



Water Polo
AUSTRALIA

Selection Policy for U16 and U18 National Teams for “Competitions”

Version 1

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#	Review Date	Effective Date	Approved By	Changes
1	Aug-Sep 2025	15 Sept 2025	Board	New policy which replaces the old “National Selection Policy for National Age Group Program Squads and Teams”

Review frequency: Annually

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1 Background

1.1 Purpose

- 1.1.1 This policy is made by Water Polo Australia Limited (“WPA”) under its constitution (“**Constitution**”) with the purpose of providing details of the process by which WPA will select Athletes for the NAGP Team for the World Aquatics U16 and U18 Championships. In particular, the intention is:
- (a) to ensure that Athletes who are chosen in these teams demonstrate a combination of current international capacity and capability as well as future potential to represent Australia at a senior national level;
 - (b) to ensure that Athlete alignment with the WPA values and behaviours, including the Think.Act.Play guidelines, in and out of the water, is taken into account in selection; and
 - (c) to employ a fair and transparent selection process that ensures that all Athletes have the opportunity to challenge for positions in these teams.
- 1.1.2 Athletes are responsible for reading and understanding this Policy. Athletes should seek their own legal advice in the event they are unclear or uncertain about the operation or effect of this Policy.

1.2 Scope

- 1.2.1 This Policy applies to all Athletes who are eligible, based on the eligibility criteria described in this document, for selection in a NAGP Team for the World Aquatics U16 and U18 Championships. WPA’s other selection policies do not apply in relation to the selection of Athletes for these teams.
- 1.2.2 This Policy does not apply to the appointment of WPA officials and coaches, including the NAGP Head Coach. Unless another Policy is created to deal with these selections, the HPC and GM-Performance has responsibility for and discretion in respect of the election and removal at any time of officials and coaches, and any decision by WPA in that regard is final and not subject to any approval or appeal under this Policy.
- 1.2.3 This Policy does not apply to selection to the NAGP Squad. Unless another Policy is created to deal with these selections, any decision by WPA in that regard is final and not subject to any approval or appeal under this Policy.

2 Definitions and Priority of Documents

2.1 Defined Terms

The following words have the corresponding meaning in this Policy:

Athlete(s) refers to the eligible participant(s) who wish to be considered for selection into a NAGP Team for the Competitions.

Athlete Agreement means the agreement that WPA requires selected Athletes to sign to participate in a NAGP Team or other national team.

Athlete Assessment Matrix means an athlete assessment matrix in the form proposed by the HPC from time to time, an example of which is in Annexure B.

CEO means the Chief Executive Officer of WPA as appointed from time to time.

Competition means the World Aquatics U16 Championships and World Aquatics U18

Championships.

GM-Pathways means the General Manager – Pathways of WPA as appointed by WPA from time to time or equivalent / replacement role.

GM-Performance means the General Manager – Performance of WPA as appointed by WPA from time to time or equivalent / replacement role.

HPC means the High-Performance Committee as appointed by WPA from time to time.

NAGP means the National Age Group Program, which includes any NAGP Squads and NAGP Teams selected from time to time by WPA where there is an age restriction of 18 or below on selection.

NAGP Squad means any group of players selected to participate in NAGP activity, whether for ongoing development or as a deliberate Preparation Program for the Competition, as defined for each NAGP campaign separate to this Policy.

NAGP Team means each team selected by or with the approval of WPA to represent Australia at a Competition, including the male and female teams.

NAGP Head Coach means the head coach of the relevant NAGP as appointed by WPA from time to time.

National Head Coach means the national head coach of WPA as appointed by WPA from time to time.

Preparation Program means the program relating to the preparation of a NAGP Squad or NAGP Team to compete in a Competition.

Selection Policy Guide means any Selection Policy Guide which may be published on WPA's website, as amended from time to time in relation to NAGP Teams selected for a Competition.

Selector's Agreement means the agreement that WPA requires selectors to sign to be a selector under this Policy.

Team Selection Panel and **TSP** means the panel responsible for the selection of the NAGP Teams under this Policy.

World Aquatics means the international federation for aquatic sports including water polo, that is based in Lausanne Switzerland and which is recognised by the International Olympic Committee.

2.2 Terms defined in Constitution

Where a capitalised term is not defined in this Policy, but is defined in the Constitution, it has the meaning given in the Constitution.

2.3 Inconsistency

In the event of an inconsistency between the terms of this Policy, the Constitution and any Selection Policy Guide, the following descending order of precedence will apply to the extent of the inconsistency:

- (a) the Constitution; and then
- (b) this Policy; and then
- (c) any Selection Policy Guide.

3 Selection Panels

3.1 Appointment of Team Selection Panel

- 3.1.1 WPA will appoint the Team Selection Panel (**TSP**), which is responsible for the selection of the NAGP Teams that will compete in each of the Competitions.
- 3.1.2 The TSP is appointed by the GM-Performance and approved by the HPC.
- 3.1.3 The TSP shall comprise of:
- (a) GM Pathways as Chair/Convenor;
 - (b) the relevant NAGP Head Coach; and
 - (c) one independent selector.
- 3.1.4 When determining the independent selector (or a replacement selection if section 3.7.2 applies), consideration should be given to:
- (a) varied state representation;
 - (b) the roles and responsibilities in Annexure A; and
 - (c) the selector being independent and not connected to Athletes in the relevant age group in a manner which could reasonably give rise to an actual or perceived conflict of interest in the selection process.

3.2 Roles and Responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities of the TSP include those set out in Annexure A.

3.3 Information Considered

- 3.3.1 The TSP is obligated to make informed decisions using all relevant information available to it, which may include but is not limited to:
- (a) input from the National Head Coach;
 - (b) input from other WPA national and state program coaches;
 - (c) relevant physical performance measures;
 - (d) relevant competition performances;
 - (e) behaviour and character assessments from coaches and support staff; and
 - (f) performance analytics information relating to individual, State and NAGP Team performances in training and in competition.
- 3.3.2 The TSP may at its discretion and in accordance with this Policy give weight to the relevant information which is made available to it.

3.4 Selection Process

The NAGP Team selection process will primarily be based on the TSP reaching consensus, however where this is not possible, each TSP member has a single vote. The Chair/Convenor does not have a casting vote in addition to their deliberative vote.

3.5 Privacy and Confidentiality

All members of the TSP are bound by and must make themselves familiar with the Privacy Policy (available on the WPA website) and are bound by the confidentiality clause in any applicable Selector's Agreement.

3.6 Conflicts of Interest

- 3.6.1 The Conflict of Interest Policy (available on the WPA website) applies to all TSP members. All procedures pertaining to the notification and management of any actual or potential conflicts of interest will be as defined in that policy.
- 3.6.2 In the situation where a TSP panel member is excused from selection deliberations or decision-making due to a conflict of interest, the GM-Performance may appoint an interim replacement selector, who is appropriately qualified to fulfil the responsibilities outlined in Annexure A, to replace the excluded panel member. The interim replacement selector will assume the voting rights of the excused panel member.
- 3.6.3 The excluded TSP member's input will not be gathered, and the excluded panel member will not have a vote or be involved in panel deliberations, in relation to the NAGP Team in any position or positions on the team where the conflict of interest is a factor.

3.7 Key TSP member obligations

- 3.7.1 TSP members must be available, willing and able to:
- (a) attend all agreed selection activities as outlined in the Selector's Agreement;
 - (b) in the opinion of the Chair of the relevant TSP, act with integrity, objectivity and impartiality in all aspects of the selection process in complying with this policy and other related policies and documents; and
 - (c) ensure the decisions made during selection meetings are documented and that all such materials remain confidential to the TSP and Board.
- 3.7.2 A TSP member who is unable to fully meet all the requirements of section 3.7.1 may resign or be removed by the CEO and replaced by the appointment of a replacement member in accordance with section 3.1.

3.8 Quorum

The TSP must have all 3 members present or engaged via phone or digital medium to form a quorum.

4 Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible for selection to the NAGP Team an Athlete must:

- (a) be an Australian citizen who is eligible to represent Australia at the Competition as set out in the then current World Aquatics Competition Regulations;
- (b) be a registered Individual Member with a club Affiliate Member and State Member under WPA;
- (c) be in good standing with WPA (both financially and behaviourally);
- (d) meet all eligibility rules imposed by World Aquatics;
- (e) have made themselves available for selection to their State team for the National State Championships (irrespective of whether they were selected or not); and
- (f) if selected, be willing and able to comply with their obligation to execute an Athlete Agreement in accordance with section 10.

5 Selection Criteria

5.1 Size of Team

The TSP is to select 14 athletes for each NAGP Team, plus reserves as it sees fit, or as otherwise directed by WPA.

5.2 Athlete Assessment Matrix

The TSP will complete an Athlete Assessment Matrix. It is expected that there will be variations and differences in the assessments by each TSP member, however through discussion the TSP must form an agreed assessment of each Athlete in contention.

5.3 Criteria

5.3.1 In selecting the NAGP Team, the TSP will select those Athletes who, to the satisfaction of the TSP in its sole and absolute discretion, show the greatest potential for selection to future Sharks and Stingers teams capable of **medalling** at Olympic Games and World Championships, whilst also balancing the need for the NAGP Team to perform for Australia at the Competition and the other considerations set out in this section.

5.3.2 The following will be considered by the TSP (noting that each may not be given the same weighting or any weighting by the TSP):

- (a) the output of the Athlete Assessment Matrix (noting that the TSP may select Athletes that are rated lower than other Athletes due to the criteria and other considerations in this section);
- (b) subject to section 5.3.4, consistency and quality of performance within the past 24 months in:
 - (i) domestic camps and competitions (NSC, AYC, State Leagues, National competitions, State and WPA camps); and
 - (ii) relevant international competitions;
- (c) composition and balance of the NAGP Team including but not limited to positional coverage within the required team size;
- (d) a particular emphasis on assessing whether the Athlete has the capability to progress from a junior to a senior National Team Athlete;
- (e) an Athlete who is selected to a NAGP Team may be considered and selected in another NAGP Team. Any player who is considered for selection in more than one NAGP Team will be assessed against the Player Management Protocol;
- (f) prior level of adherence by the Athlete to the obligations contained in any current or prior Athlete Agreement; and
- (g) the Athlete's likely contribution to the NAGP Team both in and away from the competition environment which may include but not be limited to leadership capability, behaviour and overall contribution to the NAGP Team performance and ability of the Athlete to demonstrate WPA and relevant NAGP Team values and behaviours, including the Think.Act.Play guidelines.

5.3.3 The TSP may also consider other factors they consider to be relevant to satisfaction of the criteria.

5.3.4 When considering performance under section 5.3.2(b), not all performances during the 24-month period need to be considered, but performance for a period of up to 24-months may be considered by the TSP. Performance beyond that time frame may only be considered by

the TSP with reference to framing any individual athlete performance progression trend relevant to the selection deliberations.

5.4 External input

The TSP may, from time to time, seek input from other WPA State and National program personnel on identified Athletes, however, must not share any confidential information in relation to the selection or non-selection of Athletes. Actual selection deliberations are the responsibility of the TSP and must remain confidential prior to and after the announcement of the NAGP Team.

6 Extenuating Circumstances

- 6.1.1 Notwithstanding anything contained within this Policy, an Athlete may notify the Chair of the TSP of any extenuating circumstances that may have prevented an Athlete from satisfying the eligibility requirements or from performing to their highest ability at any of the competitions or camps referred to in section 5.
- 6.1.2 An Athlete must notify the Chair of the TSP at their earliest opportunity and in writing, which may include email or SMS, that they intend to submit extenuating circumstances. Following informal notice being provided, the Athlete must as soon as practicable provide a more formal written summary of the extenuating circumstances, which may be submitted by email.
- 6.1.3 In considering the performances of Athletes, the Chair of the TSP at their absolute discretion, may recommend to the TSP that it gives weight (and if so, then what amount of weight) to extenuating circumstances which will be addressed on a case-by-case basis.
- 6.1.4 A decision as to whether extenuating circumstances shall be considered in relation to an Athlete, and if so then the weight that shall be given by the TSP to those extenuating circumstances, will be made by the TSP in its absolute discretion on a case-by-case basis.

7 Selection Process

The selection processes and timelines will be developed for the NAGP Team based on the dates for the respective Competition. Those selection processes and timelines will be developed for each NAGP Team dependent on factors including their respective State, National and International competition cycles.

8 Endorsement and Ratification

Once the TSP selects the Athletes for the Competition, the list will be approved by the GM-Performance and then forwarded as soon as practicable for endorsement by the WPA HPC.

9 Notification, Communication and Feedback

9.1 Notification

Athletes will be notified of NAGP Team selection decisions in accordance with communication protocols reasonably determined by WPA.

9.2 Communication

- 9.2.1 The selection processes, timelines, and any subsequent updates (including notification of selection decisions) will be clearly communicated in writing to all eligible Athletes and other stakeholders as soon as practicable.
- 9.2.2 Communication will be via official channels determined by the WPA (such as email, website publication, or member portal) to ensure equal access to information.

- 9.2.3 Athletes are responsible for ensuring their contact details are up to date and for reviewing all selection-related communications.

9.3 Feedback

At their discretion, non-selected athletes are provided with an opportunity to seek feedback from the respective NAGP Head Coach, in accordance with the arrangements and process communicated at the time of NAGP Team notification.

10 Athlete Agreement

All selected Athletes must sign and return an executed Athlete Agreement, that stipulates their obligations as members of the NAGP Team to the WPA GM-Pathways within 14 days of notification of selection.

11 Withdrawal or Removal of Athletes

- 11.1.1 Should an Athlete withdraw (or be removed, for example, this may include due to injury or other health matter or due to no longer meeting the Eligibility Requirements outlined at section 4) from the NAGP Team following their selection, the NAGP Head Coach may request that the TSP select a replacement Athlete. The NAGP Head Coach may also choose not to replace the withdrawn player.
- 11.1.2 The TSP may select any Athlete based on the requirements of the NAGP Team and in accordance with section 5 to replace an Athlete who has withdrawn or is removed from the NAGP Team. If reserves have been chosen by the TSP, then the replacement Athlete should be chosen from the reserves except in the case of exceptional circumstances (which include that the skillset required to replace the withdrawn or removed Athlete is better matched by someone not in the reserves).

12 Appeals

Appeals will be conducted in accordance with and will be governed by WPA's Selection Appeals Policy which is available on the WPA website. An Athlete wishing to appeal against their non-selection in the NAGP Team for a Competition should note the strict timeframes and requirements in that policy and the specific grounds of appeal.

13 Amendments to this Policy

- 13.1.1 This Policy may be amended at any time by WPA in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution.
- 13.1.2 This Policy can be also amended at any time by the Board if in its opinion such an amendment is necessary for any of the following reasons:
- (a) as a result of any change in NAGP Team eligibility criteria or rule;
 - (b) as a result of any change in the rules governing a Competition or a particular event in a Competition;
 - (c) to give effect to the Policy following a drafting error or oversight; or
 - (d) to clarify any ambiguity or otherwise give effect to the intended meaning of the Policy.
- 13.1.3 WPA will publish amendments to the Policy on its website and communicate the update to the relevant stakeholders within the WPA community, and those amendments shall take effect immediately unless otherwise stated.

Annexure A Roles and Responsibilities

The Team Selection Panel (TSP) members will have the following specific responsibilities within the TSP along with providing overall identification and assessment of players.

Role	Specific Responsibilities in Addition to General Selector Duties
Chair / Convenor of Selection Panel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair and Convene the Panel • Ensure all processes are followed and policies are adhered to. • Ensure all relevant information is available and considered by the panel members. • Ensure communication processes pre and post selection are followed. • Ensure all risk management strategies are considered, including but not limited to injury coverage, team culture, leadership, succession planning and depth chart management. • Provide medium and long term planning perspective around NAGP Team for current and next campaign. • Ensure management of risk around depth of talent, contingency plans and succession planning. • Provide contemporary expertise and the ability to objectively evaluate selection options.
NAGP Head Coach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on the needs of the current campaign. • Provide contemporary water polo expertise and knowledge of international team playing systems, strengths and weaknesses and how that impacts on the requirements of the NAGP Team. • Identify and articulate a clear performance vision and strategy including specific tactical systems, technical requirements and how individual Athlete roles and performances contribute to this strategy. • Demonstrate clear understanding of individual Athlete role(s) as well as capabilities within or across specific or multiple positions and their respective strengths and weaknesses. • Demonstrate leadership qualities to identify, balance and manage group dynamics with individual learning and performance styles to create a high performing team.
Independent Selector (suitably experienced athlete, coach or selector)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on the needs of the current campaign. • Attend all agreed selection activities outlined in the Selector’s Agreement. • Provide contemporary water polo expertise and knowledge of international team playing systems and individual Athlete strengths and weaknesses and how that impacts on the requirements of the NAGP Team. • Regularly watching and reviewing matches that Athletes being considered for selection are playing in. Demonstrate clear understanding of individual Athlete role(s) as well as capabilities within or across specific or multiple positions and their respective strengths and weaknesses. • Play the role of “critical friend” or “devil’s advocate” by replicating how an opposition coach will seek to defeat the NAGP Team, or NAGP Team plans in Competition and assist to reducing the possibility of this occurring.

