

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.

