



***Splashball*<sup>™</sup> Program Booklet**  
**for Multi Sport Organizations**  
An Official Program of USA Water Polo



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## WHY *Splashball™*?

*Splashball™* is the newest program under the umbrella of USA Water Polo, and was created to accomplish three distinct objectives:

1. Fill an existing gap in our sport by providing opportunity for 5-9 year olds
2. Offer children a fun, healthy activity that promotes fitness, self esteem and water safety
3. Further engage our USA Water Polo clubs in their communities so that they can partner with local aquatic facilities and cultivate a larger base of aquatic enthusiasts from which to build our sport long term



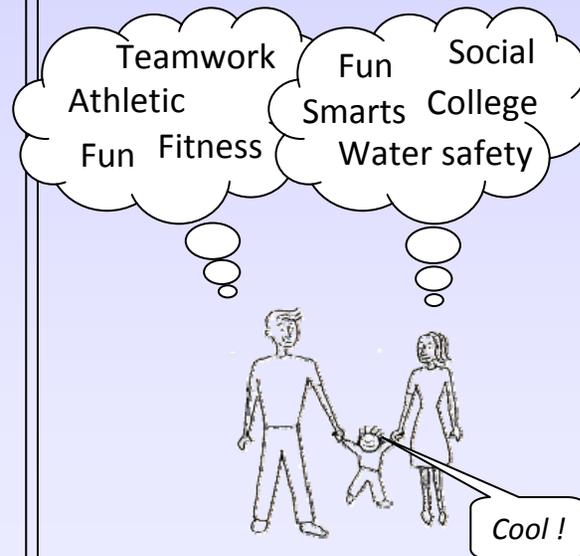


*Splashball™* will drive widespread trial of water polo at young ages, giving clubs and communities new incentives to teach safe aquatic skills

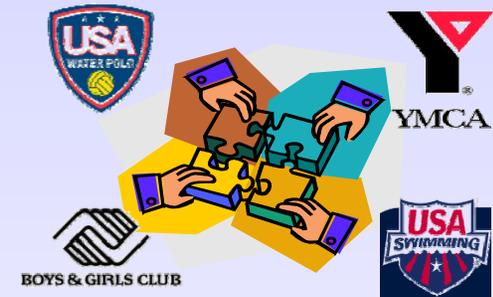
**Why we are doing this:** Expanding water polo nationwide means more opportunities for kids and families, better utilization of aquatic facilities and ultimately a broader talent pool for Olympic sport.



*Nationally consistent rules for each age that make the game easier for kids and attractive to parents without losing the essence of water polo, while also encouraging safety and fitness*



*Help parents find the next step for their children in aquatic sport after basic swim lessons*



*Formal “Win-win” contracts with entities that have pools; more water polo means more programs and opportunities for organizations and facilities*



## BRIDGING THE GAP

Although very strong in teenage participation, water polo has lagged sports like baseball, soccer and swimming in early adoption by children 5 and up

- Soccer: 37% under 10
- Baseball: 29% are between the ages of 5 and 9
- Swimming: 57% between 6-12
- **Water Polo: 5% of current active members are 10 and under**





## Why Kids Need *Splashball*<sup>™</sup>

Early age is a time for experimentation and building and skills. Water skills are particularly critical at this stage of development both for safety and to establish strength and flexibility in the water. At an age when many children are signing up for their first experience with soccer, swimming, basketball or baseball, water polo has never before provided an introductory program to allow kids to try the game.

*Splashball*<sup>™</sup> is designed to introduce the sport of water polo to children ages 5-9. The intent is to provide basic skills and understanding of the sport in a recreational format. Although water polo is known for its toughness and endurance, *Splashball*<sup>™</sup> harnesses all the fun, dynamic aspects of the game in a safe, easy to learn aquatic experience that will motivate kids to swim and stay fit.

*Splashball*<sup>™</sup> is also unique in aquatic sports in that it provides the team element that supports social development. Kids at this age expect their activities to have a social and interactive component.

### **Core Benefits**

- Develop water safety skills
- Cultivate health and fitness
- Sample a new sport for which you may have a special talent or passion
- Meet new friends in a safe, fun environment, that also teaches life lessons
- Build endurance and muscle tone
- Learn water polo basics designed by the US Olympic program



## Why Communities Need *Splashball*<sup>™</sup>

*Splashball*<sup>™</sup> offers an opportunity for organizations such as Parks & Recreation Departments, YMCA's and YWCA's, Boys and Girls Clubs, JCC's and others to provide an additional aquatics program that appeals to the social, team element that is so important to the younger age group. These organizations need to offer relevant programs to their constituents as well as monetize their existing aquatic facilities.

In a recently conducted national survey of USA Water Polo club administrators, 82% of respondents said they would be interested in partnering with a multi sport organization on a program for 5-9 year olds by providing technical expertise and coaching.

This type of partnership can provide an immediate lift to a new program and could yield other potential benefits such as access to new facilities and audiences for organizational outreach and growth.



## Sessions & Seasons

As an effective sampling program for the beginning player, we recommend 8 to 10 week sessions (depending on pool availability). Each week would ideally consist of at least one (1) practice of no more than 45 minutes and one (1) game session.

At the conclusion of a season, each player should receive the appropriate Certificate of Completion and an evaluation as a means of measuring and rewarding achievement.

The short duration of a season offers organizations the opportunity to run several per year allowing for athletes in other sports a variety of times to participate.



## Marketing Materials

USA Water Polo will be making available to every participating *Splashball™* program a suite of customizable marketing materials through our USA Water Polo partner, Vistaprint.

These materials can be accessed through our [Vistaprint](#) portal, customized for your organization as the “call to action”, printed and delivered to your specified location. Additionally, USA Water Polo has negotiated the costs for each item on your behalf so that your pricing will be the best afforded to any Vistaprint customer. Items include:

- Large banners; 6’ X 2.5’ vinyl, full color
- Brochure; 6 panel, full color
- Magnets; full color
- Poster 11X17”; vertical or horizontal, full color, full bleed
- Post card; ~5 ½ X 4” 2 sided color
- Yard Signs and stands; 27x18”, full color



## *Splashball*<sup>™</sup> Membership

Athletes wishing to play *Splashball*<sup>™</sup> who are ages 5 to 9 will sign up with USA Water Polo for \$25 for a calendar year. *Splashball*<sup>™</sup> members should not have held either USA Water Polo Silver or Gold memberships previously. All *Splashball*<sup>™</sup> members become part of the water polo community, receive a Splashball Festival invitation and receive secondary insurance coverage. Of course, USAWP gold and silver membership categories are also eligible to participate in *Splashball*<sup>™</sup> programs.

USAWP will also work with new programs to offer grants based on the number of new members signing up for a *Splashball*<sup>™</sup> program.



## Player Identification

Players can be identified through any number of aquatic events and facilities or other youth sports throughout your region. We encourage you to take advantage of the tools designed by USA Water Polo to advertise and promote within activities such as swim meets, water polo tournaments and clinics, and local non-sports events that attract families with young children. Other youth sports like soccer, lacrosse, baseball and basketball all have programs for advertising. Look at these as new sources of leads for your program.

Recreation & Park Departments may offer *Splashball™* or wish to offer the program through community and school pools. Our *Splashball™* brochure will help introduce this new opportunity to these groups.

Birthday parties are a perfect way to introduce new participants to *Splashball™*. By offering existing players the Birthday party option, many will bring new players to you as potential new club members





## Coaches



*Splashball™* coaches should be kid and parent friendly. The program is geared towards fun versus competition. The coach should be an outgoing, positive person who understands children, can celebrate their accomplishments and be able to teach parents about the game. Coaches should naturally find playing time for everyone and focus on the fun.

*Splashball™* Coaches will follow the same Code of Conduct and have the same certifications as all USAWP coaches. They will also be subject to background screening performed by our licensed clearinghouse.



# Positive Coaching Alliance



USA Water Polo's partnership with the Positive Coaching Alliance provides the perfect philosophy for our youngest water polo players. Every *Splashball*<sup>™</sup> coach should have completed the online PCA Coaches course prior to their first *Splashball*<sup>™</sup> season. PCA Materials available through USAWP will help:

- √ Use water polo to prepare participants for success in life in and out of the pool
- √ Emphasize character education and life lessons through sports
- √ Help your club to create a shared vision among your organizational leaders, coaches, parents and athletes
- √ Emphasize mastering skill and having fun over keeping score
- √ Putting in an effort to improve
- √ Emphasize the fun of learning new things and mastering them
- √ Emphasize that mistakes are "OK" if we learn from them

More information on PCA is available either at [usawaterpolo.org](http://usawaterpolo.org) or on the PCA site by clicking [here](#)



# Parent Involvement

*Splashball™* is a ideal outreach opportunity and can become a fertile ground for new coaches, referees, and officials when approached properly with parents and family members. At this age parents expect to be involved. Use that to your advantage. Involve parents in as many aspects of the *Splashball™* program as possible.

- Practice organization
- Game day organization
- Snacks (critical for any sports activity for this age group!)
- Season ending team parties
- Coaching, refereeing, table officials



## Recommended Equipment Checklist

- Pool, which may be shallow
- Mikasa *Splashball*<sup>™</sup> water polo balls. If these are unavailable, then the Mikasa Mini or Junior size water polo ball can be substituted depending on age and skill level
- *Splashball*<sup>™</sup> water polo goals, which should be 84” or less across the front. The goals may be rigid or inflatable. If these are unavailable, then two chairs or garbage cans may be set up on the pool edge
- Five (5) cones or wall markers
- Water polo caps
- Flotation: Vested buoy or noodles
- Personal swim suit; any kind will do
- Smiles and a great attitude



## Splashball™ Equipment Sources

USA Water Polo has sourced several vendors to assist in any new equipment needs you might have as a club. We suggest visiting some of these sites or [usawaterpolo.org/Splashball](http://usawaterpolo.org/Splashball) to get more complete information

### **Kap 7**

[Inflatable Goal](#)

[Antiwave Mini Floating Goal](#)

[Mikasa Mini Ball](#)

[Mikasa 6" Splashball](#)

[Mikasa Junior Ball](#)

[Flotation Vest](#)

### **Turbo**

[10u Junior Water Polo Caps \(set of 32\)](#)



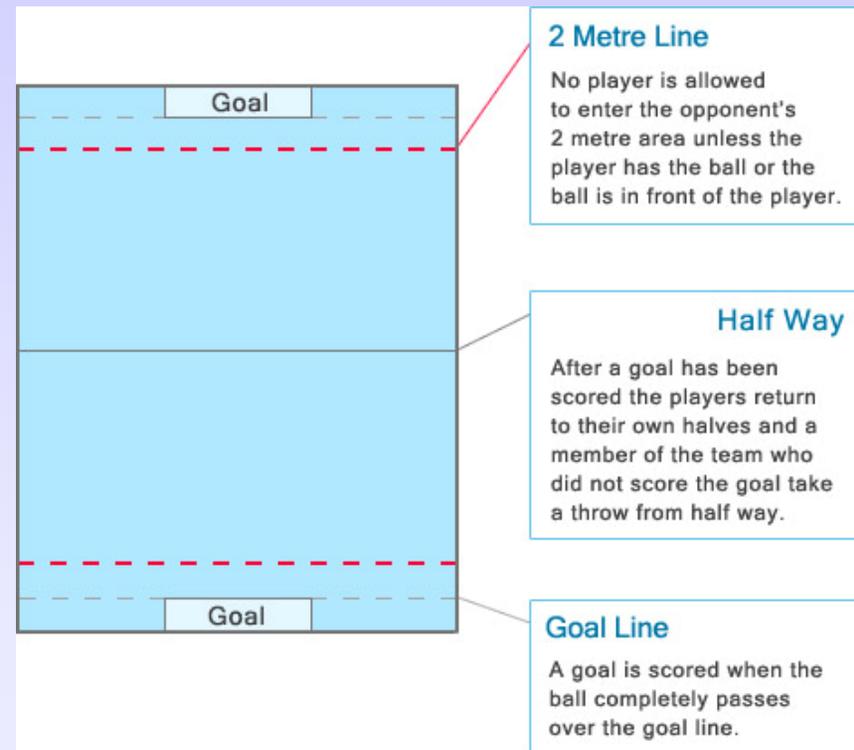


## Recommended Course Set-Up

*Splashball™* water polo goals, which should be 84" or less across the face, should be set in the water at each end of the 20 yards or less course. The goals may be rigid or inflatable. If the goals are unavailable, then two chairs or garbage cans may be set up on the pool edge.

Lane lines or walls can easily mark the course perimeter which should be 20 x 15 yards or less. If the course dimensions do not match exactly, that is quite all right. *Splashball* is designed to accommodate any type or size pool. Cones on the wall edge mark each goal line, 2m line and half way point.

Importantly, don't let pool size or shape deter you from play. The above recommendation will move players more quickly towards the actual water polo game but can easily be adjusted for skill level and to guarantee **fun**





## Pre-Program Assessment

Your club can hold a “Splash Tryout,” which can function as an Open House for your club as well as a Pre-Program Assessment of skills. If an athlete can complete the following, then no floatation or use of the bottom is needed:

- Swim 5 minutes without stopping; freestyle, backstroke, side stroke and breaststroke with good form.
- Tread water for two minutes.

The assessment will also help your club to group talent fairly, as well as a chance to solicit parent volunteers to help at practices and the scoring table during games. Engaging parents is critical to the success of *Splashball™*. Realize that aligning your program’s goals with the goals of parents will ensure success and provide important volunteer resources for your club over many years.



## Participant Numbers

*Splashball™* is a co-ed game of team work. Teams typically have six (6) on a side with a goalie (7). The goalie can use both hands and stays in his/her half of the course.

The game can be played with less or more. With younger participants the more active they become the more interested they stay. Placing up to ten (10) or more on a side in the water, as long as it is safe, can keep the game more fun for more athletes.

If the participant numbers do not support a typical game, we recommend a half court game with the ball returning to the half after any change of possession and the non-scoring team taking the ball to half to restart play after scoring a goal.





## *Splashball*<sup>™</sup> Rules

These detailed rules that can be adjusted to simplify play and not intimidate the beginning player/coach/parent. We recommend you begin your season with fewer rules and build up as skills of the players improve. Our *Splashball*<sup>™</sup> Festival will use these rules and standard team numbers as outlined previously.

- There will be no contact allowed
- Players can use two hands to catch, but only one hand to pass or shoot the ball. The exception to this is the goalie, who may use two hands.
- The game should consist of two (2) 10-minute halves with a 2 minute halftime or four (4) 5-minute quarters with 2 minutes between each.
- Teams swap ends at half-time.
- To start the game, players line up along the goal line. At the referee's whistle, players sprint to the centerline.
- If the pool is deep, flotation devices are allowed.
- If pool is shallow, players must not walk while holding the ball.
- Players cannot shoot from a free throw.
- Free throws cannot be defended.
- A goal is scored when the entire ball passes over the goal line.
- After a goal, players return to their own half, and on the referees' whistle, a player from the team who didn't score the goal takes the throw from halfway. The ball must be passed back
- No player may tackle another player whether in possession of the ball or not.
- Offensive players cannot fend (Heisman) a defensive player to shield the ball.
- Players may not swim on or over opponent's legs.
- The ball should remain above the water surface at all times.
- Any of the above infringements result in a free throw signaled by the referee. The free throw must be taken from where the foul occurred or an area not closer to the attacking goal of the team awarded the foul.



# Splashball™ Certificate of Completion

We recommend you provide each participant with a Certificate of Completion at the end of the *Splashball* session. Templates for these certificates will be provided by USA Water Polo and available for printing through our [Vistaprint](#) partner. Splashball also teaches a wide range of skills, and each player should also receive an evaluation from the coach. The evaluation shall include the following skills:

## Swimming Skills

- Head up freestyle 20y
- Switching from head up freestyle to upright backstroke to head up freestyle 20y

## Movement Skills

- Jump Out and recover - armpits must be clear of the water with the arms raised to an extended & vertical position over the head (clap optional).
- The head is to remain out of the water at all times, 5 consecutive within 15 sec's
- Deep water swimming start and stop, to be performed explosively and promptly
- Travel two meters forwards, backwards and to both sides while facing the same direction and holding ball in the air at all times

## Treading & Eggbeater Kick

- Deemed to be completed correctly if the head stays above water level at all times.
- Egg beater kick
- Utilizing both arms and legs while maintaining the body in a vertical position (skulling), 5 minutes
- Legs only, arms extended over the head with the body in a vertical position, 20 seconds
- Utilizing both arms and legs while maintaining the body in a horizontal position (water bug), 20 seconds
- Arms only skulling - legs to be motionless, 30 seconds



# *Splashball*<sup>TM</sup> Certificate of Completion

## **Ball Handling Skills**

- Dribbling: Swim 20y with the ball in straight line
- Pick up the ball into a throwing position, with one hand only, from underneath (5 each hand)
- Flip the ball quickly from one hand to the other
  - 10 wet (lands on water); 10 dry (stays in air)
- Throw the ball accurately to a partner (1 hand only)
  - preferred hand 7y; non-preferred hand 4y
- Catch the ball successfully 4 times from 5 attempts
  - preferred hand from 5y; non-preferred hand 3y

## **Game Skills**

- Demonstrate a hard shot at goal with good technique from 4 yards
- Demonstrate an understanding of *Splashball* by participating in a game
  - If pool is shallow, players must not walk while holding the ball.
  - Players cannot shoot from a free throw.
  - Free throws cannot be defended.
  - A goal is scored when the entire ball passes completely across the goal line.



## Lesson Plans

A complete series of eight (8) lesson plans will be available soon that will build up to game formation and skills applications. Please visit [usawaterpolo.org/Splashball](http://usawaterpolo.org/Splashball)

## More Information

More information on *Splashball™* is available on at [usawaterpolo.org/Splashball](http://usawaterpolo.org/Splashball)

Or Email [splashball@usawawaterpolo.org](mailto:splashball@usawawaterpolo.org)

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USA Water Polo

2124 Main Street, Suite 240

Huntington Beach, CA 92648

