



# **Ulster Water Polo Junior Blitz Series**



## **CLUB HANDBOOK**

**2023/24**



## BRIEFING NOTES FOR THE SEASON 2023/24

### **FAQ: CLUB COACHES**

#### **Introduction**

Thank you for your service to your club and Ulster Water Polo. If you are taking on the role of Junior Water Polo Coach for the first time, we wish you well for the incoming season and hope that this document will be of assistance to you throughout the year. Should you have any queries throughout the season please do not hesitate to get in touch at any time.

The main purpose of our Junior Blitz Series is to provide an opportunity for our younger players (most of whom will be new to our sport) to engage in water polo at a fundamental level, for these players to learn some of the basics of water polo and primarily for them to have a fun experience playing our sport.

**NB. Please ensure the relevant persons within your club are advised of the information below, particularly if you have several coaches and managers working across the underage groupings.**

#### **Competition Formats & Rules**

The Ulster Water Polo Junior Blitz Format and Rules have been passed through the Ulster Water Polo Committee for implementation during the forthcoming 2023/24 playing season. All Junior Water Polo played under the auspices of Swim Ulster should adhere to the requirements of the rules document, however the Ulster Water Polo Committee reserve the potential to update these rules at any time during the season.

#### **Inability To Fulfil a Fixture**

If your club is unable to fulfil a fixture or attend a Junior Blitz event you should inform the host Club immediately via telephone contact (this will normally be the Club Secretary of the host club).

#### **Team Entries & Requesting Additional Team Entries for a Blitz**

The Host Club will invite entries to their Blitz event approximately 4 weeks in advance of the event date and Clubs will provide a contact number & a preferred return email address when inviting entries.

As standard, each Club will be invited to enter 1 x team in each age category for each Blitz, however Host Clubs will be entitled to enter 2 x teams in each age group, within their hosted Blitz event. Additional U9 and U11 teams (and possibly U7's) can participate in a particular blitz at the host Clubs discretion. Host Clubs have the right to refuse entry for additional teams if seven days' notice is not provided or if an additional team would result in a significant increase in pool time.

Ulster Water Polo strongly recommends that you make sure you have a number of teams available for both U9 and U11 water polo from the start of the season. This allows the Ulster Water Polo Committee and Host Clubs to plan accordingly.

## **Notification of Fixtures**

Scheduling of Blitz games are the responsibility of the **HOST CLUB**. Ulster Water Polo will endeavour to help in this process if requested to do so. However, host clubs must take on this responsibility.

Match schedules for blitzes should be released at least 7 days prior to the event. This is to allow sufficient time for clubs to make arrangements for travel and to check the availability of players, coaches and volunteers.

## **Match Times**

All teams should arrive at their allocated venue in time to warm up and be ready to play for the time specified on the programme schedule. This should include enough time to allow for your team(s) to put on water polo caps etc.

All teams must strictly adhere to their allocated time slots (i.e., to be out of the pool before the next match is due to start). All matches will finish before the start time of the following game i.e., any delays in preparation will eat into those games allocated match time, to ensure the follow-on game starts on time. If you are running late on the day, please inform the host club immediately via verbal communication.

## **Officials**

The Host Club shall provide Referees for all games. All teams should have a Team Manager to effectively manage their team(s) at the event. Each game will be overseen by a single Referee. The Host Club shall provide an event Co-ordinator and a Timekeeper who will control start & finish times of games.

## **Results**

There will be no scores or results recorded for U7, U9, U11 Blitz games.

## **Fees**

There will be no entry fee requirements for the Junior Blitz series, as Host Clubs will bear the cost of pool time required at their event.

## **Child Welfare & Code of Conduct**

Swim Ulster is fully committed to the safeguarding and wellbeing of its participants. Every individual in water polo should at all times, show respect and understanding for participants rights, safety and welfare, and conduct themselves in a way that reflects the ethos and values of Swim Ireland Codes of Conduct and Child Safeguarding Policy.

All Officials, Coaches, Team Managers and Volunteers attending must hold current AccessNI clearance and a valid Swim Ireland recognised Safeguarding Qualification. Swim Ireland Child Safety policies will apply throughout the event.

Photography can only occur with permission of the Host Club and the Pool Facility Management and must adhere strictly to the Swim Ireland Filming & Photography Policy.

If you have any queries regarding child protection, then please contact –

***Phil Kelly, Water Polo Development Officer at Swim Ulster***

***Tel: 07919368577 Email: [phil@swimulster.net](mailto:phil@swimulster.net)***

## Responsibilities of Host Club – an aide memoire

1. We would advise the Host Club to send out entry invitations by email at least 4 weeks in advance of your Blitz, this will give time to receive entries and to draw up & circulate a match schedule. Note: clubs are only allowed to enter one U9 Team and one U11 Team. As Host Club organising the Blitz, you can enter two teams in each age group. Host Clubs may also choose to invite entries for U7's.
2. A schedule of matches needs to be drawn up. This can take a while, so we would advise assigning this to someone who is good at excel / schedules. Note whoever is doing the schedule, I would advise starting U9 and U11 matches at same time as keeps it easier to control. Points on the schedule:
  - build in a bit of time at the start and end for unforeseen circumstances/setup.
  - make sure the matches end when they are supposed to end - this way it only affects the teams that were playing their match - If a team isn't ready and take 2 minutes to get caps on, this is eating into their play time and doesn't change the schedule for everyone else.
  - Depending on numbers, you can either do a round robin or everyone plays 3 or 4 matches, don't go below 4 minutes for a match.
  - Build in a minute between matches, if possible, but get someone to have the next 2 teams ready to go during the match before theirs
  - Try and sort the referees beforehand, If you have some of the older boys/girls there, then its good experience for them to ref
3. On the blitz night – You will need:
  - a. A minimum of two referees – one to do U9 matches and one to do U11 matches.
  - b. A timekeeper to blow whistle for matches to end and to start next match on time. Note if a team is not ready, you don't change the time, they just get a shorter time for their match.
  - c. Someone on the pool bank to make sure that teams are ready to get into the water on time for their match.
  - d. Coaches to look after your U9 and U11 team.
  - e. In total probably need about 8 volunteers with specific jobs to make sure it goes to schedule.

### Junior Blitz: Sample Match Schedule

**(Note: match times should reflect number of entries received and available pool time)**

#### 6min matches with 1min turnaround

##### Under 9's Match Schedule

##### Under 11's Match Schedule

	White		Blue			White		Blue
18.35	Brugha 1	V	Newry		18.35	Brugha 1	V	Cu Chulainn
18.42	Diamonds	V	Brugha 2		18.42	Diamonds	V	Newry
18.49	Cu Chulainn	V	Newry		18.49	Bangor	V	Brugha 2
19.00	Brugha 1	V	Diamonds		19.00	Brugha 1	V	Newry
19.07	Newry	V	Brugha 2		19.07	Bangor	V	Cu Chulainn
19.14	Brugha 1	V	Cu Chulainn		19.14	Diamonds	V	Brugha 2
19.21	Newry	V	Diamonds		19.21	Brugha 1	V	Bangor
19.28	Brugha 1	V	Brugha 2		19.28	Brugha 2	V	Cu Chulainn
19.35	Diamonds	V	Cu Chulainn		19.35	Bangor	V	Newry
19.42	Brugha 1	V	Newry		19.42	Brugha 1	V	Diamonds
19.49	Brugha 2	V	Cu Chulainn		19.49	Diamonds	V	Newry

## USEFUL CONTACTS

Club	Email
Bangor Barracuda's	<a href="mailto:bangorbarracudas@hotmail.co.uk">bangorbarracudas@hotmail.co.uk</a>
Cathal Brugha	<a href="mailto:info@cathalbrughawaterpolo.com">info@cathalbrughawaterpolo.com</a>
Clonard	<a href="mailto:clonardsecretary@gmail.com">clonardsecretary@gmail.com</a>
Cú Chulainn	<a href="mailto:cuchulainn.waterpolo@gmail.com">cuchulainn.waterpolo@gmail.com</a>
Diamonds	<a href="mailto:info@diamondswaterpolo.com">info@diamondswaterpolo.com</a>
Lisburn	<a href="mailto:secretary@lisburncityswimmingclub.org">secretary@lisburncityswimmingclub.org</a>
Newry	<a href="mailto:info@newryswimmingclub.co.uk">info@newryswimmingclub.co.uk</a>
Portadown	<a href="mailto:portadownasc@gmail.com">portadownasc@gmail.com</a>

## SCHEDULE OF JUNIOR BLITZ EVENTS FOR THE 2023/24 SEASON

Month/Day/Date (2023/24)	Host Club	Venue	Start/End Time
October	Clonard	Andersonstown LC	
November	Newry	Newry LC	
December - Date TBC	Xmas Blitz	Venue - TBC	
January	Diamonds	Grove Wellbeing Centre	
February	Cú Chulainn	Falls LC	
March	Cathal Brugha	Falls LC	
April	Bangor	Bangor Aurora	
May	Portadown	South Lakes LC, Craigavon	



# Junior Blitz Series: The Rules

## **RULE 1 – AGE QUALIFICATION**

- U7: Players must be in Primary 3 or below on the day of the event
- U9: Players must be in Primary 5 or below on the day of the event
- U11: Players must be in Primary 7 or below on the day of the event

## **RULE 2 – TEAMS**

- Each team shall consist of 6 x outfield players and 1 x Goalkeeper permitted in the pool at any one time. (May be adjusted by Host Club)
- Teams can be a mix of Boys & Girls

## **RULE 3 – REFEREES & TEAM MANAGERS**

- Referees will be provided by the Host Club.... the Host Club event Co-ordinator will appoint a single Referee for each game.

## **RULE 4 - DISCIPLINE**

- Rough or dangerous play will not be allowed.
- Swim Ireland Codes of Conduct will apply at all times.
- Coaches are expected to manage the discipline of their players.

## **RULE 5 – SUBSTITUTIONS**

- Substitutions are unlimited and will be permitted throughout the game.
- A Referee may exclude a player for a short time for rough play and then subsequently signal re-entry when he/she deems appropriate... a Referees decision is final.

## **RULE 6 – DURATION OF THE GAME**

- Games duration will be dependent upon the number of entries received and pool time available.
- Game duration will be announced by the Club when the event schedule is published.
- 30 sec rule will not apply
- The Host Club Co-ordinator will manage the time for each game and will signal to Referees when a game must finish.

## **RULE 7 – THE PITCH**

- The pool will be divided into match areas and mini water polo goals will be in use.
- Pool depth will be adjusted by Host Club for U7's and U9's.
- U11's will play in deep water
- 2m Cones will be in place and only goalkeepers are permitted inside the 2-metre area.

## **RULE 8 – SCORING**

- The ball must clearly enter the goals to permit a goal to be scored...balls rebounding off the pool side will not be declared goals.

- The ball will be centered after each goal.
- Goals can be scored from anywhere on the pitch

#### **RULE 9 – CATCHING & THROWING**

- U7's – may catch and throw with two hands
- U9's - may catch with two hands but must throw with one hand...no walking in possession of the ball, swimming with the ball only.
- U11's – Must catch and throw with one hand...deep water games

#### **RULE 10 – EQUIPMENT**

- First team on the team sheet will provide the ball for the game.
- “Home” team named on the scheduled game will wear white caps.
- Shirts must be worn by players for any team photos being taken.
- U7's, U9's and U11's will use a size 3 ball.

### **PITCH SET-UP**

#### **Two Pitch Set-Up**



Useful Links:

<https://www.swimireland.ie/about/safeguarding/safeguarding-policies>

<https://www.swimulster.net/Home.aspx>

**Good Luck to everyone taking part; most of all have a fun time and enjoy our  
Ulster Junior Water Polo Blitz Series.**

**Ulster Water Polo Committee**