



## CODE OF CONDUCT

Approved January 19, 2026

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Water Polo West has developed this Code of Conduct for the benefit and protection of individuals associated with Water Polo West.

### Definitions

1. In this Policy:
  - a. **Bylaws** means the duly approved bylaws of WPW as may be amended from time to time
  - b. **Case Manager** means a neutral third party assigned to review Complaints and assist with hearing procedures and administration
  - c. **Code** means the Code of Conduct forming Part I of this policy as may be amended from time to time
  - d. **Complainant** means the person alleging a potential violation of WPW's Code of Conduct or other applicable WPW policies
  - e. **Complaint** means a report by an individual or group delivered to WPW about a potential violation of this Code of Conduct or other applicable WPW policies
  - f. **Hearing** means the procedure by which Complaints are adjudicated before a Panel in accordance with the Disciplinary Procedure
  - g. **Member** means any member club affiliated with Water Polo West as defined in bylaws.
  - h. **Participant** means all athletes, coaches, managers and volunteers affiliated with any member as defined in the Bylaws as well as all individuals employed by, engaged in activities with, or in attendance at events sanctioned by WPW, including but not limited to: athletes, coaches, convenors, facilitators, officials, volunteers, managers, persons affiliated with WPW member clubs, directors and employees of WPW, parents/guardians of youth athletes and spectators
  - i. **WPC** means Canadian Water Polo Association Inc. d.b.a. Water Polo Canada
  - j. **Water Polo West or WPW** means Water Polo West Assn.

### Purpose

2. To ensure a safe and positive environment at all WPW programs, activities, and events by providing minimum standards of appropriate behaviour consistent with WPW's values including, but not limited to: sportsmanship, equality, inclusion, fairness, participation, teamwork and fun.
3. WPW prohibits unlawful discrimination and is committed to ensuring everyone is treated with dignity and respect.

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### **Application of the Code of Conduct**

4. The Code applies to participants' conduct during WPW business, programs, activities, and events including, but not limited to: competitions, tournaments, matches, games, practices, tryouts, training camps, meetings and travel, associated with WPW.
5. The Code also applies to participants' conduct outside of WPW business, activities, and events when such conduct adversely affects relationships within WPW (and its work or sporting environment) or when it is detrimental, or perceived to be detrimental, to the image and reputation of WPW. Such applicability will be determined by WPW at its sole discretion.

### **Responsibilities**

6. All participants are responsible for maintaining and enhancing the dignity and self-esteem of other participants and individuals by:
  - a. Demonstrating respect to all people and classes of people regardless of physical characteristics, athletic ability, age, colour, race, citizenship, ancestry, place of origin, religion, mental or physical disability, family status, marital status, socioeconomic status, gender identity or expression, sex or sexual orientation.
  - b. Focusing comments or criticism appropriately and avoiding public criticism, or largely distributed digital criticism, of athletes, coaches, organizers, volunteers, employees, or other participants,
  - c. Treating all referees and officials with respect, particularly underage referees and officials,
  - d. Consistently demonstrating a spirit of sportsmanship, leadership, integrity, and ethical conduct
  - e. Not engaging in discrimination within the meaning of the *Human Rights Code*, R.S.B.C. 1996, c. 210, as may be amended from time to time
  - f. Acting, when appropriate, to correct or prevent practices that are unjustly discriminatory
  - g. Consistently treating individuals fairly and reasonably
  - h. Ensuring adherence to the rules of water polo and the spirit of those rules
7. All participants are responsible for refraining from behaviour that can be considered harassment, violence, and sexual harassment.
8. **Harassment** means any comment or conduct directed towards an individual or group – both face-to-face and electronically - which is offensive, abusive, racist, sexist, degrading, or malicious. Types of behaviour that constitute harassment include, but are not limited to:
  - a. Written or verbal abuse or threats
  - b. The display or circulation of material which is offensive or which one ought to know is offensive in the circumstances
  - c. Offensive remarks, jokes, comments, innuendo, or taunts
  - d. Leering or other suggestive or obscene gestures
  - e. Psychological abuse including abuses of power and trust

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- f. Condescending or patronizing behaviour which is intended to undermine self-esteem, diminish performance or adversely affect social conditions
  - g. Practical jokes which cause awkwardness or embarrassment, endanger a person's safety, or negatively affect performance
  - h. Any form of bullying
  - i. Any form of hazing where hazing is defined as potentially humiliating, degrading, abusive, or dangerous activity expected of a junior-ranking athlete by a more senior teammate, which does not contribute to either athlete's positive development, but is required to be accepted as part of a team, regardless of the junior-ranking athlete's willingness to participate. This includes, but is not limited to, any activity, no matter how traditional or seemingly benign, that sets apart or alienates any teammate based on seniority on the team
  - j. Unwanted physical contact including, but not limited to, touching, petting, pinching, or kissing
  - k. Behaviours such as those described above that are not directed towards a specific individual or group but have the same effect of creating a negative or hostile environment
  - l. Retaliation or threats of retaliation against an individual who reports violations of this Code or other applicable WPW policies to WPW
9. **Violence** means the exercise of physical force by one person against another that causes or could cause physical injury; an attempt to exercise physical force against an individual that could cause physical injury; or a statement or behaviour that is reasonable for a person to perceive as a threat to exercise physical force against them that could cause physical injury. Types of behaviour that constitute violence include, but are not limited to:
- a. Verbal threats to attack
  - b. Sending threatening messages or emails
  - c. Making threatening physical gestures
  - d. Brandishing or wielding a weapon
  - e. Hitting or other forms of intentional unwanted touching
  - f. Throwing objects
  - g. Any attempt to engage in the type of conduct outlined above
10. **Sexual Harassment** means unwelcome sexual comments and sexual advances, requests for sexual favours, or conduct of a sexual nature, either face-to-face or electronically. Types of behaviour that constitute sexual harassment include, but are not limited to:
- a. Sexist jokes or comments of a sexual nature
  - b. Display or circulation of sexually offensive material
  - c. Sexually degrading words used to describe a person
  - d. Inquiries or comments about a person's sex life
  - e. Unwelcome sexual flirtations, advances, or propositions
  - f. Unwanted physical contact of a sexual nature

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### **Doping and Drug Use**

11. Participants must abstain from the non-medical use of drugs or the use of performance-enhancing drugs or methods. More specifically, WPW adopts and adheres to the Canadian Anti-Doping Program. Any infraction under this Program will be considered an infraction of this Code and may be subject to further disciplinary action, and possible sanction, pursuant to the Disciplinary Procedure. WPW will respect any penalty enacted pursuant to a breach of the Canadian Anti-Doping Program imposed by any other sport organization.
12. Participants must refrain from associating with any person for the purpose of coaching, training, competition, instruction, administration, management, athletic development, or supervision who has incurred an anti-doping rule violation and is serving a sanction involving a period of ineligibility imposed pursuant to the Canadian Anti-Doping Program and/or the World Anti-Doping Code and recognized by the Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport.

### **Inappropriate Behaviour**

13. Participants must avoid behaviour considered to be inappropriate. Particularly, participants must:
  - a. Refrain from the use of power or authority in an attempt to inappropriately influence another person
  - b. Not be in possession of or use any illegal substance and/or performance enhancing drugs

As well, participants are responsible for:

- c. Respecting the property of others and not wilfully causing damage
- d. Adhering to all applicable laws and regulations
- e. Promoting water polo in a constructive and positive manner
- f. If under the legal age to consume alcohol or cannabis in the location of a WPW sanctioned activity, not possessing or consuming alcohol or cannabis
- g. If over the legal age to consume alcohol or cannabis in the location of the WPW sanctioned activity, not supplying alcohol or cannabis to minors; avoiding the consumption of alcohol or cannabis in the presence of minors; and otherwise taking reasonable steps to responsibly consume alcohol or cannabis in a way that does not negatively affect the public image of WPW and the sport of water polo in British Columbia
- h. Complying, at all times, with the WPW's Bylaws, policies, procedures, rules, and regulations, as adopted and amended from time to time

### **Directors, Committee Members, Volunteers, and Staff**

14. In addition to ss. 9-16 above, WPW's directors, committee members, employees, volunteers, and staff have additional responsibilities to:
  - a. Function primarily as a WPW director, WPW committee member, volunteer, employee or staff member and not as a member of any other group or constituency

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- b. Act with honesty, integrity, and utmost good faith, and conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the nature of their responsibilities
- c. Ensure that WPW's financial affairs are conducted in a responsible and transparent manner
- d. Conduct themselves openly, professionally, lawfully and in the best interests of WPW
- e. Exercise the degree of care, diligence, and skill required in the performance of their duties pursuant to the laws under which WPW is incorporated
- f. Exercise discretion and respect the confidentiality of sensitive issues
- g. Be independent and impartial and not influenced by self-interest, outside pressure, expectation of reward, or fear of criticism
- h. Exhibit decorum appropriate to both the circumstances and position
- i. Be fair, equitable, considerate, and honest in all dealings with others
- j. Ensure that all Members are given a sufficient opportunity to express opinions, and that all opinions are given due consideration and weight
- k. Respect the decisions of the majority and resign if unable to do so
- l. Attend meetings and be diligent in preparation for, and participation in, meetings
- m. Know and understand WPW's Bylaws and policies
- n. Not engage in a sexual or intimate relationship with any athlete under 18 years of age, or a sexual or intimate relationship with any athlete over 18 years of age if in a position of power, trust, or authority over the athlete
- o. Comply with WPW's Bylaws and all applicable policies

### **Coaches**

15. In addition to ss. 9-16 above, coaches affiliated with WPW have additional responsibilities. The coach-athlete relationship is a privileged one and plays a critical role in the personal and athletic development of an athlete. Coaches must understand and respect the inherent power imbalance that exists in this relationship and must be extremely careful not to abuse it, whether intentionally or unintentionally. Thus coaches have additional responsibilities to:

- a. Ensure a safe environment by selecting activities and establishing controls that are suitable for the age, experience, ability, and fitness level of the athletes involved
- b. Prepare athletes systematically and progressively, using appropriate time frames and monitoring physical and psychological adjustments while refraining from using training methods or techniques that may harm athletes
- c. Avoid compromising the present and future health of athletes by communicating and cooperating with sport medicine professionals in the diagnosis, treatment, and management of athletes' medical and psychological treatments
- d. Support the coaching staff of a training camp, provincial team, or national team, should an athlete qualify for participation with one of these programs
- e. Provide athletes (and the parents/guardians of youth athletes) with the information necessary to be involved in the decisions that affect the athlete

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- f. Act in the best interest of athletes' holistic development as people
- g. Respect other coaches and persons attending WPW sanctioned events
- h. Treat all referees and officials with respect, including voicing game concerns to the Referee in Chief or otherwise appropriately
- i. Meet the highest standards of credentials, integrity and suitability, including but not limited to such considerations established by WPW
- j. Self-report any ongoing criminal investigation, conviction, or existing bail conditions, including those for violence, crimes involving minor, or illegal substances
- k. Under no circumstances provide, promote, or condone the use of drugs (other than properly prescribed medications) or performance-enhancing substances and, in the case of minors, alcohol, cannabis and/or tobacco
- l. Respect athletes participating with other clubs and, in dealings with them, not encroach upon topics or actions which are deemed to be within the realm of 'coaching', unless after first receiving approval from the coaches who are responsible for the athletes
- m. Not engage in a sexual relationship with any athlete under 18 years of age, or an intimate or sexual relationship with any athlete over 18 years of age if the coach is in a position of power, trust, or authority over the athlete
- n. Recognize the power inherent in the position of coach and respect and promote the rights of all participants in sport. This is accomplished by establishing and following procedures for confidentiality, informed participation, and fair and reasonable treatment. Coaches have a special responsibility to respect and promote the rights of participants who are in a vulnerable or dependent position and less able to protect their own rights
- o. Dress professionally, neatly, and inoffensively
- p. Use inoffensive language, taking into account the audience being addressed
- q. Comply with WPW's Bylaws and all applicable policies

### **Athletes**

16. In addition to ss. 9-16 above, WPW's athletes have additional responsibilities to:
- a. Report medical issues in a timely fashion, when such problems may limit their ability to travel, practice, or compete; or in the case of carded athletes, interfere with their ability to fulfill requirements under the Athlete Assistance Program
  - b. Participate and appear on-time, well-nourished, and prepared to participate to their best abilities in all competitions, practices, training sessions, tryouts, tournaments, and events
  - c. Honestly represent themselves and not attempt to participate in a competition for which they are not eligible by reason of age, classification, or other reason
  - d. Adhere to WPW's rules and requirements regarding clothing and equipment
  - e. Respect other athletes and individuals present at WPW sanctioned events
  - f. Act in a sportsmanlike manner and refrain from displaying violence, foul language, or inappropriate gestures to other athletes, officials, coaches, or spectators

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- g. Dress in a manner representative of WPW; focusing on neatness, cleanliness, and discretion
- h. Comply with WPW's Bylaws and all applicable policies and, when applicable, additional rules as outlined by coaches, league officials, or clubs

### **Officials**

17. In addition to ss. 9-16 above, WPW's officials have additional responsibilities to:
- a. Maintain and update their knowledge of the rules and rules changes
  - b. Work within the boundaries of their position while supporting the work of other officials
  - c. Act as an ambassador of WPW and its values
  - d. Agree to enforce and abide by national and provincial rules and regulations
  - e. Take ownership of actions and decisions made while officiating
  - f. Respect the rights, dignity, and self-worth of all individuals
  - g. Not publicly criticize other officials or any water polo club or association
  - h. Assist with the development of less-experienced officials and minor officials
  - i. Conduct themselves openly, impartially, professionally, and in good faith in the best interests of WPW, athletes, coaches, other officials, and spectators
  - j. Be fair, equitable, considerate, independent, honest, and impartial in all dealings with others
  - k. Respect the confidentiality required by issues of a sensitive nature, which may include ejections, defaults, forfeits, disciplinary procedures, appeals, and specific information or data about Members
  - l. Honour all assignments unless unable to do so by virtue of illness or personal emergency, and in these cases inform the assignor or association at the earliest possible time
  - m. When writing reports, faithfully set out the true facts and not attempt to advocate for or justify any decisions
  - n. Dress in proper attire for officiating
  - o. Comply with WPW's Bylaws and all applicable policies

### **Spectators and Parents/Guardians of Youth Athletes**

18. In addition to ss. 9-16 above, spectators and parents/guardians of youth athletes at WPW events have additional responsibilities to:
- a. Respect the decisions and judgments of officials, and encourage athletes to do the same
  - b. Encourage athletes to play by the rules and to resolve conflicts in a sportsmanlike manner without resorting to hostility or violence
  - c. Condemn the use of violence in any form
  - d. Never single-out or ridicule a participant
  - e. Provide positive comments that motivate and encourage participants
  - f. Understand that officials do not communicate with spectators and only speak to coaches and participants, so spectators and parents/guardians of youth athletes are encouraged to discuss their concerns with coaches after the match

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- g. Recognize that officials, organizers and staff act in good faith, to the best of their abilities and in the best interests of WPW, its members, the athletes, and the sport of water polo as a whole
- h. Support all efforts to remove verbal and physical abuse, coercion, intimidation and sarcasm
- i. Respect and show appreciation for the efforts of all competitors, coaches, officials and other volunteers
- j. Refrain from violence, foul language, or inappropriate gestures