



## HOW TO ARRANGE GAMES

Competition can come about in league play, head-to-head games, or in a tournament format. From a cost standpoint, the more matches your team can play in a given location, the less expense there is. Teams can play up to three games a day – but fatigue becomes more of a variable if there are more than two matches daily.

Later manuals will discuss how to organize your own league and tournament play; the information in this chapter covers how to organize a game against another team. The following steps provide an easy way to manage all of the details necessary to get your first game arranged.

1. Decide which teams you would like to and/or need to play. The normal procedure is to play both home and away with each team. Remember that travel is easily your biggest budgetary cost.
2. After deciding which teams you would like to play, contract their coaches to set up dates and times. Schedules must be coordinated with the pool directors to ensure access to the facilities. Confirm everything in writing with everyone concerned, keeping a copy of the scheduling memo sent to the other coaches and pool directors. Never assume that your communication with your opponent is final until you have confirmed your date(s) and time(s). Some collegiate and high school varsity programs prefer to issue contracts through their athletic departments. Regardless of the method, prevent misunderstandings and forfeits with written confirmations.
3. For all home games in Club competition, file a sanction form with USA WATER POLO at least 30 days prior to the game, listing the game time and site. This will cover the insurance for the teams and facility, provided the sanction requirements are met (these requirements are discussed in Chapter 2 Safety). A copy of the sanction form should be provided to the facility prior to the game.
4. Set up officials for the games by calling the officials' association in your area. Send the association a copy of your schedule, and they will ensure you have competent officials. Schedules should be submitted to them weeks in advance. If you do not know the association that serves your area, contact your USA WATER POLO district or zone chairman for assistance.

You are only required to provide officials for games taking place at your own pool. However, it is always prudent to discuss the topic with the opposing coach, when traveling to his/her site for a game. In addition to referees, at least three and preferably four desk officials should be provided to operate the table. One individual does the scorekeeping, another the shot clock, a third the game time, and a fourth the ejection time. (ref. Kalbus "Responsibilities of the Desk")

Payment of the officials can be handled in two ways and should be discussed with the referees before they arrive at the game. Officials can be paid in cash at the site, or your school or club may send them a check. Prompt payment of the officials will ensure their attendance in the future. Expect to pay a referee according to his rating, plus something additional for his travel, food, or both if s/he is coming from a distance or will miss meals due to the game schedule. Ratings are based on ability and are reviewed periodically by the association.

5. When hosting the game at your facility, locate the game equipment necessary. A brief listing of the equipment needed is given below.
  - Table and chairs for the desk officials, benches or chairs for teams
  - Scorebook and pencils
  - Game clock (horn and stop watch will suffice)
  - Scoreboard (blackboard works fine)
  - Shot clock (a bell and a stopwatch or basketball clock will work fine)
  - Desk flags: 1 red, 1 blue, and 1 white



- Cones to mark pool designations (goal line, halfway, two-meter, four-meter, seven-meter)
  - Program and rules description for fans
  - Game balls
  - 26 caps with numbers and ear guards (12 contrasting color plus 2 goalie caps)
6. When traveling to away games with young athletes, ensure that appropriate supervision is provided, either through coaches or chaperones. Permission slips for minors and emergency phone numbers of all athletes should be copied and distributed to the adults accompanying the team.
  7. Notify the local newspaper before and after the game to increase school and community support. Establishing a rapport with the press is very valuable for your team. Be sure to call whether winning, losing, or drawing. Press members respect coaches who can acknowledge the down times as well as the good times. Remember that press about your team, even when they lose, is better than no press at all!  
Include statistics naming the high goal scorers from each team, goalie saves, score by quarters, the final score, and any other noteworthy information. Be sure to identify yourself at the outset and be prepared with all of this information when you call, especially if you make contact with an answering machine. You are completely at the mercy of the reporter who answers the phone or listens to your message as to whether your team will receive print or not!

Be organized and plan ahead so that you can concentrate on coaching your team rather than dealing with administrative problems. Most of all have fun and do not let the details mar your positive attitude!