

2009 Midlakes Water Polo Operating Plan

1. Guiding Philosophy

Midlakes is a recreational league, which emphasizes friendly competition. Each coach should ensure all team members play some time each game. Larger teams (with over 20 on the roster) should consider splitting the roster into two teams of equivalent size. Sportsmanship will be demonstrated by players, coaches and spectators at all time.

Rivalry between clubs has always created spirited competition in the Midlakes Water Polo League. This is something that should continue as part of the character of Midlakes competition. While we do not want to diminish nor discourage such spirited competition, it is not in the best interest of the league to let this override proper conduct that is expected in the pool area. As a recreational league with a focus on education, sportsmanship will be demonstrated by players, coaches and spectators at all times.

2. Organization

In order to understand the organization of the league it is important to understand the entire Midlakes Swim League structure. Midlakes Water Polo has its own operating plan, but falls within the jurisdiction of the Midlakes Swim League by-laws. It is composed of a single representative reporting to the Swim League Board and providing leadership to a committee of club representatives. Within the Water Polo committee there is a disciplinary sub-committee to handle issues of poor conduct and decide penalties, etc...

Fees:

Club Fee - \$50.00 (any club with five or more players participating in MLWP) Payment due at the Spring Midlakes swim league meeting in April.

Season Fee: 10&U teams - \$40, 12&U teams, \$40, 14&U teams - \$60, 17&U teams - \$60, 17/14&U Girls - \$50, Women's Open - \$50, Men's Open \$50. Payment is due at the coaches meeting.

Championship Tournament Fees: 10&U - \$66, 12&U - \$66, 14&U - \$110, 17&U - \$110. For Teams with more than 13 players on there Championship Roster there will be a \$4 fee per player over 13 added to the Tournament Fee. Tournament fees are due at the Sunday Tournament seeding meeting.

Teams failing to submit fees by the specified dates will be ineligible for play, unless arrangements have been made with the Midlakes Water Polo Director.

Roles

2.2.1 Water Polo Committee

The Water Polo Committee, with the approval of the Midlakes Board, is responsible for the recommendation of changes to the Water Polo Operating Plan, organization of regular season play, and organization and oversight of the Championship Tournament. The Water Polo Committee shall consist of one representative from each club participating in water polo and the Midlakes Water Polo Representative.

2.2.2 Water Polo Director

The Midlakes Water Polo Representative shall be appointed by the Midlakes Board of Directors, and shall serve for a term of two years. The Midlakes Water Polo Representative shall be responsible for:

- *collecting team fees
- *scheduling regular season and championship games
- *resolving protests
- *acting as Championship Tournament Director or appointing a Director
- *conducting general water polo meetings
- *recommending changes to the operating plan
- *publicizing water polo

*acting as a contact for individuals interested in the sport

*Ensuring website accuracy and timeliness

The Midlakes Water Polo Director shall submit a written report to the Midlakes Board of Directors after the close of each season.

2.2.3 Head Referee

The head referee is the absolute authority on all issues regarding the referee schedule, style of play, rule book interpretation and conduct enforcement. He, along with the Midlakes Water Polo Director, has the final say on game rulings.

2.2.4 Disciplinary Committee

The Water Polo Committee will appoint two individuals, in addition to the Midlakes Water Polo Director, to serve on a three person committee that will oversee the sportsmanship rules above and enforce disciplinary actions as needed.

2.2.5 Web Specialist

This is an optional position that depends on the Midlakes Water Polo Directors ability to do website updates his/herself. If the Director does not feel comfortable making updates to the website directly, then a technical person should be sought and assigned in order to perform the updates.

2.2.6 Club Representative

Each club is required to have a club representative to serve on the Midlakes Water Polo Committee and keep their respective clubs informed. Each Club may structure their Water Polo program however they like, but the responsibility for carrying out all of the tasks for a successful season fall on the club rep. Some of these responsibilities include but are not limited to: Timely notification of information from the committee, ensure clubs are prepared when hosting games, report results from games they host to the Director (or Web Specialist) in a timely manner (i.e. that same day) and all meetings are either attended or at a minimum meeting notes are reviewed and feedback is sent to the Midlakes Water Polo Director. The Club Representative should check club and league websites to ensure that no conflicting information such as disjointed schedules, incorrect contact information and/or bad links exist that could mislead users and cause confusion.

3 Information

3.1 Meetings

Meetings of the Midlakes Water Polo Committee are critical to the organization and success of the season.

Each meeting serves a specific purpose

Spring Committee meeting – The spring board meeting agenda should include but not be limited to: defining roles and responsibilities, determining which clubs will be participating, evaluating mergers, reviewing league financials, assessing fund raising opportunities/requirements and laying out the remaining meeting schedule for the upcoming season. Spring meeting should coincide with the Midlakes Spring Meeting in April.

Pre Season Committee meeting – The board meeting agenda should include but not be limited to: ensuring no changes to the schedule are required, all equipment is readily available and functional, shirts will be available on schedule, determine pool availability for scheduling and ensure all clubs have what they need for a successful season. This meeting should be held late June or early July.

Coaches Meeting – Meeting is held the first Tuesday evening of the season. The agenda should include but not be limited to: Coaching requirements, reviewing league goals for each age group, new rules, collection of season team fees and preliminary rosters, final division alignment, expectations of performance and conduct, notification responsibilities for forfeits.

Tournament Meeting: Meeting is held the Sunday, prior to the Championship Tournament. The agenda should include but not be limited to: Collection of Final rosters with cap #'s for tournament, Collection of Tournament Fees, review of rules for conduct, game play, overtime etc.

Post Season Committee Meeting: This meeting should be held in September prior to the Midlakes Fall Meeting so that and changes to water polo can be reported at the Midlakes Fall Meeting. Agenda for this meeting should include but not be limited to: summarizing the season positives and negatives, reporting current financials, assessing merges and participation levels, proposals for changes to the Water Polo Operating Plan.

3.2 www.midlakeswaterpolo.com

The Midlakes Water Polo League website has replaced all other mechanisms for disseminating information on a league wide basis. It has reduced the burden on everyone by providing a single location, accessible by all, for getting the latest, most accurate information. Because of that it is Critical that the website be updated on an extremely frequent if not immediate basis during the season in order to minimize confusion and keep the website appealing and effective.

The website is the home to the following information:

- ◆ Schedules
- ◆ Results
- ◆ Educations material
- ◆ News stories
- ◆ Contact information
- ◆ Sharing of digital photography from league events
- ◆ Special honors
- ◆ Historical information
- ◆ Vital documents and letters

4 Eligibility

4.1 Age Groups

The following are the age groups for all divisions:

Ten and Under	co-ed
Twelve and Under	co-ed
Fourteen and Under	co-ed
Seventeen and Under	co-ed
Seventeen/Fourteen and Under	Girls
Open Women	women
Open Men	men

Age will be determined as of June 15th in the summer of competition. Seventeen and Under players remain eligible for that group though the summer immediately following high school graduation.

Age Group Eligibility

Youth, whose families are active, dues paying members of a club currently participating in the Midlakes Swim League are eligible for Midlakes Water Polo competition. All eligibility requirements for Midlakes Swim League apply except where they conflict with the Midlakes Water Polo Operating Plan. Competitors may only compete for the club, in which they are active members, except in the case of combined teams and 17/14&U girls team. (See combination section).

Open Eligibility

To be eligible for competition in the “Open” age groups one must be:

1. Active dues paying members of a club currently participating in the Midlakes Swim League, or
2. Former active dues paying members of a club currently (or formerly) participating in the Midlakes Swim League, or
3. A current and active salaried water polo coach paid and employed by a club participating in the Midlakes League, and plays with his or her own club.

Team Combinations

It is the goal of the Midlakes League to encourage participation in the water polo by as many clubs as possible. To that end, Midlakes clubs are encouraged to look to their own membership for participation on their water polo teams. Individuals that are a member of a Midlakes club that is not offering water polo may petition to be placed at a club that is offering water polo. Placement will be based 1st closest club, 2nd need and must be done by the Water Polo committee or their appointed person. The request for placement must take place prior to the individual playing for a club.

Approved Club Combinations not requiring individual approval are: Woodridge/Norwood and Overlake/Triangle.

5 Competition

5.1 Philosophy

Emphasis should begin with education as the primary goal. All kids should participate and basic skills should be taught.

5.2 Rules

The rules of FINA - USWP shall apply to the Midlakes Water Polo League, except where they conflict with this Operating Plan.

*each quarter of competition shall consist of six minutes running time, with each 10 and under game consisting of five minutes running time per quarter. Definition of running time: Clock stops at goals and time outs only.

*For Championship Games 10 & Under will be 5 minute stop time all other age groups will be 6 minute stop time.

*there will be two time outs allowed during a game for each team. A time out will be for a period of one minute. Each team will be allowed one timeout during a sudden death period. During the Championship Tournament current US Water Polo rules regarding Timeouts will be used.

*teams will change ends of the pool after each quarter. For games at MICC and MIBC team will change ends at half.

*all games must end with a winner. During regular season games, ties will be determined by playing a Sudden Death period. Coin toss prior to the start of the Sudden Death period will be used to determine ends. For the Championship tournament, current US Water Polo rules regarding overtime play will be used.

* Mercy rule: Any game where one team has an 8 goal lead will go to a full running clock for the remainder of the game. (Even if the point difference becomes less than 8 points). Meaning no clock stoppage at goals or penalties.

5.3 Conduct & Sportsmanship

It is the intention of the league to have its players, coaches and spectators behave in an appropriate fashion at all games. Recognizing that this sport is very competitive, it is understood that an individual may have a difference of opinion with a referee. The questioning of a specific call should be handled by the coach only, by using a timeout. Should a player be involved in challenging a referee's call, the player will be issued a single warning before being removed from the game.

The below listing, although not exclusive, will serve as a guideline to behavior which is considered inappropriate and will receive a single warning before dismissal from the current game:

- ◆ Arguing referee calls
- ◆ Using profanity
- ◆ Taunting opponents and/or referees

Any player, coach or spectator that continues the inappropriate behavior will receive a 1-game automatic suspension (i.e. the next subsequent game). A second suspension for the same transgression may result in a suspension for the remainder of the season and tournament. The decision of the disciplinary rules committee will be final.

Generally, if the violation is related to taunting or attempting to intimidate a referee, the suspension for the remainder of the season and tournament will be automatic.

With respect to any incidents which include punching, kicking, elbowing and the attempt to injure another player/opponent, such action will constitute a brutality and carry with it a suspension for the remainder of the season and tournament. It is understood that in a competitive game, accidents can occur, however, it will be in the judgment of the referee whether the action warrants a full suspension.

5.4 Safety Credentials for Coaches

All coaches and assistants are required to have:

Current First Aid and CPR and completion of a Midlakes Sponsored rules clinic (or successful completion of the Midlakes Water Polo rules test) to be put on in conjunction with the mid-June meeting.

5.5 U.S. Water Polo Membership

Membership in U.S. Water Polo is strongly recommended for all players and coaches.

5.6 Regular Season

The Midlakes Water Polo League will be divided into 2 Divisions. Placement in division will be based on the teams' final placement in the prior year's tournament as well as coaches and operating committee recommendations. If a team from the previous year is not around for the current year, everyone is moved up 1 place.

- The League will divide the teams equally between divisions.
- In age groups with an odd # of teams, the extra team will always be added to Division II.
- All Clubs must declare if they are going to have a "B" team in any age group by the Tuesday prior to the start of league play. No new teams will be added to the Sanctioned League play after this date.
- All "B" and new teams will be added to the bottom of Division II.
- There will be a maximum of 6 teams in Division I (see below for only exception).
- During the regular season, teams will play only within their division.
- The league does encourage teams to set up cross division exhibition games on their own. These games will not count towards your tournament seeding.

Division of Teams in age groups:

1 – 7 Teams	1 Division
8 Teams	4 teams in each Division
9 Teams	4 teams in Division I, 5 Teams in Division II
10 Teams	5 teams in each division
11 Teams	5 teams in Division I, 6 Teams in Division II
12 Teams	6 teams in each Division
13 Teams	6 teams in Division I, 7 Teams in Division II
14 Teams	6 teams in Division I, 8 Teams in Division II
15 Teams	3 Divisions of 5 Teams each.
+15 Teams	Always add teams up from lowest division Example: 5, 5, 6 then 5, 6, 6, then 6, 6, 6

12&U games will be played on Thursdays, 10&U games will be played on Fridays, 14&U games will be played on Saturdays, 17&U games will be played on Sundays

League Play Format

4 Teams in a Division

Week #1	#1 plays #3, #2 plays #4, #1 plays #4, #2 plays #3
Week #2	#3 plays #4, #1 plays #2, #1 plays #4, #2 plays #3
Week #3	#1 plays #3, #2 plays #4, #1 plays #2, #3 plays #4

If available

Week #4 #1 plays #4, #2 plays #3, #3 plays #4, #1 plays #2

5 Teams in a Division

Week #1 #3 plays #5, #1 plays #2, #4 plays #5, #2 plays #3, #1 plays #4

Week #2 #1 plays #5, #2 plays #4, #1 plays #3, #2 plays #5, #3 plays #4

Week #3 #3 plays #5, #1 plays #2, #4 plays #5, #2 plays #3, #1 plays #4

If available

Week #4 #1 plays #5, #2 plays #4, #1 plays #3, #2 plays #5, #3 plays #4

6 Teams in a Division

Week # 1 #1 plays #6, #2 plays #5, #3 plays #4, #1 plays #5, #2 plays #6

Week #2 #3 plays #5, #2 plays #4, #1 plays #3, #4 plays #6, #1 plays #2

Week #3 #5 plays #6, #1 plays #4, #2 plays #3, #4 plays #5, #3 plays #6

If available

Week #4 #1 plays #2, #3 plays #4, #5 plays #6, #1 plays #4, #2 plays #5, #3 plays #6

7 Teams in a Division

Week #1 First Pool #1 plays #2, #3 plays #4, #2 plays #3, #1 plays #4, #1 plays #3, #2 plays #4

Second Pool #5 plays #6, #6 Plays #7, #6 plays #7

Week #2 #2 plays #5, #1 plays #7, #3 plays #6, #4 plays #5, #2 plays #7, #1 plays #6

Week #3 #3 plays #5, #4 plays #6, #3 plays #7, #1 plays #5, #2 plays #6, #4 plays #7

If available

Week #4 First Pool #1 plays #2, #3 plays #4, #2 plays #3, #1 plays #4, #1 plays #3, #2 plays #4

Second Pool #5 plays #6, #6 Plays #7, #6 plays #7

8 Teams in a Division

Week # 1 First Pool #1 plays #7, #1 plays #5, #3 plays #7, #1 plays #3, #5 plays #7

Second Pool #2 plays #6, #4 plays #8, #2 plays #8, #4 plays #6, #2 plays #4

Week #2 First Pool #3 plays #4, #1 plays #2, #2 plays #3, #1 plays #4

Second Pool #5 plays #6, #7 plays #8, #5 plays #8, #6 plays #7, #3 plays #5

Week #3 First Pool #6 plays #8, #1 plays #6, #3 plays #8, #1 plays #8, #3 plays #6

Second Pool #2 plays #5, #4 plays #7, #2 plays #7, #4 plays #5

If available

Week #4 First Pool #1 plays #2, #3 plays #4, #1 plays #3, #2 plays #4

Second Pool #5 plays #6, #7 plays #8, #5 plays #7, #6 plays #8

Championship Tournament

The Midlakes Water Polo Championship Tournament will be an 8 team double elimination tournament, with each age group playing on a single day the 13th game will be played on Saturday with age group game order the same as the finals, with the final game of each age group being played on Sunday.

From the results of the regular season games, teams will be placed into the Championship Tournament. All teams in Division I will be seeded ahead of teams from Division II. The first and second place teams in Division II will always be placed into the Championship Tournament. Any team that forfeits three or more games during the regular season will not be eligible for participation in the Championship Tournament.

When possible, there will be a consolation tournament open to all teams that do not qualify for the Championship Tournament to be held in conjunction with the Championship Tournament.

.Seeding into the 17/14 &U Girls, Women's and Men's Open tournaments will be based on last year's results with new teams seeded at the bottom of each division. Each team will play all other teams participating in these age groups with the 1st place team going to finals and the 2nd and 3rd place team going to a semi-final game.

Tournament Director

The Midlakes Water Polo Representative will act as the Championship Tournament Director. The director's duties shall include:

- *collection of entry fees from each team
- *seed the entries using regular season records
- *arrange pool time for games in conjunction with the Water Polo Representative from each club
- *organize and supervise tournament play
- *arrange referees for tournament

Championship Tournament

Each day will follow this format

<u>Game Time</u>	<u>Game #</u>	<u>Who is playing</u>
8:00 AM	Game #1	#1 Seed Vs #8 Seed
8:50 AM	Game #2	#4 Seed Vs #5 Seed
9:40 AM	Game #3	#3 Seed Vs #6 Seed
10:30 AM	Game #4	#2 Seed Vs #7 Seed
11:20 AM	Game #5	Loser Game #1 Vs Loser Game #2
12:10 PM	Game #6	Loser Game #3 Vs Loser Game #4
1:00 PM	Game #7	Winner Game #1 Vs Winner Game #2
1:50 PM	Game #8	Winner Game #3 Vs Winner Game #4
2:40 PM	Game #9	Winner Game #6 Vs Loser Game #7
3: 30 PM	Game #10	Winner Game #5 Vs Loser Game #8
4:20 PM	Game #11	Winner Game #7 Vs Winner Game #8 -- Winner to Finals Sunday
5:10 PM	Game #12	Winner Game #9 Vs Winner Game #10
Saturday	Game #13	Winner Game #12 Vs Loser Game #11 – Winner to Finals Sunday

Championship Week

12&U Tournament held Tuesday

17&U Tournament held Wednesday

10&U Tournament held Thursday

14&U Tournament held Friday

Women's and Men's Open Tournament Games will be held in the evenings during the week and Saturday

Semifinal Day – Saturday

Game #1	14&U Winner Game #12 Vs Loser Game #11 – Winner to Finals Sunday
Game #2	10&U Winner Game #12 Vs Loser Game #11 – Winner to Finals Sunday
Game #3	17&U Winner Game #12 Vs Loser Game #11 – Winner to Finals Sunday
Game #4	12&U Winner Game #12 Vs Loser Game #11 – Winner to Finals Sunday
Game #5	17/14 Girls 2 nd place vs 3 rd Place – Winner to Finals Sunday
Game #6	Men's Open 2 nd place vs 3 rd Place – Winner to Finals Sunday
Game #7	Women's Open 2 nd place vs 3 rd Place – Winner to Finals Sunday

Championship Day - Sunday

Game #1	14&U Winner Game #11 Vs Winner Game #13	Team listed first is in blue caps
Game #2	10&U Winner Game #11 Vs Winner Game #13	Team listed first is in blue caps
Game #3	17&U Winner Game #11 Vs Winner Game #13	Team listed first is in blue caps
Game #4	12&U Winner Game #11 Vs Winner Game #13	Team listed first is in blue caps
Game #5	17/14 Girls Top 2 finalists	Team listed first is in blue caps
Game #6	Men's Top 2 finalist	Team listed first is in blue caps
Game #7	Women's Top 2 finalist	Team listed first is in blue caps