



The history and principles of underwater rugby

Press Release Number 4

14 August 2011



What is underwater rugby?

A short film
History of the sport
The rules

Links

Schedule of the competition

The 9th CMAS UWR Championships Helsinki 2011 official website

Follow the Championships on

facebook

twitter #uwrwc11



Contacts

Hannu Ahonen
hannu.ahonen@gmail.com
Jari Hovikorpi
office@sukeltaja.fi
Davrell Tien (media)
davrellt@hotmail.com

+358 40 580 5063

Underwater rugby is the only true 3-dimensional team sport in which both ball and players can move in any direction.



Unterwasserrugby, as it is known in German, was invented in Köln, Germany in 1961 and became popular in the Nordic countries under the name, UW-Polo. In 1978, prior to the first European Championship between Germany and the Nordic countries, the rules were codified to eliminate

variation in the number of players and regulation of above surface play. Since then the game has evolved and grown in popularity. By the 2007 World Championships in Bari, Italy 13 nations were represented.

Underwater rugby is played in a pool between 12 and 18 meters in length and 8 and 12 meters in width. Depth ranges between 3.5 and 5 meters. A game consists of two 15-minute halves with a five-minute half-time break. Each team is allowed a single 60 second time out per game. The game clock stops for any infringements called by the referee during the game.

Each team has 15 players, 12 of whom play. The remaining three are held in reserve as possible substitutes. During the game 6 players are in the pool while 6 others are on land. The six in play can exit the water at any time for an exchange with a player on deck.

The players wear fins, a diving mask and snorkel. A plastic ball filled with salt water is used to score a goal. The goals, baskets made of steel, are placed on the bottom of each end of the pool. Prior to the start of play, 6 players enter the water. Each must keep one hand on the wall at their end of the pool until the signal to begin play.

The ball lies on the bottom in the middle of the pool. When the referee sounds the buzzer both teams race to gain possession of the ball. There are different positional configurations but

generally a team has two forwards (center/right), two backs and two left wing/goalkeepers. Teams strive to maintain possession of the ball and score by overpowering and outwitting their opponents. Successful underwater rugby requires a mixture of individual skills, such as ball handling, and teamwork, both strategic and tactical. Underwater rugby is a physically demanding sport. Speed, maneuverability and apnea (suspension of external breathing) are all part of the contest.



Players are not allowed to jam their shoulders into the mouth of the goal. A player may position herself over the opponent's basket, blocking the goalie from taking her position.

Underwater rugby is a contact sport with a fairly simple set of rules. A player who possesses the ball can attack any other player. The ball holder may also be attacked. Kicking, hitting, striking the head, strangling or playing the ball above the surface can be punished by a warning, free-throw or a two-minute penalty. If a referee judges that an almost certain goal was stopped, a penalty in the form of a free-throw is awarded. Infringements of the rules are judged by three referees, two in the water and one on deck.

The Championships

Competition in underwater rugby ranges from local club level to national elite. There are national, zonal and world titles. There are also national championships for under-21 teams.

Underwater Rugby is played by all ages, shapes and sizes. Quite a few national team players have had careers spanning over 20 years. The longevity of underwater rugby players in contrast to athletes in sports that involve running is due to low stress on major joints. Underwater rugby teams that play together over a number of years can improve by synchronizing routines. Since the means of communication beneath the surface are limited, effective passing relies on predictable patterns of movement.



Davrell Tien

Press Secretary

9th UW Rugby World Championships Helsinki 2011

Davrell Tien

<http://www.uwr-finland2011.fi/>

+46 708 83 41 31