

In all sports, a high standard of refereeing ensures a competitive and safe context that encourages participation and promotes the sport. Without referees, play would quickly degenerate into a rough and tumble affair with unqualified results and avoidable injuries. But each game must also develop in its own way to allow teams to compete for leaderships and success. That is the referee's challenge: to conduct a competitive and safe game, enjoyed by players that are confident in the final result.

This guideline provides an overview to refereeing practice, obligations and techniques.

1. Duties of referees

- § Conduct each game to the current ICF Canoe Polo Competition Rules.
- § Be unbiased and impartial.
- § Ensure that each game is played in a safe and orderly manner.
- § Accept responsibility for the safety and welfare of players.
- § Treat players, officials and spectators with respect, dignity and fairness. Be aware of your obligations to yourself and the community regarding discrimination and harassment,
- § Be a role model for all involved with canoe polo.
- § Do not publicly criticise the performance and decisions of other referees.
- § When playing, referees must respect without question, all decisions given by the referees controlling the game.
- § Check and sign that the game score sheet has been completed correctly.
- § Check that penalties have been recorded on the game score sheet.

2. Controlling the field of play

- § Two referees control the game, one along each side of the playing area. The control referee works on the same side that the official's table is located. The non-control referee works the opposite side.
- § Referees are primarily responsible for that part of the playing area to their right (when facing the playing area). Generally, a referee should not need to move any further to the left than the six metre line. However, either referee may call an infringement anywhere on the field, but in most situations should defer to the referee nearest the play.
- § The aim is to achieve a trailing and leading system for controlling the game. The leading referee keeping ahead of play and focusing on the immediate action. The trailing referee coming from behind with a full view of play.
- § Referees must move quickly to the goal line on their right when shots at goal are likely. Only at the goal line can accurate decisions be given on goals, corners and goal-line throws.
- § Where games are played on two or more adjacent playing areas, it is recommended that different pitch whistles be used to distinguish the games.

3. Referee co-ordination

- § Always check that the other referee agrees with your decision. If different decisions are called, each referee should be prepared to change. If there is uncertainty, defer to the more serious infringement.
- § If an infringement is called that you have not seen, copy the signal of the other referee.
- § If a penalty is wrongly awarded but then corrected, players must be notified and given sufficient time to understand the change so that they may reposition if necessary. Alert players to the change with three blasts of the whistle.
- § If at any time the referees disagree and cannot resolve their differences, they shall stop the game and consult. If they remain in disagreement the control referee shall take the decision.
- § Referees should discuss any disputed or contentious decisions at completion of the game to clarify the rules and their interpretation of them.

4. Referee restraints

- § Keep verbal instructions to a minimum. If a player requests an explanation of an infringement, give a brief explanation while holding the signal. Do not enter into arguments with players, either during or after a game.

- § If players dispute a decision, in general stick with the decision, unless the other referee also disagrees. If the decision is changed be sure to alert all players to the change.
- § Be aware that players may feign reactions to influence a decision

5. Sportsmanship

Sport gives a great deal of enjoyment and provides important opportunities for personal development and achievement. Good sportsmanship ensures that everyone has the opportunity to make the most of their involvement; it encourages participation and promotes the sport.

Referees are well positioned to encourage sportsmanship by:

- § setting an example
- § ensuring games are played with fairness and respect
- § complimenting and encouraging players as appropriate
- § ensuring that games end with mutual respect between teams.

6. Difficult players

As a competitive sport, players will inevitably disagree with decisions and be vocal or even demonstrative to show their displeasure. Of course some will also attempt to sway a decision to their favour. The best way to reduce your stress when dealing with these players is to be confident in your understanding and interpretation of the sport and its rules. This comes with experience.

When dealing with difficult players:

- § be fair and listen to their concern but act promptly and decisively to resolve it.
- § do not enter into debate. A short simple explanation for a decision is all that is needed.
- § remain calm and confident. Show that you are in control and have the authority, not the other way around
- § enforce decisions strictly to the rules.

7. Scrutineering

For detailed scrutineering requirements refer to the ICF Canoe Polo Competition Rules, Appendix II: Scrutineering.

Scrutineering of all equipment must be done before the game commences. However, equipment may deteriorate during play and subsequently create a risk for players. It is the referee's duty to identify these risks and to act accordingly. If necessary, time-out should be called while the situation is made safe.

General

- § Referees must be continually aware of any situation that places players at risk
- § Referees are authorised to stop the game for any reason
- § A player must not wear any items (such as jewellery and watches) that can endanger either the wearer or any other player
- § No loose straps, tape or clothing

Kayak

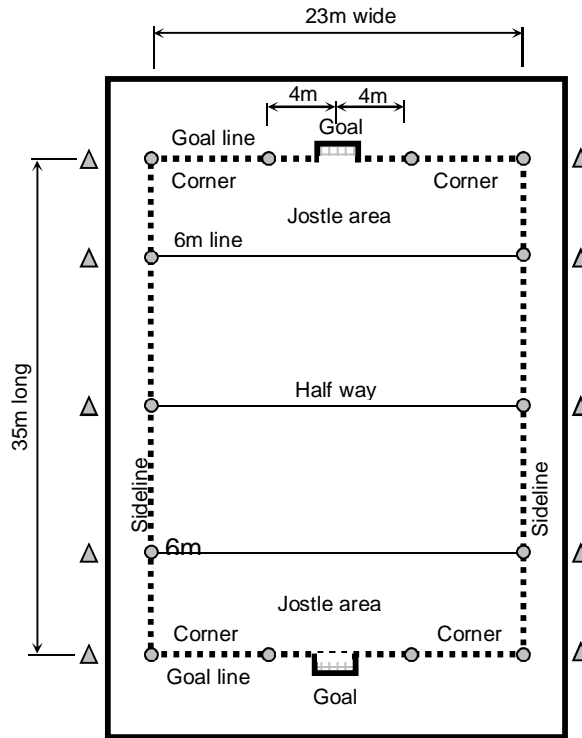
- § Kayaks must not have any sharp projects or edges or other dangerous features. All metal bolts, screws or other fixing devices should be recessed
- § Bumper padding must be a suitable shock absorbing material. It must not move out of place during impact against other kayaks. If bolts or rivets are used to attach the bumper, they must be recessed at least 20 mm into the padding.

Paddle

- § Paddles must not have any sharp projections, edges or other dangerous features.

Helmet and faceguard

- § Helmets must be safe and suitable. They must protect against any blow to the head



Playing area terminology

.....	Floating rope	○	Floating marker
—	Imaginary line	△	Poolside marker
—	Edge of pool		

reasonably anticipated in the course of a game

- § The faceguard must be securely fixed to the helmet, without sharp or dangerous fixings. It must project against any blow that may be reasonably anticipated in the course of a game. It must cover the entire face of the player beginning at the lower level of the chin and covering the area between the two temples. The guard must be designed so that no contact is possible between the face and the blade of a horizontally held paddle when it is poked into the guard.

Body protection

- § Body protection must be at least 15mm thick. It must project against any impact from other player's equipment, which may be reasonably anticipated in the course of a game. The body projection must begin within 100mm from the cockpit rim measured at the player's side, with the player sitting normally in their kayak. The gap between the top of the protection at the side and the top of the armpit measured with the arm horizontal must be equal or less than 100mm.
- § A shirt with sleeves, which at least covers the mid upper arm, must be worn. Players shall not have grease, oil or any similar substance on their arms, shoulders, neck and equipment.

8. Playing area

- § The playing area must be set up with goals, boundary makers and pool side markers as shown in the following sketch. The size of the playing area will depend upon the area of water available but where possible, the standard 23m x 35m should be set up.
- § The goals have an open face of 1.0m high x 1-5m wide and located so that the lower inside edge is 2m above the water. The netting should be constructed so that a ball scoring a goal is caught in the net to provide a definite indication that a goal was scored.

9. Referee accreditation

Australian canoe polo referees are accredited as level A, B or C. Accreditation requirements are given in the following table.

Shirt colour	Level and description
	<p>Level A Australian canoe polo referee</p> <p>Able to confidently control any game at an international, Australian, or local level.</p> <p>Colour: grey sleeves Marking: 'REFEREE' on the back of the shirt.</p>
	<p>Level B Australian canoe polo referee</p> <p>Able to control most games at a local level and gaining experience to be the controlling referee at a national level.</p> <p>Colour: orange sleeves Marking: 'REFEREE' on the back of the shirt.</p>
	<p>Level C Australian canoe polo referee</p> <p>A less experienced referee gaining experience at a local and national level. Able to referee restricted categories with support.</p> <p>Colour: green sleeves Marking: 'REFEREE' on the back of the shirt.</p>

10. References

The following material sets out the canoe polo rules and their interpretation.

- ICF Canoe Polo Competition Rules
- [ICF Referee's course](#)

11. Further information

For further information contact:

Paddle Australia
 Chief referee, canoe polo technical committee
 E: info@paddle.org.au