

# CANOE POLO

## SIMPLIFIED PLAYING RULES

### 2017

This brochure is intended for the novice player as a quick guide to the rules of play for canoe polo. For detailed rules refer to the ICF web site [www.canoeicf.com](http://www.canoeicf.com).

Reference: *International Canoe Federation, Canoe Polo Competition Rules, 2017.*



**Australian Canoe Polo**

#### 1. THE GAME

Each team has five players and up to three substitutes. Only five players from each team may be on the playing area at any time during the game. If a team is reduced to only two players at any time during the game, the referee will stop the game and a decision made to either continue or conclude the game. A game comprises two, ten minute halves plus allowances for time-out and a break between halves. The winner of the game is the team that scores the most goals.

To start the game, each team lines up with some part of their kayak sitting on their goal line. Once ready, the referee starts the game by throwing the ball into the centre of the playing area. One player from each team, called the charge, attempts to gain possession of the ball to win the opening advantage.

In general play, only those players in possession of the ball, or competing for it, may be tackled, but once in the jostling area, players may be jostled when not competing for the ball. The goalkeeper must not be tackled or jostled, and must not be prevented from taking up a position under the goal.

#### 2. START/RESTART OF PLAY

The start or restart of play is signalled to all players by either the referee's whistle or a player elevating the ball, depending on the reason for the start or restart. Commencing play before the whistle is blown, or the ball is elevated, will result in a recall of the ball. An exception is the restart of play with a referee's ball when the ball hitting the water signals the restart of play. Starting or restarting play may be initiated by:

##### Referee's whistle

Apart from the general control of the game, the referee's whistle is used to start or restart play at specific times in the game. The whistle is used to start play at the following times:

- start of the game, and start of the second half of the game
- restart of play after a goal has been scored
- restart of play after time-out
- indicating that a 6m penalty shot can be taken.

##### Elevated ball

When taking a free throw, or a free shot, a player must signal the recommencement of play by holding the ball stationary, for a moment, above the shoulder. The player's kayak must be stationary and the ball must travel one metre from the point of release before it is considered to be in play. An elevated ball is used to restart play for the following:

- after a shot has been awarded
- after a throw has been awarded.

There is no requirement for a referee to also blow the whistle because the elevated ball alerts other players to the start of play.

#### 3. RESTART AFTER GOAL

After a goal is scored, the team that scored must return to their own half within approximately 10–15 seconds. Any deliberate delay incurs a team warning for unsporting behavior. Play may restart when at least two players of the defending team are back in their half. No player of the defending team may join play until their body has crossed the centerline back to their half.

The player restarting play must position their body somewhere along the centre line of the playing area. The ball held up to show the referee that the player is ready. The rest of the team may not cross the centre line until the whistle is sounded to restart.

#### 4. SHOT CLOCK

A shot clock is used in world championships, but may be used for any other competition. The following rules apply:

- a team must attempt a shot at goal within sixty seconds of gaining possession or control of the ball.
- for a goal to be scored, the shot at goal must have been taken before the start of the shot clock expiry signal.

#### 5. SUBSTITUTION

During the game, substitutes must sit behind the goal line but not within 4m of either side of the centre of the goal. Substitutes must not sit behind the goal. Exit and entry of players for substitution must be at the team's own goal line and may occur at any time. A player leaving the playing area must have themselves, kayak and all equipment entirely across the goal line before substitution. Capsized players not leaving the playing area at their own goal line may not be substituted until the next break in play.

#### 6. END OF GAME

At the completion of play, the team with the highest score wins. A draw is awarded if scores are equal. If the result is a draw but a clear winner is required, overtime applies.

Overtime consists of consecutive periods of five minutes each. The team scoring the first goal becomes the winner. A three minute break is required before overtime commences, there is one minute between periods, and teams change ends

#### 7. THE REFEREE

Two referees control the game, one on each side of the playing area. The control referee works the side of the playing area

where the officials' table is located. This referee is the more senior referee and responsible for the game. A second referee works the opposite side of the field.

The referees work together to control the game and call the play as they see it. A whistle is used to alert players and communications are made with hand signals. Infringement penalties are usually a free throw or free shot but for more serious infringement a player may be warned, asked to leave the field for two minutes, or prevented from completing the game. As an impartial person, calling the play in accordance with the game's rules to benefit all, the referee deserves attention and respect. There is little to gain by arguing or disputing a decision, but much to be gained by accepting the decision and quickly refocusing so that time and opportunities are not lost.

## 8. REFEREE HAND SIGNALS

Hand signals are used by referees to control the game by notifying players of infringements and of the appropriate penalty. The attached sketches illustrate these and the following comments provide a general interpretation.

### 1. Start/infringement (free throw/free shot applies)

At the start of a game, and at the start of the second half, one player (the charge) from each team attempts to gain possession of the ball at the centre line throw. Physical assistance from other players is not allowed. Other players may go out with the charge, but must not be within a three metre radius of the charge. Infringement incurs a free throw.

A team is penalised if it causes unnecessary delay to starting the game. A free shot and a team warning (green card) applies.

### 2. Completion of half/full time

This signal is used to show the completion of time at the end of each half. If a goal penalty shot was awarded before completion of time, then the goal penalty shot must be taken before the half is finished.

### 3. Goal

The signal identifies the scoring of a goal. It is followed with a hand signal to the table officials, showing the number of the player who scored. A goal is only scored when the whole ball passes through the front vertical plane of the goal frame. If the goal frame has moved, the ball must still pass through front plane, but in its new position, not where it should be.

### 4. Disallowed goal

This signal cancels a previously called goal, or clarifies that a goal was not scored.

## 5. Sideline throw/corner (free throw applies)

The ball is considered to be out of play when it touches, or passes over a sideline, or touches an overhead obstacle. The ball may float onto the sideline, be pushed by a boat or paddle, or it may be carried over by a player.

How ever it gets there, a free throw is awarded against the last boat, paddle, or person to touch the ball. The free throw is taken from where the ball goes out of play and may be taken in any direction.

A corner is called when the ball passes over the goal line and was last touched by a boat, paddle, or person defending that goal. The ball may be deflected from a paddle, bounce off a defender's boat, or be purposely pushed out.

Note that for both the sideline throw and the corner, a free throw is awarded. That is, a shot at goal cannot be made from either of these penalties. If a goal is scored directly from a free throw, the goal will not be allowed, and a goal line throw will be awarded to the defending team.

## 6. Goal line throw (free throw applies)

A goal line throw is awarded to the defence when the ball is thrown over the goal line by the offence or an offender was the last to touch the ball as it went over the goal line. A ball that rebounds off the goal frame and into the playing area remains in play, but a ball that rebounds off any part of the goal support structure also attracts this penalty. Defence takes the free throw, which may be taken anywhere along the goal line.

## 7. Time-out

Time-out may be called to recognise that play has been stopped unreasonably and should not compromise playing time. Typically, time-out will be called when retrieving an out of play ball, directing players, illegal substitution, or any other event that stops play. Play is restarted by allowing the team that had possession of the ball when timeout was called, a free throw. Time-out may be called at any time.

## 8. Referee's ball

A referee's ball is called when it is unclear which team has possession, or where the referee wishes to restart the game after an interruption. When two or more players have their hands firmly around the ball and it is held for more than five seconds, a referee's ball will be called. However, should either of these players, use the boat or other person for support, illegal holding will be awarded.

To restart the game, the referee asks a player from each team to position their boats facing a sideline and sitting one metre apart. Their paddles should lie on the water beside them

and their hands should be resting on the spray deck. Players position on the side of their defending goal. If a referee's ball is called within the jostle area, it is taken at the nearest 6m line. The referee throws the ball between the two players and the player winning the ball has the advantage of returning it to play.

## 9. Obstruction (free shot applies)

Obstruction is called when a player actively impedes the progress of another player when neither is within three metres of the ball. However, obstruction does not occur when both players are competing for the ball; when the opposing player has the ball; when the opposing player is within three metres of the ball and is the nearest player to the ball; or when both players are jostling within the six metre area.

The same penalty applies to an illegal jostle. An illegal jostle occurs when a player attempts to hold a stationary position but is moved more than fifty centimetres by the sustained contact of an opponent's kayak.

## 10. Illegal kayak tackle (free shot applies)

An illegal kayak tackle occurs when any part of the tackling kayak contacts the body of the person being tackled and/or endangers the tackled player. A tackle that contacts the spray deck is considered illegal if the attacker continues to paddle into the spray deck or if the player continues tackling over the spray deck. A kayak tackle that strikes the side of another kayak at 80–100° with force is an illegal tackle. Tackling an opponent who is not within three metres of the ball, or tackling an opponent who is not competing for the ball, is also illegal.

An illegal kayak tackle will be awarded against a player that makes contact with the goalkeeper. It is not necessary for the goalkeeper's paddle to be vertical to be awarded an illegal tackle, but only that the goalkeeper is attempting to maintain a position within one metre of the goal. An offender pushing a defender onto the goalkeeper will also incur an illegal tackle.

## 11. Five second/possession (free shot applies)

A player having possession of the ball for longer than five seconds will be penalised. To be in possession, the ball may be in the player's hands, on the water but within arm's reach, or being manoeuvred with the paddle. A player rolling with the ball is considered to be in possession even though the ball travels under water with the player. A ball in the air, but within arm's reach, is not considered to be in possession. The five second count starts once there is possession. This penalty also applies to a player paddling with the ball resting on the spray deck.

An exception to the rule is: if a player does not take a free shot within five seconds, a free shot is awarded to the other

team. If a free throw is not taken within five seconds, a free throw is awarded to the other team.

#### **12. Illegal use of the paddle** (free shot applies)

Illegal use of the paddle includes, striking any part of another player with the paddle, attempting to play the ball with the paddle when an opponent is using their hands, placing the paddle across the bow of an opponent's boat within arm's reach of the opponent, throwing the paddle, attempting to play an opponent's paddle instead of the ball, and placing a paddle within arm's reach of an opponent who has the ball in their hand.

#### **13. Play-on/advantage**

The play-on signal indicates that an advantage has been given or to encourage play where players may be uncertain of the game status. Advantage is given at the referee's discretion. It allows play to continue when the team in possession is benefited by play continuing although an infringement has occurred against them. The whistle is not blown.

The referee can penalise any player who causes an infringement for which advantage is played at the next break in play with a yellow or red card as appropriate.

#### **14. Free throw**

The free throw signal is used in combination with other signals to indicate the award of a free throw, as opposed to a free shot. A free throw may not be directed at goal.

If a goal is scored directly from a free throw, the goal will not be allowed, and a goal line throw will be awarded to the defending team.

Free throws apply to the following infringements:

- start/infringement
- sideline throw/corner
- goal line throw
- five seconds/possession (usually a free shot, but if a free throw is awarded but not taken within five seconds, a free throw is awarded).

#### **15. Free shot**

The free shot signal is used in combination with other signals to indicate a free shot, as opposed to a free throw. A free shot may be directed at the goal.

A free shot applies to the following infringements:

- obstruction
- holding
- illegal kayak tackle
- five second/possession

- illegal use of the paddle
- goal penalty shot.

#### **16. Goal penalty shot** (free shot and time-out applies)

A goal penalty shot is awarded when a player, in the 6m zone, is shooting, passing, or positioning for a near certain goal, but is deliberately or dangerously fouled in an attempt to prevent the goal being scored. A goal penalty may be awarded to a player outside the 6m zone if the goal is undefended and the play was set for a near certain goal.

The goal penalty shot is awarded against the offending player. The player taking the shot sits on the 6m line, directly in front of an undefended goal. All other players must be behind the halfway line. The referee's whistle indicates that the shot can be taken and also the resumption of play.

If completion of play has been called immediately after a goal penalty shot has been awarded, the penalty must be taken before scores are finalised.

#### **17. Showing cards**

Green, yellow, and red cards may be used at any time during a game to penalise a player whose actions may not be adequately addressed by the rules. The awarding of cards is a serious matter and the referee must explain the reasons for awarding the card. Card penalties are recorded by the table official. The following sanctions apply:

**Green card** – a warning. A green card may be awarded for dangerous play, talking back to the referee, or for unsporting behaviour. A third green card (including team warnings) to the same player for any reason, automatically becomes a yellow card. A yellow card is also awarded to a player guilty of the same offence as a current team warning.

**Yellow card** – two minutes penalty. When awarded, the player must leave the playing area for two minutes and cannot be replaced by a substitute. The penalised player cannot resume play until directed to by the referee. A yellow card may be awarded for a deliberate or dangerous foul that prevents the scoring of a near certain goal, for deliberate or dangerous play, repeated and continuous dispute of the referee's decisions, foul or abusive language, or illegal substitution.

A second yellow card to the same player, for any reason, automatically becomes a red card.

**Red card** – rest of game penalty. A red card will be given to a player who has committed a serious offence and is directed to leave the playing area for the duration of the game. The player takes no further part in the game and cannot be replaced by a substitute. Also, a player receiving a red card during a

competition receives a one game suspension and cannot take part in the next game in that competition.

A red card may be awarded where a player disputes a yellow card, or a yellow card has not had the desired effect of causing the player to control their play or attitude, for a personal attack on another player, for repeated and continuous foul or abusive language. A red card will be given where a substitute prevents a goal being scored; in this situation, the captain nominates the player to leave the game.

#### **18. Unsporting behaviour** (green card applies)

Unsporting behaviour covers a variety of actions considered unnecessary and not in the spirit of the sport. Such actions include: an infringement committed during a break in play, hindering a player's attempt at righting themselves after capsizing, interference with an opponent's equipment, using delaying tactics, showing dissent or retaliation, foul or abusive language, bouncing the ball out of play on an opponent's kayak, or any other unsporting behaviour the referee considers detrimental to the game. A green card is awarded.

#### **19. Illegal holding/illegal hand tackle** (free shot applies)

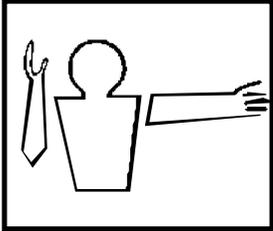
Illegal holding applies to a player gaining support or propulsion by placing their hand, arm, body or paddle on an opponent's kayak, or holding the opposing player or their equipment. It also applies to using playing area equipment such as boundary markers, goal supports or any surrounding object.

An illegal hand tackle occurs when a tackled player does not have possession of the ball; or where there is contact to the body other than by an open hand to the back, upper arm or side; or the tackle endangers a player. A hand tackle that pushes a player onto an approaching kayak, or onto the side of the pool, is considered dangerous. An illegal tackle will also be called for players grabbing vests or manhandling another player.

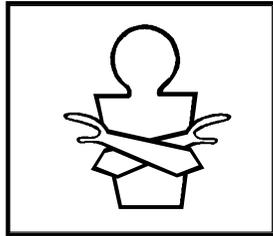
The signal applies to a player using a forceful action with one or both hands that results in significant contact with an opponent's arm or with the ball that is still in the opponent's hand. It also applies to a player fending off an attempted hand or kayak tackle with their hand or forearm, or with the movement of the elbow towards their opponent.

**ICF CANOE POLO – REFEREE HAND SIGNALS**

**1. START/INFRINGEMENT**



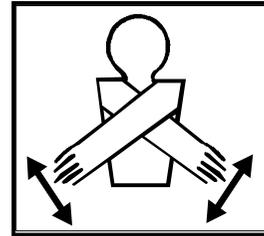
**2. COMPLETION OF HALF/FULL TIME**



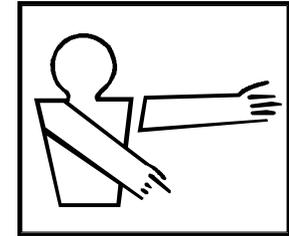
**3. GOAL**



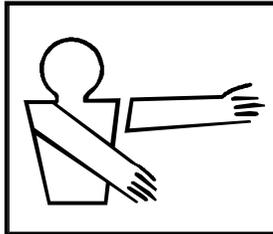
**4. DISALLOWED GOAL**



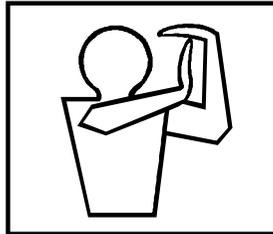
**5. SIDELINE THROW/CORNER**



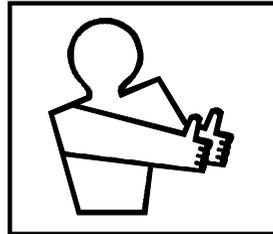
**6. GOAL LINE THROW**



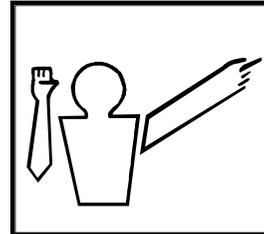
**7. TIME-OUT**



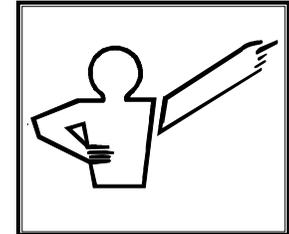
**8. REFEREE'S BALL**



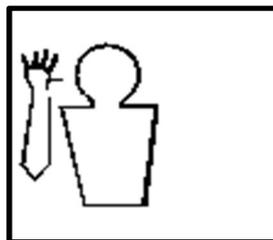
**9. OBSTRUCTION**



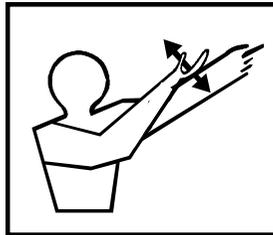
**10. ILLEGAL KAYAK TACKLE**



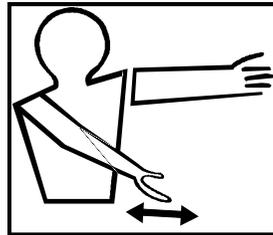
**11. 5 SECONDS/POSSESSION**



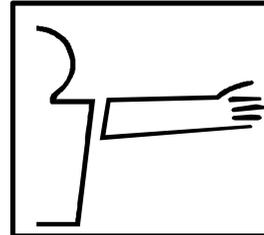
**12. ILLEGAL USE OF PADDLE**



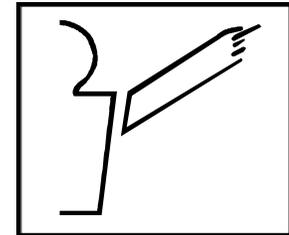
**13. PLAY ON/ADVANTAGE**



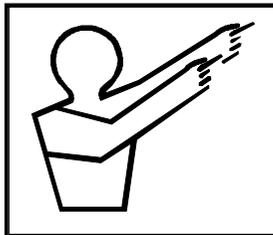
**14. FREE THROW**



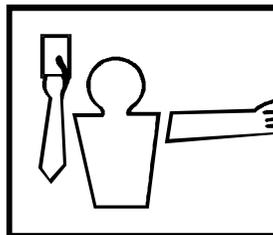
**15. FREE SHOT**



**16. GOAL PENALTY SHOT**



**17. SHOWING CARDS**



**18. UNSPORTING BEHAVIOUR**



**19. ILLEGAL HOLDING/ILLEGAL HAND TACKLE**

