



Player Safety

Alberta Water Polo Association is dedicated to our core values and committed to providing a positive, fun, healthy, and safe environment for all of our members which includes athletes, officials, coaches and volunteers. This requires the appropriate education, resources, and training to ensure the safety of those within the water polo community.

Water polo is a physically demanding sport. As in any sport, injuries are likely to occur. Athletes, coaches, and parents all have a part in preventing, recognizing, and managing injuries. An awareness and education of the rules is needed to define what is a part of the game and what is an athlete pushing the limit to gain an advantage. Any act that is intended to harm another player is not acceptable. While pushing is a part of the game, kicking and punching with malicious intent or any act deemed a brutality will not be tolerated. With this being said there are instances where athletes, many of whom are young and growing into their bodies, may accidentally hurt another player. It is important that parents and coaches recognize the difference between intentional actions and accidental contact in order to not amplify situations that may arise.

EDUCATION. Know the rules of the game. Ordinary fouls, exclusion fouls, and penalty fouls will happen. Incidents above and beyond these may happen and referees and AWPA officials are responsible for filing incident reports in these instances. In some out of the ordinary circumstances coaches or athletes may submit incident reports after a game. However, these are usually exceptional circumstances and should not be considered the norm and should follow proper procedures. Additionally, anyone who uses foul language, or is disrespectful to officials will be excluded from the game.

RESPONSIBILITIES. **Coaches** are responsible to teach athletes the appropriate skills of the game and reinforce that violent behavior is not acceptable. Protecting the ball, and gaining an advantage must be taught within the rules of the game. **Referees** are in place to control the flow of the game. **Athletes** should be expecting that there will be some physicality in the water given the nature of the sport. Athletes can ensure that appropriate measures are taken to help protect themselves and others both in and outside of the pool. Nails are to be trimmed prior to any competition. Similar to wrestling wearing tight suits helps prevent suit grabbing and game caps are worn to help protect the sides of the head. **Spectators** are to provide a positive environment with keeping in mind that the different levels of the leagues is to develop skills and practice what is being taught in the club training. Provincial league play is a space where everyone should feel that they can learn and develop. Parents are also encouraged to take the Respect in Sport program.



TRAINING. Opportunities are available for all members to participate in various clinics and professional development. All clinics that Alberta Water Polo puts on, will be listed on our website under 'calendar' and events. Members are encouraged to participate in the online minor officials training tool to help understand the rules. Referees have requirements and levels of games that they can officiate. There are evaluations that are required before a referee can move to the next level of games. It is important to remember that referees are also developing and learning during provincial league games. Coaches are also required to have certain levels of certification and take the Respect in Sport module.

Links/Resources

[Safe Sport](#)

[Respect in Sport](#)

[Concussions](#)