

FINA Water Polo VAR Protocol





“One protocol – used by all”

Major FINA competitions, tournaments qualifying for major FINA events as well as continental competitions qualifying for major FINA events are only permitted to be conducted with a VAR system in place.

The FINA protocol for VAR shall be fully applied in all competitions qualifying for FINA events.

Summary of the FINA VAR protocol

1. Situations for review during the match

The use of VAR is limited to following categories of decisions:

- Goal/ No goal
- Goal scored at shot clock expiration or time expiration at the end of a period
- Jury table errors and failures of the electronic system (*including time out buttons or future electronic re-entry system*)

2. Principles

1. **The final decision will always be the referees’ decision.**
2. **Video Assistant Referee (VAR) is a match official** - advice received from VAR referee about possible error must be verified by referee of the game.
3. The **original decision** given by the referee **will not be changed unless** referee decides that his original decision was wrong.
4. Only the referee of the match **can do a review**; the VAR official and the delegate can only alert the referee to do a review.
5. If the ball is live at the moment of a situation, the referee will stop the match at an appropriate moment, as quick as possible. In case of a goal/no goal situation at the goal line, the match must be stopped not later than immediately after the next attack.
6. The referee shall take position in front of the screen to have an optimal view and him/her self shall operate the button to replay and review the situation
7. **Accuracy is more important than speed**, therefore there is no time pressure to review the decision quickly.



A match is not invalidated because of:

- malfunction(s) of the VAR technology
- wrong decision(s) involving the VAR
- decision(s) not to review an incident
- review(s) of a non-reviewable situation

3. Review process

Review steps:

Step 1

- A. The referee informs the VAR and his partner (usually based on a 'check'), that a decision/incident should be reviewed, or
- B. The VAR official, or delegate recommends to the referees (usually based on a 'check') that a decision/incident should be reviewed

Step 2 - the referees decide whether and when to stop the game to review the video footage and take the appropriate decision

3.1. Where does the review take place?

Ideally the VAR office should be located next to the catwalk.

If it is not feasible the VAR "cubic" shall be set up on catwalk and it should be well protected from views of all but officials of the game.

For reasons of transparency and integrity (i.e., to demonstrate that no one has influenced the review process) the VAR room/"cubic" must be visible and, as much as possible, the referee should remain visible throughout the process.

There should be no media/broadcast microphones or cameras positioned in/near to VAR room/"cubic" which show a view of the screen

3.2. Who takes part in the review?

Only the referee(s) of the game and VAR official take part in the review. This should be the referee who is closest to the VAR room. If necessary, he/she can look for advice of his/her partner in the game. In general, no one else can take part in the review but in some cases, the delegate may be involved.



3.4. Responsibilities of the other match officials during the review.

Other match officials observe the team members in the field of play and at the bench area

3.5. What do the players and team officials do during the review?

Players must go to their respective halves of the field of play.

During any Video Review, no substitution is allowed from any of the re-entry areas before the referee communicates his/her decision after the Video Review.

3.6. Which protocol must the referee follow during the review?

3.6.1 Goal/No goal situation

If the referee or VAR official has doubt about goal/no goal situation, the referee should review the situation to assess if the ball fully crossed the goal line.

3.6.1.1 If a goal has been awarded:

- a) One of the referees of the match shall signal that the goal must be reviewed;
- b) One of the referees takes the ball out of the water;
- c) One referee, closest to the VAR room, reviews the situation and takes the decision to allow or disallow the goal;
- d) In case the goal is cancelled, the former defending goalkeeper will restart the game with a free throw. The players shall be allowed to take any position in the field of play as a after time out;
- e) In case the goal is allowed, the game restarts according to WP16.1.

3.6.1.2 If a goal was not awarded

The Referees of the match must find **an appropriate moment**, as quickly as possible after the situation, to review it.

Definition of an appropriate moment includes:

- Neither team has possession of the ball
- Interval time
- Corner throw
- Team in possession of the ball has no clear advantage

At the latest, the review must be done after the first attack following the doubtful "GOAL / NO GOAL" situation



3.6.2 A Goal scored at the expiration of the shot clock or at the end of a period.

When a goal was scored very close to shot clock time expiration, or during the time expiration at the end of a period the referee should check if the ball left the hand of the attacker before the time expired.

- The video review will only be done immediately after a goal was scored from this shot.
- If no goal was awarded and the result of the shot was a corner throw or rebound, no video review will be done.
- If this situation happens at the end of a period or end of the game, the period or the game will be not be ended. After the referee has done a VAR review and made his decision public, he will end the period (or match, if applicable)

3.6.3 An excluded player at the end of a period

When a player is excluded at the end of a period, and at the expiration of time the attacking team shoots at the goal, the VAR equipment must be used to assess if there was a change of possession in order to define if the match will be restarted with both teams complete or with one player excluded

No other situations as mentioned in 3.6.2 and 3.6.3 can be considered for VAR review after time expiration.

3.6.4 Technical errors by jury table officials and / or malfunctioning of electronic equipment

In situations when technical errors of the table officials or malfunctioning of electronic equipment occurs, the referee can use the VAR system to determine the correct solution for the situation.

Determination and resolving of the situation shall happen during the incident before the match is restarted.

The decision of referee to review or not to review VAR cannot be subject for protest.



3.7 Communicating the outcome of a review

The referee must go to the center of the field of play and visually clearly indicate which decision was taken and then clearly indicate how the match will continue.

The Public Announcer must announce, once referee decided to review the situation, as well as the referee's decision after review. A message may be displayed on the scoreboard as well.

In principle, as a matter of transparency, after the decision of the referee, the reviewed situation may be shown on scoreboard and TV.

3.7.1 To restart the match after the review

a) If a goal is not allowed:

- The game restarts with a free throw taken by the team which had the last ball possession.
- The time is not reset, nor is the shot clock.
- The players are allowed to take any position in the field of play as after a time out

b) If a goal is allowed:

- The match restarts as after the goal
- The time is reset to the moment when the goal was scored
- All goals and exclusions are nulled
- All yellow and red cards, brutalities, misconducts will remain on the match protocol.

4 Who operates the equipment for a review by the referee?

The equipment for a review is operated by a VAR technician and a VAR official.

The VAR official shall prepare the situation to be reviewed, the referee himself will operate the equipment during the review.

4.1 Location and role of the Video Assistant Referee (VAR) Official

The VAR official is a match official and will be in contact with the referee using the referee team's communication system; the VAR official will use a push button to activate the microphone.



The prime role of the VAR official is to ‘check’ the play throughout the game and inform the referees when a possible situation for review occurs.

5. Headset communication

Requirements:

- The VAR headset must be integrated into the match officials’ headset system.
- A Push-to-talk feature is required for the communication between the VAR and the referee.
- The ‘talk’ button should switch off when not pressed down so it does not remain ‘open’ at the end of a communication. This feature will avoid any distractions or confusion for the referees.

6 Use of VAR equipment for post-match review

6.1 Violent situations

In case of violent situations Paragraph 4.2 of Appendix C of the FINA Rules will be applied:

4.2 For incidents of brutality or extreme violence, after the match the Management Committee is entitled to review official video of any match and is entitled to apply a sanction for the incident, notwithstanding that the referees did not make a call of brutality or extreme violence during the match.

6.2 Video Review Request

After the match, a team may request a Video Review. This request may be done under the same conditions as filing a protest after the match.

In future, the application of VAR equipment may be extended in cases where violence is involved.