



## **COMPETITION RULES**

**2009 – 2011**

**Last Amended and Approved by Council on 17 Feb 2009**

***(reviewed 07 July 2010)***

*All previous Competition Rules are hereby revoked and cancelled*

### **1. Introduction**

These regulations are intended to supplement the current A.S.A. Statute and the Disciplinary Code and they shall not in any way supersede any rule contained in the said Statute or Disciplinary Code.

### **2. Competitions**

The Council shall organise competitions as stipulated in the Statute. The Council may also organize other competitions. The Council, except where the format is explicitly stipulated by the Statute, shall decide upon the format of any competition.

#### **2.1 Senior Athletes**

Athletes who during the year of competition shall be aged 16 and over shall, for the purposes of these rules, be considered a Senior Athlete. Any such athlete may register with any club under the rules and regulations as stipulated in the current ASA Statute. No athlete shall be eligible to participate in any competition organised by the ASA, or under the auspices of the ASA, if the same athlete has not submitted the appropriate registration form with attached required documentation according to rules and regulations currently in force. Double registrations are not permitted.

#### **2.2 Junior Athletes**

Athletes who during the year competition are less than 16 years of age shall, for the purposes of these rules, be considered as a Junior Athlete. Any such athlete may register with any club under the rules and regulations as stipulated in the current ASA Statute. No athlete shall be eligible to participate in any competition organised by the ASA or under the auspices of the ASA if the same athlete has not submitted the appropriate registration form with attached required documentation according to rules and regulations currently in force. (Vide Competition Rules # 5)

Athletes who register as "Juniors" are bound with the club they registered with for a period of one competitive season extended automatically for a further competitive season unless the athlete applies for a release by not later than 15<sup>th</sup> November. The registration period of a Junior Athlete shall not be extended at the end of the year of the competitive season during which the athlete reaches the age of fifteen years. Athletes who reach the age of 16 are automatically released and are free to join any other club as "Senior Athlete".

### **2.3 Required Athletes' List**

By a stipulated date, before the start of the competitive season, clubs are to present to the ASA Secretariat a list of not more than fourteen (14) athletes, which they plan to utilise during the current competitive water polo season. This shall contain the names of registered athletes who are not eligible to participate in any age group Competitions during that same season. Athletes not included in this list have the right to be transferred on loan. The List shall be signed by any two of the Club's officials. Vide also Rule 34(ii)(a)(b) of the ASA Statute.

### **2.4 Loan of Athletes**

An athlete may be transferred on loan for a period not exceeding one competitive season from one club to any other club on the appropriate forms. A loaned athlete must have a valid registration with his original club. The appropriate form must reach the ASA Secretariat before the official competitive match of the competition in which the loaned athlete shall participate. The competitive season an athlete spends on loan shall be considered as part of his original registration period. Rule 36 of the ASA Statute regulates loan of Athletes.

### **2.5 Athletes of Non-Maltese Nationality** *(amended CM3-17.02.09)*

a) All ASA Rules regulating the registration of athletes shall apply for the registration of athletes of non Maltese Nationality with the exception of Rule 34 1 (i)(vi): "Signature of any two of the Club officials of the previous Club (if applicable) authorising the transfer".

b) The following rules shall apply and shall regulate the registration of Athletes of non Maltese Nationality:

i. Registration Forms of non Maltese Athletes are to be submitted to the ASA Office at least four (4) days prior to the start of the first match of the competition in which they will be participating. This rule applies to all categories.

ii. In order to be eligible to participate in the Final Round of the National Water Polo Championships & Knock Out Competition organised by the ASA, athletes must have their registration form submitted to the ASA Office at least four (4) days prior to the start of the final round and must be residing in Malta at least four (4) days before the start of the said Final Round. Non Maltese Athletes, who, for some reason or other, are not residing in Malta for a continuous period of fifteen (15) days during the final round, will be ineligible to participate further in the Final Round and/or the Knock- Out competition. Clubs are to inform the ASA, in writing, whenever any non Maltese athlete, registered with their club, is leaving the Island.

iii. In order to participate in any competition organized by/or under the aegis of the ASA of Malta, Athletes of non Maltese Nationality do not require any form of transfer certificate, (vide rule 2.5 b v.) release or permission, from the Federation they had previously been registered with. However, should the ASA, receive an official communication from the Federation, with whom the athlete had been previously registered with, objecting to

the Athlete's participation with the local club in any competition, the ASA will inform both the Club and Athlete of this objection and that, as a result, the athlete shall no longer be eligible to participate in any ASA Competitions and that he will be considered as an illegal player should the club make use of him as from the date of the said notification.

iv. If the club is retaining the same athlete/s of non Maltese Nationality, it is not necessary for the club to submit a new registration for each competition in that same competitive season.

v. The minimum registration period of Athletes of non Maltese Nationality may be of less than four competitive seasons only if these are registered on the ASA Loan Form. Athletes of non Maltese Nationals are to produce an International Transfer Certificate if their registration period exceeds one competitive season.

vi. Clubs registering Athletes of non Maltese Nationality that were registered with a local club that same or during the previous competitive season, shall be obliged to pay a transfer fee as regulated by the parameters stipulated in the ASA Transfer Tribunal Code.

vii. It is the obligation and duty of the registering club to enquire, seek and obtain the necessary permits as required by the relative Authorities.

## **2.6 Athletes Joining Foreign Clubs**

Maltese Athletes released in order to join a foreign Club may participate at any time in any competition with a local club.

## **3. Laws Governing the Game**

All laws governing the game are to be regulated as per FINA Rules and Regulations unless otherwise specified by local rules and regulations.

## **4. Registration of Athletes**

All Athletes are to be registered on the Association's Registration Forms.

## **5. ASA Identity Cards**

An athlete must be in possession of an ASA Identity Card before he is eligible to participate in an age-group competition. These identity cards are issued when a recent passport-sized photograph together with an original official birth certificate are submitted to the ASA Secretariat four (4) days before the start of the water polo event in which the athlete will be participating. A player without the required card shall not form part of the team's line-up. It is the responsibility of the club's officials to make the necessary arrangement to collect the athletes' Identity Cards from the ASA Office. Cards are to be inspected by the match referee prior to the commencement of any age-group match. A game shall not be played if each team does not present at least seven identity cards.

## **6. Duration of the Game**

The duration of all Senior and Junior matches shall be of four sessions of eight minutes each with two minutes interval between the first and the second and between the third and fourth session, and five minutes interval between the second and third session.

Duration of Sessions for the Minors and Youth Age-Group Water Polo shall be of 4 sessions of 5 minutes each with 2 minutes break between each session.

## **7. Changing of Ends**

Teams will change ends between the second and the third session. Team officials and reserves must sit on the reserves bench behind the goal that their team is defending.

## **8. Deciders / Knock Out Competitions**

In determining the winner of a league competition teams finishing with equal points must play a decider. Such deciders matches shall be played to a finish.

Should the score be level at full time in any game for which a definite result is required (Any Decider and Knock Out competition games) the game will continue with extra time following an interval of FIVE minutes. The extra time will consist of two sessions of THREE minutes each, with an interval of two minutes for the teams to change ends. If at the end of the two periods of extra time the score is equal, there shall be a penalty shoot out to determine the result.

### **8.1 Penalty Shoot Out**

In case of a penalty shoot out the following procedure shall be followed:-

The coaches of the respective teams will be requested to nominate five players and goalkeeper who will participate in the penalty shoot out; the goalkeeper may be changed at any time provided the substitute was listed amongst the team list in the game.

The five players nominated will be required to be listed in order and that order will determine the sequence in which those players will shoot at their opponent's goal, the sequence cannot be changed.

No players excluded from the game are eligible to be listed amongst those players to shoot or substitute as goalkeeper.

If the goalkeeper is excluded during the penalty shoot out, a player from the nominated five players may substitute for the goalkeeper but without the privilege of the goalkeeper. Following the penalty shot, the player may be substituted by any another player or substitute goalkeeper.

## **9. Caps**

Caps worn during all ASA Competitions shall be in conformity with FINA Rules Vide WP 4.

Caps shall be numbered on both sides. The goalkeeper shall wear a Red Cap No 1 and the other caps shall be number 2 to 13. A substitute goalkeeper shall preferably wear a red No 13 cap. A player shall not be allowed to change his cap number during the game except with the permission of the referee and with notification to the match secretariat.

Clubs are being solicited to have an additional set of caps so that the player's cap, lost or torn during the match, could be changed by a cap the same number. As an alternative teams may make use of one unnumbered cap and caps bearing the numbers from 14 onwards.

## **9.1 Caps Colours**

Teams listed in the first column of the fixture list shall be considered to be the home team. The home team shall wear white caps. The clubs, however, may reach agreement over the cap colours before the match starts. The Clubs are to inform the Table Officials of any such agreements.

Water Polo players are not to take off their caps until they have left the pool area and entered the dressing rooms. Clubs may make use only of water polo caps which conform to FINA rules. Clubs may also make use of water polo caps with their club's colours. The club caps must be easily distinguishable from the caps worn by the opponents. Before the start of the match, the referee/s will decide whether the caps are acceptable or not. Clubs who are intending to make use of caps with club colours must also have a set of white / blue caps available.

## **10. Water Polo Balls**

Water Polo Balls for matches played at the National Pool shall be provided by the Association. For the match played in Club pitches the home team shall provide a minimum of 4 water polo balls. The junior size water polo balls shall be used for Minor Age-Group Competitions.

## **11. Team Officials**

Team Officials shall be limited to one Head Coach, one Team Official and one Medical doctor/Physiotherapist and they are to sit on the substitutes' bench. The head coach of the attacking team shall be allowed to move to the 5 meter line at any time. Only the Head Coach or Team Official is allowed to approach the Table during a match. Disciplinary action shall be taken against offenders. All the officials shall wear the same Club's uniform.

At the end of the match, the Coach and the Team Official shall direct the team straight to the dressing rooms and shall not allow any lingering, verbal or physical contact with the opposing team and or supporters. The retiring teams, shall keep to their side of the pool and should not cross over to the other side for any reason whatsoever. Disciplinary action will be taken against offenders.

## **12. Number of Players in Team Line-Ups** *(last Amended AGM 2008)*

Each team shall consist of seven players, one of whom shall be the goalkeeper, and not more than six reserves in the final round of the National Water Polo Championship and K.O. competition, and not more than eight reserves in all the other competitions.

Each team may have a maximum of two players of non Maltese Nationality forming part of the squad in any competitive match organised by or under the aegis of the ASA of Malta.

## **13. Excluded Players**

Players excluded for the rest of the match by the referee, for misconduct or brutality, are to leave the pool precincts and retire directly and immediately to the dressing rooms – no lingering is permitted. The excluded player shall keep to his team's side of the pool and should not cross over to the opponent's side for any reason whatsoever.

Players who may not participate any further in the match because of three personal faults are to remain seated on the substitutes' bench wearing their caps

## **14. Players committing an act of Brutality**

Players committing an act of brutality shall be excluded for the remainder of the game and a penalty throw awarded to the opposing team. The offending player may be substituted when four minutes of actual play have elapsed. The excluded player is to leave the precincts of the pool and may at no time re-enter.

## **15. National Water Polo Championships**

The National Water Polo Championship is played in two phases, The Preliminary Round and The Final Round. All teams applying to participate in the National Championships play each other in the Preliminary Round. The first four placed teams in the Preliminary round will play each other on a further two round league competition to determine the 1<sup>st</sup> Division Champion. All the other teams will play each other on a single round to determine the 2<sup>nd</sup> Division Champion. Teams may apply to participate directly in the 2nd Division.

### **15.1 Determination of Placings in Preliminary Round**

In the classification of the Preliminary Round, if two teams are placed in the 4th position on equal points, the result of the match played against each other will determine the classification. In case this match finished in a draw result, a decider is played to determine the 4th and 5<sup>th</sup> placed. Points gained in the Preliminary round are carried to the final round of this competition.

## **16. Junior, Youth and Minor (Age-Group) Competitions**

Athletes' eligibility

- Juniors – must not be older than nineteen (19) in the year of competition
- – more precisely does not celebrate the 20th birthday in year of competition,
- Youth - must not be older than seventeen (16) in the year of competition,
- – more precisely does not celebrate the 17<sup>th</sup> birthday in year of competition,
- Minors – must not be older then fourteen (14) in the year of competition.
- – more precisely does not celebrate the 15th birthday in year of competition,

The size of the pitch for the Minors competitions shall measure 20 by 25 metres.

The Youth and Minors matches shall be played on a Home and Away basis.  
The Juniors matches shall be played at the National Pool, or at neutral pitches.

## **17. Match Officials, Referees & Table Officials**

1. Only referees appointed by the ASA shall control competition matches organised by or under the auspices of the ASA.
2. It is the responsibility of the ASA to appoint the Table officials ( Match Sec. and Time-Keepers) for matches played at the National Swimming Pool
3. It is the responsibility of the Organising Club to appoint table officials (match secretary and time-keepers) for the match and to provide all the timing equipment required. These officials are to present themselves to the referee before the match starts. Two officials of the Away Team have the right to sit on the secretary's table to act as observers.

At the end of the match, which is being played at the National Swimming Pool the match secretary shall give the original match record to the ASA Secretary or in his absence an ASA Official. At the end of the matches played at various clubs, the match secretary shall give the original match record to the referee. The copies of the match records are always to be handed to the official of the participating teams. It is the duty of the club official to collect a copy of the match card at the end of the match. Failing which, the club will be considered as having received said copy of the match card (vide Disciplinary Commissioner's code Article 8 regarding contestation of any report on the match cards).

### **18. Pitch Rigging**

It is the responsibility of the Organising Club to have the rigging of the pitch, as per FINA standards, set at least 15 minutes prior to the scheduled start of the match.

### **19. Match Inspector**

A match inspector may be appointed to observe the match proceedings. He shall have the right to make reports to the Council about any incidents that may take place.

### **20. Restricted Area and Security**

It is the responsibility of the Organising Club to ensure that only the match officials, team players, two team officials per club and a medical doctor/physiotherapist are present in the restricted area. The Organising Club shall be responsible for all security arrangement during matches and or competitions played on their premises. The Organising Club should make the required security arrangements in good time before the actual date of the event. In pitches where the referees officiate the game on a platform of the same level as that of the supporters, the Organising Club is to ensure that the restricted area should be of at least two metres.

### **21. Presentation of Trophies**

It is the responsibility of the team captain to present himself to receive the Winners or the Second Placed / Runners up trophy, at the end of the final match or at a time when requested by the ASA. (Vide disciplinary code)

It is also the responsibility of the Head coach and Official / Ass. Coach accompanying the team, to ascertain that the Team Captain presents himself for the presentation of the Trophies. (Vid e disciplinary code)

In instances when the Captain of the team is excluded because of misconduct or brutality or because of serious injury, the Head Coach or Asst. Coach / Official, is to appoint one of the players to receive the winners or runners up trophy

### **22. Conceded Walk-overs**

If a team concedes more than 2 walk-overs, that team shall be considered as having withdrawn from the competition in which the walk-overs were conceded. All points derived from matches played against this team shall be cancelled and the classification adjusted accordingly. The team shall be subject to disciplinary actions as per the Disciplinary Code in force.

### **23. Classification Points**

A win earns the winning team two (2) points whilst the losing team earns nil (0) points . A draw earns each participating team 1 point.

### **24. Equality of Points between two teams**

In case of equality of points in a group between two teams the classification shall be established as follows:

- a) Precedence shall be given to the team having won / gained the greatest number of points from the matches played between the two teams in that same competition. (The Preliminary Round and the Final Round are the same competition)
- b) If this is still a tie, precedence shall be given to the team with the largest difference between goals scored for and against
- c) If there is still a tie, the precedence shall be given to the team having scored the higher number of goals.
- d) If there is still a tie, the precedence shall be given to the team having won the largest number of matches.
- e) If there is still a tie, the classification of the teams shall be decided by lot.

#### **24.1 Equality of Points between more than two teams**

- a) Only the points gained in those matches played amongst the teams with equal points shall be decisive.
- b) If there is still a tie the classification shall be established according to the goal difference gained in only those matches played amongst the teams with equal points
- c) If there is still equality the classification shall be established according to the highest number of goals scored in only those matches played amongst the teams with equal points.
- d) If there is still a tie, precedence shall be given to the team having won the largest number of matches.
- e) If there is still equality the classification shall be established according to the goal difference achieved in all matches played in the group.
- f) If there is still equality the classification shall be established according to the highest number of goals scored in all matches of the group.
- g) If there is still equality, the classification of the teams shall be decided by lot.

#### **24.2 National Championships – Preliminary Round & Final Round**

- a) When applying rulings 18.1b, 18.2e & 18.2f to determine classification in the Preliminary Round, the goal difference is calculated on the matches played by the teams that qualify to participate in the same division in the final round.
- b) When applying rulings 18.1b, 18.2e & 18.2f to determine classification in the Final Round

the goal difference is calculated on the matches played by the teams playing in the same division in the final round.

## **25. Referees' Report**

If a Referees' Report is contested and it is upheld, any decisions taken after this occurrence shall not have an effect the result of the match.

## **26. Protests**

Protests on Points of Fact during and / or after a match shall not be upheld as per WP7.1. (*WP 7.1 - All decisions of the referee/s on questions of fact shall be final and their interpretation of the rules shall be obeyed throughout the game*)

Protests on Technical Errors may be made during a match by the Coach or the Assistant Coach or Club Official immediately to the Secretariat or Referee. Protest on Technical Errors lodged at the end of the game are not upheld.

## **26. Interpretation**

Should any controversy exist on the interpretation of any of these rules, the Rules and Regulations contained in the ASA Statute shall supersede.

## **27. Validity of these Competition Rules**

These Competition Rules shall remain in force until cancelled and or amended by the Council prior to the start of the first competition.