

INSTRUCTIONS

This Learning Packet has two parts: (1) text to read and (2) questions to answer.

The text describes a particular sport or physical activity and relates to its history, rules, playing techniques, scoring, notes and news.

The Response Forms (questions and puzzles) check your understanding and appreciation of the sport or physical activity.

INTRODUCTION

Water polo is a rapidly growing sport in the United States and internationally as well. For anyone involved in playing or even being a spectator, it is important to understand the rules of the game.

Teams are composed of about 12 players, depending on league rules. Seven players are in the pool at a time, which includes one goalie and six field players. Each field player plays both offense and defense, and the goalie is not allowed on the other half of the pool. There are many different arrangements of players in front of the goal (which may be attached to the pool deck or free floating on lane lines). The location of the players depends on the play that is being run, similar to basketball or hockey.



HISTORY OF THE GAME

Invented in the late nineteenth century in Great Britain and played in many countries around the world, notably including Hungary, the game involves teams of seven players (plus up to five substitutes), with a ball similar in size to a soccer ball but constructed

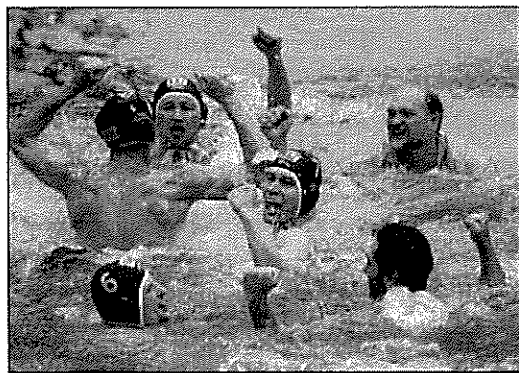
out of waterproof nylon. The object of the game is to throw the ball into the team's goal net at the end of the pool, and prevent the opposition from doing so at the other end of the pool.

Men's water polo was the first Olympic team sport in the 1900 games. Women's water polo was only introduced in the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games after political protests from the Australian women's team. Such protests were rewarded when Australia won the gold medal match against the United States with a "buzzer-beater" last-minute goal.

The annual Varsity Match between Oxford and Cambridge Universities is the longest running water polo competition in the world, having run since 1891.



The most famous water polo match in history is probably the 1956 Summer Olympics semi-final match between Hungary and the Soviet Union. As the athletes left for the games, the 1956 Hungarian revolution happened, and a 200,000 strong Soviet army crushed a small uprising of Hungarian insurgents. Many of the Hungarian athletes vowed never to return home, and felt their only means of fighting back was by victory in the pool. The confrontation was the most bloody and violent water polo game in history, in which the pool reputedly turned red from blood. The Hungarians defeated the Soviets 4-0 before the game was called off in the final minute to prevent angry Hungarians in the crowd reacting to Valentin Prokopov punching Ervin Zador's eye open. The Hungarians continued to win the championship by defeating Yugoslavia 2-1 in the final. Half of the Hungarian Olympic delegation defected after the games.



Water polo world championships are held every year together with the world swimming championship, under the auspices of FINA "Water Polo World League."

Today water polo is gaining popularity in the United States. Though the majority of domestic club teams are based in California it has become more widespread among New England preparatory high schools and Ivy League universities.

Water polo requires upper and lower body strength, hand-eye coordination, speed and

endurance much like volleyball, another popular California sport.

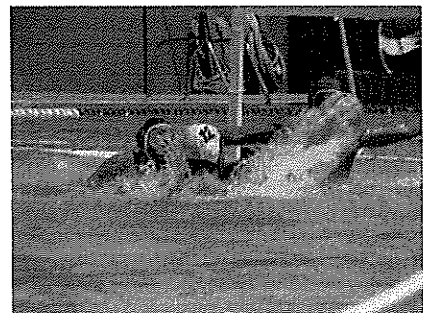
HOW WATER POLO IS PLAYED

One important rule is that the ball can only be handled by one hand at a time. If a player holds the ball (which is yellow with an easy-grip design) with both hands, the referee calls a turnover and the possession of the ball goes to the opposing team. Also, there are important lines on the pool deck which delineate specific regions in which the rules of play are special. There is a mark two meters out from the goalposts on both sides of the pool called the “Two Meter Line.” Players on offense *without* possession of the ball are not allowed in the opposing team’s two meter line, or a turnover is called. Only a player with the ball is permitted within the two meter line. There is also a “Four Meter Line,” which is the location from which penalty shots are taken on the goal.

A penalty shot is given to a player who is fouled within the four meter line while actively attempting to score. A foul constitutes a hit from the defensive player, swimming over the offensive player’s back, or other such shot interference.

Clean defense involves positioning the defender’s body between the offensive player and the goal and focusing on the ball rather than the individual player. A foul called anywhere in the pool outside the four meter line results in the referee blowing a whistle, and a stoppage of the clock while allowing the offensive player a free pass. Five seconds are given in which to complete this pass, and if the defensive player interferes with this, he/she will be ejected from the game for the standard period of two minutes. A designated corner of the pool is selected as the “ejection box” and a player may only re-enter the game upon the signaling by the referee that time is up, or else by a goal scored, whichever comes first.

One player on each team is designated the goalkeeper, and his primary job is to guard the goal by deflecting or catching any shots at goal. The goalkeeper is the only player who can touch the ball with both hands at the same time, and the only player allowed to stand on the bottom (if the pool is shallow enough to allow this). There are six players plus a goalkeeper. Standard offensive positions are: center, wings, drivers and point. Defensive positions are often the same positionally, but just switched from offense to defense. Players who chase the person with the ball are sometimes called “chassers.”

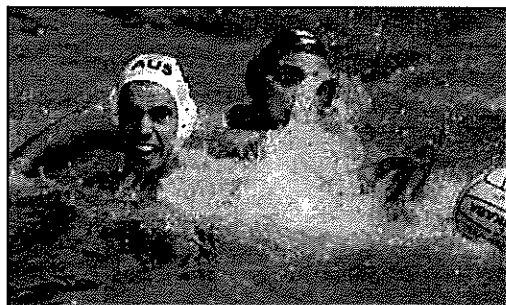


The clock depends on the rules of play and the level of competition. Usually, men play four 7-minute quarters while women play four 6-minute quarters. There is a running shot clock of 35 seconds for each team which resets only if a shot is taken or there is a change in possession. Teams are usually allowed two time outs per game, although this may vary.

In scoring, one point is given for each time the ball is thrown into the goal, and in some leagues there is a two-point line several meters out of the goal. Each quarter begins with a sprint in which the fastest members of each team race toward the ball, which is placed at the halfway point on the water by the referee.

SKILLS & TECHNIQUES

Treading water: The most common form of water treading is referred to in the United States as the “egg-beater,” named because the movement of the legs resembles the motion of an egg beater or mixer. The advantage of the egg-beater is that it allows the player to maintain a constant horizontal position in the pool (as opposed to the scissor kick, which results in the player bobbing up and down.) Also, by kicking faster for a brief period the player can get high out of the water (as high as their waistline) for a block or catch.



Swimming: As water polo is a team water sport, swimming is most commonly a skill which is acquired before playing this sport. It is a key element as it is needed to swim back and forth across the court often. Both goalkeepers wear caps.

Ball handling skills: As all out-field players are only allowed to touch the ball with one hand at a time, they must develop good ball control.

EQUIPMENT, FACILITY & CLOTHING

Uniforms consist of swimsuits for both men and women, as well as a cap on the head with plastic ear protectors and the player’s number on both sides. Away teams wear lighter color caps, while home wears the darker color.

Dimensions of the water polo pool are not fixed and can vary between 20 x 10 and 30 x 20 meters, and are filled with water to a minimum depth of at least 1.8 meters. The goals are three meters wide and one meter high.

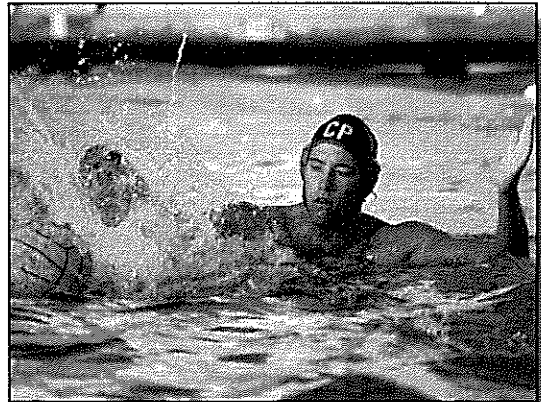
The water polo ball is available in two major sizes. The size 4 ball is designed for women with a circumference of 26.5 inches. The size 5 ball is for men's competition and is 28 inches in circumference.

WATER POLO NEWS & NOTES (Information taken from a variety of sources including ESPN, NCAA, Wikipedia and newspapers)

NCAA

Bolstered by the play of tournament MVP Joel Dennerley, USC won its fourth consecutive championship in 2011 with a 7-4 victory against rival UCLA. Dennerley, the Trojans' senior goalie finished the championship match with 14 saves, while seven different field players scored for USC.

The Trojans end the year 24-3 and become the first school to win four consecutive NCAA men's water polo titles. UCLA, the winners of the Mountain Pacific Sports Federation Tournament, dropped to 24-5. The Bruins were led by a pair of goals from junior Josh Samuels. UCLA had won the conference tournament with a 10-9 in sudden-death victory against USC in the title game to earn the MPSF's automatic berth into the NCAA tournament.



In the championship match, UCLA's Samuels scored first on a five-meter penalty shot with 3:05 left in the opening period, but then the Trojans ran off five consecutive goals — from Michael Rosenthal, Connor Virjee, Nikola Vavic, Stephen Siri and Mace Rapsey — before Samuels was able to score again with 2:29 left in the half. From there, USC controlled the contest with tight defense as Dennerley was able to block several of the Bruins' shot attempts.

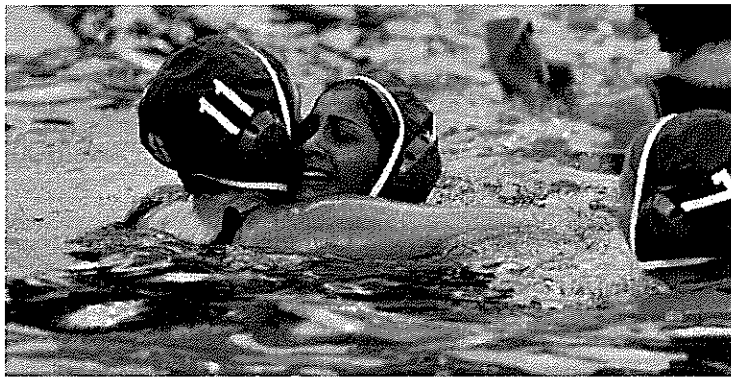
Besides Dennerley's MVP honors, Peter Kurzeka and Vavic were NCAA tournament first-team selections for the Trojans. Samuels and Cullen Hennessy were members of the NCAA tournament first-team for UCLA, Nelson was a first-team selection for Princeton and Graham Saber from UC San Diego rounded out the NCAA tournament first-team.

On the women's side, a tough angle, a one-goal lead, and just over one minute to go in the 2012 NCAA Women's Water Polo Championship stared senior Pallavi Menon in

the face. She had three problems, but her aim wasn't one. Menon's shot across the goal bounced off the far post and into the cage, sealing Stanford's second consecutive NCAA title, and third overall, with a 6-4 victory against USC.

The Cardinal (26-2) added its third women's water polo national championship to its collection, and the 103rd NCAA title overall for the Stanford Athletics. Stanford previously won women's water polo titles in 2002 and 2011.

The victory came two years after the Cardinal had lost the 2010 national title game 10-9 to USC in the very same Aztec Aquaplex pool.



Menon's second goal of the game, with 1:11 to go, put the Trojans on the back heel, forcing them to take a quick shot on the next possession. The Cardinal defense, anchored by tournament MVP Kate Baldoni, who made 15 saves Sunday, held firm to preserve the win.

Baldoni earned the tournament's top honor after making a total of 29 saves and allowing just nine goals in Stanford's wins over Pomona-Pitzer, UC Irvine and USC.

Her saves Sunday continually kept the Cardinal's slim leads from evaporating as the Stanford offense engaged in a physical battle for position on the other end.

Neither team ever led by more than a goal, and USC's only advantage came when the Trojans' Madeline Rosenthal scored at the 5:12 mark of the opening period.

The lead lasted just 33 seconds, as Menon opened the Cardinal's account with a power-play goal. Stanford would strike again on the power play with 2:23 left in the first period as Kiley Neushul struck.

The teams traded goals in the final minute of the frame, with USC's Colleen O'Donnell equalizing with 53 seconds left, but one again a Trojan ejection would benefit Stanford, as Kaitlyn Lo fired used a defender to screen USC goalie Flora Bolonyai before firing

home to the near post.

The defenses took over at this point, as neither school conceded in the second frame, and it was only a moment of bad luck that the scoreless run was broken a minute into the third period. Victoria Kennedy was called for holding the ball with two hands, and USC's Patricia Jancso converted the resulting penalty shot to pull the Trojans even at 3-3.

Once again, though, the Cardinal answered quickly. Kaley Dodson found space in front of the USC goal and windmilled a shot home just 10 seconds later.

This set the stage for a tense fourth period, in which USC's Monica Vavic tied things up once again at the 6:57 mark. Baldoni would step up to keep things knotted up by making a pair of tough saves, including snuffing out a USC 6-on-5.

Dodson would step up again with 4:13 remaining, as Stanford's powerful 6-on-5 unit powered home its fourth goal of the game, setting up Menon's title-sealing shot three minutes later.

2012 Olympics

In the 2012 Olympic games, 12 teams competed in the men's tournament and 8 teams in the women's competition. The U.S. won the women's water polo gold medal match while Croatia won the gold for the men.

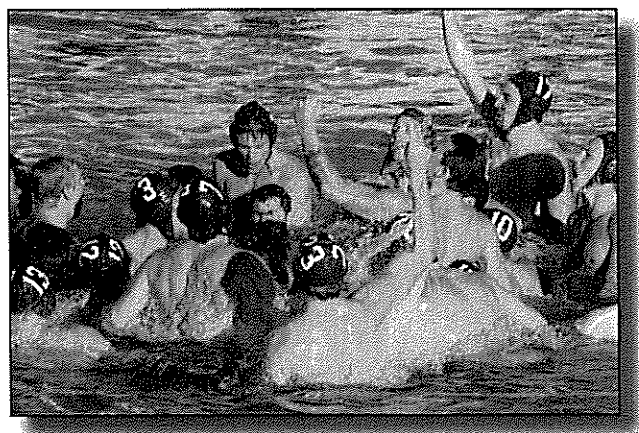
Stay current with information about the sport by visiting these websites:

<http://www.ncaa.com/home/>

<http://www.waterpolo.ca/>

<http://www.h2opolo.com/>

<http://www.usawaterpolo.com/>



STUDENT RESPONSE PACKET #25

WATER POLO

NAME _____

DATE _____

WHAT TO DO

The following questions will help you to have a greater appreciation and understanding of water polo. Write your answers in the spaces below the questions. If there is not enough room, write on the backs of these sheets. Be neat, spell correctly, and write in complete sentences.

1. Describe the typical composition of a water polo team.

2. Where was water polo invented? When was it first played in the Olympics?

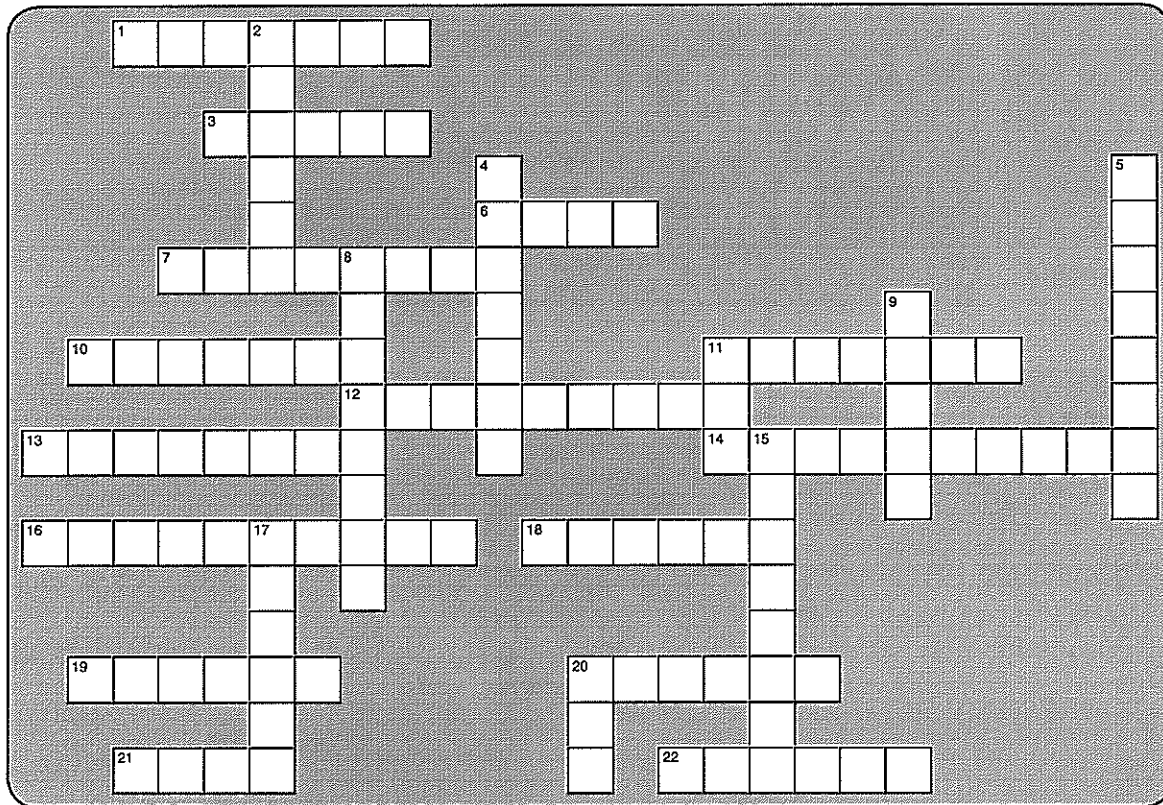
3. What is the longest running water polo match in the world?

4. Describe the most famous water polo match in history.

5. Describe three important water polo skills.
6. Describe where the various water polo position players may move in the water.
7. What happened with most of the Hungarian Olympic delegation after the 1956 Olympics? Why?
8. Name one important rule in water polo.
9. What player is permitted inside the “two meter line?”
10. In some leagues, one can get two points for a goal. How does this happen?

Name: _____ Date: _____

Physical Education 25 Crossword



Across

1. This country was involved in the most famous water polo match
3. You need this to play a game of water polo
6. Players wear caps for identification and to protect these
7. The _____ box is in one corner of the pool
10. One of them watches for fouls
11. Those players who chase the player with the ball are sometimes called this
12. The women's team from this country won Gold in 2000
13. Half of the Hungarian Olympic delegation did this after the 1956 games
14. You must have _____ of the ball to cross the two meter line
16. The state in the US with most of the water polo club teams
18. Each quarter begins with one
19. The goal keeper is the only player permitted to stand on it
20. The water polo ball is similar in size to this ball
21. The ball can be handled by only one at a time
22. Women's water polo was introduced in the Olympics held here

Down

2. This player is not allowed to roam around the whole pool
4. These shots are taken from the four meter line
5. Ability to do this well is important in water polo
8. The "egg beater" is called _____ water
9. The number of players in the water for one team
11. You can tell what team a person is on by the color of this
15. These players can touch the ball with only one hand at a time
17. This university is involved in the longest running water polo competition
20. Women play four _____ minute quarters

Name: _____ Date: _____

Physical Education 25 Word Search



Find these words in the above puzzle. Circle the words.

- | | | |
|------------|--------------|------------|
| Polo | Hungary | California |
| Players | Ball | Volleyball |
| Clock | Sydney | Turnover |
| Offense | Athletes | Goal |
| Defense | Championship | Pool |
| Basketball | FINA | Goalkeeper |
| Hockey | | Swimming |