**Water polo** is a [competitive](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Competitive_sport) [team sport](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Team_sport) played in water between two teams of seven players each. The game consists of four quarters in which the two teams attempt to score goals by throwing the [ball](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Water_polo_ball) into the opposing team's [goal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Goal_(sport)). The team with the most goals at the end of the game wins the match. Each team is made up of six field players and one [goalkeeper](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Goalkeeper_(water_polo)). Excluding the goalkeeper, players participate in both offensive and defensive roles. Water polo is typically played in an all-deep [pool](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Swimming_pool) so that players cannot touch the bottom.

A game of water polo mainly consists of the players [swimming](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Swimming) to move about the pool, [treading water](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Treading_water) (mainly using the [eggbeater kick](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eggbeater_kick)), passing the ball, and shooting at the goal. [Teamwork](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Teamwork), tactical thinking and awareness are also highly important aspects in a game of water polo. Water polo is a highly physical and demanding sport and has frequently been cited as one of the most difficult sports to play.[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Water_polo#cite_note-1)[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Water_polo#cite_note-2)[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Water_polo#cite_note-3)

Special equipment for water polo includes a [water polo ball](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Water_polo_ball), a ball of varying colors which floats on the water; numbered and coloured [caps](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Water_polo_cap); and two goals, which either float in the water or are attached to the sides of the pool.

The game is [thought to have originated](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_water_polo) in Scotland in the mid-19th century; specifically, [William Wilson](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Wilson_(aquatics)) is thought to have developed the game in the 1870s as a sort of "water [rugby](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rugby_football)". The game further developed with the formation of the [London Water Polo League](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=London_Water_Polo_League&action=edit&redlink=1) and has since expanded, becoming popular in parts of Europe, the United States, Brazil, China, Canada and Australia.