



Technical Director AGM Report

Sunday, November 24, 2024

Michael Reid, Technical Director

Introduction

It is my privilege to present the 2024 Annual General Meeting Technical Director's Report for Vortex Water Polo. Over the past year, we have experienced significant progress, challenges, and opportunities as we strive to enhance our programs and impact Manitoba's Water Polo community.

Athlete-Centred, Coach-Driven and Volunteer-Supported

Reflects the core values and structure of the National Coaching Certification Program (NCCP). The "athlete-centred" approach prioritizes the needs and development of athletes, ensuring that coaching strategies and decisions are always focused on enhancing their performance and overall well-being.

"Coach-driven" emphasizes that coaches, as key facilitators of athlete growth, lead the planning, training, and development processes, using their expertise to guide athletes effectively.

Lastly, "volunteer-supported" acknowledges the vital role that volunteers play in supporting both coaches and athletes, creating a strong community that sustains the sport and helps make it accessible to all. This holistic approach aims to create a positive and thriving environment for athletes at every level.

In this report, I will touch on the following topics:

- Volunteers
- Coaches
- Membership
- Competitions & Training Camps
- Recruitment & Marketing
- Goals
- Vision
- Conclusion

The Importance of Volunteers

Volunteers remain an essential cornerstone of Vortex Water Polo. Without their dedication, our programs and events could not operate at the current level.

Contributions in 2023-2024:

- **Event Support:** Volunteers played crucial roles in organizing competitions, officiating games, and ensuring smooth logistical operations.
- **Recruitment Assistance:** Information tables at the Pan Am Pool significantly boosted awareness of the sport.
- **Administrative Tasks:** From managing trips (thank team managers) to ordering and selling club merchandise.

We sincerely thank all current, past, and future board members for their dedication and service to our sport. While challenges and differences of opinion are inevitable, they reflect the passion we all share for advancing the sport. It's through respectful collaboration, open dialogue, and a shared commitment to progress that we continue to grow and improve. Your efforts, past and present, and those yet to come, are vital in moving our sport forward and ensuring its success for generations to come.

Call to Action:

We encourage more parents to join our volunteer roster. Signing up via RAMP at no cost makes a significant impact on our success. It also acts as a more accurate accounting of our volunteer base which is viewed positively by our sport funding bodies.

Recognizing their invaluable contributions, we aim to strengthen volunteer appreciation initiatives next year.

Coaches: A Limiting Factor to Growth

A shortage of qualified coaches continues to challenge our ability to expand. With only 14 coaches in 2023-2024 compared to 28 in 2021-2022, we must prioritize developing new coaching talent to sustain growth.

Recruiting our alumni back into the sport remains a challenge. We have a number of retired provincial team, professional and national team athletes right here in Winnipeg who are no longer active in water polo. It's time to bring them back!

Our Future Coaches: Athlete-Mentors/Junior Coaches

Engaging high school-aged athletes as assistant or entry-level coaches is an immediate but longer term solution. These individuals bring enthusiasm and recent playing experience, which is invaluable for our athletes.

Athlete-Mentors have been a key part of our coaching framework, providing leadership opportunities and improving support for young athletes. Athlete-Mentors are not reflected in our coach numbers as they are not certified coaches but are taking steps to becoming our future coaches in the next few years as they accumulate their course requirements and gain experience.

Contributions:

- Assisting certified coaches, Athlete-Mentors focus mostly on the younger age groups, such as 11U and 13U (this season it is 8U and 10U).
- Their involvement creates a bridge between playing and coaching, fostering a community-driven culture.

Plan:

- **Training & Certification:** We hope to see the club continue to offer subsidized access to NCCP training for all coaches.
- **Mentorship:** Pair new coaches with experienced staff to ensure a supportive learning environment.

Special Acknowledgment:

A heartfelt thank you to Coach Pizey for his incredible leadership of the girls' program over the past two seasons. His dedication and passion have left an indelible mark on the players and the broader program. While he now focuses on specialized goalie training on Mondays and Fridays, his contributions continue to resonate deeply with all of us. Thank you, Coach Pizey, for your unwavering commitment and the lasting impact you've made!

Membership

Vortex Water Polo (VWP) remains committed to fostering an inclusive and welcoming environment for all athletes. Our club offers competitive, recreational, and introductory programs for all ages, embracing athletes of all genders.

Parents, you can help us grow! One great way is by registering as a volunteer. It's quick, easy, and free to sign up through RAMP. Stay tuned—an email reminder with all the details will be sent out soon.

One of our key goals is to expand programs into other parts of the city. However, achieving this will require more qualified coaches to join our team. Growing our coaching roster is critical to making this vision a reality, and we appreciate the community's support in helping us reach this milestone.

Together, let's continue to grow and strengthen the VWP family!

Membership Breakdown

Gender	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Girls	94	82	123
Boys	156	155	173
X	1	4	4
Total Athletes	251	241	300

Free Trials	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Total Free Trials	N/A	57	124
Free Trials who Joined	N/A	31	49

Categories	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Total Athletes	251	241	300
Coaches	28	20	14
Volunteers	20	22	68
TOTAL IMPACT	299	283	382

Competitions and Training Camps

Competitions

Participation in competitions is a core component of athlete development and club identity. Highlights of 2023-2024 include:

- 17U NCL (National Championship League): Marking a milestone, Vortex entered its own teams, supported by the experience gained through collaborations with Pacific Storm and Capital Wave the previous season.
- Winter League: Consistent participation fostered skill-building and camaraderie among all members.
- MWPA and SK Provincials: These events showcased local and regional talent.
- 15U Westerns and Alberta Open: These high-profile tournaments allowed our athletes to compete against top-tier teams across Western Canada.
- Lex Mackin was the leading scorer in 17U Boys NCL Western Conference.

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- We had many other athletes on the girls' and boys' 17U teams who were top performers in other stats.
- When we do not have teams entered in higher level competitions we do our best to collaborate with other clubs across the country. For example, Izzie Hyman played for Fraser Valley at 15U Westerns and Jayden Del Campo played in tournaments in California and Miami.

Training Camps

We continued to emphasize high-performance development through training camps.

- **18U Competitive Summer Camp:** Athletes benefited from intensive training led by Michel Roy and Waneek Horn-Miller. This camp not only honed skills but also instilled values of leadership and teamwork. We had several out-of-province athletes attend this camp which added a new flair and environment to the training.

Recruitment & Marketing

Recruitment is a constant initiative throughout the year, whether that is for athletes, coaches and volunteers.

Below list highlights what we have done throughout the season specifically for athletes.

Recruitment/Information Table at Pan Am during School League

- Volunteers and coaches ran an information table in the lobby on numerous of the School League game days at Pan Am Pool.

Free 11U and 13U Water Polo Classes

Summer Camps

- 13U, 15U and 18U

School League

- Several Vortex coaches lead school teams

Free Trials

- Ongoing throughout the year; 124 last season; 49 became full members

Are you Our Next Marketing Volunteer?

A marketing volunteer is essential to the growth and success of Vortex Water Polo (VWP). With their help, the club can reach a wider audience, attract new members, and showcase the incredible opportunities it offers. From managing social media and creating engaging content to organizing promotional events and connecting with the community, a marketing volunteer plays a key role in raising the club's visibility. Their efforts directly support membership growth, program expansion, and the overall vitality of VWP, making them an indispensable part of the team.

To date, the club has not had someone dedicated to marketing our great sport!

Goals

When Vortex was founded, we set out to achieve four major goals, with the belief that the first goal would serve as a crucial stepping stone toward accomplishing the other three.

[See image on next page]


VORTEX **4 MAIN GOALS**

Goal #1
 Programs in all 4-corners of the city of Winnipeg. [currently in 2]

Goal #2
 Support the initiation of programs that eventually become self-sufficient clubs (Brandon, Portage la Prairie, Selkirk and Steinbach). [ongoing]

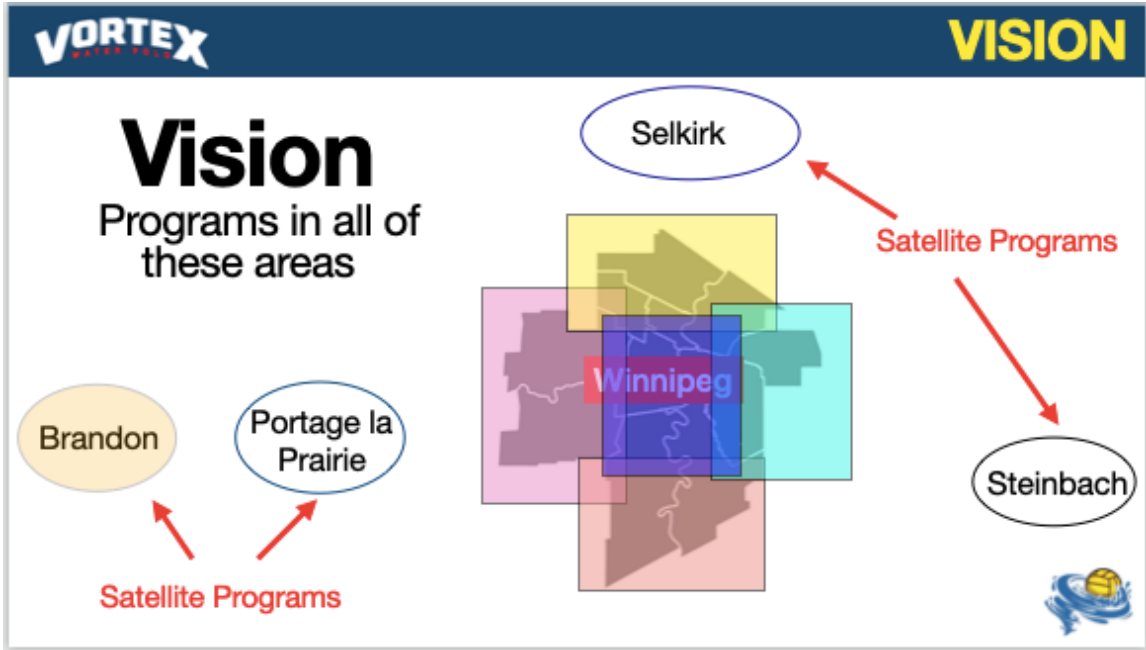
Goal #3
 Female to male athlete ratio of 1:1. [ongoing]

Goal #4
 Competitive Teams at NCL Level in 15U, 17U, 19U and Adult categories for both girls and boys. [15U Westerns & 17U NCL]



Vision

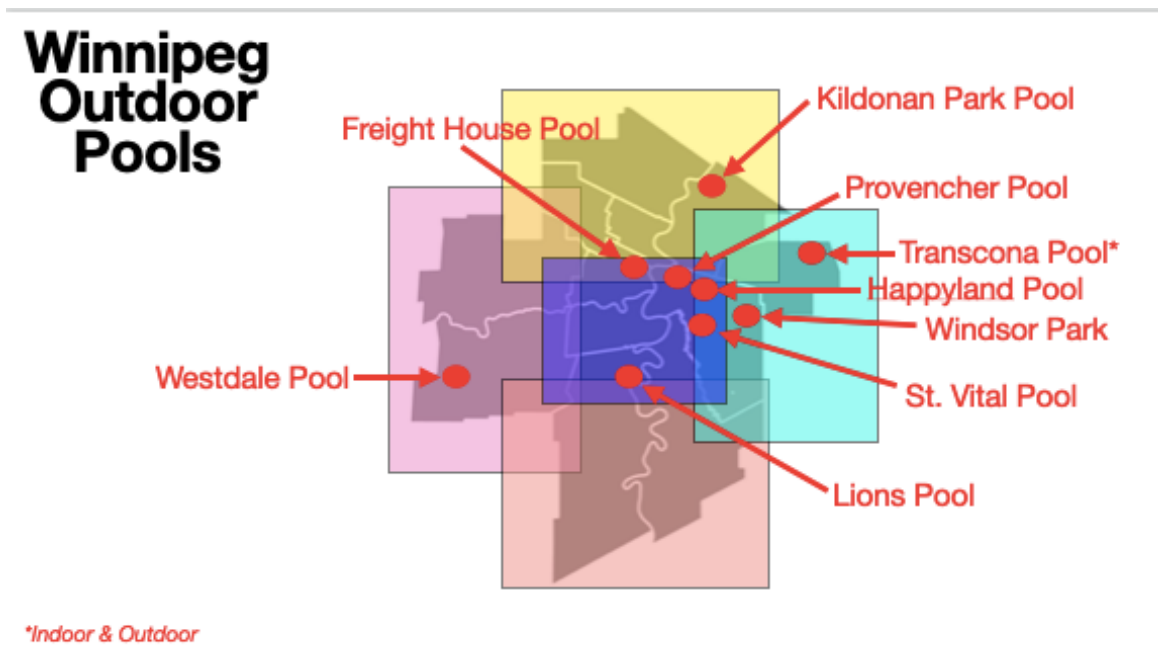
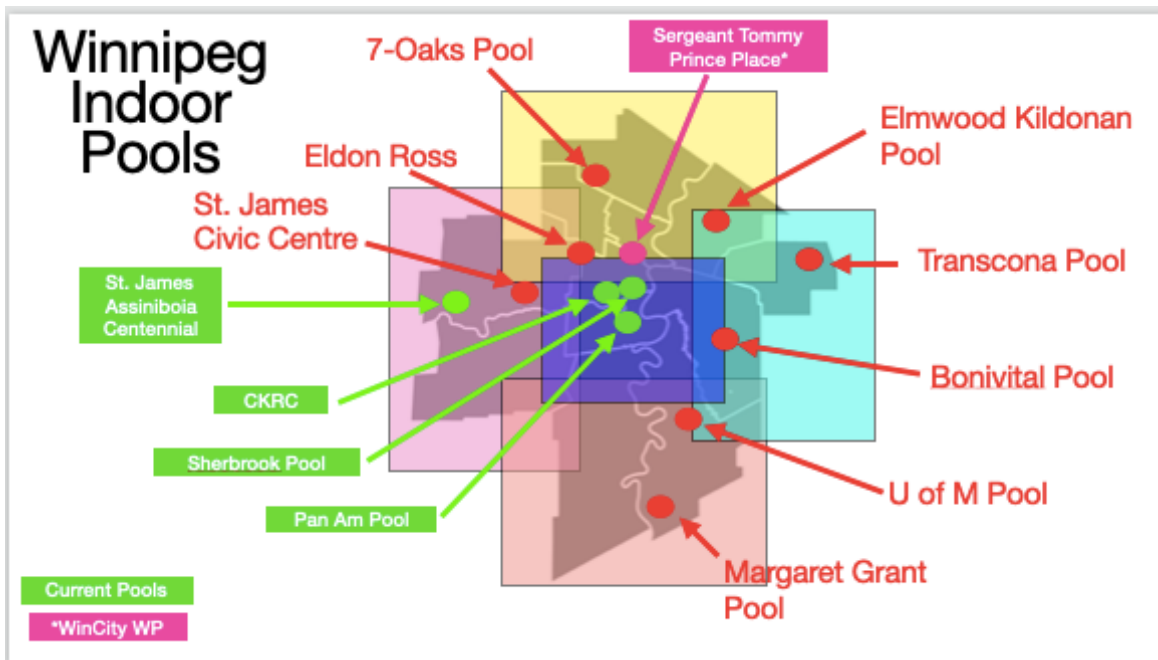
Our vision is to make Water Polo programs accessible in every corner of the city. Currently, our activities are primarily centred around Pan Am Pool, which limits our reach to other communities. We believe we’re missing valuable opportunities to grow the sport by not offering grassroots programming in these areas. While the City of Winnipeg has suitable swimming pools across various neighbourhoods, gaining access to these facilities remains a significant challenge.



Barriers and Opportunities:

- **Barriers:** Limited coaching staff and challenges in securing access to other City of Winnipeg pools.
- **Opportunities:** Targeting grassroots programming in underrepresented communities with suitable pool facilities can dramatically grow the sport’s reach.

Look at all of the swimming pools in Winnipeg:



*Indoor & Outdoor

Conclusion

A sincere thank you to our coaches, volunteers, board members, and sports partners, including the Manitoba Water Polo Association and Sport Manitoba. Your passion, dedication, and teamwork make Vortex Water Polo a thriving community.

Together, we look forward to building on this momentum in 2024-2025 season and beyond.

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Michael Reid

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Vortex Water Polo

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