

NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP LEAGUE HANDBOOK

16 and under | 18 and under | Senior

2024-2025



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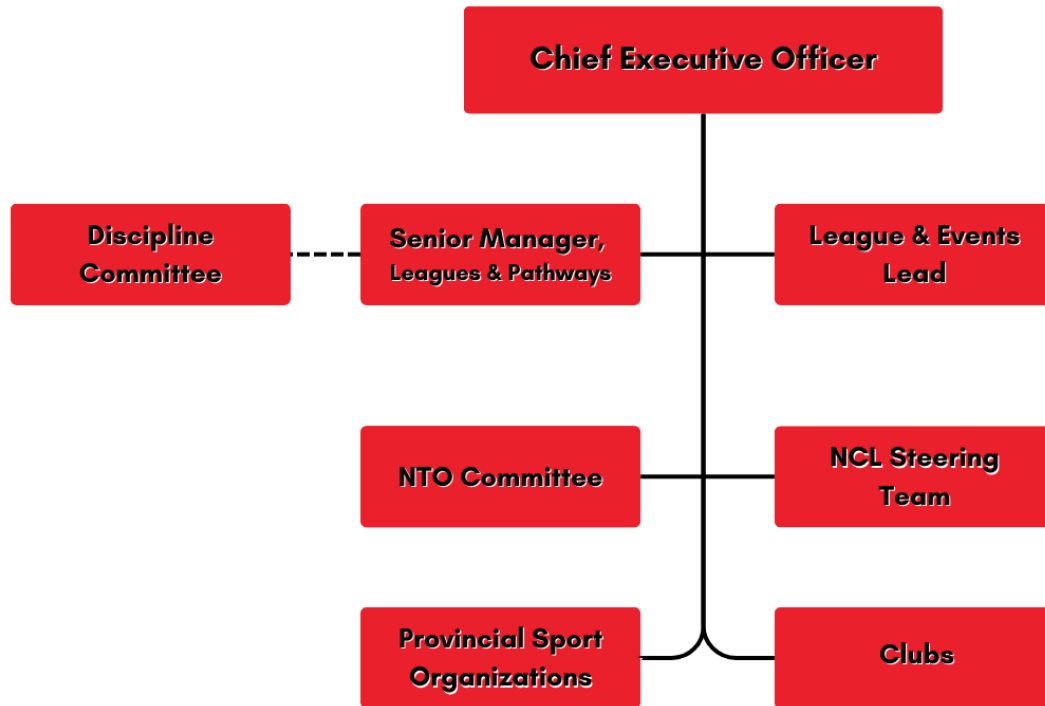
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1. Governance, Categories and Administration

1.1 League Governance Model

1.1.0 Diagram 1: NCL League Organization Chart



1.2 Responsibilities

1.2.0 Water Polo Canada (WPC), represented by the Executive Director, Senior Manager of Leagues & Pathway, and the League and Events Lead, is responsible for the overall strategic direction, governance, partnership management, leadership, and financial management of the National Championship League (NCL). Other WPC staff and volunteers will be appointed to specific functional areas within the management and leadership of the NCL, such as operations, logistics and procurement, communication and marketing, and participant (athlete, coach, official) development. WPC will be responsible for establishing partnerships with local hospitality groups and establishing preferred hotel rates and other travel and accommodations concessions for participating teams. WPC is responsible for establishing a "stay and play" and "travel and play" policy for participating teams and for providing each host club (or PSO) with a hosting kit, including marketing materials and officials' uniforms.

- 1.2.1 The NCL Council Steering Team's mandate is to help create, evaluate, review, and implement all technical aspects of the NCL for the various age categories (16 and under, 18 and under, and Senior). The Terms of Reference for this committee can be found in [Appendix A](#).
- 1.2.2 The Discipline Committee's mandate is to provide guidance and implement disciplinary standards for all competition-related matters and review behaviour deemed detrimental to the league's image or contrary to the WPC Code of Conduct and as defined in the Judiciary for all NCL age categories. The Terms of Reference for this committee can be found in [Appendix B](#).
- 1.2.3 The National Technical Official (NTO) Committee is responsible for scheduling referees and delegates for all NCL games and providing onsite leadership support, when deemed necessary. There will be an NTO Chair and Two Coordinators: one responsible for the western provinces (British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba) and another for the eastern provinces (Quebec, Ontario, and Atlantic Canada). A fourth representative may be recruited to support committee duties at special events. The NTO Committee can assign, evaluate, mentor, and discipline referees and, when need arises, support WPC in communicating disciplinary sanctions.
- 1.2.4 A Local Organizing Committee (LOC) will be formed for each of the Championships events: 16U Western Finals, 16U Eastern Finals; 18U Conference Championships, Senior Nationals; and the 18 and under National Finals. Members of the local club, municipal tourism departments and Province will be asked to sit on the LOC along with the assigned WPC staff members. The LOC will be responsible for organizing these events.
- 1.2.5 The host club is responsible for all the following during NCL games:
 - 1.2.5.1 Ensure all timing equipment can deliver programming for the 20s shot clock.
 - 1.2.5.2 Minor officials are provided for each field of play, including a game secretary (6-8 sports), shot clock/game clock worker, penalty secretary, minor officials supervisor, and live stream operator.
 - 1.2.5.3 Setup/takedown of the field of play for all games completed an hour before first game time.
 - 1.2.5.4 The host club will be responsible for a hospitality suite for the volunteers, coaches, and officials for competition events of more than 6 hours per day. For any NCL Finals event, Water Polo Canada will provide \$100 per meal per field of play.
 - 1.2.5.5 The host club will be provided with a guide regarding minimum

field of play (FOP) and timing equipment requirements. The host club will be required to use all elements in the host kit provided by WPC at no additional cost to the club.

- 1.2.5.6 The host club is responsible for ensuring all volunteers are well trained in their assigned roles. WPC will provide training opportunities online throughout the season for host clubs, and it is the host club's responsibility to ensure that volunteers attend these training sessions.
 - 1.2.5.7 Violations of WPC hosting policy (ex., lack of minor officials/goal judges, pool not set up per WPC policies, no NCL banners, insufficient equipment to run event etc.) will result in a \$500 fine per day.
 - 1.2.5.8 If the LOC fails to adhere to any of the responsibilities listed above WPC may deliver a fine or determine the LOC ineligible for hosting future NCL events.
- 1.2.6 The NCL has a stay-and-play policy for all categories. All clubs in the NCL will be expected to stay at WPC partner hotels for all NCL events where a host partner exists. The hotel partners will be listed on the WPC site. Any club that reserves rooms at a non-partner hotel will violate the policy. Violation of the stay-and-play policy will result in the club paying fines of \$750 per team for regular season violations and \$1000 per team for Finals events violations.

1.3 NCL Handbook

- 1.3.0 The following Handbook will govern the rules and regulations for the competition categories and events outlined herein.
- 1.3.1 The handbook will be revised annually by the Senior Manager for Leagues & Pathway and the Manager of League and Events. The annual review will commence after the National Finals each year.
- 1.3.2 Water Polo Canada reserves the right to make minor clarifications and adjustments to the handbook throughout the season. These changes will be communicated to all teams immediately after their implementation.

1.4 Competition Categories

- 1.4.0 16 and under boys: born between **2009 and 2012**.
- 1.4.1 16 and under girls: born between **2009 and 2012**.
- 1.4.2 18 and under boys: born between **2007 and 2010**.

- 1.4.3 18 and under girls: born between 2007 and 2010.
- 1.4.4 Senior men: born in 2008 or earlier.
- 1.4.5 Senior women: born in 2008 and earlier.
- 1.4.6 Each senior team may have a maximum of four (4) athletes born in 2009 on its roster for any game.
- 1.4.7 No exemptions for players born outside the listed age brackets will be granted.

1.5 Participation Eligibility

- 1.5.0 The NCL is open to citizens, permanent residents of Canada, and residents of another country who are living continuously in Canada under a travel, student, or work visa (including children) who are recorded on the WPC Registration System in the correct registrant category and good standing with their Club and PSO.
 - 1.5.0.1 Clubs may submit an exemption to the Senior Manager of Leagues & Pathway on the player's behalf. These will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Any exemptions will be shared with all NCL clubs in general communications if approved.
- 1.5.1 The NCL participants shall include Players, coaches, referees, managers, chaperones, medical personnel, minor officials, and volunteers. All participants must be registered in good standing with their club, PSO and WPC.
- 1.5.2 Referees, coaches, and athletes must be recorded in the Perform in Water Polo registration category and listed in Water Polo Canada's National Registration System, RAMP InterActive® (hereinafter referred to as "RAMP") before their first game.
- 1.5.3 All other participants – chaperones, team managers, non-paid minor officials, or general volunteers – must be recorded in the "Volunteer" registration category and listed in the Water Polo Canada's National Registration System, RAMP prior to their first game; the registration of these volunteers will be the responsibility of the club registrar.

1.6 Entry Format

- 1.6.0 A team wishing to enter the NCL must be affiliated with a registered Canadian Club in good standing with their PSO and WPC.
- 1.6.1 All teams wishing to participate in the NCL must register and pay for their entry through the RAMP registration system. WPC will determine registration and

payment deadlines annually.

- 1.6.2 Teams wishing to enter the NCL after the deposit deadline but before the final registration deadline can do so after sending a formal request to the Senior Manager of Leagues and Pathway and the League and Events Lead. They will review the request and determine whether the team can register. Teams registering after the deposit deadline will be charged an administration fee of up to 25% of the final registration fees.
- 1.6.3 The Senior Manager of Leagues and Pathway and the League and Events Lead must receive a list of all permanent or temporary transfers for 18U and senior divisions on or before October 31st of each calendar year. This applies to athletes and coaches permanently moving from one club to another and to those being loaned to another club to participate in the NCL as per rule 2.3.7.
 - 1.6.3.1 A player or coach who moves between cities, whether from within Canada or outside Canada, in the middle of the NCL season can apply for an exemption to the October 31st deadline rule. The Senior Manager of Leagues and Pathway and the League and Events Lead will review the application and determine if the transfer will be approved.
- 1.6.4 All personal information of registrants selected for a roster must be accurate; rosters with incomplete or inaccurate information may be declined.

1.7 Financial Obligation

- 1.7.0 Teams entering the NCL will be responsible for paying a non-refundable deposit totaling 25% of the registration fees. The remaining balance will be charged to the credit card on file on the registration deadline date.
- 1.7.1 Clubs that have paid a team deposit fee but choose not to pay the registration fee balance will not be refunded any portion of the deposit. A club that chooses not to pay the full registration fee after paying the deposit can put 50% of the deposit towards the registration balance of one of the club's other NCL teams (excluding 16U teams).
- 1.7.2 Deposit and final payments may only be made online via RAMP. WPC will not accept cheques.
- 1.7.3 Teams making late payment of the final registration fees will be charged an administration fee of \$100 every three (3) business days, excluding statutory holidays. Administration fees may be paid via PayPal (paypal@waterpolo.ca).
- 1.7.4 If a team is unable to attend an event due to extenuating circumstances, they must contact the Senior Manager of Leagues and Pathways who will consider their case for withdrawal from the event and communicate in a timely if their

withdrawal carries any sanction or penalty.

- 1.7.4.1 Requests must be made 14 days before the start of the event. All other requests will be deemed a forfeiture which may be associated with fines.
- 1.7.5 WPC will establish the overall budget and determine the deposit amount and final registration fees. The budget includes, but is not limited to, the following elements:
 - 1.7.5.1 Pool rental costs
 - 1.7.5.2 Officials and staff travel and accommodations
 - 1.7.5.3 Officials and staff honoraria and salary
 - 1.7.5.4 Officials and staff uniform
 - 1.7.5.5 Team and individual awards and National Finals awards banquet
 - 1.7.5.6 Marketing and Communication
 - 1.7.5.7 General administration
- 1.7.6 WPC will attempt to enter into facility rental agreements directly with the competition venues. If a club holds a contract with the competition venue, the club will need to remit an official invoice to WPC to be reimbursed.
- 1.7.7 WPC will determine an equitable fee structure for every category. The final costs of these programs can be found in the registration package.
 - 1.7.7.1 All fees will be processed through RAMP
 - 1.7.7.2 All transactions are subject to an administration fee

2. General Rules

2.1 Rules of play

- 2.1.0 The rules of play for all categories shall follow the current World Aquatics Competition Regulations for water polo, except where specified elsewhere in this document.
- 2.1.1 Any specific rule adaptations will be communicated before each event to the Head Coaches of each team.
- 2.1.2 The NCL will implement the 20s shot clock rules at all facilities for the 2024-25

season and beyond. Clubs, PSOs and facilities must coordinate to ensure their equipment has the 20s shot clock capability before hosting.

- 2.1.3 The World Aquatics rule allowing for flying substitutions will apply in all suitable field of play (FOP).
- 2.1.4 If the World Aquatics Technical Water Polo Committee (TWPC) and World Aquatics Bureau modify the rules of play, the NCL can implement the new rules immediately.
- 2.1.5 The format for the number of players in the water (not including the goalie) and the ball size for each category is as follows:
 - 2.1.5.1 All Women's categories will be 6 on 6 with a size four ball
 - 2.1.5.2 All Men's categories will be 6 on 6 with a size five ball
- 2.1.6 Teams are not required to have a second goaltender. Any goaltender is required to wear a red cap with the number 1, 13, 14, or 15. Any athlete on a team's signed game roster can be cap switched into a goalie cap (1, 13, 14, 15) during the game in case of injury, as the referee or delegate allows, and otherwise only at halftime. However, regular goaltender substitutions may only be between goaltenders wearing red caps.
- 2.1.7 There will be zero tolerance for violent acts committed in the water. Any elbows, knees, head-butts, closed fists, punching, striking or other physical action purposefully directed towards an opponent with intent to injure will result in brutality and violent action.

2.2 Team Eligibility

- 2.2.0 Teams/clubs must be Canadian-based. Foreign teams may only register for an open Championship with the express consent of WPC.
- 2.2.1 Teams must submit an initial roster of at least thirteen (13) athletes at final team registration (October 14th). Teams may manage their roster throughout the entire season via RAMP Interactive® and will be permitted to have up to thirty (30) athletes on their online roster. The roster will close on two weeks prior to a team's first competition date. Athletes and staff must appear on the online roster to be eligible to compete and sit on the bench.
- 2.2.2 Final game rosters, with cap numbers, must be submitted the Monday before an event to ensure that all safe sport requirements are completed and there is ample time for entry into 6-8 sports.
- 2.2.3 A maximum of sixteen (16) players and three (3) certified staff are permitted to sit on the team bench, all of whom must appear on the online team roster.

Teams may rotate players and coaches from match to match. Only participants on that game's roster can sit on the team bench.

- 2.2.4 Any athlete not on the team bench for the start of the game but who is on their team bench before the start of the 3rd quarter is eligible to compete, provided they are otherwise eligible to compete. Athletes who arrive after the game has started but before the beginning of the 3rd quarter must check in with the WPC delegate before being allowed to sit on the team bench or enter the water. Coaches will make the WPC delegate aware of any potential late arrivals before the start of a game and ensure their roster is reflective of all athletes intending to play that game.
- 2.2.5 A staff member of the team must review their official game roster prior to the two-minute warning signal of each match through the 6-8 Scores Application at the Minor Officials' Desk. The team staff member may make lineup changes up to 2 minutes prior to each NCL match. Coaches are expected to ensure that the spelling and accuracy of names are accurate in the 6-8 platform.
- 2.2.6 When coaching minors, one of the team's coaches must be the same gender as the team competing. This coach must meet the minimum certification standard and be at least 18 years of age before the start of the NCL season.
- 2.2.7 NCL head and assistant coaches must meet specific criteria to be eligible to coach in the NCL. These criteria can be found here: [WEB LINK](#).
- 2.2.8 As a result of not having the proper coaching certification or a head coach present (player/coach is not permitted), the WPC delegate will enforce the following penalties and sanctions:
- 2.2.8.1 The team will receive three (3) demerits per offence.
 - 2.2.8.2 The assistant coach may act as the head coach when the head coach is serving a suspension due to a red card sanction if the assistant coach also meets the requirements to be a head coach.
- 2.2.9 Each athlete must wear similar attire, which includes the following: water polo caps, bathing caps, player's clothing, and bathing suits. Athlete attire must be blank or contain the club's logo or club/team name. Athletes can wear different versions of attire (i.e., swimsuits) if the design and major colour schemes of the attire remain the same (ex., suits must have the same base colour, but if the logo switches from the left side to the right side, that is acceptable). WPC/National Team clothing, or clothing from another country, is prohibited. The uniform standard applies to opening ceremonies, pre/during/post-games, and awards ceremonies.
- 2.2.10 All bench staff must wear similar attire, which includes the following: pants, capris, shorts, a t-shirt, a golf shirt and a dress shirt:

- 2.2.10.1 Pants, capris, or shorts must be blank or contain the club's logo or team name. All bench staff must wear the same style of pants, capris, or shorts.
- 2.2.10.2 A T-shirt, golf shirt or dress shirt must be blank or contain the club's logo or team name. All bench staff must wear the same T-shirt, golf shirt, or dress shirt.
- 2.2.10.3 Baseball caps are permitted if they contain the club's logo or team name.
- 2.2.10.4 WPC/National Team clothing or clothing from another country is prohibited.
- 2.2.10.5 The uniform policy applies to opening ceremonies, pre/during/post games, and awards ceremonies.
- 2.2.10.6 Failure to adhere to the WPC clothing policy will result in 1 demerit per game for each person applied to the offending team.

2.3 Player Eligibility

- 2.3.0 Players must be Canadian Citizens or Residents of Canada, or be a resident of another country who is living in Canada under an appropriate visa, and in good standing with their Club, PSO and WPC registered in the Perform in Water Polo registration category and in good standing with their Club, PSO and WPC, and must appear on the WPC Registration System.
- 2.3.1 Players must compete in at least one full regular-season event to be eligible for the Conference Championships or National Championships. At that event, the players must have actively participated in at least 50% of the games. No exemptions will be considered.
- 2.3.2 Athletes may only appear on one (1) roster per division, per year.
 - 2.3.2.1 Clubs who enter multiple teams in a single NCL division, excluding 16U (ex: two 18U boys' teams), can move athletes between their multiple teams, under certain requirements. Each eligible team may move **a maximum of four** players during an NCL season. A club that has two teams entered a single category would, therefore, have a possible maximum of eight roster moves in one season, four players moving from Team A to Team B and four players moving from Team B to Team A). Eligible teams must make any roster moves before the Conference Championships or National Championships, whichever comes first.
- 2.3.3 Participants may not be listed as an athlete and coach on the same roster.

- 2.3.4 If an athlete's hat number does not match what is on the signed roster, the onsite Water Polo Canada delegate will change it in the 6-8 game sheet App. It is the team's responsibility to ensure that all athletes' names are correctly spelled and cap numbers are accurate. The team will be assessed one demerit for signing an incorrect scoresheet.
- 2.3.5 If an athlete on a team's master roster but not listed on the scoresheet, is found in the water or on the team bench, the delegate will add the missing player's name to the scoresheet. The team will be assessed 1 demerit for signing an incorrect scoresheet.
- 2.3.6 If during a game, an athlete who is not registered on a team's master roster and is found to be in the water, the athlete shall not be permitted to play or continue to play. If the game has started, the offending team will forfeit the game. In this scenario, an Incident Report must be written and submitted to the NTO Coordinator, Senior Manager of Leagues and Pathways and the League and Events Lead. If an ineligible athlete is found after the match ends, the game will not be replayed and the game will be considered a forfeit. The Discipline Committee will review the report to determine if suspension, fines, or another penalty should be added.
- 2.3.7 Athletes may only compete with the club with which they are registered as a primary, secondary, tertiary or fourth club member. The following exceptions will apply:
- 2.3.7.1 Senior NCL athletes, excluding Senior National Team athletes, may participate on any team provided they meet the requirements in 2.3.1. above.
- 2.3.7.2 Athletes who receive funding from their home province but wish to play for an NCL club outside of their home province because 1) they are training at the NTC and/or 2) there are no NCL clubs within their province, are eligible to apply for an exemption that will allow them to compete for a club in a different province, without having to give up their home province registration.
- 2.3.7.3 Athletes who participate in one NCL category for their home club but cannot play for their club in a 2nd NCL category because their club has not entered a team into that category can submit an exemption request to play for a club in a different province of registration (without switching their registration) if they meet all the following conditions:
- The athlete is playing in either the 16 and under, 18 and under NCL category for their primary, secondary, tertiary or fourth club.

- The athlete cannot play in either the 16 and under, 18 and under NCL category for their primary, secondary, tertiary or fourth club because their club does not offer that team.
- The athlete is unable to play in the specified NCL category for another club in their province of registration because no other club(s) has registered a team in the specified NCL category or the club(s) who have entered cannot accommodate the athlete on their team(s).
- If an athlete meets all the above conditions, they are eligible to apply for an exemption to rule 2.3.7. The exemption request must be submitted to the Senior Manager of Leagues and Pathway and the League and Events Lead and must clearly show the required conditions have been met.

2.3.7.4 Player Loan forms must be submitted to Senior Manager of Leagues and Pathway and the League and Events Lead prior to an athlete being eligible to compete. The WPC office will confirm once the athlete is eligible to be added to the team's roster.

2.3.8 18 and under and Senior athletes must compete in at least one full event of the regular season, in more than 50% of the games, to be eligible for the respective category's playoffs (East/West Conference Championships, National Finals, and the Senior National Championships). Extenuating circumstances may exist for injuries or other situations. The team will need to submit an official letter of appeal at least 14 days in advance of an event to the Senior Manager of Leagues and Pathway and the League and Events Lead along with supporting documentation.

2.3.9 Athletes training at the National Team Centre (NTC) full-time are eligible to play in the NCL. NTC athletes must have their club choice approved by the Senior National Team Staff in conjunction with the Senior Manager of Pathways and Leagues and the League and Events Lead. WPC will consider the following criteria when determining whether to accept or deny a placement for the athlete: club history of the athlete, positional need of the team, previous league placement of the team, logistics, and competitive balance. The Senior NT athletes are on loan from the NT during the Senior season, and as such, ALL NT activities will take precedence over Senior games.

2.4 Duration of the Game

2.4.0 All games of all categories shall consist of four (4) quarters of eight (8) minute stop time with a two (2) minute interval break between periods.

2.4.1 Stop time will be used throughout the game, unless a 10-goal differential is reached. Once a 10-goal differential is reached run time will be used for the

rest of the game for all situations, except with timeouts. If the timeclock and possession clock are not able to be asynchronously, then run time will be used in interval time only.

- 2.4.2 Regular season or finals events with a round-robin followed by a medal round will use World Aquatics tie-breaking procedures for any teams tied after round-robin play.
- 2.4.3 In finals events with only round-robin play, every game will require a definitive winner. Any game ending with a tied score at the end of regulation will proceed to a shootout to determine the winner. The World Aquatics shootout procedure will be applied, except that only three (3) shooters instead of five (5) will shoot according to the rules. Regular season round-robin games will end in a tie.
- 2.4.4 Elimination or qualification games during the Championship competitions (East/West Conference Championships, National Championships, Open Championships and Senior Nationals) ending with a tied score at the end of regulation will proceed to a shootout to determine the winner. The full World Aquatics shootout procedure will be applied.

2.5 Pool Specifications

- 2.5.0 The distance between the goal lines shall be twenty-five (25) meters. The width of the field of play shall be twenty (20) meters. The boundary of the field of play at each end shall be zero point three (0.30) meters behind the goal line. The depth of the field of play shall be two (2) meters.
 - 2.5.0.1 For regular season games, WPC will allow a variance of a maximum of 20% on the length and depth of the field of play and a maximum of 40% on the width.
 - 2.5.0.2 WPC will allow a maximum variance of 15% on the width, length, and depth for the Championship competitions (East/West Conference Championships, National Finals, Open Championships, and Senior Nationals).

2.6 Competition Formats

- 2.6.0 The **16 and under** categories shall observe the following competition format and calendar:
 - 2.6.0.1 16U Eastern and Western Championships and Invationals will be an open registration. Any team that is in good standing with WPC and the PSO are eligible to register a team to compete.
 - 2.6.0.2 The Senior Manager of Leagues and Pathway and the League and

Events Lead will determine the championship format annually.

- 2.6.1 The **18 and under** categories shall observe the following competition format and calendar:
- 2.6.1.1 Teams shall play a regular season between November and May of each year. They shall be divided into a Western Conference (British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba) and an Eastern Conference (Ontario, Quebec, and Atlantic Canada).
 - 2.6.1.2 Where possible, teams shall further be divided into divisions based on regional proximity.
 - 2.6.1.3 When possible, the 18U category will have a tiered competition format, with all matches played during large tournament weekends.
 - 2.6.1.4 Teams will play a minimum of 15 regular season games
 - 2.6.1.5 The playoffs shall consist of a Western Championship and an Eastern Championship in late April / early May. Each team within the conference will automatically qualify for their Conference Championship. The top four (4) finishers at each respective Championship will qualify for the National Finals (last weekend of May).
 - 2.6.1.6 The format for the regular season, regional Championships, and National Finals shall be determined annually by the Senior Manager of Leagues and Pathway and the Leagues and Events Lead.
- 2.6.2 The **Senior** categories shall observe the following competition format and calendar:
- 2.6.2.1 Teams will play a regular season between December and May of each year. Teams shall be divided into a Western Division (British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba), an Ontario Division, and a Quebec Division where possible.
 - 2.6.2.2 Teams will play a minimum of 15 regular season games.
 - 2.6.2.3 The Senior category, like the 18U category, will be a tiered competition format when possible.
 - 2.6.2.4 The regular season format and Senior National Championships shall be determined by the Senior Manager of Leagues and Pathway and the League and Events Lead annually.
- 2.6.3 The format of the 18U National Finals will be determined by the Senior Manager

of Leagues and Pathway and the League and Events Lead on a year-by-year basis.

- 2.6.3.1 The location of the 18U National Finals will be determined on a yearly basis by a bid committee led by the Senior Manager of Leagues and Pathways and the Leagues and Events Manager. Cities and Tourism Associations will submit a bid to WPC, with the hosting rights going to the best overall bid as determined by the bid committee. This bid will also identify the local club that will be part of the hosting committee.

2.7 Point System

- 2.7.0 In the regular season, teams in the 16 and under, 18 and under, and Senior NCL categories will receive three (3) points for a win and one (1) point for a tie or Shoot-out loss.

2.8 Tie Breaking Procedure

- 2.8.0 If teams are tied in the standings during round-robin play, the World Aquatics bylaw 10.9.1.11 shall rank the teams.
- 2.8.1 In the event two (2) teams are tied in the standings during the regular season of all NCL categories the following tie breaking procedures will be used to rank the teams:
- 2.8.1.1 Head-to-head record
 - 2.8.1.2 Goal difference against the highest placed team
 - 2.8.1.3 If the two teams are tied for first place, the goal difference against the next highest placed team
 - 2.8.1.4 If the teams remain tied, goals for and against the highest or next highest placed team.
 - 2.8.1.5 If the teams remain tied, the two teams will go to a shootout
 - 2.8.1.6 Random Draw
- 2.8.2 In the event three (3) teams are tied in the standings during the regular season of the 18 and under and Senior categories, the following tie-breaking procedures will be used to rank the teams:
- 2.8.2.1 Goal differential between the three tied teams
 - 2.8.2.2 Goals scored between the three tied teams.

- 2.8.2.3 Goal differential against a higher-ranked team
- 2.8.2.4 Overall goal differential
- 2.8.2.5 Overall goals for
- 2.8.2.6 Random draw
- 2.8.2.7 Once a team advances the two (2) tie breaking procedure shall be employed to rank the remaining teams.

3. Championship Awards

3.1 Championship Trophy and Banners

- 3.1.0 WPC will award the winning team a trophy and banner and medals (gold, silver, and bronze) for each of the Championship events identified below.
 - 3.1.0.1 16 and under Western Champions
 - 3.1.0.2 16 and under Eastern Champions
 - 3.1.0.3 18 and under Western Champions
 - 3.1.0.4 18 and under Eastern Champions
 - 3.1.0.5 18 and under National Champions
 - 3.1.0.6 Senior National Champions

3.2 Individual Awards

- 3.2.0 The following individual awards will be presented at the respective 16 and under Western and Eastern National Championship events:
 - 3.2.0.1 All-Star Team

3.3 The following individual awards will be presented at the respective 18 and under Western and Eastern Championship events:

- 3.3.0.1 Regular season All-Star Team
- 3.3.0.2 Regular season Top Goal Scorer

3.4 The following individual awards will be presented at the 18U National Championships and Senior National Championships.

- 3.4.0.1 Most Value Goaltender

- 3.4.0.2 Most Valuable Coach
- 3.4.0.3 Most Valuable Player
- 3.4.1 Participating teams will be asked to provide votes for regular season awards and all-star team awards. The team of delegates responsible for Championship events will select the Most Valuable awards.
- 3.4.2 The NCL Club Cup will be awarded at the 18U National Finals to the club that has accumulated the most points over the course of the NCL season across all six divisions of competition. Points will be awarded as follows:
 - 3.4.2.1 Conference Championships: 3 points for Gold, 2 points for Silver, 1 point for Bronze.
 - 3.4.2.2 National Championships: 6 points for Gold, 4 points for Silver, 2 points for Bronze.

4. Abuse-Free Sport and the NCL

4.1 What is Abuse-Free Sport?

- 4.1.0 As of Friday, March 24, 2023 Water Polo Canada officially joined Abuse-Free Sport, the new independent program to prevent an address maltreatment in sport, managed by the Office of the Sport Integrity Commissioner (OSIC).

4.2 What it means?

- 4.2.0 As of March 24, 2023 a new complaint process will be in effect, and as part of the Agreement signed between WPC and the Sport Dispute Resolution Centre of Canada (SDRCC) in connection with its Office of the Sport Integrity Commissioner (OSIC), designated registrants of Water Polo Canada will become subject to the Universal Code of Conduct to Prevent and Address Maltreatment in Sport (UCCMS) under the Abuse-Free Sport umbrella. These designated registrants are referred to as "WPC UCCMS participants".

4.3 Who are the "WPC UCCMS participants"?

- 4.3.0 WPC UCCMS participants are:
 - 4.3.0.1 any individual associated with WPC's National Team and High-Performance programs (including Regional Development Centres) such as athletes, coaches or any other staff or individual supporting one of these WPC programs and/or interacting with any of these WPC programs' participants;
 - 4.3.0.2 WPC's National Championship League (NCL) and WPC's National

Inter-Provincial Championship participants including all athletes, all team coaches and all other staff associated with teams as well as all WPC staff, contractors, technical officials and event volunteers involved in these tournaments;

- 4.3.0.3 all WPC Board Members, WPC employees/contractors and WPC committee volunteers.

4.4 What is the new complaint process?

- 4.4.0 The new complaint process is available [here](#).

5. Judiciary – NCL specific processes

5.1 Scope

- 5.1.0 This section is specific to the NCL and is meant to deal with "Field of Play" or "NCL environment" situations different from those addressed in Section 4 above. For situations that constitute UCCMS violations, Section 4 "supersedes" such NCL-specific processes.

5.2 Definition

- 5.2.0 This section applies to clubs, teams, athletes, coaches, officials, chaperones, parent fans, and other team personnel and herein will be referred to as a "participant."
- 5.2.1 An incident may be defined as one of the following:
- 5.2.1.1 an event in which a participant is ejected from the game or competition venue due to any behaviour deemed detrimental to the image of the league, WPC and the sport of water polo (e.g., violent action, red card and misconduct).
 - 5.2.1.2 Incidents may occur during any part of an NCL event.
 - 5.2.1.3 Withdrawals, forfeits or code of conduct violations.
- 5.2.2 Each discipline issue will remain on a participant's record for five (5) years. A physical assault of another participant outside of the field of play will remain on a participant's record indefinitely.
- 5.2.3 A major incident requires four (4) or more games of suspension and must be reviewed by the discipline committee.
- 5.2.4 Other incidents may be deemed major if they involve repeat offenders, defaults, forfeits, withdrawals, illegal participants, and a failure to adhere to

sanctions or code of conduct violations.

- 5.2.5 Sanctions will apply to all NCL events and may be carried over to other categories and seasons in which that participant is partaking.

5.3 Responsibilities and Authority

- 5.3.0 The NCL incident form is [found here](#) and must be completed by game officials (referees and delegates) and submitted for all incidents defined in section 5.1. above, immediately after the conclusion of the match/incident.
- 5.3.1 Following each NCL event, the Senior Manager of Leagues and Pathway or Leagues & Events Lead will update a report outlining sanctions placed on individual players or coaches. In any incident where a suspension is delivered, delegates must first review this report to determine if additional suspensions will be delivered.
- 5.3.2 All sanctions will be communicated to the team within two hours of a games completion. A copy of the incident form may be provided upon request.
- 5.3.3 WPC Representatives have the authority to give an athlete, coach or spectator a yellow or red card, depending on the action of the participant, if they see an action that the official misses.
- 5.3.4 The delegate(s) may suspend a participant up to a maximum of one (1) game without review by the Senior Manager of Leagues and Pathway and the League and Events Lead. An NCL Incident Form must be submitted.
- 5.3.5 The Senior Manager of Leagues and Pathway and the League and Events Lead may suspend a participant up to a maximum of three (3) games without review by the Discipline Committee. A written report must be provided to the participant in question (via the club) prior to the sanction being applied.
- 5.3.6 The Discipline Committee will review all major incident reports and provide a written discipline report to the relevant parties (via the clubs) after reviewing the incident.
- 5.3.7 The Discipline Committee may also review minor incidents at the request of the Senior Manager of Leagues and Pathway and the League and Events Lead.
- 5.3.8 Water Polo Canada can transfer any NCL incident review from the NCL judiciary process to the WPC Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedure policy, if deemed appropriate by the executive director of WPC. A violent action will carry an automatic one (1) game suspension. A second violent action within the same season, regardless of the category, will carry an automatic three (3) game suspension. A third brutality within the same season will result in a suspension for the remainder of the season.

- 5.3.9 A player who receives three disqualifications in one season, regardless of category, will automatically receive a one game suspension, in addition to any suspension determined by the Senior Manager of Leagues and Pathway and the League and Events Lead and/or the Discipline Committee. If a player receives four disqualifications in one season, regardless of category, it will be deemed a major incident and reviewed by the Discipline Committee. The League and Events Lead and/or the Discipline Committee will decide whether player suspensions resulting from disqualifications and/or brutalities are served in the category they were received in, within a different category (if applicable), or across multiple categories (if applicable) on a case-by-case basis.
- 5.3.10 A coaching red card will carry an automatic one (1) game suspension. Coaching red cards apply to the team in which they were received. A coach is unable to participate in any games until the suspension has been served with the appropriate team.
- 5.3.10.1 A second red card for misconduct within the same season will carry an automatic two (2) game suspension regardless of Category. A third red card for misconduct within the same season will carry an automatic three (3) game suspension.
- 5.3.10.2 If a coach receives a red card and the suspension cannot be served because the team the coach received the red card with has no games remaining in the season, the carded individual will not be allowed to coach another one of his/her NCL teams without first serving the suspension with that team.
- An official exemption can be requested to the Senior Manager of Leagues and Pathways in extenuating circumstances where a suspension will extend to an unreasonable amount of games because of this rule. The exemption request will be responded to before the next event, regardless of age category.
- 5.3.10.3 If a coach receives four (4) total red cards, regardless of the category, it will be deemed a major incident and reviewed by the Discipline Committee. The Discipline Committee can levy additional sanctions upon review, including sanctions outside the category in which the fourth (4th) red card was received.
- 5.3.11 All decisions from the Senior Manager of Leagues and Pathways and the League and Events Lead and/or the discipline committee will be sent to the club of the involved participants.

5.4 Video Review For Violent Actions

- 5.4.0 A video review may be initiated at any time by the game's delegate for the WPC Representative (Senior Manager Leagues and Pathways and/or Leagues and Events Lead) to review an incident in order to assess potential disciplinary action pertaining to perceived violent action or game misconduct behaviours.
- 5.4.1 A video review may be requested for disciplinary action by a team's head coach within 30 minutes of a game's completion. This review may be for new claims or for a review of a call for additional sanctions to be put in place. A fee of \$200 CAD, payable by cash only, must accompany the request for video review. This fee will be refunded if the review results in new or additional disciplinary action. The process below outlines how the video review request can be submitted and the process that will be followed to review video.
- 5.4.2 The Head Coach of a team must request to the Senior Manager of Leagues and Pathway and/or the League and Events Lead onsite or the NTO that a game situation to be reviewed for potential disciplinary action.
- 5.4.3 Potential violent action that was missed or not appropriately sanctioned may be reviewed utilizing this procedure.
- 5.4.4 The Senior Manager of Leagues and Pathway and/or the League and Events Lead and the NTO will then review the video to decide if an incident did occur. It is important to note that only the official WPC video will be reviewed at this time. No other video will be considered.
- 5.4.5 Senior Manager of Leagues and Pathway and/or the League and Events Lead, along with the NTO will discuss with the officials and delegate of the game to gain an understanding from their point of view what took place during the game.
- 5.4.6 Senior Manager of Leagues and Pathway and/or the League and Events Lead and the NTO may request from both team's additional video footage of the incident.
- 5.4.7 Potential outcomes of the decision process:
- 5.4.7.1 If the video is reviewed and it is determined that there is no violent action, no further action will be taken.
 - 5.4.7.2 If the video is reviewed and a violent action was found, sanctions will be applied as per relevant sections of this handbook.
 - 5.4.7.3 If the video is reviewed and no violent action was found, but aggressive play was found that would otherwise warrant a one game suspension, then that suspension would be applied, and the deposit would be returned.

- 5.4.7.4 If the incident requires further investigation/review the Senior Manager of Leagues and Pathway and/or the League and Events Lead and NTO will provide all evidence to the Disciplinary Committee for further review and discussion, as well as the recommendation on sanctions that will be given.

5.5 Protests

- 5.5.0 The Senior Manager of Leagues and Pathway will review all protests. All decisions rendered by the Senior Manager of Leagues and Pathway are final and cannot be appealed.
- 5.5.1 Teams may only protest a technical error. A technical error does not include a judgment call made by a referee regarding the interpretation of a rule. Video replay cannot be used in protests.
- 5.5.2 All protests must be in writing and submitted to the game's Delegate utilizing the protest form up to (30) minutes following the final game time indicated on the electronic scoresheet. Once the form has been submitted, no further communication can occur, unless under questioning by the Senior Manager of Leagues and Pathway, until the protest is resolved. [Appendix E: Protest Form](#).
- 5.5.3 The protest form must include a cash fee of \$200 CAD (the payment will be refunded if the protest is successful).

5.6 Appeals

- 5.6.0 Incidents may be appealed except for protests and referee rule interpretations; the discipline committee is the final arbiter of all discipline issues, and its decisions cannot be appealed.
- 5.6.1 Player transfer requests may not be appealed.
- 5.6.2 Suspensions of one game from a delegate may be appealed directly to the Senior Manager of Leagues and Pathway and the League and Events Lead.
- 5.6.3 Suspensions of three (3) games or less from the Senior Manager of Leagues and Pathway and the League and Events Lead may be appealed directly to the Discipline Committee.
- 5.6.4 All other appeals must be made to Water Polo Canada's CEO.
- 5.6.5 Decisions from the Discipline Committee cannot be appealed.
- 5.6.6 Appeals must be submitted within 24-hours after the interested parties receive the verdict and may only be submitted by email accompanied by a \$200 administration fee payable by PayPal (paypal@waterpolo.ca). Clubs,

represented by the President, must submit appeals on behalf of a club participant.

- 5.6.6.1 While under review, the rendered verdict will remain active and the participant must adhere to the imposed decisions.
- 5.6.6.2 Appeals will be reviewed and decided within seven business days after receiving the official request and payment.
- 5.6.6.3 The club will be reimbursed the administration fee if the appeal is successful.

5.7 Team Forfeits and Defaults

- 5.7.0 A team that forfeits a regular season game will receive a sanction of \$250 per game forfeited.
- 5.7.1 A team that does not have at least 8 players at the start of a game will be considered a default and will be treated the same as a forfeit.
- 5.7.2 A team that forfeits four (4) regular season games will not be permitted to participate in the current year's National Finals.
- 5.7.3 A team that has qualified for the Nationals Finals (Senior or 18U), but does not participate, will receive the following sanction:
 - 5.7.3.1 30 days or more notice prior to the first day of competition will result in a \$1,500 sanction;
 - 5.7.3.2 Within 30 days, a \$3,000 sanction will be sanctioned, \$1500 will go towards the team that replaces the defaulting team as a travel grant.
 - 5.7.3.3 Within 7 days, a \$4,500 sanction will be sanctioned, \$3000 will go towards the team that replaces the defaulting team as a travel grant.
- 5.7.4 Forfeits that result because of a force majeure or other circumstance outside of team control will not result in a sanction. WPC will review these situations on a case-by-case basis.

5.8 Demerit System

- 5.8.0 For violations of handbook regulations, teams will receive demerit points. Demerit points will be counted per infraction.
- 5.8.1 When a team receives six (6) demerit points, the team will be fined \$250 by

WPC. If a team receives another three (3) demerit points, another fine of \$250 will be levied. Every demerit after the ninth (9th) demerit will result in a \$100 fine from WPC.

- 5.8.2 A coach, after receiving six (6) demerit points, regardless of team or division, will be fined \$250 by WPC and a subsequent fine of \$250 for every two (2) demerits thereafter. A coach's demerits will also count towards team and club totals.
- 5.8.3 Clubs are ultimately responsible for the conduct of their teams In any category. Should the demerits gather by a club throughout all NCL categories reflect poor conduct, fines may be applied.

5.8.3.1

Number of Teams	Number of Demerits	Fine Amount
3	18	\$750
4	24	\$1000
5	30	\$1250
6+	36	\$1500

- 5.8.4 Fines must be paid through PayPal (paypal@waterpolo.ca) within a week of receiving notice of the fine.
- 5.8.5 The following violations will result in demerits:
 - 5.8.5.1 Committing a player misconduct (excluding for an illegal entry) or a coaching red card – 2 Demerits
 - 5.8.5.2 Committing a violent action - 3 Demerits
 - 5.8.5.3 Signing a scoresheet with an incorrect roster - 1 Demerit.
 - 5.8.5.4 Violating WPC clothing policy (ex. Different base colour of swimsuits) – 1 Demerit
 - 5.8.5.5 Not having a certified coach because of a red card suspension - 3 demerits
 - 5.8.5.6 The Senior Manager of Pathways and League or the League and Events Lead can determine other violations that will result in demerits on a case-by-case basis. Certain violations can result in multiple demerits.
- 5.8.6 The Senior Manager of Leagues and Pathway and the League and Events Lead will issue all demerits and a notice of cause. Extenuating circumstances will be

taken into consideration.

6. The NCL Code of Conduct

6.1 General Conduct and UCCMS

- 6.1.0 Participants of NCL are signatories of the UCCMS, which supersedes the larger NCL code of conduct.
- 6.1.1 In addition to the responsibilities listed below, It is expected that all participants are expected to adhere to WPC's code of conduct.

6.2 Participant Responsibilities

- 6.2.0 A participant attending an NCL match shall agree that:
- 6.2.0.1 There will be no possession or use of any illegal substances, recreational drugs and/or performance-enhancing drugs.
- 6.2.0.2 If under the age of majority in the province of the competition, there will be no possession or use of alcohol.
- 6.2.0.3 If over the age of majority, there will be no supplying of alcohol to minors (as defined by the laws of the province of the competition).
- 6.2.0.4 Any physical damage occurring, or cost arising from missing items in a room, is the responsibility of the registered occupant(s) unless some other person(s) are proven responsible. If more than one person is sharing a room, cost will be shared equally, if there is no admission of guilt. The club involved shall be responsible for collecting any such costs.
- 6.2.0.5 Any contravention is sufficient grounds for a participant to be sent home at his/her own expense.
- 6.2.0.6 Any contravention of the above will be dealt with by the club involved. If the club fails to act responsibly, WPC will impose sanctions and to collect any money outstanding.
- 6.2.0.7 Unacceptable behaviour shall include:
- Committing any act which would be considered an offence under federal, provincial or municipal laws, or the rules of the facility. An offender shall immediately be sent home. When this is not possible, the offender shall, at their own expense, be sent home as soon as possible, disqualified from further

games within the tournament, and the home provincial association staff person shall be informed by telephone or fax.

- Gross misbehaviour.
- Unsportsmanlike conduct.
- A participant reporting for a game in an impaired condition.

6.3 Chaperone Responsibilities

6.3.0 Be responsible for the safety and well-being in conjunction with the team coach; be responsible for the behaviour of players during the times they are not under the control of the coaching staff or manager.

6.3.1 Report to the coach any sickness or injury, and any incidents likely to bring discredit to the team, provincial association or country. Together with the coach, decide upon disciplinary action to be taken.

6.4 Coaches' Responsibilities

6.4.0 Determine curfew times, no later than midnight.

6.4.1 Determine team meeting times and places.

6.4.2 Control athletes during practices and games.

6.4.3 Assume duties of chaperone when chaperone is unavailable.

6.5 Referee's Responsibilities

6.5.0 Be responsible for the safety and well-being in conjunction with the team coach, be responsible for behaviour of players during warm up, game time and post activity on the pool deck.

6.5.1 Represent yourself to the best of your ability in a neutral manner as a referee of WPC.

6.5.2 Represent yourself to the best of your ability in a professional manner as a representative of WPC.

6.6 Doping Control

6.6.0 WPC has fully adopted the policies of the Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport (CCES) and the Canadian Anti-Doping Program (CADP) available online at <http://www.cces.ca/en/antidoping/cadp>. WPC strongly opposes the use,

possession and supply of banned substances and practices in competitive water polo, either during training or competition in Canada or abroad by Canadian athletes, coaches, medical, para-medical or other support staff.

- 6.6.1 As a deterrent, WPC will participate in announced and unannounced doping control of athletes in accordance with the CCES CAPD.

Appendix A: NCL Steering Team Terms of Reference

- NAME:** NCL ADVISORY COUNCIL ("Council")
Operational Committee reporting to the WPC Chief Executive Officer
- TERM:** Ongoing; annually updated
- MANDATE:** To provide a forum for discussion around the National Champions League and the National Provincial Championship.
- KEY DUTIES:** To review and discuss operational matters in relation to the NCL/NPC. The Advisory Group will bring issues or matters that are pertinent and have an impact on the operations or success of the NCL/NPC.
- AUTHORITY:** The Advisory Group holds no authority to bind the Corporation. At all times WPC will work with the PSOs and clubs to implement plans and ideas that are beneficial to all but may, in some circumstances, take a leading role and implement an idea or plan that does not meet the expectations of a minority of the PSOs and/or clubs.
- COMPOSITION:** The Advisory Group will be comprised of the following:
- Chief Executive Officer will be an ex-officio Advisory Group.
 - WPC High Performance Director
 - WPC Senior Manager of Leagues and Pathways
 - WPC League and Events Lead
 - Other Staff members as required
 - Each registered PSO will have one representative on the Advisory Group.
 - Other invited guests may be part of the meeting(s) and will serve in an informational capacity.
- MEETING:** The Advisory Group will meet as required.

- The Advisory Group will meet bi-monthly via conference call.
- The Advisory Group will meet otherwise when required to discuss an important or immediate requirement.

RESOURCES: When necessary to inform the conversation around an agenda item, WPC staff or Members of the WPC Board of Directors (in addition to those listed above), and/or subject matter experts will be invited to join the meeting for that discussion(s).

AREAS OF FOCUS:

At least once annually, the Advisory Group will review the operational plan for the NCL/NPC upcoming season.

OPERATIONAL PLAN:

All actions and work of the Advisory Group are directed towards achieving the best outcome and results for Water Polo Canada and its members.

EVALUATION: To track progress in an ongoing manner, a matrix of key performance indicators (KPIs)

will be reported to the Chief Executive Officer.

REPORTING: The Advisory Group meeting minutes will be available to the Chief Executive Officer on

an ongoing basis.

- A section in the Annual report will be added to report on the NCL/NPC accomplishments.
- The Key Performance Indicators matrix will be made available to the Chief Executive Officer quarterly.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL:

The Advisory Group will review these Terms of Reference once a year, and when updates are made, the document will be submitted to the WPC Chief Executive Officer for approval.

Appendix B: Discipline Committee Terms of Reference

Name:

Discipline Committee

Mandate:

To provide guidance and implement standards for all competition related matters, any behaviour deemed to be detrimental to the image of the league or contrary to the WPC code of conduct, and as defined in the Judiciary for the various NCL age categories (16 and under, 18 and under, Senior).

Key Duties:

1. Create disciplinary standards for all NCL categories.
2. Review the Judiciary section of the NCL Handbook on an annual basis.
3. Record keeping of all incident reports.
4. Record keeping of participants' disciplinary records.
5. Review minor incidents as needed.
6. Review and evaluate all major incidents.
7. Final arbiter in the appeal process.
8. Create precedents for minor and major incidents.
9. Ensure written reports are being distributed to interested parties on a timely basis as per the standards outlined in the NCL Handbook.

Authority:

The discipline Committee will work with the Senior Manager of Leagues and Pathways and the League & Events Manager and provide recommendations to WPC regarding the judiciary section of the NCL Handbook.

Composition:

- League and Events Lead – Chair
- Neutral representative
- NTO Chair
- International Liaison

- Members will recuse themselves and comparable replacements will be identified in situations where there are conflicts of interest

Appointment and Succession:

- **WPC staff will be appointed.**
- Neutral representative will be appointed by the Senior Manager of Leagues and Pathway and the League and Events Lead.
- NTO Chair will be contracted by WPC.
- International liaison appointed by the Senior Manager of Leagues and Pathway and the League and Events Lead.
- Replacement members will be appointed by the Senior Manager of Leagues and Pathway and the League and Events Lead.

Meetings:

The Discipline Committee will meet on an ad-hoc basis by conference call or webinar.

Objectives:

1. To develop, maintain and implement judiciary standards for the NCL.
2. Review the NCL Handbook section related to judiciary on an annual basis.

Appendix C: Incident Reporting Form

Date: _____ Location: _____ Event: _____
 Game#: _____ Time/Quarter _____
 of Incident:

Officials

Delegate(s)			
Referees			

Game and Incident Participant Details

	White Team		Blue Team	
Team				
Coach				
Hat #	Name	Hat #	Name	

Incident Description by referee(s) or delegate(s)

Decisions / Recommendations by delegate(s)

Appendix D: Protest Form

Event:	Date:	Time/Quarter of incident:
Game #:	White Team:	Blue Team:
World Aquatics or Handbook rule(s) in violation:		
What technical error occurred and who was at fault?		
How did the technical error affect the outcome of the game?		
Diagram (if applicable)		

Appendix E: Disciplinary Decision Making Tree

