

## FLNS Mini Water Polo Festival – Rules & Regulations

### Season 2026

#### 1. Purpose

Mini water polo is designed to:

- Introduce children to water polo in a fun, safe, and inclusive environment
- Focus on skill development rather than competition
- Encourage teamwork, confidence, and enjoyment

Festivals are **non-competitive**, with no official rankings or winners.

#### 2. Age Groups

- In the 2025/26 edition of the FLNS mini polo festival, the following are eligible to participate: the U10/U12/U16 teams: boys, girls, or mixed teams.
- **U10 (2016 and younger)**
- **U12 (2014 and younger)**
- **U16 (2010 and younger)**

#### 3. Pool Size & Equipment

##### Pool Dimensions

- The field of play should be 20 m x 15 m (maximum) and 15 m x 10 m (minimum).
- For the U10 age group, the field of play should be 15m x 10m.

##### Goals

- The goal dimensions: 2.15/50 m x 0.75/0.8 m.
- U10 small floating goal posts.

##### Ball

- Water polo balls size 3 for the U10/ U12 age group categories.
- Water polo balls size 4 for the U16 age group category.

##### Depth

- **Shallow/deep** but must allow players to stand safely.
- Deep-water versions are allowed for advanced groups.

#### 4. Team Composition

- **5 vs 5**, the team is not required to have a goalkeeper. The first one to stand in the goal becomes the alternative goalkeeper.
- **Substitutions unlimited**, rolling substitutions encouraged.
- **If a club cannot field a team of 5 players, players can join other participating teams.**

#### 5. Game Duration

- **2 × 6 minutes** continuous play with **3 minutes break** between the periods for the U10/ U12 age group categories.
- **1 × 12 minute** continuous play for U16 age group category.
- No timeouts
- Clock runs continuously

#### 6. Playing Rules

##### General Rules

- No aggressive contact.
- No pushing off other players.
- No holding, sinking, or pulling back opponents.
- The emphasis is on *playing the ball*, not the player.

##### Possession

- No possession time, the clock runs continuously.
- The clock only stops in case of an injury.

##### Restart After Goal

- After a goal has been scored, the players shall take up positions on their respective halves. The referee shall restart a game by blowing a whistle.

##### Advancing the Ball

- Players may:
  - swim with a ball in front
  - pass anywhere
  - shoot only from **inside the attacking half**

##### Handling the Ball



- One-hand rule is encouraged.
- Younger age groups may allow two-hand catches for development.

### Alternative Goalkeeper

- Can use two hands
- Rotated so all players try the position

## 7. Fouls

### Ordinary Fouls

Referee uses simple explanations:

- “Don’t hold!”
- “Swim!”
- “No pushing!”

Minor fouls result in a free pass.

### Major Fouls / Exclusions

- Deliberate roughness
- Dangerous play
- An excluded player can immediately return to the field of play (except for brutality, violent game, or disrespect) after first entering the ejection area placed under their own bench.

## 8. Safety Rules

- Caps must be worn and tied securely.
- No jewelry, hard hair clips, or sharp objects.
- All players must be comfortable swimming the festival’s depth.
- Nails are cut short.
- A qualified lifeguard must be present.

## 9. Officials & Coaching

- Referees focus on **instruction over punishment**.
- Match sheets and jury table officials are not required.
- Coaches must promote:
  - Good sportsmanship
  - Equal playing time
  - Positive encouragement

## 10. Scoring / Results

- Do **not** keep official score
- Do **not** publish results or league tables
- Reward participation (e.g., medals for all)

## 11. Spirit of the Festival

Mini water polo festivals aim to:

- Be **inclusive**
- Have **short, fun, fast-paced games**
- Teach skills and teamwork
- Build confidence in young swimmers
- Winning is **not** the focus; learning and enjoyment are.