by a defensive player).
- g) The horn sounds indicating the 30 seconds has run down and the ball must be turned over to the other team.

Often, after a missed shot, a few seconds transpire before it is evident which team is in possession of the ball. The shot clock should be reset after the rebound is finally controlled by one team.

If a player dumps the ball into a corner, the shot clock is reset (players usually dump the ball because the shot clock was about to expire anyway) but it does not start (this will be controlled by the game clock person) until the ball is put into play or a reasonable time has elapsed for the (new) offensive team to put it into play.

The trickiest thing about operating the shot clock is deciding when a change of possession occurs. Often, there is a certain amount of bobbling of the ball and it is not clear who is in possession. Be patient. Make sure the other team takes clear possession of the ball by swimming with it or passing it before resetting the shot clock. Some shot clock experts advise waiting a tiny bit after you think it should be reset, before actually resetting the shot clock during a game. This is to be sure a reset is the correct course of action. The theory is that being late by a fraction of a second (and uniformly so for both teams) is better than starting too soon and requiring that it be reset, which stops the action and takes time.

Judgment is required for this and game outcomes can depend on it, so it can be anxiety producing. It is easy to make a mistake, and in close games a mistake can be very costly to one of the teams. Sometimes mistakes can be automatically voided (for example, a quick turnover or a shot resets the clock anyway, so who cares what the expired time was on the last possession?). But, if you make a mistake that can affect the outcome of a game inform the referee and the game should be stopped while the right time is set.