



What Is I Love Water Polo?

I Love Water Polo (ILWP) is an introductory, grass roots water polo program for boys and girls ages 8-13 (participants between the ages of 6 and 8 may be considered). This newly developed [Water Polo Canada](#) program offers children the ability to learn the game of water polo, and the basic skills involved in the sport. The ILWP program also helps to enhance the participants swimming, balance, and coordination skills.

ILWP is a community driven program offering various levels of skill development similar to swimming lesson programs. ILWP is a flexible program that can be used by communities to supplement their swimming lesson program, can be used as an after school program, or as a weekend/evening activity for children.

ILWP coaches and instructors are trained through the [National Coaching and Certification Program \(NCCP\)](#) as a [Community Water Polo Coach](#).





Frequently Asked Questions

Why choose water polo?

Water polo involves three components: fitness, skills, and the game. ILWP allows kids to have fun while learning basic skills, tactics and rules of the game. ILWP provides a positive environment that promotes fitness, friendship, teamwork and sportsmanship. We do not keep score at our games and scrimmages, although referees are often present to enforce the adapted rules of the game. Focus is on skill development and fun! ILWP is considered non-contact, and rough play is not tolerated. Water polo is the perfect answer for those parents who want to involve their children in a sport that promotes total body fitness, with very little impact on joints. Injuries are rare at this level of play.

Why do kids like water polo so much?

It's fun! It's unique! Most athletes like water polo because it is a physically demanding sport. It is different and unusual. Although it combines elements from a wide variety of sports (swimming, soccer, basketball, ice hockey, rugby and wrestling, to name a few), and entails many of the same principles and rules, it is different from typical sports that children play.

Are there any prerequisites?

No water polo experience is necessary, but players should be comfortable deep water swimmers. We recommend Red Cross Aquaquest 8 (Swim Kids 7) or Lifesaving Society Swimmer 7, or equivalent, as a pre-requisite. We understand that many kids do not experience formal swimming lessons, though. If you are unsure, please have a coach assess the child in question.

Why is there such a broad range of ages?

Water polo is coed for younger players because at this stage of development there are not great differences in strength and ability, between males and females. Coed programs allow us to promote equality, and allow coaches to form groups easily by player ability, not specifically by gender or age. At age 14, competitive water polo becomes streamed by age and gender.

Practices combine water polo skills like ball handling, game tactics and scrimmages with swimming endurance and speed. The players get fit very quickly without realizing it! Many players will go on from ILWP to play in competitive programs. Others will continue it as a recreational activity, and would still be skilled enough to play in high school and even university programs.



The History of ILWP and Acknowledgements

The [Community Sport - Initiation Water Polo Coach](#) program is a [National Coaching Certification Program \(NCCP\)](#). Water Polo Canada (WPC) developed this coach education program in order to train coaches to develop a grassroots community driven water polo program to boys and girls.

In the spring of 2009, WPC obtained a grant from Heritage Canada to nationalize the I Love Water Polo (ILWP) program and run a pilot in Atlantic Canada. The Ottawa Titans Water Polo Club developed the first version of ILWP, and has been operating the program in the Ottawa region since 2001. WPC has merged the core components of the ILWP Ottawa Titans program with its NCCP [Community Sport - Initiation](#) coaching program to form a National standardized ILWP.

The vision and the driving force behind the concepts of the award winning I Love Water Polo program was Mr. David Hart, Head Coach of the Titans. The Titans, with a 3-year Ontario Trillium Foundation grant to get started, trained instructors, developed lesson plans, purchased equipment, and then launched a program at five pools, later expanding to eight pools.

In May 2005 the Titan's I Love Water Polo program won an award of excellence from the Parks and Recreation Ontario (PRO). Nancy Snihur, who was the first administrative volunteer and developed the strategic plan, business case, Trillium grant application and many of the promotional material, accepted the award on behalf of the Titans.

In the spring of 2005, Ontario Water Polo (OWP) obtained a grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation to support the Association's efforts to enhance awareness and interest in water polo, strengthen the network of water polo clubs and affiliates across Ontario, and increase access to the sport.

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