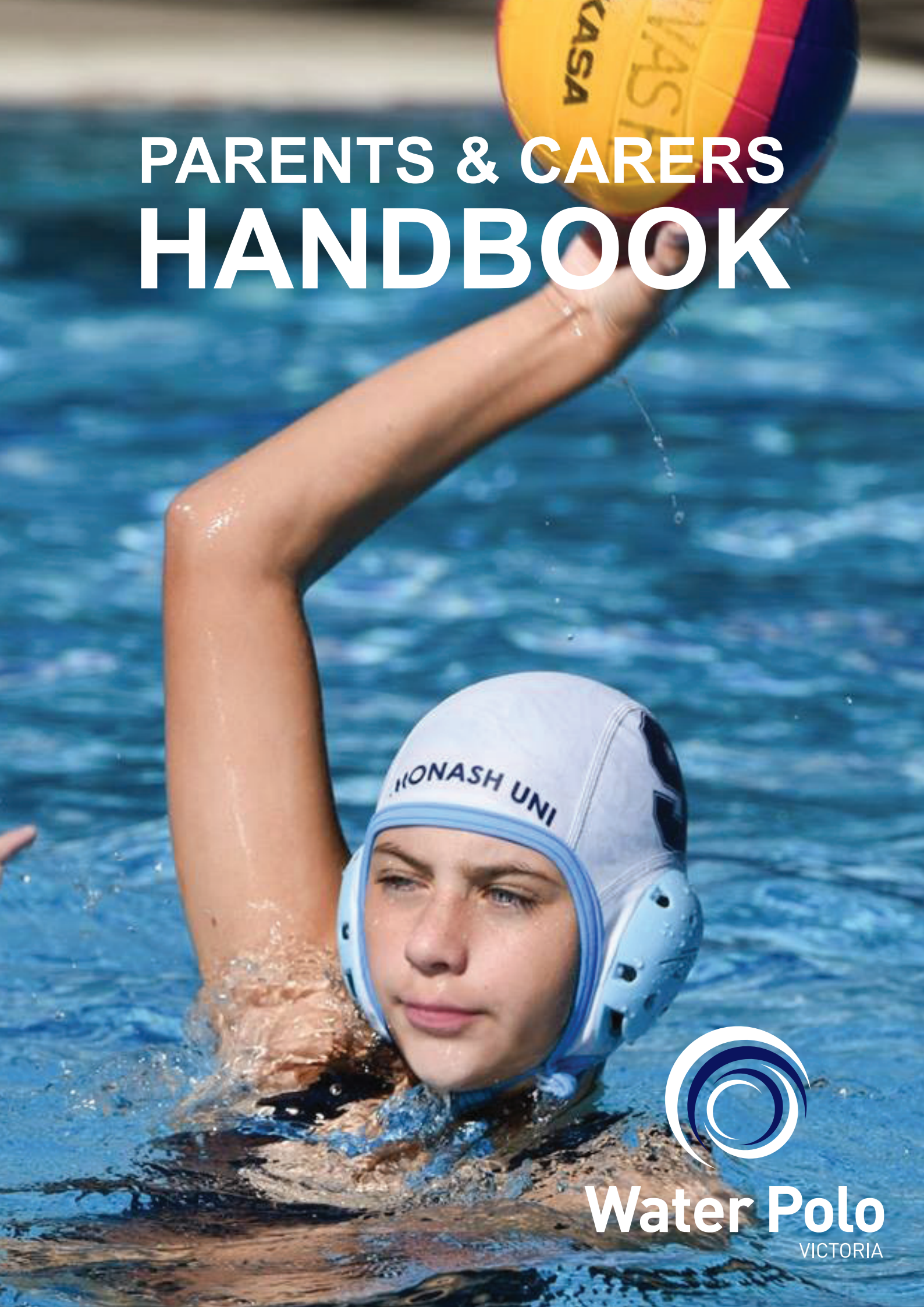


PARENTS & CARERS HANDBOOK



Water Polo
VICTORIA



Water Polo

VICTORIA

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About us

Water Polo Victoria (WPV) is the governing body for water polo in Victoria. Each Victorian player is a member of their water polo club, which in turn is a member of Water Polo Victoria. Water Polo Victoria is affiliated with the national governing body for the sport, Water Polo Australia



Above all else, Water Polo Victoria and its stakeholders are about providing an opportunity to be involved in this great sport, in a fun, safe and supporting environment, enjoying sporting excellence and developing important life skills.



Welcome to the water polo community!

Water polo is a great sport for your child, whether they want to compete, get fit or just have fun.

Water Polo Victoria believes every Victorian child should have the opportunity to participate in water polo regardless of gender, age, ability, sexuality, cultural background or religion. As a parent, you can be confident that that our water polo community at all levels is committed to being child safe by increasing safeguards for children, eradicating discrimination and promoting the important role water polo and aquatic sports can play in the lives of all Victorians. Water Polo Victoria encourages you to work positively with your club and coach to best understand your child's particular needs and circumstances.

Each new member under the age of 14 will receive a new member kit. As part of the kit you will receive the following:

- A bag to keep your child's equipment in
- The parents' handbook to answer any questions
- A junior-size water polo ball so everyone in the family can enjoy the sport.

We wish you the best as you begin your journey with your child and hope you make the most of the water polo experience by becoming involved. Remember clubs are like extended families and there are many rewarding roles that will help your child and your water polo club be the best they can be.

What do I get with my membership?

Your water polo membership gives you:

- a new member kit that includes parents' information and a mini water polo ball for all new members under 14
- access to state specific programs
- insurance cover (provided under the Water Polo Australia insurance scheme)
- a welcoming and inclusive club environment
- connection with online news including regular correspondence and information
- access to various levels of competition including the opportunity to attend tournaments
- exclusive members' discount deals from Water Polo Victoria partners.



Keeping water polo safe

The safety of children and young people in our sport is paramount. We want water polo to be fun, enjoyable and safe for all. Everyone in the water polo community has a role to play in ensuring that we keep our sport as safe and enjoyable as possible. Water Polo Victoria has developed a Safe Sport Framework. This confirms the shared responsibility we all have for keeping each other safe in water polo - children and adults alike.

Water Polo Victoria is committed to ensuring that everyone associated with water polo complies with the Safe Sport Framework and asks all people involved in the sport, assist us in promoting the best practice policies and procedures wherever possible. It is the responsibility of everyone involved in water polo to be aware of our responsibilities and expectations and to help safeguard each other and the children and young people involved in our sport.

Our commitment

Water Polo Victoria and its member clubs strive to:

- provide a safe environment for everyone involved in our sport;
- take an inclusive approach in our activities;
- ensure the safety and wellbeing of young people in our sport;
- develop and maintain an effective child safe culture across all our activities, programs and services;
- support all people in our sport protect young children who are involved in water polo; and
- promote and support the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and children with a disability.

That is why we take seriously our obligation to educate and inform everyone involved in our sport of their own responsibility to:

- protect and look after each other;
- protect and look after children and young people; and
- create and maintain a child-safe culture and a culture of inclusion and safety that is understood, endorsed and put into action by all.

Report any concerns

If at any time during your child's water polo experience you have concerns about your child's safety or welfare, please report your concerns immediately to an official of your club - such as a coach or administrator or a club Member Protection Information Officer. For serious concerns such as criminal conduct or child abuse please contact your Club and call Water Polo Victoria on 03 8560 2140.

Code of Conduct



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Everyone in water polo must:

- Use language around young people which provides clear direction, boosts their confidence, is positive and affirming and not in any way:
 - ◆ discriminatory
 - ◆ racist
 - ◆ sexist
 - ◆ derogatory or negative
 - ◆ threatening or intimidating
 - ◆ profane or sexual in nature or content.
- Only use social media and electronic communications to communicate with a young person on issues directly related to water polo activities and, wherever possible, copy such communication to the parent or carer. Further, such communication should never be used to arrange unauthorised social contact or include anything of a sexual nature
- Ensure that any physical contact with a young person is necessary and appropriate to the water polo related activity
- Never engage in any sexual behaviour whether involving physical contact or not with or in the presence of a young person
- Do not provide transportation for or engage in any social contact with a young person unless specifically authorised by that person's parent or carer
- Avoid unsupervised situations with young people
- Do not give gifts to a young person without approval from that person's parent or carer
- Not take any images of a young person unless:
 - ◆ Prior permission has been obtained;
 - ◆ It is directly related to participation in water polo;
 - ◆ The young person is appropriately dressed and posed; and
 - ◆ It is taken in the presence of another person in authority.
- Never allow overnight stays by a young person unless:
 - ◆ Prior permission has been obtained from the parent or carer and Water Polo Victoria or the young person's water polo club; and
 - ◆ The practices and behaviour during any such stay are consistent with the Safe Sport Framework and generally accepted community standards.
- Avoid one-on-one situations with a young person in a change room whilst balancing any requirement for supervision of a young person in a change room with their right to privacy
- Whilst carrying out any role in water polo, paid or otherwise:
 - ◆ Do not use, possess, supply or be under the influence of alcohol or any illegal, illicit or performance enhancing substance; or
 - ◆ Do not smoke any tobacco-related product.



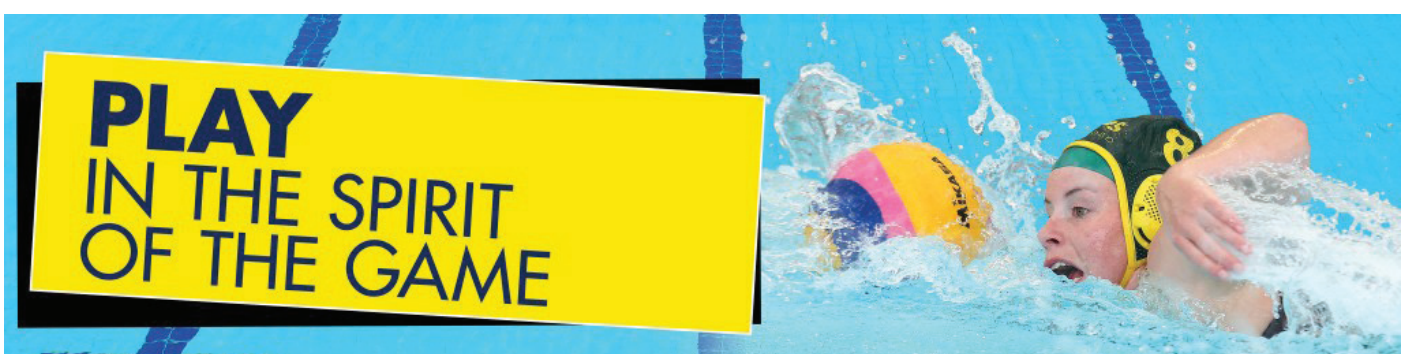
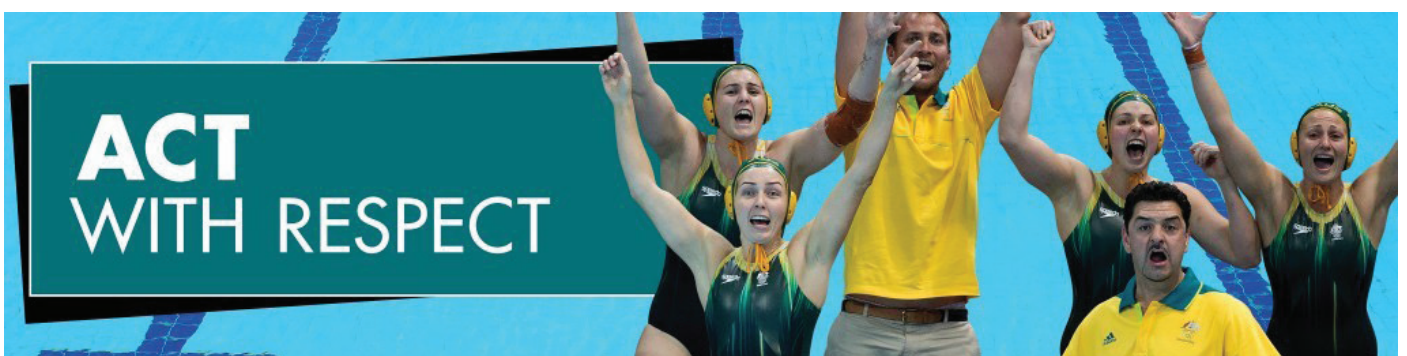
Think. Act. Play.

Water Polo Victoria recognises the importance of ensuring the values of water polo are upheld and have taken positive steps to ensure the Victorian water polo community are aware of our member protection policy, as well as our desire for all to enjoy the sport and play in the spirit of the game. Water Polo Victoria adopts **Think. Act. Play.**

There are three slogans that underpin the **Think. Act. Play.** program aimed at promoting positive behaviour and respect. The slogans include:

- **Think before you speak:** What you say and do shapes the culture of our sport. Your words can influence the way people are seen and treated by others, and the way in which people feel about themselves. It can also impact the way the community perceives our sport. Remember - what you say matters.
- **Act with respect:** Showing respect and treating everyone fairly is just as important as the game. No matter who you are or where you come from, treating each other with respect and dignity ensures everyone can enjoy the game. Whether you're playing, coaching or cheering from the sidelines - respect the referee's decision. Remember - to earn respect you must give it.
- **Play in the spirit of the game:** The way you play, coach and support says a lot about your character. Playing in the spirit of the game is more than just the rules. Players that keep their cool under pressure, even when things are not going their way, have a better chance of winning the game. Coaches that encourage sportsmanship get the best from their players. Parents that set a good example help their children enjoy the game. Remember - take responsibility for your actions and play in the spirit of the game.

The target groups for **Think Act Play** include players, coaches, officials, parents and spectators; essentially the entire Water Polo community. Whatever your role in the sport, remember that you are inspiring and influencing others, and what you say and do matters.



Water polo for juniors explained

The game of water polo is an international Olympic sport that is played by two teams of seven players, six field players and one goal keeper. The game involves treading water (using a kicking motion known as 'eggbeater kick'), players catching and passing the ball with one hand while being defended by opponents, and scoring by throwing the ball into a net defended by the goal keeper.

Ball: A water polo ball is constructed of waterproof material to allow it to float on the water. The cover has a special texture so it won't slip from the hands of a player. The size of the ball is different for men, women and juniors.

Caps: A water polo cap is used to protect the players ears and to identify them. Home team field players wear numbered light caps, and visiting team field players wear contrasting caps. Both goalkeepers wear red caps (numbered '1') and substitute goalies caps are numbered '13'.

Mouthguards: Payers must wear mouthguards to avoid accidental contact from the ball or other players.

Goals: Two goals are used. These can either be put on the side of the pool, or in the pool using floaters.

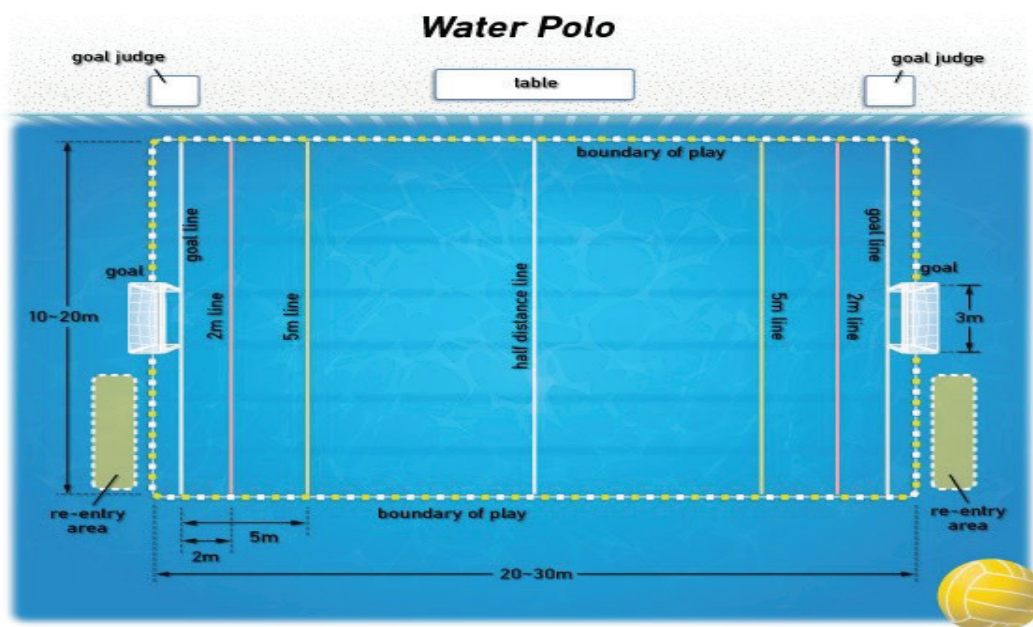
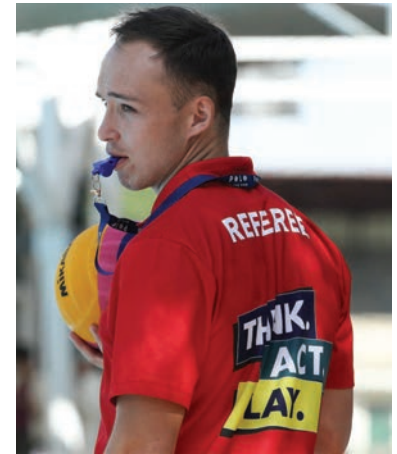
Scoring: A goal is scored when the ball crosses the goal line fully, having passed between the goal posts and under the bar.

Fouls: There are several different types of fouls the referee will not permit including; ordinary fouls, exclusion fouls, penalty fouls, and personal fouls. In the event of a foul the referee may award a free throw or penalty throw. When a foul leads to the awarding of a free throw, no shot on goal is permitted. When a foul leads to the awarding of a penalty, the penalty must be taken from the five metre line with one clean movement and with no hesitation. Players can only accumulate three fouls before being excluded from the game. If players are excluded for a foul they must swim to their team's exclusion box, rise to surface within the box then re-enter (on exclusion no timeframe is applied). After receiving a foul, the centre forward and the centre back must swim out allowing for a new centre forward.

Swimwear: Male players often wear swimming briefs. Female players must wear a one-piece swimsuit.

Referees: There are usually two referees who walk along the sides of the pool. They blow their whistle and indicate with their hands and arms the cap number of the goal scorer and/or the direction and type of the foul awarded.

Table officials: There should be a timekeeper and a secretary/recorder on the table to keep accurate records of the score and fouls awarded.



The basic rules

Prior to the game: There are a number of things coaches, team managers and referees look at including:

- Has the game sheet been filled out correctly, legibly and been signed?
- Are the players wearing the right coloured and numbered cap that corresponds to the game sheet?
- Has each team provided a table official and do they understand their role?
- Do we have the correct sized balls for the age group as well as some spares?

To start the game and each period: All players line up behind the goal line with heads touching the goal line rope and wait for the referee whistle. As players swim up the pool, the referee will drop the ball into the water in the middle on their side of the pool.

Modified Rule	12/U	14/U	Rationale
Goal size (max. recommended)	Junior goals	Full-size goals	Goal size increases with physical development (arm span)
Field size (min. recommended)	17m (L) x 15m (W)	23m (L) x 20m (W)	Recommended optimum but may vary depending on facility/pool
Pool depth - Players may not walk while touching the ball or jump off the bottom in attack or defence	Min 1.8m	Min 1.8m	Recommended optimum but may vary depending on facility/pool and player ability
Team roster – Min. and max. listed player numbers for a match	Min: 11 Max: 13	Min: 11 Max: 13	Encourages maximum usage of all players and limits 'bench' time
Players numbers - Players numbers in water per team (inc. goalkeeper):	7	7	
Game duration - 4 quarters	5 min quarters 2 min quarter break 4 min half-time	6 min quarters 2 min quarter break 4 min half-time	Shorter game times manage fatigue in young players. Increases with age
Shot clock	Not used	30 sec shot clock or change of possession	When not used, referee has discretion to change possession after 30 secs (min.) if no shot at goal attempted
Timeouts	Not used	Not used	Due to pool booking restrictions
Ball handling - Field players can swim with the ball but cannot: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • catch the ball with 2 hands • hit the ball with a clenched fist (goalkeeper excepted) • take the ball underwater • be inside the attacking 2m area unless behind the line of the ball 	Yes	Yes	Players practice using one hand to control the ball from first exposure to the sport and are aware of their position in the field
Free throw - When awarded, a player can play the ball by dropping it into the water, throwing it up in the air, swimming or passing it. The defensive player must move away from the person taking the free throw or they may be excluded. No shot on goal is allowed from a free throw. The penalty for breaching this rule is a turn over	Yes	Yes	Applies at all times to all parts of the field. Ensures all players develop skills rather than a team having 1 very good shooter who continually scores goals from the 5m line after a free throw
Corner throw - Awarded when goalkeeper deflects or throws ball over the goal line. If a defender throws ball over the goal line it is a corner. A corner is taken on the side of the pool where the ball went out, at 2m line	Yes	Yes	FINA Rules

The basic rules

Modified Rule	12/U	14/U	Rationale
Player game time	Each player on the team must play at least one quarter in first half of the game	Each player on the team must play at least one quarter in the game	Provides fair water time in every game for all players. Players transition from a participation-focused environment to a competition-focused environment
Contact	Minimal contact permitted	Allowed	Limitations on contact encourages participation and skill development without compounding game intensity through physical contact. Referee to award a free throw
Player rotation - Players must rotate positions in the water:	If a foul is given at CF/CB, both must swim out of 2m zone and allow a new player to take the CF position	None	Provides guidelines for coaches to ensure that all players have the opportunity to try each position and develop a wide range of skills
Exclusions – occurs in the case of a major foul	No timeframe for exclusions. Excluded player to swim to exclusion box, rise to the surface within the box, then re-enter game	20 seconds in exclusion box	Accommodates for less than official requirements and makes allowances for slower swimming speeds
Referee flexibility	Referees may provide instructions to players and allow advantage calls to maintain game flow	Referees to apply the rules as per FINA Sport Rules	A combination of quality coaching and refereeing will assist in the development of skills and understanding of the rules to ensure maximum participation and retention in the sport
Coaches - The coach is allowed to move up to the 5m line when their team is in attack and should return to the goal line when their team is in defence. The coach may ask questions of the referee	Yes	Yes	Provides opportunity for coaches to better communicate with players regarding field position and tactics to develop their skills
Other	WPV may from time to time adopt and publish local specific rules to suit available facilities at each venue		
Special Rules for 12/U			
Jumping off pool bottom - To cater for limited depth at the shallow end of the pool at Hawthorn Aquatic and Leisure Centre, referees will apply these local rules interpretations:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only the goalkeeper is allowed to jump off the bottom • If an <u>attacking</u> player jumps off the bottom for advantage, the ball will be turned over as a minor foul and a free throw awarded to the defending team • If a <u>defending</u> player jumps off the bottom for advantage, the attacking team will retain possession either as advantage or a minor foul called and a free throw awarded • If a <u>defending</u> player jumps off the bottom and <u>blocks a shot inside 5m</u>, the attacking team will be awarded a 5m penalty • For a player's <u>second offence</u> for jumping, the referee will <u>notify the coach</u> of this "second offence" • For a player's <u>third offence</u> for jumping, the referee will <u>exclude the player for the remainder of the game</u> – a replacement player will be allowed in the water when the excluded player gets to the exclusion box 		
Goal margin difference - Provides mechanism to reduce the occurrence of one-sided games and maximise players' enjoyment	<p>After a goal and if the goal margin is then <u>greater than 5</u> then leading team to move all players back to <u>defend from the 5m line</u></p> <p>If the goal margin comes <u>back to 3</u> then leading team may defend the <u>full length of the pool</u></p>		

Positive parenting tips

These tips can help keep water polo fun for not only parents for your young players too:

- Emphasise the benefits of water polo including fun, commitment, team work and self-discipline.
- Give continuous encouragement and never show disappointment over performance. You can always talk about effort, sportsmanship, process and what the coach had to say.
- Allow the coach to coach.
- Build friendships with other parents to make water polo competitions more fun for you.
- Volunteer where possible. Our sport relies heavily on our parents lending a hand.
- Throw the ball around with your family and join in on the fun.
- Reward effort.
- Show interest by asking questions about training, what is being worked on or what feedback has been received from the coach and attending competitions.
- Balance your interest with questions that include who your child made friends with, what funny things happened and how much fun it all was.
- Show them unconditional love no matter what.



How to get involved

Volunteer

Volunteers run water polo. From the table officials to the board members, all are volunteers and might have full-time jobs outside water polo. They might have kids in the sport (or used to have kids in the sport or be a kid in the sport) but most importantly - they have a love of the sport. Therefore, parents are water polo's secret weapon! They are the people who offer encouragement and support (financial, practical and psychological) that helps to initiate and then sustain a child's participation. Volunteering means that you have another avenue to have a positive impact in your child's athletic environment, but it also gives you a fun setting where you can meet other like-minded adults and make new friends. Here are some ways you can get involved:

- Join your child's water polo club board or committee
- Become a table official
- Become a referee
- Conduct fundraisers
- Be a team manager
- Become a coach
- Help your child's team with game preparation or administration duties

Get in contact with your child's water polo club to find out about how you can volunteer. Water Polo Victoria would like to thank all the parents who dedicate their time and effort to assist with their child's water polo club.



Frequently asked questions

How do I choose the right club for my child?

Finding the right club to suit your child can be difficult. Here are some important factors to look for in a club:

- The coaches, officials and volunteers have the right qualifications
- The club is implementing Water Polo Victoria's Safe Sport Framework
- The club has regular training sessions which encourage your child to do their best and give them opportunities to improve and achieve their potential
- The club provides an opportunity to play water polo competitively
- The club is a place for social interaction and the opportunity to develop great friendships (for both parents and players).

What equipment does my child need?

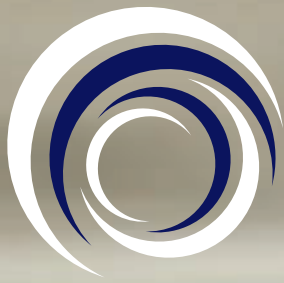
Not all equipment is required to be purchased by every water polo player and most clubs provide certain items for practice and games. Your child's coach will be able to tell you exactly what your water polo player needs. Here are some suggested items for the upcoming season:

Mouthguard: Mouth guards protect the players' teeth from the ball and the contact of other players. Water Polo Victoria has a policy which makes the wearing of mouthguards compulsory during matches conducted by the association.

Swimwear: The type of swimsuit necessary depends on the gender of the player and whether you're playing for fun or in competition. You want a suit that fits tightly and won't cause drag in the water so that you can move quickly. In official competition, males wear swimming briefs and females wear one-piece swimsuits that zip up the back and don't have traditional swimsuit straps. There is a vast range of swimwear available that comes in different styles, colours and materials. Always check with your club to confirm suitable attire for competitions.

What pathways are available for my child?

Your child can participate in national club championship teams and tournaments from 12 & Under to 18 & Under. Additionally, there is a state competition, Victorian school tournaments for primary and secondary students, high performance camps, state league competitions and ultimately National team squads, selections and competitions.



Water Polo

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