



**SEA WOLF WATER POLO CLUB  
GUIDELINES – COACHES, PLAYERS, MANAGERS, PARENTS, CO-ORDINATORS  
APRIL 2017**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This document is designed as a guideline for all Sea Wolf stakeholders. It sets out the obligations and expectations that the Club has of the stakeholders, and how they should engage.
- 1.2 This document has been adopted as a policy by the Committee of Sea Wolf Water Polo Club.
- 1.3 The purpose is to provide guidelines for all stakeholders around their expectations and ensure there is consistent communication between all parties. This ensures that everyone can participate in the sport in a positive and rewarding manner.
- 1.4 Water polo is a sport that enjoys strong parental support, not only in supporting their children at training and games, but also as a self-funded sport, water polo relies heavily on parents for funding and fundraising. As such parents are often quite involved with the sport. Parents want the sport to provide development, enjoyment and motivation for their children.
- 1.5 Some coaches and all officials are volunteers who want to contribute back to the sport. They also see a motivating, rewarding experience, often linked to skill and personal development in a variety of areas.

**2. STRUCTURE**

- 2.1 The Sea Wolf Committee is elected at the Annual General Meeting each year.
- 2.2 The Sea Wolf Committee appoints a Head Coach.
- 2.3 The Sea Wolf Committee appoint various roles associated with an age group and specific teams:
  - Head Coach
  - Age Group Coordinators
  - Team Managers
- 2.4 The Sea Wolf Head Coach is responsible for the performance of the coaches.



- 2.5 Sea Wolf has a Team Selection Policy which clarifies the Club's position in regards to the selection of team members and expectations around playing time etc. This is published on the Sea Wolf website.
- 2.6 A formal review process is being developed to evaluate the performance of a team following a championship. Various stakeholders associated with the team will be engaged for their evaluation and feedback, to be measured against the expectations and targets for that team.
- 2.7 Sea Wolf has adopted a complaints process and the Sea Wolf Committee appoints a Complaints Officer to independently handle a complaint made to the Club. In the first instance the Grade Coordinator for the age group will be the first point of call and will liaise with the Committee's Complaints Officer.

### **3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 Sea Wolf is involved in promoting and developing the sport of water polo in New Zealand. This involves organising teams and entering various leagues and competitions for Sea Wolf registered players.
- 3.2 Sea Wolf recognises the success and development of the sport, the Sea Wolf Club and the Sea Wolf players. This success is heavily dependent on both a good relationship and engagement between all stakeholders of the game. This includes:
  - Players
  - Coaches
  - Managers/Coordinators
  - Referees
  - Games Officials e.g. table
  - Parents
  - Sea Wolf Committee
  - New Zealand Water Polo
  - The Community
- 3.3 Without officials supporting teams and competitions, Sea Wolf cannot function. Sea Wolf seeks to retain and develop a high calibre of officials supporting the game. It is recognised that as officials are effectively resourced through volunteers, there are instances where we have limited resources and capabilities. This includes:
  - Coaches
  - Referees
  - Managers/Coordinators
  - Game Officials



- 3.4 Players participate in water polo seeking an experience that is enjoyable, fun and rewarding. Sea Wolf expects all stakeholders to treat the players with respect and not to denigrate, abuse or otherwise compromise their enjoyment of the game.
- 3.5 As many of the coaches and referees develop from within the playing base of the Club, we recognise that many are young and developing adults, often with a desire to develop skills and capabilities as young adults.
- 3.6 All stakeholders should recognise that officials volunteer their time to the Club and the sport, and are wanting to contribute in a constructive manner. Officials seek an environment where stakeholders support them.
- 3.7 It is important that the roles and responsibilities of the various stakeholders associated with a team are clear, understood and respected by all stakeholders.
- 3.8 It is critical that there are clear communication lines between all stakeholders to ensure that stakeholders are informed and there is consistency across the teams representing Sea Wolf.

#### **4. COACHES**

- 4.1 The Coach is ultimately responsible for the team's performance.
- 4.2 The Head Coach and the Team Coach are the decision makers in regards to team selection and playing the game.
- 4.3 The Head Coach and the Team Coach will follow the Sea Wolf Team Selection Policy.
- 4.4 The Sea Wolf Team Selection Policy provides the guidelines around the team and playing strategy. If the Club determines that this policy is to change for any particular reason this must be communicated to the stakeholders.
- 4.5 The Coach, Manager or Coordinator will address all players and parents prior to an event (league, championship or specific event) and communicate their approach and strategy towards the coaching and management of the team. This should be done face to face but can be done via email. The important aspect is that the Coach and Manager must communicate their views and approach with both the parents and the players.
- 4.6 Sea Wolf encourages the Coach to hold a debrief with the team after a game/event. The Coach or Manager may decide to involve the parents or alternatively specifically exclude parents.



- 4.7 Where parents are not involved in a debrief, the Coach should also provide some feedback to parents either face to face or via email at the conclusion of an event or tournament.
- 4.8 All decisions surround the coaching of the team and playing times rest with the Coach.
- 4.9 The Coaches decisions are final and should not be challenged by any player or parent.
- 4.10 Coaches should communicate with players in a professional manner. Abusive or excessive bad language will not be tolerated. It is recognised that a Coach must deliver messages to a team before, during and after a game in a manner that is appropriate for the players.
- 4.11 If a player wishes to seek advice or explanation surrounding a decision or their play, they can do so via the Coach or the Manager.
- 4.12 If a parent wishes to comment or provide feedback, this must be communicated through the Manager. The parents should not engage directly with the Coach. The issue which frequently arises is that parents become too involved and it becomes an interference and distraction for the Coach.

## **5. MANAGERS**

- 5.1 The primary role of the Manager is to coordinate activities around a team.
- 5.2 This embraces such areas as:
  - Communicating training and playing obligations e.g. location, times, uniform etc.
  - Ensuring players arrive on time and updating the coach accordingly
  - Ensuring requests for payment of fees etc. are communicated
  - Arranging logistics
  - Updating scores and providing formal and informal reports where appropriate
  - Primary point of contact with parents
  - Primary point of contact with players outside of game preparation and playing
- 5.3 The Manager is the primary link between the team and the parents. The Manager will usually be of a similar age/maturity as the parents.
- 5.4 Communication from parents must be directed to the Manager on any aspect of the team.
- 5.5 The Manager is responsible for timely communication about the team and for establishing points of contact to ensure parents and players are informed.



5.6 If a Manager is not appointed, the age group coordinator assumes the role of the Manager.

## **6. COORDINATORS**

6.1 The primary role of the Coordinator is to coordinate activities around an age group surrounding a competition or event but outside of the game/competition itself, where it applies to multiple teams from Sea Wolf.

6.2 The Coordinator is largely involved in preparation of multiple teams with regards to ensuring the Manager and Coaches are aware of the specific details associated with an age group around a particular event or competition. This can include logistics planning, budgets and providing contact details.

6.3 Where a Coordinator is not appointed, the Manager assumes these duties.

## **7. PLAYERS**

7.1 The players will receive communication and decisions (verbal or written) from the Coach and/or Manager in regards to direction re training, playing, uniform, travel and other logistics.

7.2 Players will behave in accordance with any Code of Behaviour required by the competition organisers, Sea Wolf Club or the team.

7.3 Players will not challenge decisions made by the Coach, Manager, Coordinator or other officials.

7.4 A player may, after a game, seek further explanation or advice/guidance around particular decisions of the Coach. This should be done privately (not in a team meeting).

7.5 Should a player wish, a question can be directed to the Manager who has an obligation to then ensure feedback is provided either directly from the Coach or via the Manager.

7.6 Sea Wolf will not tolerate inappropriate behaviour by a player or behaviour which challenges an appointed official. If deemed appropriate, the official may determine the player is withdrawn from an event.

## **8. PARENTS**

8.1 Sea Wolf welcomes and encourages the involvement, support and participation by parents in their children's events.



- 8.2 Parents must respect the roles and responsibilities of the various officials associated with the Club and specific teams. This includes:
- Sea Wolf Committee
  - Sea Wolf Head Coach
  - Team Coach
  - Team Manager
  - Grade Coordinator
  - Competition Officials
- 8.3 There have been instances with water polo clubs in New Zealand, where parents have become too involved with the team and expressing personal views on how the team is coached. Sea Wolf wants to ensure this does not happen and ensure parents understand and respect the roles and responsibilities of the officials.
- 8.4 Water polo is a complex game in addition to being a contact sport. Referees decisions may sometimes be seen as confusing. Parents may not understand all the rules or the interpretation of the rules and resultant decisions of the referee. Parents must refrain from abusing the referee or other officials involved in games.
- 8.5 If parents have a concern they must communicate that directly to either the Team Manager or the Age Group Coordinator. Parent should not communicate directly with the Coach before, during or immediately after a game around the particular coaching strategy or handling of a player.
- 8.6 The Manager will communicate with the Coach for their consideration and response. The Manager will provide feedback to the parent.
- 8.7 The bench can only contain the named players and the named three officials in accordance with the rules of the event. This includes the named coach, Assistant Coach and Manager as listed on the official team sheet.
- 8.8 Should any stakeholder feel an issue has not been adequately addressed, Sea Wolf has a Complaints Process headed by a Complaints Commissioner. This ensures that issues can be effectively and efficiently handled on behalf of the Sea Wolf Club. The Complaints Commissioner will report back to the Chairperson of Sea Wolf. The Chairperson or Secretary of Sea Wolf will provide feedback and any decisions back to the person laying the complaint.
- 8.9 Sea Wolf will not tolerate behaviour from any stakeholder which compromises the roles of the Coach, Manager or any official.