



Sports Regulations

Hopla Cup 2026

U10-U12 Tournament



1.0 Teams

- 1.1 Teams must consist of at least 6 players. The game is played with 6 players (5 field players + 1 goalkeeper).
- 1.2 In 2026, boys and girls born in 2014 and after can participate in the Hopla Cup U12.
- 1.3 In 2026, boys and girls born in 2016 and after can participate in the Hopla Cup U10.
- 1.4 A player can only play in one team.
- 1.5 An overaged player cannot be registered in 2 different tournaments.

2.0 Playing Field

- 2.1 The playing field will be 20 m x 10 m, the pool depth is 1.80 m.
- 2.2 Penalty shots are taken from 4 m.
- 2.3 The goal area (ex 2m) will be marked longitudinally by a cone located 2 m from the goal line and laterally by another cone 2 m from each goalpost (or by a mark on the pool tubes 2 m from each post...). The 4 m zone will be marked by a cone of a different color.
- 2.4 Goal dimensions: 2 m x 0.75 m.
- 2.5 The balls used will be size 3.

3.0 Game Duration

- 3.1 Each match will last 2 periods of 9 minutes each with a 2-minute interval between periods.
- 3.2 Time runs continuously and is stopped only in case of injury or technical incident.
- 3.3 The 28-second rule does not apply.

- 3.4 The referee may decide that ball possession must be given to the other team if there are obvious signs of time wasting, especially in the last minute of the match (team remains in its half, team retreats without reason). The referee will then announce “5 seconds”; time remaining for the team in possession to shoot.
- 3.5 Each match will start at the scheduled time whether both teams are present or not. If one of the two teams is absent, the team present wins the match by forfeit with a score of 8-0. If both teams are absent, both teams lose by forfeit with a score of 8-0.

4.0 Rules

- 4.1 During even-numbered player situations, an attacker cannot stand in front of the opposing goal and up to 4 m for more than 10 seconds to avoid overly static play. A foul will be called and ball possession returned to the opposing team.
- 4.2 A player who commits 4 personal fouls cannot resume play; they remove their cap and take a place on the substitutes’ bench.
- 4.3 Brutal, disrespectful players or those acting against the spirit of the game will be permanently excluded from the match with replacement (they will be automatically suspended for the next match). Furthermore, disqualification for several matches or even the entire tournament is possible depending on the severity of their actions after review by the disciplinary committee.
- 4.4 A temporarily excluded player must join the exclusion area and visibly surface there. They may then immediately return to play.
- 4.5 At any time, a field player can be substituted by leaving the playing field through the exclusion area. The substitute may enter the field after visibly surfacing in the exclusion area and giving a high-five to the outgoing player once they have also reached the area.
- 4.6 Only the goalkeeper is allowed to hold the ball with both hands in their 4 m zone.
- 4.7 The goalkeeper is allowed to cross the midfield. Outside the 4 m zone, the goalkeeper is subject to the same rules as a field player.
- 4.8 If the goalkeeper touches the ball and it leaves the field behind the goal line, there is a corner; laterally, a throw-in is awarded to the opposing team.
- 4.9 **Attacking the goalkeeper: when the goalkeeper has control of the ball, players are not allowed to challenge them. If not respected, a free throw will be awarded to the goalkeeper.**
- 4.10 **In defense: as soon as all attackers have crossed the halfway line, pressing is mandatory. Any player performing zonal defense will be excluded and receive a personal foul. A player is allowed to zone after committing a simple foul on a player but must return to pressing once the foul has been played.**
- 4.11 **After a foul outside the 4 m line, the attacking player cannot shoot directly at the goal; the same applies for corners! However, the player may play the ball (meaning releasing it from the hand,**

bouncing it), then swim and shoot or fix and shoot. If the foul occurs outside 4 meters, the referee raises the arm.

- 4.12 The free throw is taken where the ball is located.
- 4.13 If the foul occurs inside 4 meters, two players of the same team must have intentionally touched the ball before shooting at goal, **or for a player who visibly put the ball back into play INSIDE 4 meters and swims beyond 4 meters before shooting (they are also allowed to re-enter the 4 m zone to shoot!)**.
- 4.14 If an attacker in possession of the ball (in the water or in their hand) is facing the goal in the 4 m zone without an opponent in front and a defender touches them from behind, a penalty is awarded to the attacker.
- 4.15 The goalkeeper may only be substituted at the following game stages:
 - 4.15.1 *After a goal has been scored,*
 - 4.15.2 *During the interval between periods,*
 - 4.15.3 *In case of match interruption by the referee due to injury.*
- 4.16 The coach is allowed to move up to their 4 m cone only when their team has possession of the ball. In defense, they remain seated or standing next to their bench.
- 4.17 In all other cases, the general water polo rules of the French Swimming Federation apply.

5.0 Points

- 5.1 The winning team will be awarded 3 points.
- 5.2 In case of a draw, 1 point will be awarded to each team.
- 5.3 The losing team receives 0 points.
- 5.4 If two or more teams have the same points after the preliminary phase, the following criteria will be applied to determine final positions:
 - a. *Result of the match between the teams with equal points.*
 - b. *Best goal difference in matches between teams with the same points.*
 - c. *Most goals scored in matches between teams with the same points.*
 - d. *Best goal difference across all group matches.*
 - e. *Most goals scored across all group matches.*
 - f. *Coin toss.*
- 5.5 During the final phase of the tournament, in case of a draw, teams will be separated by a series of 3 penalty shots. If still tied at the end, each team will alternately take a penalty (with the same 3 shooters as initially) until one team wins. Players will shoot in the same order as the first series. The team wearing white caps will shoot first.

6.0 Referees

- 6.1 One referee per match (two are possible depending on circumstances).
- 6.2 Two people at the score table to ensure the rules are respected, note the score, and control substitutions, player exclusions, and fourth personal fouls.
- 6.3 One timekeeper per pool during pool or ranking matches.

7.0 Miscellaneous

- 7.1 Only 1 coach and 1 assistant may sit on the bench.
- 7.2 The coach must never interfere with the referee's function.
- 7.3 The coach is there to coach, not shout at players. Repeated behavior will result in a yellow card, then a red card if it continues.
- 7.4 The assistant is not allowed to move, even if the head coach is excluded.
- 7.5 During the tournament, the coach, assistant, and players must wear the accreditation provided by the organizers. Members of the same team should wear identical uniforms if possible.
- 7.6 The coach or assistant will be automatically expelled in case of protest during a match and suspended for the next match. A harsher sanction may be applied by the tournament organizing committee.
- 7.7 A red card results in an automatic suspension for the next match.
- 7.8 Any misconduct by coaches or spectators in the stands hindering the proper conduct of the game allows the referee to temporarily suspend the game. In case of recurrence, the game ends and a 5-0 loss is awarded to the team whose supporters or officials are deemed responsible (tournament disciplinary committee).
- 7.9 If misconduct involves both teams or their spectators, each team will be assigned a 5-0 loss (tournament disciplinary committee).
- 7.10 Any issues not covered by these rules are governed first by FFN rules (1) and, if needed, by World Aquatics (2).
- 7.11 Composition of the disciplinary committee :
 - 7.11.1 The president of Mulhouse Water Polo (or their representative member of the board).
 - 7.11.2 The match referee.
 - 7.11.3 Referee supervisor, if present.
 - 7.11.4 A member of the Hopla Cup organizing committee.
 - 7.11.5 Any person required by the MWP president.

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