

USA WATER POLO – RETURN TO PLAY FOR CLUBS

Club Administrators:

Although the coronavirus has been affecting different parts of the country in different ways and will continue to do so, at this time, all USA Water Polo sanctioned events have been suspended and will remain so until further notice. Nevertheless, governmental authorities in your locality may relax the social distancing/shelter in place requirement so as to permit the resumption of at least some water polo related activities. USA Water Polo members and clubs should refer to the sources of publicly available information regarding the social distancing/shelter in place requirements applicable to their locality and, at a minimum, observe those requirements.

According to the United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee's Chief Medical Officer, although the young and healthy tend to have less severe cases of COVID-19, every case of this disease is potentially life-altering or deadly. At this time, there is no way of completely eliminating the risk of fatal infection.

While no precautionary measures can guarantee that participants in, or spectators at, water polo activities will not be exposed to, or contract, the COVID-19 virus, there are a number of publicly available sources of information regarding precautions that our members and clubs may elect to take in order minimize the risk of COVID-19 infection. Those sources include:

- The Federal Government's guidelines for "Opening Up America Again" issued on April 16, 2020 at [WhiteHouse.gov/OpeningAmerica](https://www.whitehouse.gov/openingamerica);
- The United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee's [USOPC Return to Training Guidelines & Coronavirus Updates](#);
- [The Aspen Institute Project Play: Coronavirus and Youth Sports](#); and
- [The Pool Management Group: How Do You Create a Safe Swim Environment With the Threat of COVID-19](#)

USA Water Polo does not endorse any particular program or source of information and urges our members and clubs to become as informed as possible regarding the precautions against spreading the COVID-19 virus that can be taken and to select those, in the judgment of our members and member clubs, that will best protect our members and their families under the particular circumstances under which they are contemplating a return to play. Also, our knowledge regarding the COVID-19 virus, and the best means of avoiding infection, is constantly changing. USA Water Polo does not assume any duty to update the information in this document as additional knowledge regarding the COVID-19 virus is obtained. The information in this document is intended to provide our members with general information. We urge our members to seek their own medical and legal advice that can be tailored to their individual circumstances.

As a reminder, in order for USA Water Polo's insurance to be available, all participants in your activities must be current USA Water Polo members, the activities must be supervised by a current USA Water Polo coach member, and a participation log should be maintained. Also, USA Water Polo's insurance does not cover activities conducted at unapproved locations, such as backyard swimming pools, lakes or the ocean. [Click here](#) for an insurance Q&A document from our insurance provider, RPS Bollinger.

Club Return to Play Guidelines

- No precautions that you may take to avoid exposing your members to the COVID-19 virus can guarantee that one or more of your members will not contract the COVID-19 virus at a club practice or competition. A release in favor of USA Water Polo of all claims, other than those for gross negligence, reckless or willful misconduct, is included within the membership agreement to

which all of our members agree when they become members. That document does not include a release of claims against USA Water Polo member clubs. Thus, we strongly recommend that you obtain a waiver and release of any claims that may be asserted as a result of your members contracting the COVID-19 virus prior to your club resuming water polo activities. A form of such a release is attached and can be accessed for approval by your members by logging into the member's USAWP account. Obtaining a release through the USA Water Polo website will ensure that USA Water Polo has a record of the release and that you do not need to worry about paper copies being lost or destroyed.

- You should ensure that each of your members knows that he or she is free to exercise his or her own judgment as to whether it is reasonably safe to return to play in your locality, as well as whether the circumstances under which your club elects to return to play provide adequate safeguards against the transmission of the COVID-19 virus.
- It is important that you communicate with your pool management to understand the facility's requirements and to ensure these requirements meet your local and state health regulations, as well as satisfying your independent judgment as to whether the facility permits you to implement reasonable safeguards against spreading the COVID-19 virus.
- Be aware that, although governmental restrictions may be eased over time, reasonable safety precautions should remain in place until the COVID-19 virus is eradicated; even if there is an effective vaccine or effective treatment for the coronavirus, there is no way of completely eliminating the risk of a serious or fatal infection. Those experiencing COVID-19 symptoms should not be allowed to participate. CDC guidelines, as they evolve over time, should be followed.
- Create a registration plan to control attendance and check-in to ensure you are meeting local guidelines, USAWP membership requirements and to permit contact tracing should one of your members contract the COVID-19 virus.
- Small group training sessions should continue to maintain social distancing practices as defined by the local or regional health or government agencies.
- Coaching can occur onsite, but coaches should maintain social distancing from all participants.
- Participants must reside in a city and/or county that has lifted restrictions in order to return to a training location that also has lifted restrictions. Participants that live in a city/county/state that have not lifted stay in place orders should not travel to facilities that have opened outside of the city/county/state.
- We highly recommend all players ease their way back into play, given the layoff from participating and competing. Practice plans should reflect the need to condition athletes back into playing shape.
- If a member has had a documented COVID-19 infection, you should obtain a note from the member's doctor indicating they are cleared to participate in training and no longer pose a risk of transmitting COVID-19 to others.

NOTE: As a club, you can institute additional modifications to your "normal" training program that are no less stringent than the local health regulations and facility requirements to provide additional protection for your members. A list of potential modifications is set forth below. As always, please be sure to communicate regularly with your club members.

Communication Reminders for your club families/members:

- Practice is resuming in accordance with state/local recommendations. Health and safety is the top priority. This means that we are relying upon our families being knowledgeable regarding the health of our members so that members who are ill do not come into contact with others, as well as complying with the risk minimization measures adopted by our club.
- Reinforcing the facility/pool requirements that athletes/parents must follow. For example, whether or not restrooms/locker rooms will be open and limitations on the use of other spaces within the facility.
- Reminding your members as to the new risk minimization rules that your club has implemented.

- Informing members as to any limitations that your club has imposed on the manner in which athletes can be dropped off for practice or picked up after practice.
- Making sure that parents and athletes are aware of your practice schedule to ensure that safety measures are being followed during practice, immediately before practice starts and after practice concludes.
- Ensuring that your members understand the procedures that you have implemented to ensure that your coaches and athletes maintain social distancing.
- If applicable, establishing rules regarding the conduct of parents of young athletes who need or want to remain on site during practice.
- Communicating to families the importance of maintaining CDC health guidelines at home and in everyday personal life.
- Regular and consistent communication with families on how your modifications to the old normal are working (or not working) for both your club and your members so that those modifications can be adjusted as needed.

Below please find examples of some modifications to athletic team protocols that we are seeing around the country. These are being provided to you as examples of things that you should consider as you return to play. USA Water Polo does not endorse or recommend any particular modification; each club should adopt those modifications best suited to its local governmental rules and regulations, the prevalence of the COVID-19 virus in its locality, the physical layout of its practice facility and its own judgment as to the risk of spreading the COVID-19 virus among its members.

POTENTIAL MODIFICATIONS

Preparing to Play:

- Avoid the use of public facilities to change – arrive at the pool in your suit.
- Bring your own equipment to practice, and avoid sharing (ex: balls, goggles, towels, water bottles).
- Try not to use the shared facilities, such as bathrooms, unless absolutely necessary. If you do use shared facilities, after each use, thoroughly wash your hands with soap and warm water.
- Where possible, avoid touching entry gates, fences, benches, etc.
- Before entering the pool, place your gear/backpack at a safe distance from other bags and people (at least 6 ft. apart).
- Maintain social distancing when on deck.
- Use face masks when possible.
- Utilize a registration/attendance process for participation and communication to ensure you are meeting local guidelines and USAWP membership requirements, as well as to facilitate contact tracing if a member contracts the COVID-19 virus.
- Have a communication plan in place to notify parents/families should you need to end practice early.
- Do not schedule practice sessions back to back; allow buffer time for one group to leave the facility before another enters.
- Remove tables, chairs and other unnecessary items that are likely to come into contact with multiple individuals and provide a surface from which the COVID-19 virus could be spread.

When Practicing:

- Swimmers should stay in separate lanes or 6 ft. or more apart.
- Do not make physical contact with others such as shaking hands, high fiving or hanging on the pool wall next to each other.
- Avoid passing with others, instead use individual practice skills & drills from the [USAWP Mobile Coach app – ODP Technical Skills](#).
- Limit the use of the goal/cage for shooting drills to one athlete at a time, with the athlete shagging his or her own balls.
- Do not share water bottles, towels or equipment with others

- Remain apart from other players when taking a break (eggbeater off the wall; separate interval groups, etc.)

After Playing:

- Leave the facility as soon as reasonably possible.
- Don't have group team meetings on deck.
- Do not use the locker room or changing area. Bring sweats or a bathrobe and shower at home.
- No extra-curricular or social activity should take place. No congregating after training.

Members should not be permitted to participate if they:

- are exhibiting any symptoms of the coronavirus: mild to severe respiratory illness with fever, cough and difficulty breathing, or other symptoms identified by the CDC.
- have been in contact with someone with COVID-19 in the last 14 days.

Admin Tools to View Waiver Forms

We have built out a section in your club admin profile that will allow you to view the members that have accepted the COVID-19 Return to Play Waiver and Release form. Please first [LOGIN](#) to your membership account. Upon first login, a pop-up will appear for you to accept the waiver. On your Member Home dashboard, you will have a grid listing with all new members and recent certifications. Click on the link to get full reports. These reports will allow you to view and export members that have completed the waiver and toggle between time periods:

The screenshot displays the admin dashboard with three main sections: 'memberships added', 'member certifications added', and 'member rtp certifications added'. Each section shows data for the period 5/01/2020 - 5/14/2020. The 'memberships added' section shows 'none'. The 'member certifications added' and 'member rtp certifications added' sections both show a 'SubTotal: 1' and 'Total Certifications: 1'. A 'Date Period' dropdown menu is open, showing various time periods, with 'This Month' selected. The background shows a 'TEST C' and 'STATISTICS' section.

| Section | Period | SubTotal | Total Certifications |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------|----------|----------------------|
| memberships added | 5/01/2020 - 5/14/2020 | none | - |
| member certifications added | 5/01/2020 - 5/14/2020 | 1 | 1 |
| member rtp certifications added | 5/01/2020 - 5/14/2020 | 1 | 1 |

Date Period: Last Year (selected: This Month)

TEST C STATISTICS

added 5/1/2019

memberships: 2

memberships: 2

certifications 019 - 9

n SubTotal: 2

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Updated Events Calendar

To view the events in our system that have been rescheduled, postponed, or cancelled; please visit USAWaterPolo.org and scroll over the "Events" navigation to view the updated event listings.