



FÉDÉRATION
INTERNATIONALE
DE NATATION



WATER POLO

team spirit and strategy

ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT WATER POLO,
ITS ORIGINS, EVENTS ETC.

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WHAT IS FINA?

**FINA IS THE WORLD GOVERNING
BODY FOR AQUATICS.**

FINA COMPRISES NOW
209 NATIONAL MEMBER
FEDERATIONS IN THE
FIVE CONTINENTS.



FOUNDED IN LONDON
JULY 19, 1908



DURING THE OLYMPIC GAMES IN LONDON (GBR).

8 NATIONAL FEDERATIONS
WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR ITS FORMATION:
Belgium | Denmark | Finland | France
Germany | Great Britain | Hungary | Sweden

WATER IS OUR WORLD

AQUATICS MEANS

SWIMMING, OPEN WATER SWIMMING,
DIVING, HIGH DIVING, WATER POLO,
ARTISTIC SWIMMING AND MASTERS.

THERE ARE A COUNTLESS VARIETY OF VALUES
AND PRINCIPLES ASSOCIATED WITH
EACH OF OUR DISCIPLINES:



SWIMMING

STRENGTH AND SPEED



OPEN WATER SWIMMING

CHALLENGE AND PERSEVERANCE



DIVING

BALANCE AND AGILITY



HIGH DIVING

COURAGE AND PERFECTION



WATER POLO

TEAM SPIRIT AND MENTAL TOUGHNESS



ARTISTIC SWIMMING

FLEXIBILITY AND GRACE



DESCRIPTION

WATER POLO IS A COMPETITIVE TEAM SPORT PLAYED IN THE WATER BETWEEN TWO TEAMS.

THE GAME CONSISTS OF FOUR QUARTERS IN WHICH THE TWO TEAMS ATTEMPT TO SCORE GOALS BY THROWING THE BALL INTO THE OPPOSING TEAM'S GOAL.

THE TEAM WITH THE MOST GOALS AT THE END OF THE GAME WINS THE MATCH. EACH TEAM IS MADE UP OF SIX FIELD PLAYERS AND ONE GOALKEEPER. EXCEPT FOR THE GOALKEEPER, PLAYERS PARTICIPATE IN BOTH OFFENSIVE AND DEFENSIVE ROLES.

DESCRIPTION

SIX RESERVES ARE ON THE SIDE-LINE WAITING TO TAKE PART IN THE GAME WHENEVER THEY ARE SUBSTITUTED. UNLIMITED SUBSTITUTIONS ARE ALLOWED.

IN WATER POLO THERE IS AN ADDED DIMENSION - THE EXTRA PLAYER. THIS IS WHEN ONE OR MORE PLAYERS FROM A TEAM ARE EJECTED FROM THE POOL FOR 20 SECONDS. THIS IS KNOWN AS MAN-UP, EXTRA PLAYER PLAY OR SIX-ON-FIVE PLAY.

TEAMS CAN ONLY RETAIN THE BALL FOR UP TO 30 OR 20 SECONDS WITHOUT SHOOTING AT GOAL.

WATER POLO IS TYPICALLY PLAYED IN AN ALL-DEEP POOL MEANING THAT PLAYERS CANNOT TOUCH THE BOTTOM. WATER POLO IS ONE OF THE MOST PHYSICALLY DEMANDING SPORTS OF ALL.

WATER POLO REQUIRES ULTIMATE SWIMMING AND SHOOTING SKILLS, OUTSTANDING STAMINA AS WELL AS HIGHLY DEVELOPED ORIENTATION ABILITIES SINCE THE PLAYERS' HEADS, UNLIKE IN OTHER TEAM SPORTS, ARE JUST ABOVE THE PLAYING SURFACE. POSITIONING, TEAMWORK AND TACTICAL DISCIPLINE AS WELL AS SMART AND SURPRISING MOVES ARE ALL ESSENTIAL PARTS OF THE GAME.



A BIT OF HISTORY

1870

The first set of rules for **"football in the water"** was drafted by the Metropolitan Swimming Association (from London, GBR) in 1870. In Scotland, initial rules were created in 1877.

1880s

"Water Polo" designation became familiar in the mid-1880s.

Initially formed by nine field players, the composition of the teams went progressively to eight (in 1885) and seven from 1886 to present.

1890

First official match between England and Scotland: July 28, 1890.

Quick diffusion of the game outside the British islands: United States, Germany, Austria, Hungary, France and Belgium.

1900

water polo is the oldest team sport in the Olympic programme, first played at the Paris Games.

1908

Great Britain was the initial powerhouse of the game, with Olympic victories in 1908, 1912 and 1920.

In the latter, 12 nations competed in the Olympic tournament, proving the internationalisation of the game.



A BIT OF HISTORY

1932

Hungary starts its global dominance at the 1928 Olympics (Silver) and **Gold** in 1932.

Other nations such as Yugoslavia (and presently Serbia, Croatia and Montenegro), Soviet Union (and nowadays Russia), Italy, and Spain became world powers in the men's game.



1973

Water Polo (only men) is part of the FINA World Championships' programme since its inception, in 1973.

1986

The women's tournament was included in the **FINA showcase at the 1986 FINA World Championships** edition in Madrid (ESP).



2000

Women's Olympic debut in Sydney 2000.

Australia, USA, and China are among the teams dominating the women's competition.



2020

Presently, **16 teams are contesting** both the men's and women's **tournaments at the FINA World Championships.**

At Olympic level, 12 men's squads and 10 women's national teams will qualify for the **2020 Games in Tokyo (JPN).**



POSITIONS

THESE POSITIONS USUALLY CONSIST OF A CENTER FORWARD, A CENTER BACK, THE TWO WING PLAYERS AND THE TWO DRIVERS.

PLAYERS WHO ARE SKILLED IN ALL POSITIONS OF OFFENSE OR DEFENSE ARE CALLED UTILITY PLAYERS. UTILITY PLAYERS TEND TO COME OFF OF THE BENCH, THOUGH THIS IS NOT ABSOLUTE.

CERTAIN BODY TYPES ARE MORE SUITED FOR PARTICULAR POSITIONS, AND LEFT-HANDED PLAYERS ARE ESPECIALLY COVETED ON THE RIGHT-HAND SIDE OF THE FIELD, ALLOWING TEAMS TO LAUNCH TWO-SIDED ATTACKS

UNLIKE MOST COMMON TEAM SPORTS, THERE IS LITTLE POSITIONAL PLAY; FIELD PLAYERS WILL OFTEN FILL SEVERAL POSITIONS THROUGHOUT THE GAME AS SITUATIONS DEMAND.



OFFENSE

THE OFFENSIVE POSITIONS INCLUDE: ONE CENTER FORWARD, TWO WINGS, TWO DRIVERS AND ONE "POINT" POSITIONED FARTHEST FROM THE GOAL.

THE WINGS, DRIVERS AND POINT ARE OFTEN CALLED THE PERIMETER PLAYERS; WHILE THE HOLE-SET DIRECTS PLAY.

The center sets up in front of the opposing team's goalie and scores the most individually.

The center's position nearest to the goal allows explosive shots from close-range.



DEFENSE

DEFENSIVE POSITIONS ARE OFTEN THE SAME, BUT JUST SWITCHED FROM OFFENCE TO DEFENSE.

Defense can be played man-to-man or woman-to-woman or in zones, such as 2-4 (four defenders along the goal line). It can also be played as a combination of the two in what is known as an "M drop" defence, in which the point defender moves away ("sloughs off") his man into a zone in order to better defend the centre position. In this defence, the two wing defenders split the area furthest from the goal, allowing them a clearer lane for the counter-attack if their team recovers the ball





GOALKEEPER

THE GOALKEEPER HAS THE MAIN ROLE IN BLOCKING SHOTS AGAINST THE GOAL AS WELL AS GUIDING AND INFORMING THEIR DEFENSE OF IMPOSING THREATS AND GAPS IN THE DEFENSE.

The goalkeeper usually begins the offensive play by passing the ball across the pool to an attacker. It is not unusual for a goalkeeper to make an assisting pass to a goal on a break away.

The goalkeeper is given several privileges above those of the other players, but only within the five-meter area in front of their own goal:

- The ability to punch the ball with a clenched fist,
- The ability to touch the ball with two hands.

In general, a foul that would cause an ejection of a field player might bring on a five-metre shot on the goalkeeper. The goalkeeper also has one limitation that other players do not have: he cannot cross the half-distance line. Also, if a goalkeeper pushes the ball under water, the action will not be punished with a turnover like with field players, but with a penalty shot.

EGGBEATING

FUNDAMENTALLY, THE GAME OF WATER POLO IS PLAYED ABOVE THE SURFACE OF THE WATER, THEREFORE DICTATING THAT A PLAYER KEEPS THEIR HEAD ABOVE WATER AND HAVE BOTH ARMS AVAILABLE FOR PLAYING THE BALL WHENEVER POSSIBLE.

CONSEQUENTLY, A LARGE DEMAND IS PLACED ON THE LEGS FOR ELEVATION, STABILITY AND BUOYANCY.





EGG BEATING

Balance and body control are essential to correct throwing, so therefore treading water using the eggbeater kick is absolutely crucial.

The eggbeating technique is performed by the athlete positioned in a sitting position, with their knees bent at almost 90 degrees with their legs wider than shoulder width.

The legs are rotated towards the body, with the left leg moving clockwise and the right-leg counter-clockwise. This propels the swimmer in an upward direction because it causes the water above the feet to move faster than the water beneath the feet.

Vigorous treading can burn over 600 calories per hour.

TACTICS

TACTICS ARE ABSOLUTELY VITAL FOR A TEAM TO SUCCEED. IN THE FINAL WEEKS OF TRAINING FOR THE OLYMPICS, TEAMS WILL WORK ON THEIR STRATEGY FOR THE FORTHCOMING GAMES.

FIGURING OUT THE TACTICS FOR SIX-ON-FIVE ATTACKING OPPORTUNITIES. THESE SITUATIONS CAN PROVE TO BE A GOOD JUDGE ON TEAMWORK AND WEAKNESSES IN THE TEAM.





TACTICS

TO SET UP THIS MOVE, THE TEAM WILL NEED TO PASS THE BALL QUICKLY BEFORE THE DEFENDING TEAM CAN ORGANISE THEMSELVES.

SPEED IS IMPORTANT TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE GAPS IN THE POOL. INDIVIDUALS WILL GET INTO POSITION QUICKLY, SO THE POST PLAYERS GO TO THE MIDDLE AND THE WIDE PLAYERS GO TO THE PERIMETER.

TEAMS TEND TO GO WIDE, BECAUSE CREATING A ONE-ON-ONE SITUATION DOWN THE MIDDLE ARE NOT AS SUCCESSFUL. PLAYERS NEED TO LOOK FOR SPACE TO GIVE THE PASSER OPPORTUNITIES TO PASS TO A TEAMMATE WITH A GOOD OPPORTUNITY TO SCORE OR SET-UP A SHOOTING OPPORTUNITY.



TACTICS

WHEN THE BALL COMES TO AN ATTACKING PLAYER, THEY MUST READ THE SPACE AROUND THE MIDDLE DEFENDER BECAUSE, THE GOALKEEPER RELIES ON THEM TO MAKE THE BLOCK.

The defence must get themselves back into position as soon as possible, so they can stop any opportunity in its tracks. It is absolutely critical that all the players involved in the 5-man defence are working together and know what their responsibility is when the ball is at each position. Successful 5-man defence is the ultimate in zone defence.

Defenders need to be mobile, so they can make the attacking players work harder. The key factor in stopping a shot is to close off as much of the attacker's angle at goal as possible. The defence also need to read where the likely shots will come from, so they can close down the space.

A SIGN OF A GOOD TEAM IS ONE THAT CAN MASTER BOTH SIDES OF THE SIX-ON-FIVE, BY PREVENTING THEIR OPPONENTS FROM SCORING, WHILE CAPITALISING ON THEIR OWN ATTACKING PLAY.



DID YOU KNOW ?

ALTHOUGH PLAYING TIME IS ONLY 32 MINUTES, A GAME USUALLY TAKES A LITTLE OVER ONE HOUR TO COMPLETE.

THERE ARE TWO-MINUTE BREAKS AFTER THE 1ST AND 3RD PERIOD, AND 3 MIN BREAK AFTER THE 2ND PERIOD.



MANUEL ESTIARTE (ESP)

Playing at six editions of the Olympics, the Spanish magician set a record hard to match. Debuting as a 15-year old prodigy at the 1977 Europeans, EstiarTE has become one of the most prolific goal-scorers in history.

He was the top scorer of the tournament in five of his six Olympic appearances (1980-2000), ironically, the only edition he didn't achieve that feat gifted him what he had been chasing for so long: the Olympic title in Atlanta 1996.

Two years later he added the world title in Perth to secure a golden finish to his already illustrious career which was truly exceptional as slim, average-heighted player outsmarted the muscular giants for more than two decades.



FILIP FILIPOVIC (SRB)

In a world where talented left-handed players are considered a gift, Filip Filipovic has become his respective team's crown jewel.

The Serbian giant can not only score loads of goals but he usually steps up in the most crucial moments at major tournaments to net decisive goals in the most important games.

That ability, besides his brilliant skills, earned him a series of MVP awards and Player of the Year distinctions – and of course Olympic gold in 2016 (after two bronzes), world titles in 2009 and 2015 and six straight triumphs at the European Championships.

TEAM HUNGARY (2000-2004-2008)

The most successful nation of water polo claimed 9 Olympic titles till date and has a glorious past to look back on starting in the mid-20s, but no other team has made such an impact in this sport as the one shining in the first decade of the new millennium.

The Hungarians achieved an unprecedented but rather magical triple by winning three straight Olympic titles in Sydney, Athens and Beijing and finished on the podium in 21 major meets out of 24 between 1997 and 2008.

They had world-class players in every position but six of them could really make the difference in any given moment – not surprisingly they belong to an elite club of 3-time Olympic champions: Tibor Benedek, Peter Biros, Tamas Kasas, Gergely Kiss, Tamas Molnar and Zoltan Szecsi.





BRIDGETTE GUSTERSON (AUS)

As one description read: *her skills were honed to perfection, her shooting awesome, whether it be at centre forward or from the outside.*

She had the ability to change results and create an atmosphere of fear in her opponents. She was the complete player.

Bridgette, as captain, led the Australians to win the historical first women's Olympic tournament in Sydney 2000, beating the US team in an amazing final, scoring the decisive goal just 1.3sec from time. She was also part of three World Cup-medal winning side (including a gold from 1995) and has a bronze from the 1998 World Championships.



TANIA DI MARIO (ITA)

A player of longevity whose career spanned over seven editions of the World Championships (2001-2015, with a complete medal collection) and was part of four Olympic campaigns of Italy between 2004 and 2016.

Right upon the first one in Athens Tania led the Setterosa's charge and clinched the Olympic title. She had a unique ability to find the best options, her anticipation and vast experience made her the real brain of any team she played for.

She enjoyed enormous success on club level as well and ended her two-decade long career on a high, with an Olympic silver in Rio.

TEAM USA

Rarely one team has ever dominated the sport as the US women's water polo team since the Olympic Games in 1912. After several tries, the US team managed to conquer the highest heights in London and with the exception of the following year, devoted to transition, they stayed on top ever since.

Their quarter-final loss at the 2013 Worlds in Barcelona (to eventual champion Spain) was the last one till date in the knock-out phases of any major tournaments.

Beginning in 2014, they won each and every title on offer, three straight wins at the World Championships, six consecutive World League victories, back-to-back golds in the World Cup, another Olympic triumph in Rio. As of 2019, the time of their last World Championships victory, they enjoyed a 53-game winning streak solely at FINA Events.









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