

Water Skyball Rules handbook

(WP2_D2.1)

WSB in EU - ToT

ERASMUS+ Sport

Table of Content

1. Introduction	3
2. General Principles of the Game	4
3. The Field of Play and Equipment	5
4. Player attire:.....	6
5. Structure and Duration of the Game.....	7
6. Zones and Player Movement	8
7. Ball Handling Rules	10
8. Scoring System	11
8.1. Goal Types and Point Values	11
8.2. Additional Rules and Clarifications.....	13
9. Game Restart and Throw Types.....	14
10. Fouls and Penalties	15
10.1. Types of Fouls	15
10.2. Referee Response and Penalty Throws.....	15
10.3. Penalty Execution Rules	15
10.4. Penalty procedure:.....	16
11. Interception.....	17
12. Spirit of the Game	19
Contact Info	20

1. Introduction

This handbook provides a structured and accessible overview of the official rules of Water Skyball (WSB), a uniquely inclusive and non-contact team water sport. Developed in Hungary by the Fontanus Scientific Methodological Research and Educational Center in 2014, Water Skyball has since grown into a European-wide initiative, promoting physical activity, tactical thinking, and the core values of sportsmanship.

The document has been developed as part of the "WSB in Europe – Training of Trainers" (WSB-EU-ToT) project, co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union. This project aims to support the expansion of Water Skyball across Europe by empowering sports professionals with the knowledge and tools necessary to implement the sport in their own communities.

As one of the key deliverables of the WSB-EU-ToT project, this handbook provides a clear and updated summary of the game's core rules and principles. It serves not only as a rulebook but also as a reference for training, coaching, and organizing local and international events. By offering a standardized set of rules and clear interpretations, this handbook ensures consistency and fairness across all levels of play—from amateur community events to professional tournaments.

Whether you are a new player, a coach, a referee, or a sport development professional, this handbook is designed to support your understanding and implementation of Water Skyball in an engaging, educational, and inclusive way.

Let's play!



2. General Principles of the Game

Water Skyball is a two-versus-two, non-contact team sport played in waist-deep water. The objective is to score points by throwing a ball into the opponent's floating goal. Beyond the simple premise lies a complex and strategic game that rewards timing, accuracy, agility, and teamwork over brute strength.

Key principles include:

- **Non-contact gameplay:** Players are strictly prohibited from making physical contact with opponents. This increases safety, reduces the chance of injury, and ensures a fair playing field.
- **One-handed ball control:** Players must use only one hand in the Midfield for all actions involving the ball—holding, passing, and shooting. This challenges coordination and precision, and keeps the sport distinct from traditional water polo or handball.
- **Inclusivity and accessibility:** The game welcomes participants of all genders, abilities, and backgrounds. It is particularly well-suited for mixed-gender and family games due to its low physical risk and strategic depth.
- **Strategic movement:** Movement restrictions across field zones encourage players to think tactically about positioning and teamwork rather than relying on speed or strength alone.
- **Fair play and respect:** Water Skyball embraces sportsmanship. The ethos of the game encourages mutual respect, emotional control, and a focus on self-improvement.



3. The Field of Play and Equipment

Water Skyball is played in a rectangular field that is specially marked and divided into functional zones. The field may be set up in pools, lakes, or any shallow-water facility with appropriate safety measures.

- **Field dimensions:** Standard dimensions are 10 meters in length and 8 meters in width. The size can be slightly modified to fit available facilities but must maintain the correct ratio and zones.
- **Water depth:** Waist-deep water (90–120 cm) is required to ensure that players can move safely without swimming.
- **Zones:**
 - **Defender Zones:** The area in front of the 2 goals; only one player can be here at a time.
 - **Midfield Zone:** The central area; all players can be here at a time.
- **Goals:** Floating goals are positioned at the ends of the field. These are designed to remain stable during gameplay and to clearly show when a goal is scored.
- **Ball:** A Water Skyball-specific ball is used, optimized for grip and bounce on water surfaces. It is lightweight and floatable.



4. Player attire:

- Shorts are mandatory for all players.
- Women must wear a closed, two-layer upper outfit.
- Team-colored caps must be worn by all players.
- Footwear is optional but may include clean pool shoes, wrestling shoes, or barefoot play depending on conditions.
- Metal accessories and jewelry must be removed before entering the water for safety reasons.

Water Skyball Player



Cap with a number



Aquatic shoes



long sleeve
compression
shirts



Short with a number
and team logo



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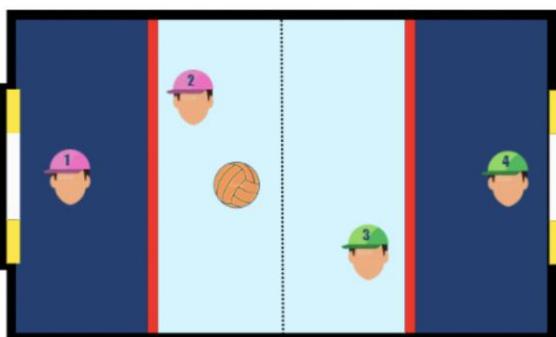
5. Structure and Duration of the Game

A standard Water Skyball match consists of one uninterrupted period of play:

- **Standard match duration:** 10 minutes.
- **Extended matches:** 12, 15, or 20-minute games may be played if agreed upon by all parties in advance.
- **No halftime:** Matches are played continuously without switching sides.
- **Clock management:** A running clock is used. The clock only stops during the last minute for penalty throws, or in exceptional cases such as injury or timeout.
- **Timeouts:**
 - One timeout per team may be requested, subject to referee approval.
 - Referees may stop the match if dangerous weather conditions or safety issues arise.
- **Match conclusion:**
 - A match ends when the full time expires, even if the ball is still in motion.
 - In tournament settings, ties may be resolved by a penalty shootout.

Water Skyball

basics



2 teams

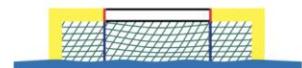


2 players per team

A unique ball



2 special goals



10 – 20 minutes



The goal is to score more points than the other team.



WSB
Training of Trainers

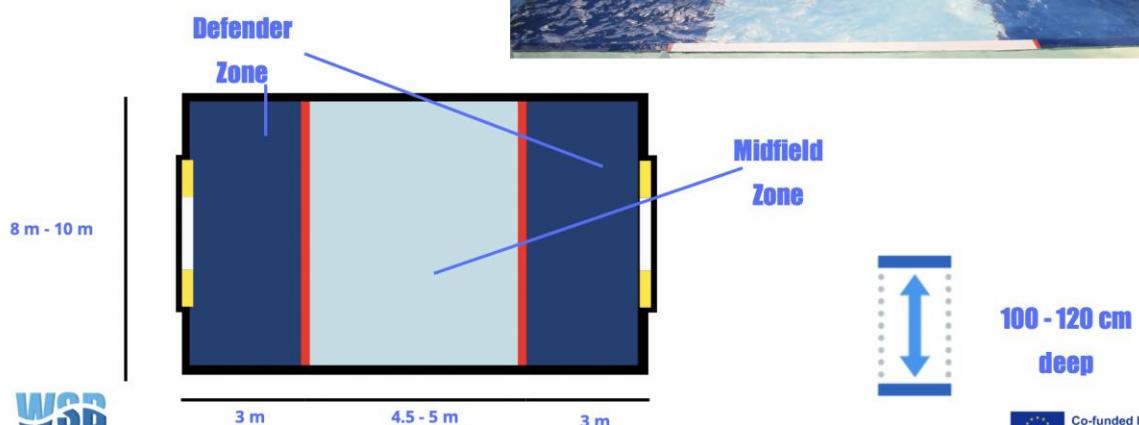
6. Zones and Player Movement

The Water Skyball playing field is divided into three zones: two Defender Zones and one central Midfield Zone. Understanding and respecting the rules associated with each zone is essential for both fair play and tactical strategy.

- **Defender Zones** (one at each end of the field):
 - Only one player from each team may be present in their own Defender Zone at a time. This player is considered the goalkeeper.
 - The goalkeeper may be changed only:
 - When the ball is out of play.
 - Or during active play if the current goalkeeper exits the Defender Zone first, allowing the teammate to enter afterward.
 - Goalkeepers are allowed to catch and hold the ball with both hands **only while they are inside the Defender Zone**. However, all passes and shots must still be made with one hand only.
- **Midfield Zone** (central area of the field):
 - Any number of players may be present in the Midfield Zone at the same time, including all four players.
 - The one-handed rule is strictly enforced in this zone: players may only touch the ball with one hand at a time, and holding, catching, or controlling the ball with both hands results in a foul.
 - This zone is the primary area for building attacks, organizing defenses, and executing coordinated team plays.
- **Movement Between Zones:**
 - Players may transition between the Midfield and Defender Zones in accordance with the rules above.
 - Crossing into the opponent's Defender Zone is strictly prohibited.
 - Violations of zone rules result in fouls or loss of possession, depending on the severity.

Strategic use of zone transitions, positioning, and timing of goalkeeper changes are important elements of advanced play. Teams must communicate effectively and maintain awareness of each other's locations to maximize their tactical efficiency within the zone-based structure of Water Skyball.

Water Skyball Field "The pool"



7. Ball Handling Rules

Ball handling in Water Skyball is defined by specific regulations, which vary depending on the player's position on the field and are essential for maintaining the flow and fairness of the game.

- **Midfield Zone:**

- Players must use only one hand to catch, hold, pass, block or shoot the ball.
- Using two hands simultaneously to handle the ball, whether during catching, holding, blocking or throwing, is considered a foul.
- Pressing the ball against the body, clothing, or water surface to gain control is prohibited.
- Hiding or submerging the ball under the water is also not allowed.
- The ball must be clearly visible and released above the waterline.

- **Defender Zone:**

- The goalkeeper is allowed to **catch or hold** the ball using both hands while within their own Defender Zone.
- However, the goalkeeper must **pass, or shoot** the ball using **only one hand**, just like any other player.

The one-handed rule challenges players' coordination and precision, and ensures that tactical positioning and team communication remain at the heart of gameplay.

Repeated or intentional violations of the one-handed rule may result in turnovers or penalties, as judged by the referee.

8. Scoring System

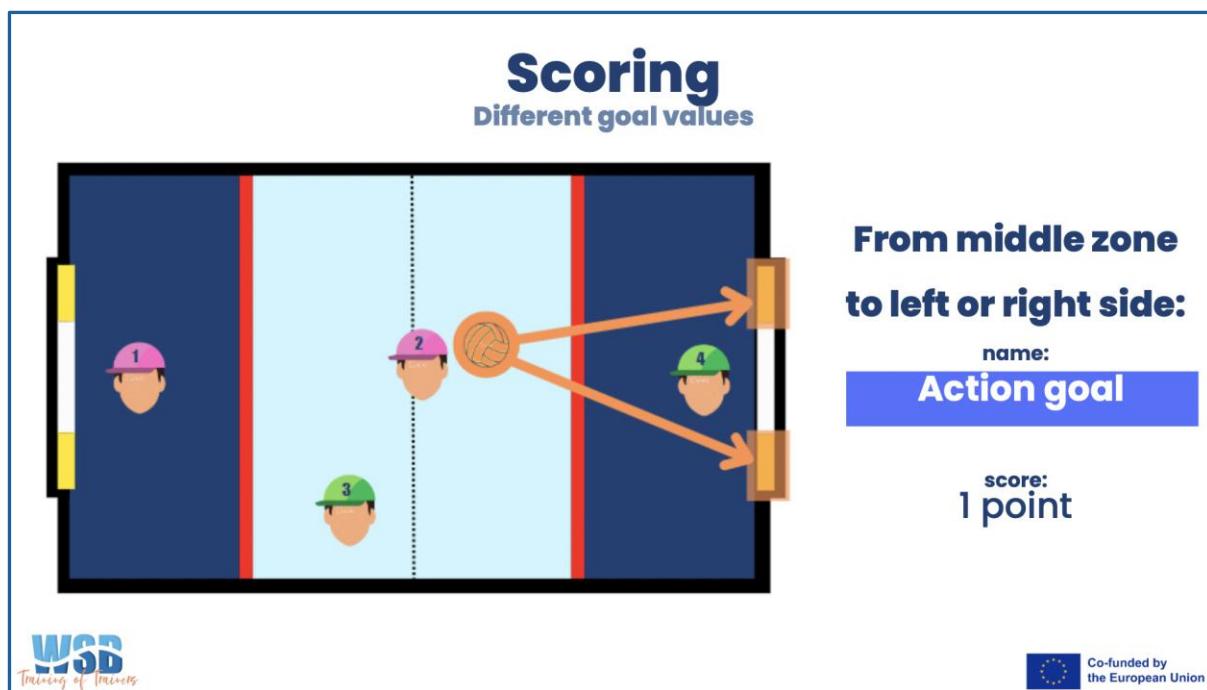
In Water Skyball, scoring is determined by two factors:

1. The position of the player at the time of the throw.
2. The specific section of the goal that the ball enters.

This system encourages risk-taking and strategic play, rewarding long-range precision shots as well as tactical execution from closer distances.

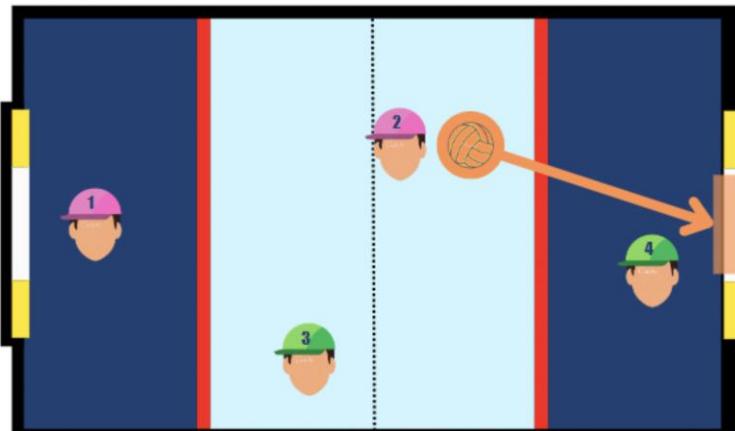
8.1. Goal Types and Point Values

- **1 Point ("Action")**
 - Awarded when a goal is scored from the **Midfield Zone**, and the ball enters the **outer goal section**.
- **2 Points**
 - "Center": Awarded for goals from the **Midfield Zone** that enter the **inner goal area**.
 - "Sniper": Awarded for goals from the **Defender Zone** that enter the **outer goal section**.
- **4 Points ("Deadeye")**
 - Awarded for goals from the **Defender Zone** that enter the **inner goal area**.
 - These are considered the most difficult and skill-demanding shots in the game.



Scoring

Different goal values



From middle zone

to center:

name:

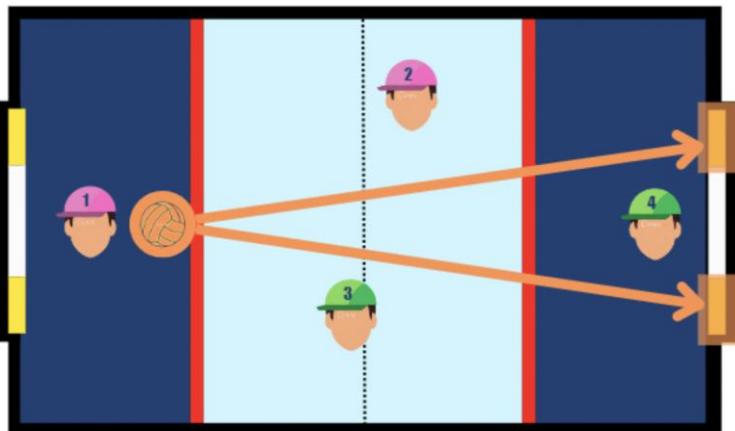
Center goal

score:

2 points

Scoring

Different goal values



From defender zone

to left or right side:

name:

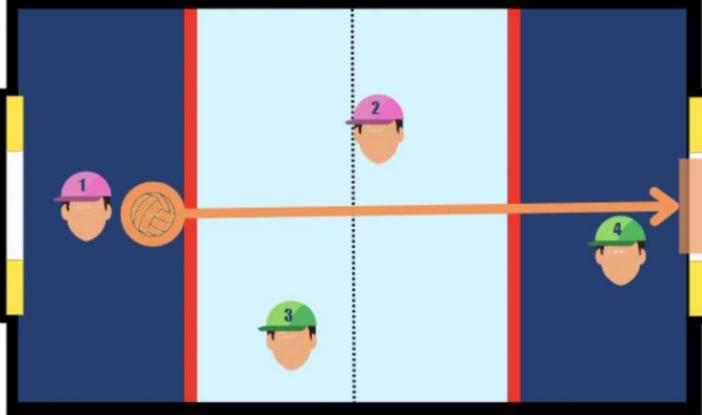
Sniper goal

score:

2 points

Scoring

Different goal values



From defender zone
to center:

name:
DeadEye

score:
4 points



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8.2. Additional Rules and Clarifications

- Goals are valid only if the throw is legal (e.g., one-handed release, player remains within the correct zone, no physical contact).
- Goals cannot be scored from the opponent's Defender Zone.
- There are no own goals in Water Skyball. If a team accidentally throws the ball into their own goal, the game continues with a throw-out from that goal.
- If a shot is deflected—e.g., bounces off a defender or goalkeeper—the point value is determined based on the original position of the thrower.

This scoring system adds complexity and excitement to the game, as players must balance risk and reward when deciding where and how to shoot.

9. Game Restart and Throw Types

The match begins and resumes through a process known as the **throw-out**:

- The team that begins starts with their goalkeeper in possession of the ball.
- The standard player formation during a throw-out is 1–2–1 (goalkeeper – midfield – forward). The 2 midfield player should stay on their half of the field at the start of the game.
- To execute a valid throw-out, the ball must:
 - Leave the defender zone
 - Bounce on the water or be caught by a teammate
 - Not result in a direct goal

Restarts also occur when:

- A goal is scored
- The ball exits the field through the sidelines or goal lines
- A penalty has been executed

10. Fouls and Penalties

Fouls in Water Skyball are actions that violate the official rules of gameplay. These may include improper ball handling, entering prohibited zones, physical contact, or unsportsmanlike conduct. When a foul occurs, the referee has the authority to issue penalties based on the severity and context of the infringement.

10.1. Types of Fouls

- Two-handed ball handling (outside the Defender Zone)
- Entering the Defender Zone as a second player
- Contact with other players
- Holding or hiding the ball under water
- Repeated minor infractions despite warnings

10.2. Referee Response and Penalty Throws

The referee may award **1 to 3 penalty throws** to the opposing team, depending on:

- The seriousness of the foul
- Whether the act was negligent or intentional
- Whether it was excessive or repeated

Penalty throws are a direct scoring opportunity for the fouled team. The penalty shot is thrown from the Midfield. The referee determines the number of throws granted.

10.3. Penalty Execution Rules

- During a foul, play is paused immediately. After the penalty throws are completed, the game continues with a **throw-out by the team that took the penalty**.
- If the penalty taker commits a foul during their throw (e.g., fakes the shot, breaks the one-handed rule), that specific penalty is invalidated.
- If multiple penalties have been granted, remaining penalty throws may still be valid even if one is invalidated.
- If **both teams are awarded penalties**, each performs their penalty throws in turn.
 - The team that **scores more points** resumes the game with a throw-out.
 - In the event of a draw, the team that possessed the ball before the interruption resumes play with a throw-out.

This penalty system ensures fairness while maintaining the flow of the game. It also provides referees with flexibility to apply proportionate consequences for different levels of rule violations.

Referees are encouraged to apply consistent judgment and clearly communicate penalty decisions using established whistle and hand signals.

10.4. Penalty procedure:

- The referee signals the foul with a whistle and hand signal.
- The team not committing the foul is awarded penalty throws (1, 2, or 3).
- Penalty throws are executed from midfield.
- The opposing team may not interfere until the throw is completed.
- Time is stopped in the final minute during the entire penalty process.
- The penalty must be thrown for the first intention without faking a shot.
- The penalty is valid if it goes into the middle section of the goal.
- The player shooting the penalty must not enter the Defender zone, neither with their hand.



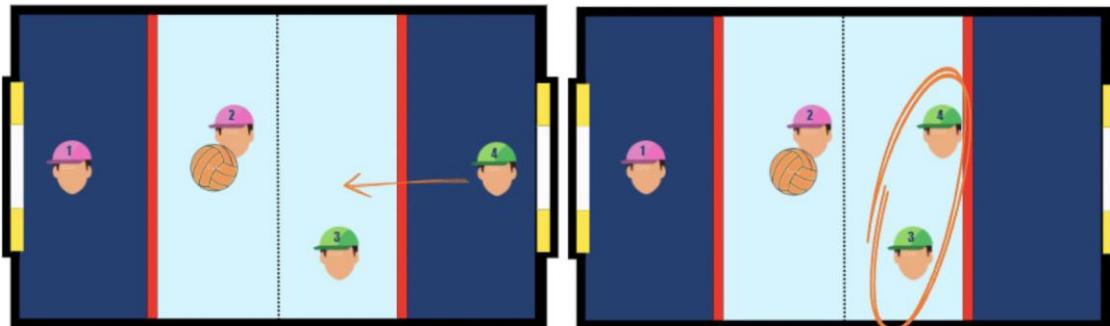
11. Interception

The defending team gains possession of the ball from the opponent through various scenarios:

- By correctly touching and owning the ball after acquiring the opponent's pass.
- Taking the ball from the opponent in the midfield in a standard manner.
- Preventing the opponent from scoring and subsequently holding onto the ball.
- The goalkeeper obtaining and maintaining possession of the ball heading towards the goal.
- Executing a Front Interception, where a defending player enters the opponent's defensive zone without anyone present. If both the defending player and the attacking player enter simultaneously, it is also considered a Front Interception.
- A Rear Interception occurs when a member of the attacking team is alone in the midfield zone with the ball, and the rear player of the defending team subsequently also enters the midfield zone.
- If the opponent's goalkeeper throws the ball into the midfield near a teammate, but the teammate fails to catch it, and then the defending team's goalkeeper enters the midfield zone, it is considered a Rear Interception.
- The ball bouncing off the goal post is freely obtainable by either team.

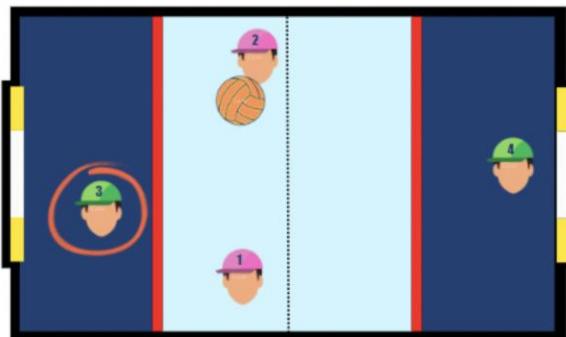
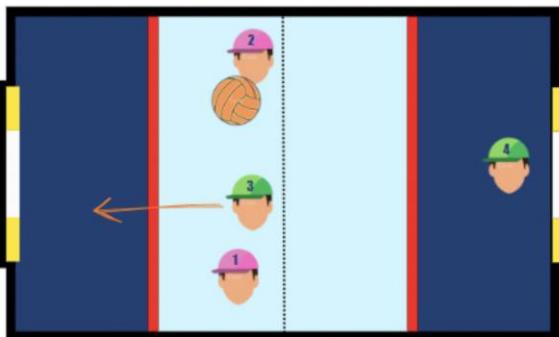
Rear interception

- **The ball is in the middle zone**
- **A player comes out of the defender zone**



Front interception

- The ball is in the middle zone
- Both members of the attacking team are in the middle zone.
- A player enters the defender zone of attacking team.



12. Spirit of the Game

Water Skyball is built upon mutual respect and the joy of sport. All participants share responsibility for upholding the integrity and ethos of the game.

Players should:

- Treat opponents and referees with respect
- Avoid arguing or disputing calls
- Support fair play and inclusivity

Referees may adjust their strictness in amateur or learning environments. For example:

- A first-time player mistakenly catching the ball with two hands may receive a warning instead of a penalty.
- However, core safety rules (e.g. non-contact) must always be enforced.

Ultimately, the value of Water Skyball lies in how it is played. It should remain welcoming, positive, and challenging—reflecting the best qualities of modern sport.



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