

Illinois Water Polo Meeting Agenda – February 6th at 7:00p

Gerrit Adams
Christopher Cloy
Megan Brownley
Joe Kamper
Tim Daniel
Joseph Kochlefl
Tom Ure
Mac Varilla
Jeff Plackett
Danielle?
Elizabeth Timmons
Rose Wimer

1. Opening comments – Joe Kamper

- Notes from the president
 - Do we need to go to a 2 day state tournament with a super sectional since we are struggling to find hosts for the current format?
 - Stevenson will host this year.
 - Tim Daniel on categorization for Water Polo
 - concerned about the state of our sport
 - losing teams and teams are co-oped
 - should be more coaches on this call
 - New by-laws include: reducing contact days down to 20 days and no admin of a club if you are a high school coach
 - If we keep going as we are going right now, we won't be a varsity sport in a few years
 - IHSA rule book by-laws are applied to all sports equally
 - makes it tough for our sport that has to be inside and fight for pool time
 - Other states break things down by sport. Ex. Missouri has a category called emerging sport which removes them from the restrictions
 - We currently do not have the man-power to be able to separate all club stuff from coaches of high school teams
 - At this point, almost everyone is doing multiple jobs. Ex: some coaches ref at tournaments as well
 - We need some support of athletic directors and principals
 - loop in Jeff Plackett, Garrit with USAWP
 - We need to rally behind this cause and gives IWP a purpose to work on immediately
 - Tim's athletic director made him run summer camps, not club in his own pool last summer
 - Anyone who cares about water polo should be alarmed and want to work on this.
 - Joe - Doesn't think that anyone really understands the severity of this issue

- We are currently losing more coaches than we are gaining at this point.
- Before the season starts, we need to send out emails to everyone so all understand what is going on.
- Outcomes of all teams (starting or long standing) will all depend on the outcome of our status.
- We have the funds and ability to host our own state tournament without the IHSA if it comes to that.
- We are looked at like other sports and there is a certain number of teams that must participate to be considered IHSA sanctioned (8%)
- Tim Daniel - the one by-law that failed was one that would remove restrictions on coaches running clubs.
- Gerrit - USAWP needs to have a conversation with IHSA to know that they are looking for the sport to grow and are not just in it for the money.
 - Changing the classification - would be a lot of work and what are the requirements for each level? How do you determine that
- Jeff - wondering which by-laws are being discussed
 - Contact days was not proposed by anyone on a BOD/legislative committee but instead came from the trainers' association due to statistics about overuse and injury
 - Any athletic director can ask for the 5 days to be reinstated to the sport at some point, but someone from inside the coaching committees need to put together a proposal and be willing to go to speak at town hall meetings
 - 800 schools that have a vote but only 10% of those schools have water polo
 - Tim - 2 main arguments - we don't have the manpower to have a separate high school and club coach and we want control over what our athletes are doing
 - Jeff - being honest, the manpower argument will not fly. Logical argument would be regathering coaches across a variety of sports and get a group that will advocate for 25 days
 - other option would be to separate out the contact days to do strength and conditioning (swimming/lifting) so you can extend the contact days
 - Tim - we need our coaches to be involved in the club
 - Jeff - we need to make a by-law proposal and he is not in a position to sponsor something like that as an AD yet
 - Tim - wants to write some language for a timeline for this
 - Jeff - First Friday in October is when there are town hall meetings to explain the rationale to people
 - walk out with a straw poll to see immediate reactions to what you said
 - ballot goes out in late November/early December
 - Gerrit - how at risk are we for losing IHSA status?

- Jeff - zero level of concern
- Joe - Beth made a point to say how they eliminated boys gymnastics
- Jeff - they had fewer than 50% of teams that we have
 - AD portals for IHSA is where they indicate if they are entering a team into the state series for that season
 - different deadlines for each season
- Gerrit - would be helpful to have a history to see trends over time and see where we are losing teams
- Jeff - CPS has no money to be able to make new teams and they are putting so much money into flag football
- Joe - they asked officials to bring their own lunch because they didn't have the money to provide it
- Tim - try to repeal the by-laws and we need to stop the bleed before we make it to the point of no return
- Jeff - not unheard of for them to reverse course as they did this with making divisions instead of conferences in football
- Chris - agree with what Tim is saying and is willing to work and get his AD involved to try to get things changed
 - need a big group reaching out to their ADs to make a change
 - St. Charles is feeling the crunch of the numbers and their co-opting their teams
 - All-Sectional and All-State voting for the last few years to look at team numbers he is seeing numbers going down
 - we are not going in the right direction for that now
- Mac - CPS has cut some major programs. There has been so much turnover with coaches so it has been hard to keep teams.
- Gerrit - USAWP piloting an idea to blast info about referee clinics that can be used to highlight coaching opportunities as well
- Joe - one area we are not struggling with is officials this year. Joe has 42 new officials in 2025.
 - 19 new officials registered
 - Joe has 18 or 19 more that are missing a requirement to be registered
 - We are missing the mark to bring in precious athletes to come back to coach - mentoring program to bring a coach in
 - coaching demand is a lot
- Joseph - CPS put down new requirements to be a coach which leads to hesitation to signing up to coach
- Joe - can we create a playbook to help new coaches figure out what they need to do
- Gerrit - today it seems like every opening is word of mouth
 - need info to go to a broader group
- Jeff - depends on whether or not districts are posting the jobs in frontline

- Jeff has the onboarding packet that Joe wants for coaching
 - can we get this put up on the website
- o Action items - Tim and Joe will be talking with Jeff tomorrow to get the information about by-laws and coaching on-boarding packet
 - how do we get our IWP email to reach more people
 - need a list of schools that have swim teams and no water polo teams to see what is holding them back

Next meeting, March 6th @ 7pm

Topics we didn't discuss yet:

- drive the website updates and tell me what to do.
- State of the industry
- USAWP
- AWP
- IHSA

2. Subcommittees

- Training (Officials and Coaches) – Eddie, Joe, Josh, Everado, Jim Caliendo, Mac Varilla, Chris Mulchrone
- Fundraising – Jim Caliendo, Eddie, Joe, Sean
- All State Banquet – Liz Perry, Keith Yavitt, Jeff Weimer, Colleen Lyons, Jeff Ritz
- Online Marketing – Megan Brownly, Mac Varilla, Brian Ruiz
 - IHSA Relations

3. Taking the next step in IWP

- New Mission Statement: IWP is here to grow the sport of water polo in Illinois through training, engagement, and encouragement.
- Next steps with sales pitch
 - “Illinois Water Polo exists for the development of student athletes from child-age to adult and beyond. We are here to grow the sport of water polo in Illinois through training, engagement, and encouragement. To support our student-athletes, coaches, and officials, we put together regular clinics and trainings to elevate everyone’s understanding and implementation to the next level.”
- This is going to stay up. Illinois Water Polo is shrinking right now.

4. Goals 2025

- Bridge gap between USA and AWP
 - Gap looks to be increasing
- Build out fundraising programs
 - Banquet was a success - Yes
 - Summer Golf Outing – No
 - Official and Coach clinic – In Progress
- Onboarding: Officials, Coaches and Teams
 - Website – Megan needs help.
 - Anything we can do?
 - LinkedIn – Joe
- Other used platforms

5. **Treasurer's Report** – Jesse Zien

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6. **All State Banquet** – Elizabeth Timmons

7. **Fundraising**

- **Dave Perry College Scholarship**
 - Any luck with tournament donations?

8. **Liaisons Report**

- **USWP Liaison** – Midwest Board Members Present & ODP - Tim Daniel
 1. Notes at the end:
- **Chicago Park District** – Brian Ruiz
 1. Late spring/summer details are still being worked out for CPD
 1. Would the park district be open to having their leagues open to other park districts? This would need to be run through Andy Walsh to see if this would be something that the Parks could do.
 2. **Side Note: CPS is struggling with players and with coaches**
 1. What can we do to help?
- **College Programs Liaison** – Augustana and Carthage opportunities

9. **New Business:**

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7. Next meeting will be: Thursday, March 6th at 7:00pm

8. Closing Comments & Adjournment

Dan Sharidan on AWP:

The only thing going at the moment is the winter league for HS boys. We had a marginal turnout. I have the same concerns now as I did before. No real interest in the younger ages in the 10, 12, and 14 groups. We are happy to help, we just need the interest from the coaches.

In 2024 we collected funds for the IL Water Polo Fund from the two leagues (\$400) and matched the funds collected as we have in the past as a donation. We also provided free balls to various leagues in 2024 that amounted to about \$2000.

One small concern. We have several teams that are ignoring paying their entry fees. The invoices listed below are all over a year old, despite several reminders. I don't want you to embarrass anyone on the call, but I thought you should be aware. I really have no leverage unless they want to enter a future league, which has not happened except for Jack Casey. He slipped through the cracks because he changed his team affiliation from Southside to Core:

These invoices are all over a year old

Central

Condors	Nate Cruz	999.46
Southside Water Polo Club	Jack Casey	684.65
Team Chicago	Sigfredo Cruz	856.68
West Polo	John Murphy	952.84

TOTAL		3,493.63
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The frustrating thing is that they don't seem to understand we do not make any money from the leagues. We invest money beyond what is collected. When teams don't pay their bills, in the future it will limit what we can reinvest in the region. Things like free balls and scoresheets, matching funds for the Illinois Water Polo Fund, and clinic lunches will all be affected. In one sense, they are stealing from the teams around them, because we will not have the funding to do these things moving forward.