



Water Polo Canada & High Performance Development Working
Group

NCL Format Changes

8-4-2020



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Introduction

In 2019, Water Polo Canada (WPC) formed a High Performance Development Working Group (HPDWG) to, in part, review and evaluate the National Championship League (NCL). The HPDWG has representation from each of the PSOs that currently have teams participating in the NCL, as well as staff from both WPC's domestic competition and high performance departments. The members of the HPDWG are:

Justin Oliveira – High Performance Director – WPC (Chair)
Olivier Bertrand – Executive Director – Water Polo Quebec
Dayna Christmas - Executive Director – Alberta Water Polo Association
Nishant Damani – Technical Advisor – Ontario Water Polo
Cyril Dorgigne - Executive Director – Water Polo Saskatchewan
Christina Kouvousis – Sport Development Coordinator – Water Polo West
Andrew Muir – Pathway Manager - WPC
Michael Reid – Representative of Manitoba Water Polo
Neil Trousdale – League and Events Manager – WPC

In June 2020, the HPDWG released a proposal that would significantly alter the format of the NCL, beginning with the 2020-2021 season. After releasing the proposal, members of WPC and the HPDWG met with representatives from NCL clubs across Canada to conduct an in-depth review of the proposal from the perspectives of the clubs. Following the review period, the HPDWG met again to evaluate all of the feedback and new data that had been gathered, and to make a final decision regarding the NCL format.

The following document will include two main sections that present the decision. The first section will detail the chosen format for upcoming NCL seasons. The second section will explain the reasoning behind the decisions made in developing the selected format, as well as responses to the important comments and concerns raised during the feedback review period.

Revised NCL Format

The 2020-2021 NCL season, and the seasons following, will have four categories of competition:

- Senior (MLWP)
- 19 and under (19U)
- 17 and under (17U)
- 15 and under (15U)



Senior (MLWP)

The NCL Senior (MLWP) category format will be similar to the existing model, with WPC splitting the competing teams into eastern and western conferences, and teams playing a series of games within their conference to determine who qualifies for the Senior National Championships. A major change to the Senior category is the length of the competition season. The current season which runs from January to March is quite abbreviated and runs into several challenges related to conflicts with other domestic and international events. Extending the season to start in early December and ending in early May will allow for several improvements to the Senior League model. Firstly, it will allow for an increase in games. The current schedule is limited to 10-14 games during the regular season. Secondly, lengthening the season will allow for Senior events to be placed on dates that are more beneficial towards the participation of important athletes groups (i.e. NCAA athletes, Senior National Team athletes, Canadian university athletes). Finally, by starting the season in December and ending in May, the Senior league can compliment the existing university water polo structure that exists in Canada. OUA athletes for example, can transition directly from their university league to the Senior League in December. With the season ending in May, the National Finals will not be far removed from the end of the university spring term as well. The Senior league will also adopt a tiered competition format, with all games being played during large tournament weekends. No matches will be played outside the large event weekends.

Athletes eligible to play in the Senior category will remain the same as currently constituted, including anyone aged 19 or over, as well as any athletes who will turn 17, 18, or 19 during the calendar year of the Senior National Championships. The exception allowing four female athletes who will turn 16 during the calendar year will also remain in place for the 2020-2021 season. For the 2020-2021 season, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Senior NCL season will not start until January, however, for future seasons, the Senior season will likely start in December.

19 and under (19U)

The 19U competition format will be altered significantly under the new NCL competition format. The new 19U format will become a hybrid competition model, similar to what had been delivered at the 14U level. WPC will be responsible for hosting an open 19U National Championship, held (likely) in early July of each season. The 19U event will be open to any properly sanctioned club in the country wishing to participate in the event (assuming there are no restrictions on the maximum number of teams that can be accommodated). In place of the currently existing 19U NCL league, the 19U club teams will now have the option to participate in various Provincial Sport Organization (PSO) and club organized 19U events. Each PSO represented on the HPDWG has committed to providing programming for the 19U category (see appendix 3 for a schedule of tentative events). The clubs will have the opportunity to determine the competition calendar that best suits their teams through participating in intra-provincial, interprovincial, and even international events as they see fit.



The 19U Open National Championships for the 2020-2021 season will feature the same age eligibility requirements as the current 19U NCL category. Any athletes who will turn 15, 16, 17, 18 or 19 during the calendar year of the 19U Open National Championships will be eligible to compete (athletes who turn 20 during the calendar year, even if their birthday is after the date of 19U Nationals, would not be eligible as they are classified as 20U).

[17 and under \(17U\)](#)

The new 17U NCL league will be based on the NCL 16U league model. Teams will be split into eastern and western conferences and play in a league organized by WPC. The league will feature a series of tournaments held within each conference, to determine which teams qualify for the 17U National Finals. The 17U category will a tiered competition format with all matches played as a part of large tournament weekends. No matches will be played outside the large event weekends. The 17U National Finals will expand to feature the top four teams from each conference, rather than the current two. Athletes eligible to play in the 17U category are athletes who will turn 14, 15, 16 or 17 during the calendar year of the 17U National Finals. For the 2020-2021 season, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the 17U NCL season will not start until January, but for future seasons, the 17U season will likely start in November

[15 and under \(15U\)](#)

The new 15U NCL competition will be based on the existing NCL 14U model. WPC will host a 15U Eastern and Western National Championship at the end of the season for the top eight (8) boys and girls teams in each conference. For the 2020-2021 season, there will not be a requirement for 15U teams to participate in a minimum ten (10) game provincial league, as was mandated for the 14U NCL leagues. The PSOs will individually determine which 15U teams from their province will be eligible/qualify for the 15U Eastern and Western Nationals. Athletes eligible for the 15U Eastern and Western National Finals include any athletes who will turn 12, 13, 14, or 15 during the calendar year of the 15U Eastern/Western National Championships.



Summary of Events & Age Categories

Revised Age Categories and Season Timelines by Event		
Event	Date	Oldest Eligible Birth Year
2021 15U NCL Eastern/Western Championships	April/May 2021	2006-2009
2021 17U NCL	January to May 2021	2004-2007
2021 MLWP (Senior) NCL	January to May 2021	2004 and older*
2021 19U Open National Championship	July 2021	2002-2006
2021-2022 15U Eastern/Western Championships	April/May 2022	2007-2010
2021-2022 17U NCL	November 2021 to May 2022	2005-2008
2021-2022 MLWP (Senior) NCL	December 2021 to May 2022	2005 and older*
2022 19U Open Championship	July 2022	2003-2007

**As per the current exception in the NCL handbook, four female born in 2005 players will be eligible to compete for each Senior (MLWP) team in 2021 and four female born in 2006 players will be eligible to compete for each Senior (MLWP) team in 2021-2022.*

Note: WPC and the HPDWG have targeted a date of January 2021 for the restart to NCL competitions however, it is important to make clear that given the uncertainty resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, it may not be realistic or possible to hold water polo competitions of any kind until the 2021-2022 season. It should also be noted that while WPC still wishes to host an open 16U and 19U National Championship in the fall of 2020 to replace the competitions that had to be cancelled because of COVID-19, it remains largely unclear whether hosting these events will be possible.

Cost

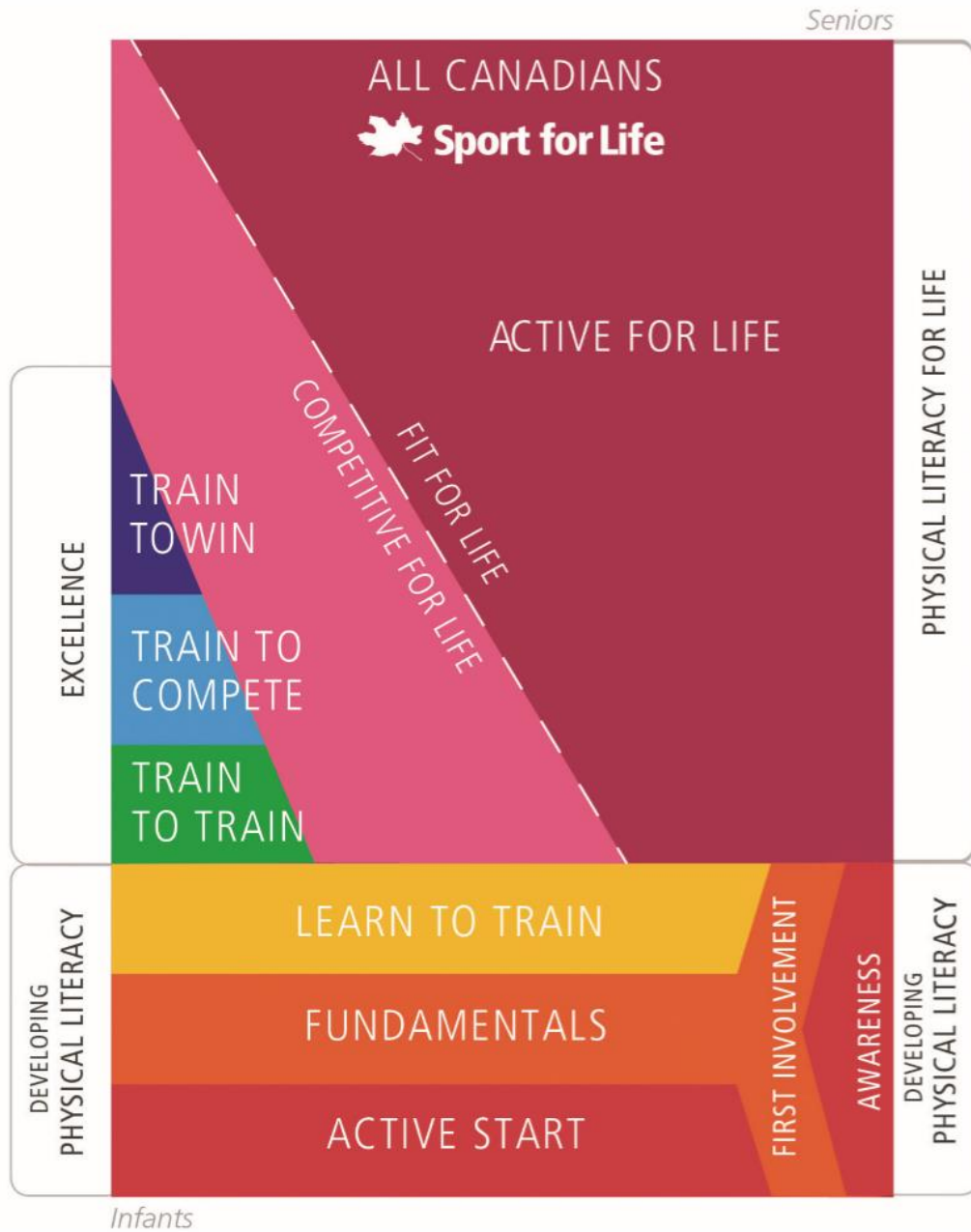
It is anticipated that the per-game cost of participation for a competing team will be similar under both the old and updated NCL formats. Exact registration fee figures will not be able to be communicated until it is determined exactly how many games, if any, can be held during the 2020-2021 competition season.

Stay and Play Policy

The NCL Stay and Play policy will remain in place for future seasons of the NCL. The Stay and Play policy allows WPC to form partnerships with hotels, tourism organizations, cities, and provinces to secure grants and partnership funding in return for the confirmation that athletes are staying at partner hotels in the host cities. These agreements drive over \$100,000 in revenues (averaging about 25% of total revenues for the NCL each season) per season on average. These revenues are entirely put back into the NCL and are used to keep the cost of registration fees lower for the clubs. Without the Stay and Play Policy, WPC would be unable to secure most of these partnerships and lose out on the associated revenue. It should also be noted that the Stay and Play policy is common to most other sports within Canada for the reasons mentioned above. On the other hand, WPC does understand the frustration that can arise from having limited choice in where a team can stay, and as such, will continue to endeavor to provide the best possible hotel options for competing teams.



LTAD and the NCL



LTAD and the NCL	
15U NCL	Train to Train – Late Competitive Foundations
17U NCL	Train to Compete – Competitive/Active for Life
19U NCL	Train to Compete – Competitive/Active for Life
Senior NCL	Train to Win – Competitive/Active for Life



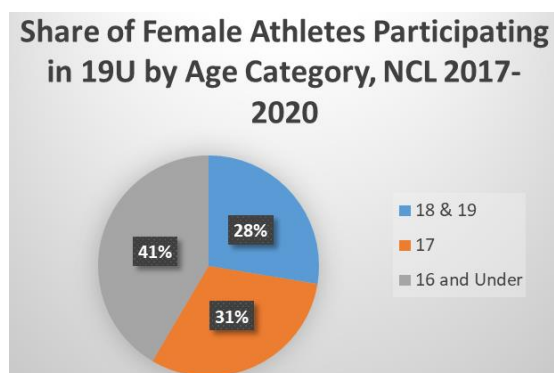
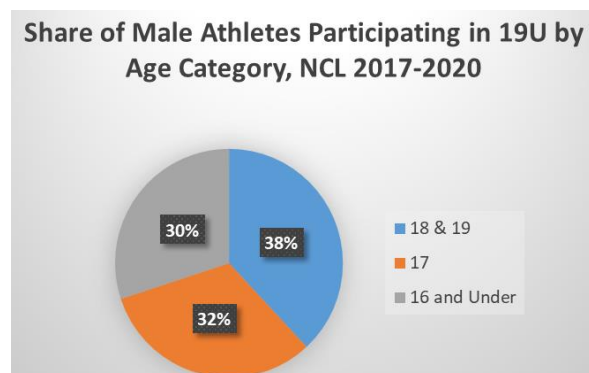
FAQS

Changes to the 19U Competition Structure

The most common area of concern that was raised by the clubs during the feedback process related to the effects of the new format on the 19U competition model. The initially released proposal poorly communicated the intentions of the HPDWG and WPC for the 19U category. The impression given was that the new NCL format would be eliminating the 19U category of competition. The impression that the 19U league would be eliminated resulted in serious concerns from the clubs, as an elimination of the 19U league would potentially have major effects on revenue generation for clubs, the development of younger athletes, and the overall number of games being played by athletes. This was not the intention of the HPDWG or the proposal. The HPDWG and WPC agree that the 19U category is a critical aspect of the competition model for water polo in Canada. The basis of the new NCL format is not an elimination of the 19U category, but of a restructuring of how that category is run, so it better suits the needs of the athletes.

The 19U NCL category, as currently run, is not serving the needs of its targeted athletes. The main reason that this is true is because there is not a critical mass of athletes that are true to the 19U category to support its current format. The majority of the athletes in the 19U category are 17U or younger athletes. 30%-40% of the 19U league's participants are on average either 16U or 15U athletes (see figures 1 & 2). This creates a dynamic where the 19U NCL league, whose main goal is to support the high performance development of 18U and 19U athletes, has these 18U and 19U athletes competing against a majority of significantly younger and less developed athletes. Furthermore, while playing up in the 19U category can be helpful for some 16U and 15U athletes, as it allows them to get more games and the ability to play against a higher level of competition, it also has the drawback of increasing the cost of participation for those athletes (who now play in two different NCL categories).

Figures 1 & 2



The 19U category is critical to development of water polo athletes in Canada for several reasons. If the 19U category did not exist, the jump from 17U to MLWP could be very daunting for many athletes. Additionally, the loss of the 19U category would significantly reduce the number of competitive games a



developing athlete plays during a season. However, the current model for the 19U league, without the critical mass of athletes in the 19U category, is too rigid to best support these needs. NCL Leagues can have a high barrier of entry. Clubs must register for the season months in advance, pay a significant registration fee, and are required to attend all the NCL events during the season. When there is a critical mass of athletes in an NCL category (the current 16U category, for example), these barriers to entry are less steep. However, without that critical mass of athletes, these barriers can prove to be more daunting.

Given the participation numbers, the HPDWG and WPC developed a model with a hybrid competition structure for the 19U category. The foundation of the hybrid model is the idea that until there is a critical mass of athletes at the 19U level, WPC and the PSOs need to provide a more flexible competition model for this age category to support the clubs and the athletes. The new format empowers the PSOs (and the clubs) to provide programming to replace the games that will be lost from the removal of the 19U NCL league. WPC will provide the focal point for the season's end by holding a 19U Open National Championship at the end of each competition season. This hybrid model will allow the important benefits of the 19U category to continue to exist, including a National Championship. Athletes in the 17U category can participate in 19U events to play more games and compete against higher-level competition. 18U and 19U athletes who do not wish to play Senior water polo can participate in 19U to finish out their careers; while those 18U and 19U athletes who are high performance focused can participate in 19U events to supplement their participation at the Senior level. In addition to keeping the above benefits in place, the hybrid model will also accrue further benefits through its flexibility. Clubs who only have a few 19U athletes and in past years faced the choice of either: not entering a NCL 19U team, entering a NCL 19U team that required the participation of multiple 16U athletes, or sending their 19U athletes to a different club, now have the ability to compete in only a few events throughout the year and still attend the National Championships. Similarly, clubs with many 19U athletes will have the opportunity to attend as many 19U events as desired and mold their schedule as they best see fit. The restructuring of the 19U category will also empower the PSOs to provide programming at the 19U level that is tailored to each province's specific needs.

WPC and the HPDWG are also committed to building an Inter-Provincial Competition, possibly in conjunction with the RDCs, that will fit into the annual water polo calendar. Given the scope of the changes being made already and the uncertainty related to COVID-19, it was deemed too challenging to implement a provincial event for the upcoming season; however the HPDWG will continue to work towards developing this event, which in turn will add another critical piece to the 19U competition calendar.

Two concerns that were commonly raised when discussing the potential ramifications of the new 19U proposal with the clubs were related to club finances and the prestige of the 19U competition model. Financially, some clubs were concerned that a lack of 19U competition would result in a loss of 18U and 19U athletes, significantly hurting club revenues, as well as hindering their ability to receive youth sport targeting grants. The above discussion on the hybrid model should clarify that the new NCL format will still offer a competition model for 19U athletes, and clubs will still be able to offer a programming model for their upper aged youth athletes, as well as the ability to apply for, and receive, youth sport related grants.



The prestige factor was another point that was sometimes raised in tandem with financial concerns. The HPDWG does understand the concern that because WPC will no longer directly be managing the 19U “regular season”, some may feel that the 19U is somewhat of a diminished product compared to the 17U and Senior (MLWP) leagues that will be run by WPC. Firstly, the HPDWG and WPC believe the 19U Open National Championship that will be held at the end of each competition season will be a powerful motivating factor for all participating teams. Open National Championship events have a strong history in Canada and the structure of the 19U Open National Championship will serve as very prestigious target for 19U teams across the country. Secondly, WPC and the PSOs are also committed to creating a calendar of events that will be listed on the WPC website and lays out all of the 19U events that will be held throughout the country in a given year. This will allow clubs to plan their competition calendar for the upcoming season, and athletes will be able to see the path they will take towards the 19U Open National Championships.

One final point that was often raised in conjunction with the discussion regarding the 19U changes was why the 17U league would not also follow the more decentralized model. This point again refers to the idea of a critical mass of athletes. As stated above, the reason for changing the 19U category is the limited number of athletes who are 18U and 19U that play in the 19U category. This issue is the driver for many of the other challenges seen at the 19U level. At 17U, this issue does not exist. The 17U category will consist of mostly 17U and 16U athletes, as well as a strong contingent of 15U athletes. The league will not be relying on 14U and 13U athletes in the same way the 19U league relies on 16U and 15U athletes. Because the 17U category has a critical mass of athletes, the barriers of entry associated with the NCL are less steep, and a nationally run league is much more effective.

Grassroots versus High Performance

The initial proposal that gave the impression that the 19U category was being eliminated resulted in many clubs believing the WPC and the HPDWG were placing the concerns of high performance athletes over the goal of increasing participation and growing the size of the pyramid. This again was an area of poor communication from the HPDWG. The HPDWG have identified a major gap in the programming of Senior level water polo in Canada and are simply aiming to address those needs. It is also the belief of the HPDWG that high performance 18 and 19 year old athletes should be competing in a challenging environment to prepare them for the rigour of international competition. With that said, the HPDWG is acutely aware of the importance of grass roots and age group development and does not wish to sacrifice the foundations of our athlete pathway for senior level competition. The intent is not to imply that clubs should be focusing only on Senior water polo at the exclusion of all else, as some clubs felt the proposal directed. The goal of the HPDWG and WPC is to create an hourglass shape of participation numbers within Canada. The NCL is starting to lose athletes when they start their 17U seasons and the participation numbers continue to drop in the years following (refer to appendix 1).

This narrowing of the pyramid is intuitive and is undoubtedly demonstrated through the participation numbers of most clubs across the country and across most sports as well. When youths approach the end of their teenage years, they begin to have many more demands on their time, whether it be jobs, preparing for post secondary education, or simple social factors. However, while it is inevitable that there will be some narrowing of the pyramid during the late teenage years, we hope to mitigate this attrition



through structure. Firstly, the increase of the 16U category to 17U will work to convince some of the 17Us who are currently dropping out of the NCL to stay for at least one more year. Secondly, a renewed focus on creating a comprehensive Senior league will work to return some of the individuals who left the sport in their late teenage years to participate once gain. Keeping athletes involved in water polo throughout their lives and/or bringing ex-athletes back to the sport will have huge benefits to the water polo community, beyond just high performance. Adult participation at clubs increases the potential numbers of coaches, referees, volunteers, and administrators that clubs, PSOs and WPC can utilize to support the growth of Water Polo in Canada and why the HPDWG heavily weights the importance of trying to create an hour glass shaped model of participation numbers in Canada.

[Status of the Senior League](#)

While the current Senior League may not live up to the expectations of WPC or even some of it's membership, the HPDWG believes that there is a need to change the status quo in order to create the long term infrastructure for Senior competition to grow within our country. Over the past 15 years, our local Senior National Team athletes have either not had the opportunity or not been granted permission to compete in the Senior League. As such, there is no channel for WPC to display its top tier athletes and no opportunity for those athletes to return to their clubs as ambassadors and role models. Through improving the infrastructure, we hope to provide these channels for our elite athletes to return to their clubs while providing experience to our developing high performance athletes to compete against our greatest athletes who are not competing abroad in foreign leagues.

Regarding the level of commitment for many older athletes, many of these Senior Athletes who have been committed to high performance streams for extended periods of time, have enough experience to allow them to be experts of their craft and require less training demands than developing athletes to be effective competitors at this level. As such, there is value for our developing athletes to be granted opportunity to compete against these strong and experienced athletes more so than competition against athletes younger than themselves. The variety in experience and training needs should help dictate training requirements for each individual athlete, and will not require a “blanket” approach for expectations of athletes.

Regarding the length of the season, the extension serves two primary purposes. First, to provide an extended season for developing high performance athletes to have access to an appropriate Daily Training Environment and Competition Environment in preparation for international competition. Second, to provide opportunity for those athletes who are competing in NCAA competitions to return to their club teams outside of their season to provide another showcase of the best Canadian athletes.

[Why implement this model for upcoming season](#)

The HPDWG originally targeted the 2021-2022 NCL season for any changes to be made to the NCL format. The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March of 2020 significantly changed this outlook. The HPDWG understands that implementing changes of this magnitude on a shorter time frame creates an additional burden for the NCL clubs, however, when all factors were considered the HPDWG determined applying the format changes for the upcoming season was the best course of action.



The reasons for this determination are as follows. The on going COVID-19 pandemic necessitates that NCL games will not be able to start until January of 2021, at the earliest. The current NCL format would be extremely difficult, if not impossible to implement in a shortened season format, given the very small window that all the 14U, 16U, 19U, and Senior (MLWP) games would need to be played in. To successfully hold an NCL season in 2021, WPC would need to implement the tiered tournament format laid out in the original proposal. The current NCL model relies on playing many games outside the larger tournament weekends, and these games would prove very challenging to schedule given the available window of time. Additionally, given the uncertainty around what the COVID-19 situation will look like in the winter of 2021, moving to a model where all games are played as a part of larger tournaments provides WPC with flexibility if changes need to be made on short notice because of COVID-19 fallout.

There was the possibility of attempting to meld the updated tournament format, with the existing age categories for the 2020-2021 season, but this approach also has serious challenges. Firstly, it is not yet clear what effect the COVID-19 pandemic has had on club membership across the country. Initial conversations with clubs point to a significant drop in club registration numbers for the 2020-2021 season. As shown in figures 1 & 2, the current 19U model relies on athletes who are also participating in 16U to fill out the ranks of their 19U teams. Given the potential drop in registration numbers, clubs and athletes may find themselves in a very difficult spot trying to meet the higher barrier of entry associated with the current 19U NCL league. Clubs may simply not have enough available 19U athletes to field teams or enough 16U athletes financially able to participate in two categories to support the smaller numbers of 19U athletes. Moving to the hybrid 19U model for the upcoming season that consists of optional events to attend starting in January, and the 19U Open National Championship in the summer of 2021, make 19U participation much more accessible for clubs across the country given the COVID-19 effects. The change to a 17U NCL category also has positive benefits associated with COVID-19 as it makes it much more likely that the 17U athletes (and 16U and 15U athletes) have a league to participate in for 2020-2021 as there will likely still be a critical mass of athletes able to participate in the new 17U category.

The implementation of this format for the 2020-2021 season also has the added benefit of providing an opportunity for the 14U and 16U teams who missed out on the opportunity to compete for a National Championship in the spring of 2020 to compete together for the 15U and 17U National Championships in 2021.

[Why a 17U category instead of an 18U category](#)

A common area of feedback raised among some clubs was why it was decided to have a 17U league instead of an 18U league. There were several reasons for this decision. 18U high performance athletes should be playing against top level competition to continue to spur their development. Rather than playing in an 18U league where only a small portion of the league is other 18U competitors, these athletes should be playing against similar aged competition in the 19U structure, as well as the top Canadian competition represented by the Senior League. To prevent athletes from being extended over multiple leagues, it is the position that any 18-year-old athlete who is on the high performance pathway is expected to be competing in Senior level competition, as this challenging environment is ideal for their developmental needs.



Another factor to consider is that moving the 17U age category to 18U would negatively affect the 16U and 15U athletes who would also play in that category. The 18U category would include too many age groups and would not be beneficial for the development of younger athletes as it would be a barrier to their participation. Moving the 16U category to 18U will seriously jeopardize the participation of the 15U and 16U athletes during a very crucial physical development period where differences between athletes can be substantial. The HPDWG assessed moving 16U to 17U as a strategic move to help retain athletes of the former NCL 16U for one extra year; however a further increase to 18U was deemed as likely to result in losing to many young athletes of 15U and 16U deterred by playing in an 18U category.

[Why change to 15U instead of keeping 14U](#)

The HPDWG has also decided to alter the 14U structure by moving that age group up to 15U. This decision was made in tandem with the decision to move the 16U category to 17U. Without a corresponding age change of the 14U category to 15U, the transition from 14U to 17U for younger athletes could prove difficult. The 15U NCL format will serve as an entry point into high performance water polo, much as the current 14U league does. The top 15U athletes will also likely compete in the 17U league, to provide the higher level of competition that may drive their development. Understanding the unique and diverse models of 14U competitions that exist across the country, the PSOs will have greater flexibility to determine how best to run 15U (and 14U competitions) to ensure the changes to the younger age categories do not negatively effect participation. It was imperative for the HPDWG to create a flexible model that would ensure the grassroots level programming to continue to exist and flourish under this model.

[How will scouting be conducted and are steps being taken to align RDCs and other projects with the revised NCL format](#)

Scouting will continue to be done in conjunction with the NCL and RDC programming. WPC and the Pathway Manager are currently in the process of building a long-term strategic plan for the growth and maintenance of the RDC programs across Canada, that will look to address several concerns. Some of these include regular touch points with WPC Technical Experts, Standardized Evaluation, and an approach that will be tailored to the needs and infrastructure of each province. The establishment of quality RDC programs will allow for streamlined athlete identification and selection processes as it would relate to National Team Programming.

With the 19U age group currently seeing the most substantial change in programming, WPC will be finding strategies in conjunction with the PSOs to ensure that all potential athletes are provided opportunity to be identified. With that said, the concept for having 18+ athletes identified through the Senior competition will be grandfathered in.



How does the new format fit with LTAD and what KPIs will be used to measure the success of this new format

The new model fits well within the LTAD framework with the understanding that the new 15U league represents the competitive foundations section of said model. That said, it is very important for us to make consistent effort as mentioned earlier to maintain our grassroots programming with a low barrier for entry into our sport. There was concern that the creation of the 15U league would place athletes into a high-performance stream too early, however, it should be noted that the training requirements for the age groups should not see a major restructuring. As stated earlier, each province has unique aids and WPC will work in close conjunction with the PSOs to ensure that grassroots programming continues to exist in alignment with the LTAD.

WPC and the HPDWG have also identified the need to update the LTAD as the most recent iteration was in 2013.

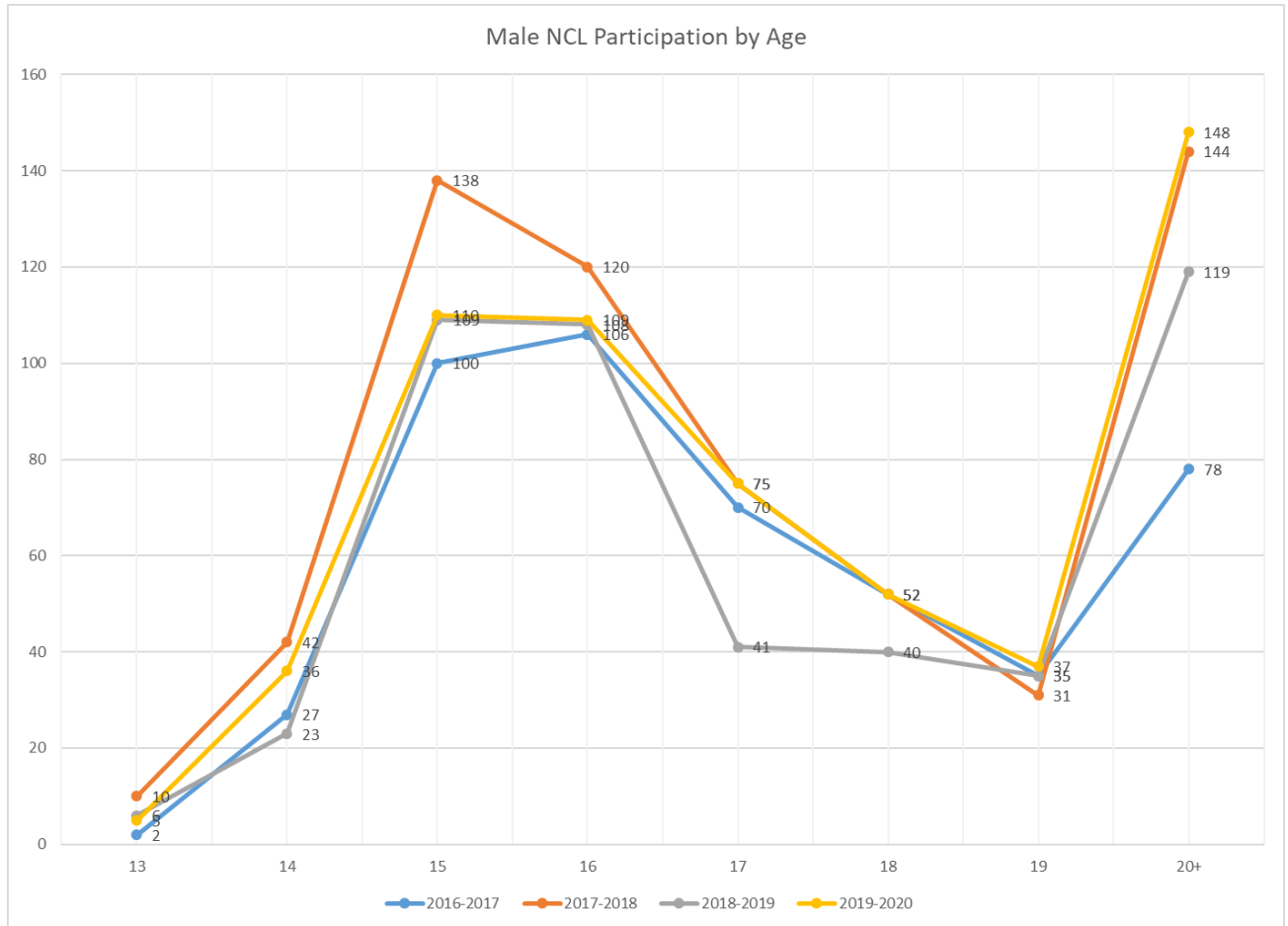
WPC and the HPDWG are in the process of determining the best KPIs to use to measure the success or failure of this new format. The unfortunate reality with many KPIs is that we will not see clear results for several seasons. There are many confounding variables that will impact participation numbers for the next seasons. The clear example is that we are already expecting to see a decrease in participation in the upcoming season as a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic; if we see a resurgence of participation in the subsequent season it is beyond unreasonable to imply any causation to the restructuring.

Conclusion

The revised NCL format, along with all other information conveyed in this document was approved by the High Performance Development Working Group by a vote of eight to one. Water Polo Canada will implement the revised NCL format that has been approved by the HPDWG.

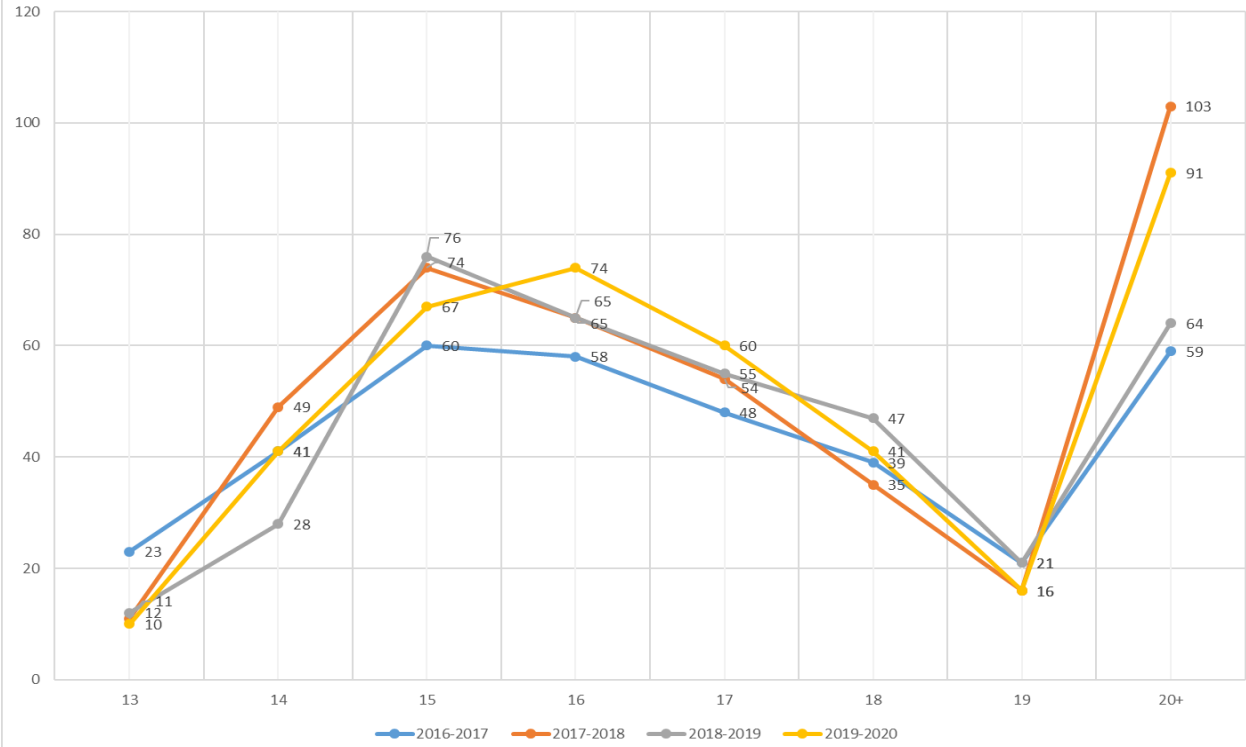


Appendix 1





Female NCL Participation by Age





Appendix 2

NCL Restructuring Timeline	
Date	Event
June 2019	Formation of HPDWG at WPC Annual General Meeting
June 2019-February 2020	Initial Discussions and Data Collection for HPDWG
March 2020	HPDWG Discussion of NCL with respect to COVID-19
April 2020	Review of NCL Data
April-May 2020	Initial Proposal Developed
June 2020	Release of Initial Proposal to Clubs
June - July 2020	Feedback Sessions with NCL Clubs
July 2020	Review and Revision of Initial Proposal
July 2020	Finalization and Release of Revised NCL Format
May 2021-June 2021	Review and Evaluation of Revised NCL Format (if possible)



Appendix 3

Tentative NCL Events - 2021		
Date	Western Conference	Eastern Conference
January 7-10	NCL - Calgary (17U)	
January 29-31		NCL - Ottawa (Senior)
February 5-7	Sask Open (19U)	
February 12-14		NCL - Montreal (17U)
February	NCL - TBD (17U)	
February 26-28	NCL - Edmonton (Senior)	NCL - Montreal (Senior)
March 5-7	NCL - Surrey (Senior)	NCL - Markham (17U)
March 19-21	Alberta Open (19U)	
March 26-28		NCL - Markham (Senior)
April 9-11	NCL - Regina (Senior)	
April 16-18		NCL - Ottawa (17U)
April 23-25	NCL - Surrey (17U)	
May 7-9	NCL - Senior National Finals	
May 14-16	NCL - 15U Western National Finals	
May 21-23		NCL - 15U Eastern National Finals
May 27-29	NCL - 17U National Finals	
June 4-6		Quebec & Ontario Championship (19U)
July 7-11	NCL - 19U Open National Championship	

Note: The above list of events are speculative. Due to the on going COVID-19 pandemic, it is not yet clear if any of these events will be able to be held. Even if the 2021 NCL season is able to start by January 2021, it is likely that changes will need to made to the above schedule.