



Modified Mar 30, 2026

JO SPECIFIC RULES

National Junior Olympics follows [USAWP Playing Rules](#) as modified by the USA Water Polo [Conduct of Championships](#)

JO Championship (Platinum and Gold)

Age Group / Gender	Shot Clock	Max Course Size	Ball Size	Period Length by Day 1-2-3-4	Timeouts	Period Breaks
10 & U	:30	20 yd x 10 yd	Junior Size 2	5-5-5-5	2 x 1:00	2:00
12 & U	:30	25 yd x 15 yd	Intermediate Size 3	6-6-6-6	2 x 1:00	2:00
14 & U Boys	:30	25 M x 20 M	Compact Size 4	6-6-7-7	2 x 1:00	2:00
14 & U Girls	:30	25 M x 20 M	Compact Size 4	6-6-7-7	2 x 1:00	2:00
16 & U Boys	:30	25 M x 20 M	Men's Size 5	6-6-7-7	2 x 1:00	2:00
16 & U Girls	:30	25 M x 20 M	Compact Size 4	6-6-7-7	2 x 1:00	2:00
18 & U Boys	:30	25 M x 20 M	Men's Size 5	7-7-7-7 * c	2 x 1:00	2:00

18 & U Girls	:30	25 M x 20 M	Compact Size 4	7-7-7-7 * (see note)	2 x 1:00	2:00
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JO Classic (Silver and Bronze)

Age Group / Gender	Shot Clock	Max Course Size	Ball Size	Period Length by Day 1-2-3-4	Timeouts	Period Breaks
10 & U	:30	20 yd x 10 yd	Junior Size 2	5-5-5-5	2 x 1:00	2:00
12 & U	:30	25 yd x 20 M	Intermediate Size 3	6-6-6-6	2 x 1:00	2:00
14 & U Boys	:30	25 M x 20 M	Compact Size 4	6-6-7-7	2 x 1:00	2:00
14 & U Girls	:30	25 M x 20 M	Compact Size 4	6-6-7-7	2 x 1:00	2:00
16 & U Boys	:30	25 M x 20 M	Men's Size 5	6-6-7-7	2 x 1:00	2:00
16 & U Girls	:30	25 M x 20 M	Compact Size 4	6-6-7-7	2 x 1:00	2:00
18 & U Boys	:30	25 M x 20 M	Men's Size 5	6-6-7-7	2 x 1:00	2:00
18 & U Girls	:30	25 M x 20 M	Compact Size 4	6-6-7-7	2 x 1:00	2:00

*** -If the schedule allows for 7 minute quarters then 7 minute quarters can be played, if not then 6 min quarters will be played.**

FLYING SUBSTITUTION

This rule only applies to pools with sidelines of at least a half meter from the wall. If sidelines are less than a half meter or if there are no sidelines, flying substitutions are not allowed.

- A maximum of 3 players can be substituted at one time. Substitutes waiting to sub in cannot touch or hang on the lane line.

- Players must visibly touch hands above the water once both, the player who is leaving and the substitute, are outside of the field of play and both heads are above water.
- The player that will be subbing in will have to enter the water from behind the goal line and swim along the wall. The player who is leaving must swim along the side of the pool until behind the goal line.
- Substitution can occur anywhere between the team's goal line and the center line, and it can occur anytime during the game, except after a penalty throw is awarded. Substitutes may not swim along the side of the pool before or during the taking of a penalty throw. Players waiting to substitute during a penalty throw must move outside of 6 meters along the wall.
- Players can stay in the substitution area for a reasonable amount of time. This is a similar approach as for the players staying in the exclusion box (re-entry area).

HALF TIME

Half time shall be 2 minutes for every game

ROSTERS/SCORESHEETS

Each coach **MUST** turn in an official NJO score sheet to the Official Table thirty (30) minutes prior to each game. Score sheets will be distributed in team packets at team check in following the coach technical meeting.

Official scorekeepers will be provided by USAWP/Site Hosts. No team officials are permitted at the scores desk.

CAP COLORS & TEAM BENCH

First team listed wears white caps and starts the game sitting on the bench to the left, as viewed from the Official Table. Teams shall switch ends/sides at halftime.

Coaches not coaching in the current or next game should not be at the scorers table or in between the benches. Coaches wishing to watch games they are not coaching should view from the spectator area. Please clear the deck as soon as possible.

ONLY Rostered athletes and coaches are allowed in the bench area at any time.

A maximum of 3 coaches can be on the team bench during a game. Additional coaches should remain in the spectator area and should act as spectators. Coaches instructing from the stands will be ejected and receive a red card.

WARM UP

A team shall receive a minimum of five (5) minutes in front of goals immediately prior to the start of their game. If goals are available in the warm up area, additional time will not be given. Referees will whistle a "2 minutes until the start of game" warning after 3 minutes of cage time. Teams may choose to keep shooting or huddle. Next game will start 5 minutes after the previous game ends.

BREAKING TIES

All games shall be played to a decision ... with a definite winner. Should the scores be level at full time in any game, there shall be a shootout to determine the result.

SHOOT-OUT PROCEDURE

- There will be an immediate coin toss to determine the shooting order, with the visiting team calling the coin toss.
- All shots will be taken to the right of the scorekeepers table unless in the referee's judgment, it should be taken the other direction (ex. Sun obscuring the goalkeepers vision). Both teams shoot at the same goal.
- Each team places its 5 players on the scorekeeper's desk side of the pool.
- No declaration of shooting order required.
- Shots are taken alternately.
- The desk must record the shooting order on the score sheet for use if it goes to the second round.
- After the first round it is sudden death.
- The bench at the opposite shooting end can move to half tank.
- In the event that the goalkeeper is excluded during the shootout, a field player may substitute for the goalkeeper with respect to the penalty shot being taken at the time of the exclusion, but such field player shall not have the privileges of the goalkeeper. Following the taking of the penalty shot being taken at the time of the goalkeeper's exclusion, the team may select a substitute goalkeeper, who shall thereafter participate in the shootout with the goalkeeper's privileges.
- In the event that a field player is excluded during the shootout, the team may substitute another field player for the excluded field player,

Shootout - team that wins in a shootout is given one extra goal (+1) for winning the shootout for purposes of advancement. (e.g. if game is tied at 5-5, team winning the shootout will have a score of 6-5 for advancement purposes)

ADVANCEMENT

All games require a winner and loser; NO TIED GAMES! Should the game score be tied at the end of regulation time, the tie shall be broken by shoot-out. In group play, teams advance to the next round according to game points earned from game results within the group. The following point system shall be used for advancement purposes:

Points	Outcome
4	Win
3	Shootout win
2	Shootout loss
1	Loss

0	Forfeit
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TIE-BREAKERS

In the unlikely case of teams tied in-game points, teams advance according to the World Aquatics tie-breaker rules, stated in the *World Aquatics Playing Rules, Appendix BL*

Two Way Ties - BL 9.6.3.1

If two (2) teams shall have equal points, further classification shall be established as follows:

"...The team winning the game between the two teams shall be placed higher..." (no other provisions apply)

Three Way Ties - BL 9.6.3.2

If three (3) or more teams shall have equal points, further classification shall be established as follows:

- BL 9.6.3.2.1 : The results among the tied teams shall determine which team is placed highest.
- BL 9.6.3.2.2 : If at any time during the application of the procedure set out in this BL 9.6.3.2, the number of tied teams is reduced to two (2), then BL 9.6.3.1 shall be used to determine which of the two (2) remaining teams is placed higher.
- BL 9.6.3.2.3 : *"The comparison shall be made upon first, the points of the games among them, next the goal difference, and next, based upon goals scored."*

GOAL SIZE

Goal size for 10U age division shall be approximately 2 meters x 0.7 meters.

Goal size for 12U age division shall be approximately 2.5 Meters X .8 Meters

Standard goal size shall be used for 14U, 16U, 18U boys and girls divisions.

ROSTER SIZE

The Conduct of Championships allows for a maximum of 12 athletes in the 10U divisions, 14 athletes in the 12U divisions and 18 athletes in all other divisions, and up to 4 coaches on a National Junior Olympics roster. However, event credentials will be limited to rostered athletes and no more than three coaches may sit on the bench during games.

RED CARDS

Any participant in the Championship Finals who receives a red card shall not participate in the team's next game in that division, and until the suspension is served, shall not participate with any team in any division and may be subject to additional punishment by action of the Championship Finals Management Committee. Any participant that receives 2 red cards, 2 misconducts, 2 brutalities, or any combination of the foregoing during that Championship shall be excluded for the remaining duration of the Championship Finals as well as all other Championship Finals that are being conducted concurrently. If a coach receives a red card and there is no other coach member present, the team will forfeit the game and a score of 5-0 will be recorded in the opposing team's favor. As a reminder, only head coaches may address the referees. Assistant coaches must remain seated and can only move away from the bench during time-outs and quarter breaks. Assistant coaches may receive a verbal warning for the first minor offense, however, it is an immediate red card for assistant coaches for disruptive behavior.

BRUTALITY/VIOLENCE

A participant penalized for a violation of Rule 21.11 of USA Water Polo Rules (brutality/violence) shall not participate in the team's next game in that division, and until the suspension is served, shall not participate with any team in any division, and may be subject to additional punishment by action of the Championship Finals Management Committee.

COACH DECLARATION

If only one coach is present at the start of a game, that coach is considered the head coach for the entirety of the match, regardless if they are listed as an assistant coach on the roster. If the rostered head coach arrives during the game, they are considered the assistant coach for that match.

At any time, if a coach abandons the bench area to coach another team, they will not be allowed to return as a coach to that game and may not be replaced by another coach.

PROTESTS

To protest a misapplication of the rules in a game a head coach or team official named on the game roster must:

- A coach wishing to file a protest must do so at the time of the incident, at the next goal or time-out, or before the start of the next period, whichever comes first. If an incident occurs in the 4th quarter or during the overtime shoot-out, a coach must follow the same procedure or has until five minutes after the game, whichever comes first. If a coach fails to notify the referee by the procedure listed above, the opportunity to protest is lost.
- Immediately pay a \$100 cash Protest Fee to the Site Director, who holds it in behalf of USAWP
- Describe the incident and nature of the protest in writing, using the Protest Form.
- Protests may not be filed for judgment calls.
- Video evidence cannot be used

The party receiving the protests shall notify each of the following (if not the party receiving the protest) of the filing of the protest:

- The Site Director
- The Tournament Director
- The lead referee at the game site, or in his/her absence, the NJO head referee(s).

The Lead Referee shall notify the opposing team's coach of the protest.

All protests shall be considered by the Championship Finals Management Committee (CFMC) and its decision shall be final.

NOTE: If an adverse condition is known prior to the start of a game, all provisions apply, EXCEPT filing must be completed BEFORE the signal to start the game is given by the game referee. Teams will proceed with the game at the scheduled time.

2026 Junior Olympic Rules Update:

10 & Under Divisions:

- **10U Mixed and 12U Mixed teams must have athletes of both genders on their roster, in the water to start each game, and ready and able to play for the duration of every game.**
- **10U Athletes may only play in one 10U division. Athletes are still permitted to play in one 10U division and one 12U division provided both divisions are in Sessions 1 and 2 OR in Session 3. Athletes may not play in Sessions 1 or 2 AND Session 3.**

	Approximate Course Size (L x W)	Team Size (Including Goalie)	Length of Game	Goal Size	Ball Size
10U	(15-18m) x (10-12m)	5 v 5	4 x 5 min quarters	Up to the size of 12u goal but preferably approximately 2.0 x .7 meters. All goes at 10u should be inflatable	Size 2
		Roster = 12	2 min halftime 30 second shot clock		
12U	20m x 15m	6 v 6	4 x 6 min quarters	Intermediate Goal 2.5 Meters X .8 Meters	Size 3
		Roster = 14	2 min halftime 30 second shot clock		