



Water Polo

By: Scrawny Johnny



Many people have heard of the sport WATER POLO but don't know what happens when the whistle blows. The sport is often remembered for its SPEEDOS, a type of racing bathing suit most often compared to "TIGHTY WHITIES". The game itself is fast-paced, similar to a combination of soccer and basketball played in a pool so deep players cannot touch the bottom. A bright yellow ball is COATED (wrapped, covered) with a grip-inducing surface so athletes can control it even when everything around them is wet. Every player must swim continuously while changing between OFFENSE and DEFENSE across four QUARTERS. The sport may receive less attention than sports like baseball or football, but on the pool deck there is an ever-abundant CULTURE built around CAMARADERIE, tan lines, and a little bit of crazy.

Let's spell: BOTTOM CULTURE CONSTANT EXHAUSTING

What sport are we discussing in today's lesson? WATER POLO

Many people have heard of water polo but don't know what happens when the _____ blows. WHISTLE

What type of racing bathing suit is most often compared to tighty whities? SPEEDOS

What color did we mention a water polo ball is? YELLOW

Not halves, we said water polo is broken into four _____. QUARTERS

We said water polo is like a combination of two other sports, name one: BASKETBALL, SOCCER

Give me a synonym for coated mentioned in the passage: WRAPPED, COVERED

Name one characteristic we mentioned this culture is built around: CAMARADERIE, TAN LINES, CRAZY

Most water polo pools are chlorine based, what type of water is the ocean made of? SALTWATER

Four quarters also equal one dollar, name the president on the one dollar bill. GEORGE WASHINGTON

Name a land sport that also uses a goal.

Give your honest opinion about individuals that wear speedos.

What would you personally need to practice before you would feel confident entering a water polo game?



Water polo's history reaches back to the mid-1800s. Early versions were less like today's TACTICAL game and more like an EXHIBITION of strength and swimming often found at festivals and county fairs. One influence was water HANDBALL, a six-player game in which goals were marked by flags. Audiences continued to grow, demanding larger and more organized (structured, orderly) games. This eventually led to the creation of CLUBS (team, squad). The sport was originally known as water RUGBY until English influence helped shift the name to water polo. By the late NINETEENTH century, the game had gained more structure and set of rules similar to the ones used today, turning a rough AQUATIC SPECTACLE (display, show) into a formal sport.

Let's spell: EXHIBITION AQUATIC INFLUENCE ORGANIZED

Early versions were less like today's _____ game and more like an exhibition of strength and swimming. TACTICAL

One influence was water-_____, a six-player game with goals marked by flags. HANDBALL

By the late 1800s, as audiences grew, demand for larger and more organized games led to the creation of _____. CLUBS

Before English influence shifted the name to polo, the sport was known as water _____. RUGBY

By the late _____ century, the game had gained more structure and set of rules. NINETEENTH

Name one place the exhibition of strength and skill was shown at. FESTIVALS, COUNTY FAIRS

Give me a synonym for organized mentioned in the passage. STRUCTURED, ORDERLY

Give me a synonym for clubs mentioned in the passage. TEAM, SQUAD

Give me a synonym for spectacle mentioned in the passage. DISPLAY, SHOW

What type of protective equipment is designed specifically for the head? HELMET

Which body system brings oxygen into the body while an athlete is working? RESPIRATORY

If you helped create a water polo club today, what would you name it?

If a sport changed its name several times while developing, what might that tell you about how its identity was still forming?

How would you decide which old rules should be preserved and which should be removed if you were helping formalize a new sport?



Modern rules try to balance the game's INTENSITY with safety, but water polo is still extremely physical. Early versions allowed players to wrestle and hold opponents underwater for POSSESSION, while today's game punishes that behavior with fouls and ejections. An ORDINARY foul stops play and allows a free pass, while a MAJOR foul can remove a player for 20 seconds and create a TEMPORARY (momentary, transitory) player-up advantage. After three major ejections, a player becomes INELIGIBLE to return. The difficult part is that referees stand above the pool, so grabbing, pinching, and holding can happen beneath the surface where they cannot always see it. Fingernail checks are mandatory to prevent scratching, and players learn quickly that choosing to go underwater can expose them to contact that may go UNSEEN by referees. The goalies often receive extra protection from officials and are less likely to receive the physicality from opposing teams, at the slight cost of getting hit in the head with the ball on occasion.

Let's spell: PHYSICAL POSSESSION OCCASION REFEREES

Modern rules try to balance the game's _____ with safety, but water polo is still extremely physical.
INTENSITY

An _____ foul stops play and allows a free pass. ORDINARY

A _____ foul can remove a player for 20 seconds and create a temporary player-up advantage. MAJOR

After three major ejections, a player becomes _____ to return. INELIGIBLE

Players learn quickly that choosing to go underwater can expose them to contact that may go _____ by referees. UNSEEN

What does today's game punish behavior like holding opponents underwater with? FOULS, EJECTIONS

Give me a synonym for temporary mentioned in the passage. MOMENTARY, TRANSITORY

What can occur underwater out of the referee's sight? GRABBING, PINCHING, HOLDING

Name another sport known for sending players to a penalty box. HOCKEY

What sense is most limited when an official cannot see action below the water? VISION / SIGHT

Would you find it easier to play in a warm or cold pool?

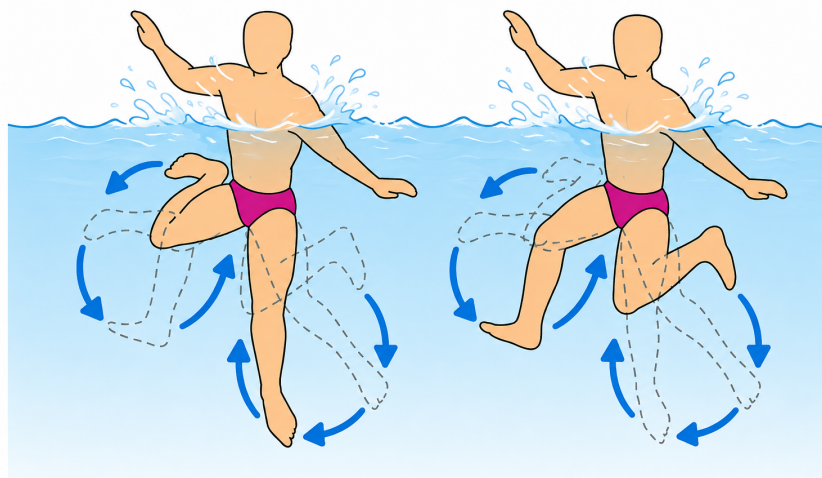
How would the game change if underwater cameras were used to help officials make every call?

Spelling & Recall • Multiple Choice • Prior Knowledge • Open / Creative • Intentional Motor

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What would frustrate you more as a player: being fouled where the referee cannot see it or being called for something you believe you did not do? Why?

Eggbeater Kick



One of the hardest CONCEPTS for a beginning water polo player is learning the EGG BEATER, the leg movement that lets the body TREAD high in the water without touching the bottom (base, ground). The left leg moves clockwise while the right leg moves counter-clockwise, almost like two GEARS working together. Players also practice head-up swimming so they can track teammates, opponents, the ball, and the goal instead of swimming blind. Each team has seven players in the pool: six field players and one goalie, and every field player switches between offense and defense. On offense, the team works against a 30-second shot clock. Field players can only control the ball with one hand at a time. The goalie may use both hands and even a CLENCHED (tightened, squeezed) fist to punch the ball; however, they cannot cross the HALFWAY mark in the pool. Water polo is not just about swimming fast; players have to stay elevated, scan the pool, make decisions, and control the ball while their legs keep working underneath them.

Let's spell: TREAD CONCEPTS TECHNIQUE UNDERNEATH

What is the name of the leg movement that helps players tread water? EGG BEATER

The left leg moves clockwise while the right leg moves counter-clockwise, almost like two _____ working together. GEARS

Every field player switches between playing offense and _____. DEFENSE

The goalie may use both hands and even a _____ fist to punch the ball. CLENCHED

However, the goalie cannot cross the _____ mark in the pool. HALFWAY

Give me a synonym for bottom mentioned in the passage. BASE, GROUND

Name one thing players track with head up swimming. TEAMMATES, OPPONENTS, BALL, GOAL

Give me a synonym for clenched mentioned in the passage. TIGHTENED, SQUEEZED

Which major joint connects the upper leg to the pelvis and plays a large role in circular leg motion? HIP

Which muscle group on the front of the thigh helps extend the knee? QUADS/QUADRICEPS

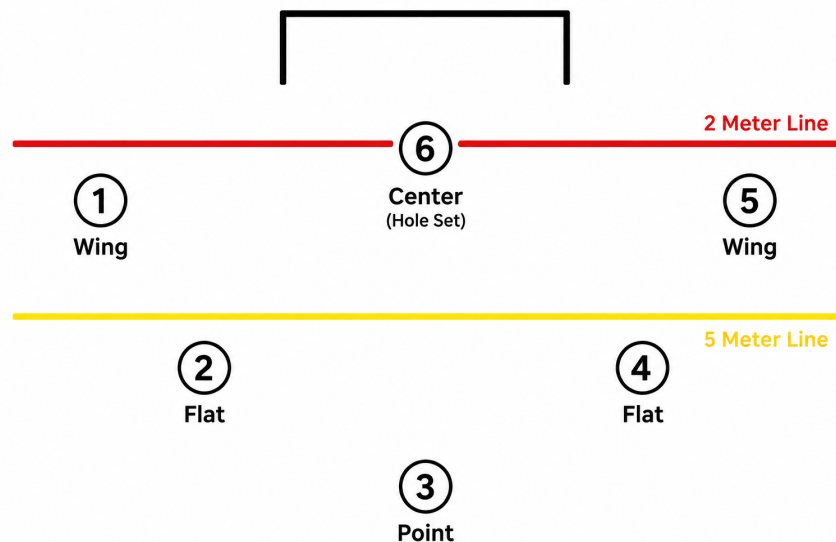
Name another sport performed in the water.

How would head-up swimming change the way you move compared with normal lap swimming?
Would you rather have exceptional swimming speed or exceptional egg-beater endurance in water polo?
Defend your choice.

Intentional Motor Activity:

Egg-Beater: Sit toward the front of a sturdy chair with both feet hovering above the floor. Practice the left leg circling clockwise while the right leg circles counter-clockwise. Start one leg at a time, then combine them slowly and imagine two gears turning together. The goal is not speed; it is feeling the opposite circular patterns become coordinated. Use the original video as a visual model:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lifq9eF848U>



Water polo's TERMINOLOGY (language, lexicon) can take a while to get the hang of, you might recognize some position names from other sports. All players wear caps, occasionally called BONNETS, that protect their ears and display a player's specific number. From the attacking perspective, players 1 and 2 work on the left while 4 and 5 work on the right. The player nearest the goal in the middle is the CENTER, or HOLE SET, and the defender assigned (designated, appointed) to the hole set and in charge of stopping incoming passes is the GUARD. The POINT sits atop the set up, aligned with the hole set. Positions 2 and 4 work as drivers swimming routes toward scoring space. Communication has its own shorthand: "WEAK!" sends the ball to the opposite side, "YOU!" tells a teammate to shoot, and "ENTER!" calls for the ball to be fed into the hole set.

Let's spell: RECOGNIZE COMMUNICATION DRIVERS SHORTHAND

Water polo's _____ can take a while to get the hang of. TERMINOLOGY

You might recognize some of water polo's _____ names from other sports. POSITION

Players also wear caps, occasionally called _____. BONNETS

The player nearest the goal in the middle is the _____, or hole set. CENTER

The defender assigned to the hole set and in charge of stopping incoming passes is the _____. GUARD

Give me a synonym for terminology mentioned in the passage. LANGUAGE, LEXICON

Give me a synonym for assigned mentioned in the passage. DESIGNATED, APPOINTED

Give me one of the shorthand communications mentioned. WEAK, YOU, ENTER

What is the most popular and most watched water sport in the Summer Olympics? SWIMMING

What organ pumps blood throughout the body during intense exercise? HEART

Would you rather play center, guard, point, wing, or driver based on the responsibilities described?

How would short calls like “WEAK,” “YOU,” and “ENTER” help when players are tired, splashing, and surrounded by noise?

If you could invent one new one-word call for a water polo team, what would it mean and when would you use it?



One of the most IMMERSIVE (absorbing, captivating) parts of water polo is that the game does not wait for you to feel ready. Your legs can be burning, your breathing can be heavy, and somebody can still throw you the ball expecting you to make the right DECISION immediately. That is where CONDITIONING becomes more than simply being in good shape; it gives a player enough control to keep thinking when FATIGUE (weariness, tiredness) starts interfering with everything else. If water polo has never been on your sports radar, check out a local college and see when they play, or catch a match during the Summer OLYMPICS. Now that you know a little more about what is happening above and below the surface, you might be surprised by how much ENTERTAINMENT (amusement, enjoyment) can come from watching a game that once looked like heads in bonnets swimming up and down a pool.

Let's spell: RADAR SURFACE HAPPENING ENTERTAINMENT

One of the most _____ parts of water polo is that the game does not wait for you to feel ready.

IMMERSIVE

In water polo, somebody might throw you the ball expecting you to make the right _____ immediately.

DECISION

_____ becomes more than simply being in good shape; it gives a player control. CONDITIONING

If water polo has never been on your sports radar, check out a college or catch a match during the Summer _____. OLYMPICS

Give me a synonym for immersive mentioned in the passage. ABSORBING, CAPTIVATING

Spelling & Recall • Multiple Choice • Prior Knowledge • Open / Creative • Intentional Motor

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Give me a synonym for fatigue mentioned in the passage. WEARINESS, TIREDNESS

Give me a synonym for entertainment mentioned in the passage. AMUSEMENT, ENJOYMENT

What word describes an athlete's ability to perform physical activity for an extended period? STAMINA

What gas does the body use during aerobic exercise to help produce energy? OXYGEN

What part of water polo do you think would be easiest for a first-time spectator to underestimate?

Would you rather watch water polo from the pool deck or through an underwater camera? What would you be looking for?

If you watched a water polo game now, what do you think you would notice that you probably would have missed before this lesson?

After learning what is actually happening in the pool, does water polo sound like something you would watch if you had the chance? Why or why not?

SOURCES

<https://www.swimming.org/waterpolo/introduction-to-water-polo/>
<https://www.rulesofsport.com/sports/water-polo.html>