

Water polo information 2025

Whangaparaoa/Kingsway water polo has been operating successfully across our two schools for several years. The combination of two schools (and occasionally more) has allowed us to enter leagues and tournaments that our players would otherwise have missed out on, so we are very lucky to be able to work together for the enjoyment of our players. This information is to inform you about the upcoming 2025 season.

Waterpolo is an exciting sport, but it is very physically demanding. Water polo utilises a skill set that requires special training including above average swimming ability, treading water, wrestling/tackling without feet on the ground. It is also a contact sport which can make it difficult for new players to simply jump in and give it a go. The most common pathways into waterpolo are through flippa ball, swimming, or surf lifesaving.

A team consists of 5 players plus a goalie at Intermediate age groups, and 6 players plus a goalie at junior and senior age groups. The game is played in quarters, and each competition or tournament has a slightly different format for the length of each quarter. A team can be made of up to 13 players, however, we usually take teams of 11 or 12 so that players get more time in the pool and less time on the bench.

Because there is a safety element, it is important that co-ordinators and coaches are clear about players abilities before deciding on teams. Team placement is a collaborative decision between co-ordinators and coaches and is detailed in our selection policy. Safety really is paramount for this type of water sport and all team placements and selection policies are geared towards ensuring players are kept as safe as possible.

Leagues, tournaments and fees

The number of tournaments and weekly leagues on offer is considerably higher than for most other school sports and is very expensive due to the cost of hiring and staffing the pool. Costs for each age group are detailed below for various leagues and tournaments. Please note that costs are for 2024 and usually increase year on year. Whangaparaoa College (the host school) have a policy whereby fees are charged based on a minimum number of players (9 players for senior teams, 10 players for junior and intermediate teams) and any remaining money is refunded at the end of the season. This allows for any unforeseen costs

In the intermediate age teams, we occasionally get players pulling out, either through illness or injury, or because the player or parents have changed their mind. This can make it very difficult to run a tournament team and disadvantages others in the team if players pull out last minute. It is our preference to invoice year 7/8 parents for the season up front. This deters parents from opting out of tournaments and leaving the school with a shortfall and the team with insufficient numbers.

By the time players reach our year 9/10 juniors team, parents are aware of the commitment and likely costs. For both junior and senior teams, where we do not have sufficient numbers, we combine with other schools and in the past have had players join us from Wentworth and Pinehurst. For the 2025 season we are already in discussion with additional schools to ensure we have enough players to register both a boys and girls senior team. Junior and Senior teams will be charged a \$500 up front commitment fee before the season commences.

Links with Hibiscus Coast Water polo club

Many of our players, coaches, managers, and parents are currently, or have been, involved with Hibiscus Coast Water Polo and we have a good relationship with the club. The club runs the Sunday League at Stanmore Bay and the club tournament program. The club support our school teams, particularly the senior boys and girls teams by subsidising a training space in term 1 at the National Aquatic Centre and allowing the use of the training equipment for our other teams at Stanmore Bay Leisure Centre.

Because of our close ties, we are in a unique position to be able to facilitate interested beginner players into club teams where additional coaching, games and tournaments are on offer, particularly for year 7/8 players.

Equipment

Players pay for their own Whangaparaoa school togs which are ordered through Delfina in Australia. We get a discount if we order 5 or more pairs at a time, so we usually place one or two orders per year. With the shipping and service fees the boys togs cost \$70 and the girls togs cost \$120.

Balls and caps are provided.

Coaches

We have been fortunate to have several of our senior players put their hand up to coach the intermediate and junior teams. Because there is a safety aspect to water polo, coaches are always overseen by an adult co-ordinator – this decision is taken primarily so that if there is an incident at the pool, our coaches can be protected. An ‘incident’ could range from a parent making a complaint, to a serious injury. Having a supervising adult present means that our student coaches are not placed in situations that are difficult or where they can be blamed.

Intermediate (Y7/8) Water Polo 2025

Intermediate water polo is split into two groups – one group of players who are beginners (Beginner team) and one group of players who already play for a club team, or who have substantial swimming or previous water polo experience (Tournament team). We need to make this distinction because the size of the pool is different for the two groups and we would not expect beginners to cope at a tournament level with no prior experience. The Stanmore Bay pool is 15m x 12m (when set up for games on a Sunday) while a normal water polo pool is 25m x 20m (used for tournaments).

In the past, we have entered Y7/8 teams by school, so Whangaparaoa enters a team and Kingsway enters a team. We suspect that there may not be sufficient numbers in 2025 to enter as separate schools, but will look more closely at this at the end of term 1. Both the beginner and the tournament teams will be charged up front for the season when teams are finalised.

Beginners team

Beginner players take part in the following:

Year 7/8 water polo training is organised at Stanmore Bay pool once a week during terms 2 and 3 and is run by senior players.

Hibiscus Coast Sunday League runs in terms 2 and 3 on a Sunday afternoon. The year 7/8 team beginner team is entered into the intermediate schools league and plays against other school and club teams from the Hibiscus Coast. The intermediate teams are usually graded, so we are able to ensure that players are playing against teams of a similar ability. The pool where the Sunday games take place is significantly smaller than a normal sized pool.

Costs for year 7/8 beginners

Intermediate (year 7/8)	Term	Amount per team in 2024	Amount per player (approx. 10 players)
WGP admin fee	NA	NA	\$30
Hibiscus Coast Sunday League	Terms 2 and 3	\$1000	\$100
Approx total			\$130

Tournament team

The tournament team has a very busy season with weekly games and several tournaments. In previous years we have entered the year 7/8 tournament team in the B grade. The team take part in the following:

Year 7/8 waterpolo training is organised at Stanmore Bay pool once a week during terms 2 and 3 and is run by senior players.

Hibiscus Coast Sunday League runs in terms 2 and 3 on a Sunday evening. The year 7/8 team is entered into the intermediate schools league and plays against other school and club teams from the Hibiscus Coast. This is the perfect training ground for tournaments.

North Harbour Zone Day is usually scheduled for a day during the second week of June.

Tournaments

- Winter Festival is held over 4 days in the third week of June
- Tim Sonderer Memorial Trophy is held over 4 days in the third week of July
- AIMS games is a week long tournament for intermediate aged players will be held in Tauranga between August 30 and September 5 (we have not entered this tournament in previous years).
- North Island y7/8 tournament is held over 4 days in the third week of September

Costs and Dates for year 7/8 tournament team

Intermediate (year 7/8)	Location	2025 Dates	Amount per team in 2024	Amount per player in 2024 (10 players)
WGP admin fee	NA	NA	NA	\$30
Hibiscus Coast Sunday League	Stanmore Bay	Terms 2 and 3	\$1000	\$100

Zone day	Auckland	Term 2	\$65	\$6.5
Winter Festival	Auckland	Term 2, 12-15 June	\$1000	\$100
Tim Sonderer Memorial tournament	Auckland	Term 3, 24-27 July	\$1000	\$100
Year 7/8 North Islands	Auckland	Term 3, 20-23 Sept	\$1000	\$100
Van hire and diesel*	NA	1 x zone day + 6 x tournament days	\$910	\$90
AIMS games**	Tauranga	Term 3, Aug 30-Sept 5	\$10,000	\$1000
Approx total including AIMS games				\$1526.50
Approx total not including AIMS games				\$526.50

*The Auckland based tournaments cover 4 days from a Thursday to a Sunday. On Thursday and Friday the team usually book a school van. We have included costs for 7 x days of van use at \$65 hire fee per day, plus \$50 petrol per day

**We have not registered for the AIMS games in previous years because AIMS only allows for a single school to enter, not a combined team. The costs in this table are estimated from the costs for other sporting codes attending AIMS in 2024.

Junior (y9/10) water polo 2025

Junior water polo (Y9/10) runs across all 4 terms. The year is pretty packed for this team, so we need commitment up front for the whole year to make it work. Traditionally, this team performs really well winning the B grade of both the North Harbour League, coming 3rd in the Auckland College Sport League in 2024 and recently winning gold in the North Island Cup.

North Harbour League runs across all four terms of the year

- Training only is scheduled for term 1. We are allocated a weekly training time.
- Terms 2 and 3 involve one weekly game and one allocated training time.
- Term 4 includes a 'summer league'. This includes approximately 4 games over term 4 and a weekly training time and grades are allocated based on the results from the term 2 and 3 league.
- Entries for this league are on a rolling basis, so our team is automatically entered each year.

One important thing to note about the North Harbour League is that we are allocated training times that change term by term. When/if we are allocated a training time that our players cannot attend, we usually book a space at Stanmore Bay instead, but we are still charged by North Harbour for the training time allocated.

College sport league runs in term 4 only

- The College Sport League operates from October to December, and our team enters the B grade (mixed gender teams are not allowed to enter higher grades). College Sport usually divides into Auckland regions, and ours is North-West, so we play against other schools from the North Shore and West Auckland. Games are at NAC or AUT and occasionally at other pools in the city. Because there are other events in term 4 (Labour weekend, and the year 9/10 tournament weekend), there are usually two College Sport games per week, held on a Friday evening and Sunday afternoon. Entries for this league close in September.

Hibiscus Coast Sunday League runs in terms 2 and 3 on a Sunday evening. Many of the players from our Junior and Senior teams are referees and help to run the league. This is considered a fun, social environment rather than a competitive league. The year 9/10 team is entered into either the high school league (if there are enough schools entered) or the adult social league, where several players parents (and teachers!) make up the opposition.

Year 9/10 Nationals are held in the 3rd week of November and is an Auckland-based tournament that runs over 4 days, usually Thursday to Sunday. Entries for this event close in September.

Costs and dates for year 9/10 juniors team

Juniors (year 9/10)	Term in 2025	Amount per team in 2024	Amount per player in 2024 (approx. 10 players)
WGP admin fee	NA	NA	\$30
3 x 1-day tournament*	Term 1		\$30-\$60
North Harbour League training	Term 1	\$960.25	\$96
Hibiscus Coast Sunday League	Terms 2 and 3	\$1000	\$100

North Harbour League	Terms 2 and 3	\$2402	\$240.20
North Harbour League	Term 4	\$960.25	\$96
College Sport League	Term 4	800	\$80
North Island year 9/10 Tournament	21-24 November	2000	\$200
Approx total			\$902.20

*We did not enter any of the one-day tournaments in 2024, so this is not reflected in the total.

Costs for year 9/10 Juniors in 2025

We propose to make the costs for the team \$950 per player in 2025. We will split the payment for the year 9/10 team into two; one payment of \$475 due at the beginning of term 1 and \$475 due at the beginning of term 3.

Specific selection criteria for Juniors

The information above for the year 9/10 juniors team is based on previous years and assumes that we will have enough players for one team. We are aware that there are currently (in 2024) a high number of year 8 players across both schools. If numbers of interested players exceed one team, then we can look to have a tournament team and a second team, as we do for the intermediate age group. Unfortunately, there is very little chance of entering a second team into the North Harbour league, but we could enter a second team into the Sunday league, ensuring that interested players are playing at least one game a week. We could also look to enter a second team into the College Sport league in term 4, dependent on players commitment. Trials for the y9/10 team will be run in February 2025.

Senior Water polo 2025

Senior water polo runs in term 1 only and consists of the College sport league and two tournaments. Because the registration for these events occurs in January, often before school has commenced, we need to have the teams finalised in November/December of the prior year.

Specific selection criteria for Senior teams

In the past, any senior school player (y9-13) has been eligible for these tournaments; however, in 2024, a new rule was introduced stipulating that senior tournaments were intended for year 11–13 players, and the majority of the team was required to be made up of these year groups. In order to include year 9/10 players, a written dispensation is required from NZWP. In 2024, we were able to get a dispensation for some (but not all) year 9/10 players to join the team.

Because of these new rules, we need to carefully consider the membership of our senior teams. There are obvious practical challenges and safety issues associated with pitting a small year 9 player against a large year 13 player; this relates particularly to boys, where there can be a hugely varying range of physical size and strength. At a senior level, the games are faster paced and more physical than they are for younger age groups, and there is a risk of injury. Additionally, there are distinct differences in maturity between year 9 and year 13 players; the senior teams travel out of Auckland together for the national tournament, and younger players need to be able to cope in close quarters with much older players. For these reasons, membership in a senior team is by invitation only.

Any year 9/10 players who are considered suitable for the senior team will only be invited to join after a discussion with their parents, who will be made aware of the potential risks. We cannot guarantee that we will be granted dispensation for any year 9/10 players to take part in the tournaments.

Leagues and tournaments

- **The College sport league** operates from February to April and our teams usually enter the B grade - both the boys and girls. College sport divides into Auckland regions and ours is North-West so we play against other schools from the North Shore and West Auckland. Games are at NAC or AUT and occasionally at other pools in the city. Games are held on a Friday evening and/or Sunday afternoon. Entries for this league close in January.
- **Senior North Islands** is in the 3rd week of March and is an Auckland based tournament which runs over 4 days, usually Thursday to Sunday. Entries for this event close mid-January.
- **Senior Nationals** have been held in Hamilton (Te Rapa pool) and Cambridge (St Peters school pool) for the last couple of years. This tournament is held during the school holidays and is usually Saturday to Tuesday. Entries for this event close mid-February.
- **Hibiscus Coast Sunday League** runs in terms 2 and 3 on a Sunday evening. Many of the players from our Junior and Senior teams are referees and help to run the league and because most are current or ex Hibiscus Coast players and this is considered a fun, social environment rather than a competitive league – as such, this is optional. The senior teams are entered into the Adult social league where several players parents (and teachers!) make up the opposition. The teams are social and are usually organised and registered outside of the school.

Below are the 2024 costs for Senior water polo to give an indication of the likely costs in 2025.

Costs and dates for Senior teams

Seniors (years 11-13)	Date in 2025	Amount per team in 2024	Amount per player in 2024 (10 players)
WGP Admin fee	NA	NA	\$30
NZWP affiliation fee	NA	\$185	\$20.50
College sport league	Term 1, pools across Auckland	1100	\$123
North Islands	21-24 March in Auckland	2000	\$222.23
Nationals	13-16 April Hamilton/Cambridge	Various costs	\$700
Hibiscus Coast Sunday League	Term 2 and 3	\$1000	\$100
Approx total			\$1200

Costs for senior teams in 2025

We propose to make the total cost \$1300 in 2025 with a \$500 commitment fee upon registration. Final payments will be due in February. Any money remaining after the season will be refunded.

Appendix 1 – Selection policy

Selection into sports teams can be stressful for players and parents. The aim of this selection policy is to outline how players will be selected into the Whangaparaoa/Kingsway school teams and what the selection criteria are. Our primary aim is to have all players who would like to play school water polo playing for a team. Specific details that relate to the year 9/10 team and the senior teams are detailed above in those sections.

If we do not have sufficient numbers of players across both schools, then we will look to other schools to supplement our team numbers. There is no shortage of smaller schools or home schooled students looking to play for a school team.

Coachability

The most important selection criteria for any team is coachability. This simply means how players react to feedback from our coaches and whether or not they can adjust their game based on what the coaches ask. Players who do not turn up for training are less likely to be selected for a tournament team.

Behaviour

Players: We spend a lot of time together—both players, coaches, coordinators, and parents—and we also spend a lot of time out in public at pools. We need players to behave in a respectful and considerate way all of the time. Most of our teams play at tournaments and often spend long periods of the day between games together. Disruptive and unruly behaviour is difficult for everyone to cope with in that environment. Players who continually behave in a way that brings disrepute to their school or to themselves are less likely to be placed in a tournament team, regardless of ability. It goes without saying that if there are any serious behavioural concerns, including aggressive or violent behaviour in the pool, the player will not be allowed to continue with the team.

Parents: We know that water polo is exciting and that you have spent a considerable amount of time, effort, and money on training, togs, games, and petrol. However, there is a NZWP parent code of conduct that is very clear on appropriate parent behaviour. It becomes very difficult for everyone if we have parents who are rude, aggressive, or behave inappropriately at games. The referee is well within their right to red card any parent causing disruption.

Ability and fitness

Because water polo is a multifaceted sport, it requires more training than most other school sports. Both water polo training and swim training are required to be successful. During the games, the coaches and coordinators are responsible for your child's safety and well-being, including knowing when to make substitutions so your child has a break, recognising if they are hurt and need help, and standing up for them if there is unfair play. Players who are not able to play competitively with a reasonable level of fitness will not be selected to play in a tournament team. It does no good for a player's self-esteem if they are placed in a team where they can't keep up, and it puts coaches and coordinators on high alert if we think that a player may get into trouble in the pool. Assessing players fitness and ability will include timed swim trials (appropriate for each team level) and water polo skills (passing, shooting, strategy).

Team play

Water polo is a difficult game, and working as a team is key to succeeding—no one player is ever responsible for a team's success or failure. The co-ordinators and coaches always work extra hard to

foster team spirit and we have a zero tolerance policy for any person or action that would seek to come against that. This includes bickering or problems between players that cannot be resolved, inappropriate social media posts, or behaving in a way that puts other players in danger.

Selection decisions

Team placement decisions are made by the coaches and coordinators. All coaches and coordinators are involved in discussions about teams and work together to come to a decision. It is rare that there is disagreement about team placement. If a decision cannot be made by coaches and coordinators, the final decision on team selection will be determined by the Director of Sport or equivalent position in the host school, currently Stuart Peacock at Whangaparāoa College.

We understand that selection decisions can result in players missing out on a team they prefer. Wherever possible, coaches and coordinators will endeavour to provide feedback and discussion so that players and parents understand decisions.

Game time

At intermediate level, we try and provide fair game time to all players. By fair game time, we mean as fair as the coach and manager can make it. You can only substitute players when a goal is scored, or during a quarter time break – if there are no goals scored within a quarter then no substitution can be made. Any complaints about game time should be directed to the coordinators.

At junior and senior level we do not operate a fair game time policy – this is standard across school teams and club teams. We have some senior players in these teams who play at a national (and international) level and some newer players with much less experience. Some players swim every day of the week, and some do not. This creates a wide range of ability within a team, particularly as it relates to swim fitness. Where possible, coaches and coordinators work to get everyone in the pool as much as possible, however, substitutions in these teams are at the coaches discretion. These are competitive teams who are aiming to do well at tournaments and competitions, and we will always look to play the most competitive combination possible. Our junior and senior players are mostly club (or ex-club) players and most are already aware of how game time works in these teams.

Complaints

Any complaints about training, games or team selection should be directed to the coordinators. Please do not complain to our coaches, they are students and are doing their best to give the players a great water polo experience.