



Guidelines for State Coaches – Junior Teams

Purpose

These guidelines explain the process for selecting State Team Coaches, the key responsibilities of the coach and what a coach can expect in terms of support from WA Underwater Hockey. The Coaching Guidelines needs to be read in conjunction with the State Team Selection Guidelines and the WA UWH Bylaws.

The role of a State Team Coach

The State Coaches are key leadership roles for Western Australian hockey. Our coaches inspire the next generation, build the underwater hockey community, pass on knowledge and build legendary teams. The role descriptions for junior team coaches can be found at the back of this guideline.

Coaches are expected to demonstrate through their actions the positive values that they have set for the team and to follow rules. This includes:

- providing feedback and advice to players in and out of the water in a respectful manner that is non-sexist, non-sexual and non-judgemental;
- showing commitment to the team including planning and attending training sessions (or putting in place alternative arrangements)
- interacting with referees and other officials in a professional and collegiate way
- ensure you are fair and equitable, having no bias towards players including due to race, age, gender, sexuality or friendships/ previous history with players.
- Give all players a chance to fairly voice their opinions and carefully consider with the captain and vice-captain any issues that are raised with your or them.

Team Selections

Coaches will be appointed prior to the selection process. The Selections Manager and/or Team Managers will announce nominations to all players once information is released by the hosting State (usually 1 – 2 months prior to the commencement of the

1st selection). Managers will issue a deadline date to all prospective players to nominate.

UWH WA will also call for nominations of selectors. Two selectors will join the coach in assessing all nominees at all three selections. The selection panel will also recommend a captain. More information on this can be found in the selections guide.

State Coach Selection Process

WA UWH aims to call for written applications for coaching positions 3-6 months prior to a tournament. Applications will be assessed by a panel of people including the Coaching Coordinator. The panel will recommend coaches to the WA UWH Committee for approval. In the situation where there is no nomination for a coach of a team or the panel is unable to establish a suitable candidate, the panel may consider individuals who nominated for other teams, re-open the application process or seek further information from applicants.

Eligibility requirements

Unless an exemption is provided by the Committee, all state team coaches must:

- Hold WA UWH Members and any other membership required for the competition (e.g. AUF, UHA or other)
- Undertake a WA UWH Coaching Course (if they have not completed one in the last 5 years)
- Provide a written game plan and training program to the Coaching Coordinator and team if successful
- Be available for team training and to attend Nationals
- Provide contact details for a referee
- Provide Photo ID such as a copy of their driver's licence
- Declare any actual or perceived conflicts of interest
- A current copy of WWC card (or application receipt until card arrives) is required for any coach applying for a junior coaching role.

Selection criteria

Coach applications will be assessed against 5 selection criteria:

Criterion	
Has a credible plan to prepare players to the level required for the team to achieve its objectives	<i>We want to know about your coaching experience and accreditations, playing experience, knowledge of the sport and objectives for the team. With juniors it is important that the objectives of the team emphasise development as a priority, rather than just winning a competition.</i>
Has the communication skills required explain a game plan, coach in and out of water and provide appropriate feedback	<i>We want to understand how you will communicate with the players. Examples of how you have done this successfully in the past are ideal.</i>
Commitment to the development of the team / squad, and also the long term development of WA players	<i>We want to know that you are willing to develop players, even if that means focusing on 'basics', building player skill sets and developing athletic foundations for future tournaments. Please explain how you will contribute to the long term development of players in WA, including developing players who aren't in the team. Your availability to coach in lead up and during tournament is also important.</i>
Able to undertake the role with integrity, fairness and apply sound judgement	<i>We will ask you if you have any conflicts of interest and if so, how these can be managed. UWH is a small sport so it does often happen that a coach has a child, partner, relative or close friend in a team. Whether you feel conflicted or not, it is important for others that they know how these conflicts will be managed. Poorly managed conflicts can undermine a coach unnecessarily. <i>We may also take into consideration your sportsmanship and behaviour as a player or in other roles.</i></i>
Organised and effective at working with others to manage a team such as captains, team manager, chaperones, parents etc	<i>Coaching does take time and require organisational skills, so we will ask you about your availability including whether you will ref or coach, and for a referee that can provide comment on how you work in a team (for example someone from your club who could explain how you work with others when you organise events, training, teams or other responsibilities.</i>

Coach Cost Reimbursement

Playing Coach

Playing Coaches are entitled to the following:

- 50% of the team flight
- 50% of the cost of Team Bathing and Polo Shirt. The cost of rash vests is borne completely by the coach.
- In the case of Accommodation, it is expected that Playing Coaches stay with their team at the Accommodation organised by the Team Manager, and pay for 50% of the accommodation costs.

All other expenses (Food, Presentation Tickets, Personal Vehicle Hire, any required Pool Fees and any other incidental expenses) are completely borne at the expense of the Coach.

Where there are 2 playing coaches appointed, the above reimbursements are to be shared equally between the 2 playing coaches.

Non - Playing Coach

Non - Playing Coaches are entitled to the following:

- 100% of the team flight.
- 100% of the cost of Team Bathing and Polo Shirt. The cost of rash vests is borne completely by the coach.
- In the case of Non- Playing Coaches, it is preferred that coaches stay with their team to minimise costs as 100% of the accommodation cost is covered by UHWHA. Where Coaches elect to stay independent of their team, they will be reimbursed the equivalent of the team accommodation cost.
- For Junior Coaches staying with their team, all in house food will be provided.

All other expenses (Food, Presentation Tickets, Personal Vehicle Hire, any required Pool Fees and any other incidental expenses) are completely borne at the expense of the Coach.

The above is based on there being only one person appointed as coach.

Coach development and other support

WA UWH will aim to provide coaches with access to training and development each year by running a coaching course and providing coaching resources. The resources are designed to provide reliable foundations for coaching a state team (such as training programs, swim sessions, game plans etc). Coaches can either use the materials provided or develop their own.

Coaches also have a peer group of other State team coaches they can talk to share ideas or talk through challenges.

Coaches can sometimes be the subject of complaints or be involved in conflict with players, parents or others. Coaches should aim to resolve issues directly and respectfully in the first instance, but can also refer people to raise their concerns with the Coaching Coordinator.

Working with captains

The coach is supported in leading a team by the Captain and one or more vice captains. The coaching role includes working with players to get everyone on the same page especially when making key decisions. The captains are a support team for the coach in this.

With junior teams there will be far less of the team administration delegated to the Captains and more managed by the coach than in seniors. The focus with junior captains is more on identifying players who exemplify the team culture and values and naming captains based on this (e.g. working hard, caring for others, good communication, taking responsibility for own mistakes, solving problems with others).

Junior captains may still be well placed to take on duties for the team which might include:

- Organising cap numbers and other information that the team manager needs
- Asking captains to lead by example – attending training sessions, communication style etc

- Providing the coach with feedback about games, how to help the team perform and which players suit the various positions
- Organising team meetings
- Assisting with decisions about who should play in each game and supporting communication with players who sit out.

Behaviour of players

Junior players are expected to act in accordance with the positive values that the coach has set for the team and follow rules. At the tournament venue, hotel etc they should respect other patrons, respecting and using all facilities correctly and ensuring that all gear is localized to the assigned area and kept in an orderly fashion. The coach and chaperones have responsibility for reminding players of acceptable behaviour and initiating management processes if required. The coach or chaperone may escalate conflict, violence or breach of the Code of Conduct to be dealt with directly by the Team Manager and the UWHWA Official. Any issues amongst the Seniors that may arise that are not resolved by coaches, will be dealt with directly by the UWHWA Official.

The procedure for managing conflict amongst players is as follows:

- For minor disputes: In the care of coaches – It is up to the coaches to resolve any minor disputes that may arise (bickering amongst juniors etc.)
- For minor disputes: In the care of chaperones – It is up to the chaperones to resolve any minor disputes that may arise (bickering amongst juniors etc.)
- For conflict: In the care of coaches – It is the responsibility of the coach to mediate resolution between the conflicting parties. (heated arguments amongst juniors)
- For conflict: In the care of chaperones – The Chaperone should try to mediate resolution of any conflict. If unsuccessful, it is the responsibility of the coach to mediate resolution between the conflicting parties to resolve the problem. If the coach is not available, the issue should be taken directly to the Managers. (heated arguments amongst juniors)
- For escalated conflict, violence or breach of the Code of Conduct: In the care of coaches or chaperones – these grievances should be dealt with directly by Managers, and the UWHWA Official.

Sitting players out of games

If a team travels with more than 10 players there will be a need to sit people out of games. It is important that the coach puts in place a good process for managing player expectations and taking fair decisions. Decisions during nationals about who to play can impact on an individual's feeling of self worth and the coach's role is ensure that the team remains a supportive and positive environment for players over the course of a competition.

Decisions to play certain players must be consistent with the goals of the team and the most important thing is that players understand how and why decisions are taken, that they are based on facts and that they are taken in the best interest of the team.

At a minimum a coach should:

- Explain to the team in advance of the competition how they will choose players for games, and this may mean acknowledging there is a natural tension between providing players game time and fielding the most competitive team.
- If players will be sitting out based on their performance (rather than a rotation system for example) the coach needs to consider objective measures for performance and be able to explain these to the players. Gender, age and size are not objective measures.
- Coaches are expected to take seriously the need to develop players and build their confidence so that even if they are not competitive at this competition, they are encouraged to work on their strengths and gaps for competition in future teams.
- Consult with the Captains on their choices for selection. A good coach will usually be able to get agreement with their captains. If a decision cannot be agreed easily the coach should move cautiously as this is a red flag for potential confusion and misunderstanding in the team.
- Talk with players 1-1 in a private setting (either the coach or captain) to let them know that they will be sitting out a game, in advance of announcing this to the team.
- Provide players with clear reasons why they are sitting out a game, listen to their feedback and answer any questions they may have.

A few common scenarios are provided below as examples:

The objective of the team is to be competitive, ideally to win gold at the nationals. Nationals is the key competition in Australia and this is a common mindset.

- A full team of 11 or 12 high level players is taken to nationals, and decisions are based on ensuring highly competitive teams are fielded in key games. This means decisions to play will often focus on fielding strong teams to win games. The potential to isolate players who sit out of games and undermine their confidence is highest in this scenario. Individual feedback should be provided prior to and during nationals to assist players to be at their best and have the best chance of performing well. If there is a group of players who are more likely to be played in tough games a plan can be made to rest them if there are easier games, in order to share playing time. In some cases it may be that there are some players happy to play fewer games, such as those also playing in the junior division, coaching or for other reasons. This approach should be explained to players in advance to avoid disappointment by those that sit out more games.
- A team of 11 or 12 players is taken to nationals and the approach is democratic, to share rest equally to ensure equal game opportunity and recovery. This most often occurs where there is sufficient depth in the team to rotate the play, or where players need exposure to be match ready and the risk/reward is worth playing them. With this scenario all players are more likely to retain confidence throughout the round robin. A player can be shocked at being sat out of finals in this scenario and so this decision needs to be carefully communicated.

The objective of the team is to develop and build the players, execute a game plan, and see what result can be achieved.

- It may be the case that the team does not consider it has a high chance of being competitive for medals, and sets goals focussed in other areas such as team work and executing a game plan. In this environment it would be logical that all players will take equal turns sitting out.

- it could be the case that the development team has a few key players that are critical to holding the team together and they play more games, making sure the competition is a positive experience for all. In junior teams it can often be the case that one or two players are critical to maintain basic structure. However there may still be a risk/reward consideration in giving players the responsibility and opportunity to play unsupported. This is a judgement call for the coach about whether it will achieve the team objectives.

Coaches Review

- UWH WA will review all coaches against the selection criteria and provide them with feedback focussed on supporting the coach in their development journey.

Role of the Coaching Coordinator

The Coaching Coordinator is designed to support coaches in WA and the development of new coaches. The key duties of the role include:

- Ensuring there are fair and effective processes to select State team coaches;
- Assisting coaches to meet WA UWH expectations by ensuring training, guidance and tools are available to coaches
- Identifying opportunities to develop new and existing coaches
- Building the peer network of coaches
- Being an escalation point where necessary for complaints against a coach
- Coordinating feedback processes for coaches



Role description

State Team Coach (adult teams)

The State Team coaches are part of a leadership group focussed on delivering a successful competition campaign for Western Australia and building and retaining our players for the long term. The role of coach is complex and this role description provides an overview only.

Main duties

Prepare the team

- Work with the Selectors and Selection Manager to choose a team of players, establish a leadership group, establish regular communication with players
- Respond promptly to communications from the Team Manager
- Build the current and future players of the state – those who are in the team and also use the state training program for development of a broader pool of players if possible.
- Prepare players for the competition by building team values, setting training programs, and developing the individual and collective skills of the team to execute its game plan.
- Teach players a game plan and strategy associated with competition
- Create a learning environment that encourages questions, collective problem solving and teamwork.
- Schedule group training sessions, planned in advance, including organising opposition for games and time for white board sessions, drills etc

At the tournament

- Regularly discuss how to execute the game plan under pressure from different teams and to adjust the game plan where appropriate
- Provide individual players with advice on how to approach games (including preparing them for pressure, coping with anxiety etc)
- To watch opposition teams and develop insights that will help their team to win
- Work with the captains and players to be organised for and on time for games, including establishing warmup routines and setting team meeting times
- Choose players for each game in a fair, transparent and supportive way.
- Support a positive and friendly team culture including good sportsmanship towards other teams and officials.

The coaching skillset

Based on the 'Coaching Framework' by Amar Sarmiento and Emma Rae, all coaching roles, whether they are in a club environment or focussed on the highest level of international competition, have the same foundations. The coaching skillset is something for coaches to develop as they grow and build their knowledge. There is no expectation that state coaches will be proficient or experienced in all these foundations.



Key skills that coaches develop as they access training and experience:

- Establishing standards and work ethics, and encouraging values of sportsmanship, fair play and personal growth and co-creating a positive environment for a team or group of athletes to achieve their goals
- To assess risk and work with others in order to keep everyone safe and healthy
- Planning, organizing and coordinating sessions, seasons and other team activities through coherent integration of the elements described in the pyramid
- Providing leadership and collaborating with the players themselves and others around the team such as: support personnel, management, volunteers and other relevant roles
- Understand and apply some basic concepts in sport psychology such as: stress management skills, conflict resolution, goal setting and manage team dynamics in order to create a healthy environment where individuals can thrive
- Communicate effectively with individuals and groups in order to transfer knowledge, ideas, concepts, skills, etc. Being proficient in different ways of communication such as verbal, visual, and written.

- Provide guidance on how to enhance physical capabilities having sound knowledge in relevant sport science areas such as conditioning, strength, finswimming, nutrition and recovery
- Adopt and implement a methodology of testing for a group of players in which a variety of relevant abilities for the sport are reliably tested and data is collected and analysed. Adopt or develop a team selection process/system that is comprehensive, relevant and fair
- Teaching, coaching and supervising the basic individual skills of underwater hockey
- Teaching, coaching and supervising the basic collective skills of underwater hockey
- Teaching, coaching and effectively communicating a game plan and specific situations of a game to your team
- Understand and manage the different stages and situations of a match in a competitive context
- Understand and manage the different stages and situations of a competition
- Coherent integration of all elements of the pyramid