



IN THE ZONE!

August 2009

The summer season is now over but fall quickly approaches:

JO and Championship Season Concludes

We would like to congratulate all the athletes who participated in the summer championship season. The Sopac zone was well represented at the various championships including junior Olympics, 20U and open events. There are various video links documenting the events and the final results are posted at the USAWP website.

Masters Update

One area that our zone did not have solid participation is at the men's open level. As we have mentioned in the past, one of the goals of the zone is to provide more play opportunities for both younger (splashball) and experienced players (open and masters). We are happy to announce that masters play has returned to the Newport Beach area. A group is meeting weekly at Newport Harbor High School and operates as a "drop-in" or "pickup" league through the US Leagues Program. For more info, contact Jeremy Laster at jlaster@ranchomv.com or Park Eddy at peddy@activecaptive.com. We also have a group playing at Capo Valley High School and in Los Alamitos. For more info contact Russell Rowlands (MVPolo@hotmail.com) and Braham Hojreh (Bhojreh@aol.com) respectively. We are looking next to North County and the inland empire for more growth in this area.

Last year the Water Polo Champions League (WPCL) ran in the winter to provide high-level play opportunity for our more experienced players. This league will continue and grow in the 2010. We hope that all our athletes who are playing at the collegiate level and finish their eligibility will join the league in January.

2009 48th Annual SPA Age Group League & Championship Calendar

The Southern Pacific Association (SPA) Age Group League is the premier age group waterpolo league for the Southern Pacific Zone of USA Water Polo. It is the longest running age group water league in the country. For the year 2009 the league shall begin the day after Labor Day, September 8th, 2009 and run thru November 15th, 2009.

To participate in the league, Clubs sign up their teams online at the zone website and arrange games with the other teams in the league. The league ends with the SPA Tournament, which is seeded based on the results of league play and other factors. The top three teams from the 12U and 14U age groups will be invited to play in the first ever "California Age Group Championships" which will be held in the Coastal Zone for 2009. This event will tentatively be held on the November 20, 21, 22, 2009 weekend.

More info can be found on the zone website.

ODP Updates

There will be substantial changes to the ODP program as we head into phase two. Detailed information can be found at the USAWP website. One of the biggest noticeable changes is a modification of the age groupings. In response to changes made at the FINA level, and in going back to previous age definitions, Juniors will go back to 20U and youth returns to 18U. In addition, as we transition, the teams will be based on even year birthdays. So, starting in the fall, we will be operating 92U and 94U teams. We will be working on schedules in the very near term to plan out the program and minimize conflicts with other club and high school events.

Splash Ball

Our splashball program was a big success with close to 85 new members to waterpolo in the 5-9 age group. This is a pilot program with the goal of rolling out to the entire zone. We will be running another session in the fall and then taking the lessons learned for more clubs to consider. We have some video up on the USAWP website as well as the zone website where you can go for more info on the program and info on how to sign up. If you have younger siblings or kids that you felt was not old enough to start playing, give it a thought. We now do have an intro to waterpolo program in the zone.

Planning Sessions

As part of zone operations and to integrate ODP, we will be starting our planning for the 2010 calendar year early in the fall of 2009. This is three months earlier than before. If you are planning on hosting a tournament or league, start to get your dates together sooner. We will have a "calendar meeting" at the beginning of 2010 but hope to work out the major conflicts that will emerge well before the meeting.

Annual Meeting

Another change to our schedule is that the Annual Meeting will be held in December instead of the following January. We should have the date confirmed by September and give everyone a heads up well in advance.

As always, if you have a question, please shoot us a note.