



## **NZ Men's Water Polo Programme Update #3**

**May 1 2022**

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this communication is to provide prospective athletes additional information and to seek confirmation of their availability for selection. The programme, costs, squad composition, coaches and commitment are expanded on in order for athletes to make an informed decision as to their availability. From this pool of players, a NZ based domestic squad of 21 players (more or less) will be selected (younger development athletes will be considered in addition to the 21 players).

Those athletes with aspirations to play for New Zealand at any time through the next five years are encouraged to 'opt in' now, in order to be considered for the programme and be a part of rebuilding and progressing the men's water polo squad in NZ.

### **Programme**

As part of a 10 year programme, we will enter an initial three year phase with two objectives, performance and player development. Essential to success is maximising the number of games played and building up to a world championship qualifying series with Australia in 2023 (dates TBC, likely early 2023).

### *Camps and Domestic Activity*

- 22-24 July – Auckland (orientation and familiarisation)
  - This intensive camp will be held at Diocesan School with athletes onsite together on Saturday and Sunday from 8.00am through 7.00pm.
- 25 July to 1 August – common training with Australian Development Squad in Auckland
  - This eight day event will provide opportunity for 10-12 matches and further common trainings to immediately initiate the programme.
  - All athletes will need to arrange annual leave or similar to ensure availability. The squad will be managed through the eight day camp to maximise participation with some players required every day and others only part.
- August/September – Premier League
  - Format, dates and venues to be confirmed.
- 30 September to 2 October – Auckland (Sydney Super League preparation)
- Additional camps and activity may be scheduled once the Australian National League and qualification series dates are confirmed.

NZ based camps will be kept to a minimum, in favour of seeking game, development and training opportunities in Australia.

### *Australian Based Activity - Squad*

The NZ Men's squad will participate in the Sydney Super League from October through December 2022, then subject to approval by Australian Water Polo, we will compete in the Australian National League from February through April 2023. All of which provides the foundation to repeat year on year and build the squad programme in preparation for national team activity.

### *International Activity – National Team*

In July 2023, US and other overseas based players, along with a small compliment of NZ based players will form a New Zealand team to tour California for matches with college teams.

In August/September, the NZ Men's team will head to Europe for at least a two week programme to play matches against clubs from professional leagues during their pre-season preparations, along with seeking out suitable tournaments too.

Should we qualify for the world championships in Japan, July 2023, the programme will be adjusted to build for this.

### *Programme Overview*

	<b>NZ Based</b>	<b>Australia</b>	<b>International</b>
<b>July</b>	Camp 1 + Australian Development Squad		
<b>August</b>	Premier League		
<b>September</b>	Premier League		
<b>October</b>	Camp 2	Sydney Super League	
<b>November</b>		Sydney Super League	
<b>December</b>		Sydney Super League	
<b>January</b>	Camp 3 TBC		
<b>February</b>		Australian National League	
<b>March</b>		Australian National League	Series vs Australia TBC
<b>April</b>		Australian National League	
<b>May</b>	NZ National League		
<b>June</b>	NZ National League		
<b>July</b>	NZ National League		California Tour
<b>August</b>			Europe Tour
<b>September</b>			Europe Tour

NZ Water Polo and the management team will actively seek out further opportunities for domestic based activity with international teams/clubs.

### **Squad Composition**

Clearly, the best New Zealand players must have the opportunity to play for New Zealand, whether they are based domestically or overseas. In addition, those furthering their sporting, academic or professional career offshore, shall be invited to the programme on the same basis as domestic players.

An NZ based squad of approximately 21 players will be selected at the conclusion of National League, from which the basis for teams to participate in Australia will be selected. All players will receive a minimum level of participation in the Australian based programme to ensure player development through the squad and performance.

Overseas based players will be identified and named as an additional group. When available and manageable, they will join the NZ based players in Australian and/or be available for the US and Europe based activity if selected.

A group of Development players will be added to the squad, likely to be age grade athletes in the born 2003, 2004 or 2005 year groups, identified to have the attributes suitable for development amongst the senior programme. These players will also participate in playing opportunities, but on a more limited basis compared to the squad of 21 players.

The squad(s) will be renamed on an annual basis, with players to be added or removed during the year.

### **Coaching Group**

The group of coaches that will lead and direct the programme represent an excellent mix of leadership, water polo experience (playing and coaching), complimentary skills and the aspiration to guide the squad. In support of the head coach, the group of assistants form a valuable resource to ensure player development is maximised and that individual development plans are set and monitored.

In addition to the head coach, Matt Claridge, the following form the coaching group, from which the travelling assistant coach will come from.

David Broome  
Richard Claridge  
Eamon Lui  
Neman Radjen  
Ben Tait

Further resource coaches may be added from time to time, along with the involvement of age grade and development coaches to support coach development pathways in New Zealand.

Strength and conditioning programming will be led by Iosefa Tuiasau.

### **Player Commitment**

In plain terms, those that declare their eligibility to be selected will also be indicating their intent to commit to the programme requirements. This will include:

- A high frequency of training.
- An initial phase of three years.
- A commitment to self-development in the context of the team comes first.

As always, the matter of athlete funded participation is unavoidable at this time. To this end, the programme has been designed to maximise and leverage the player contributions, so that not only will players have the best possible water polo experience for their investment, they will be participating in a clear, coherent and aspirational programme. As such, the investment from players is to be set at \$5,500 for NZ and Australian, squad based activity. National team activity will require further contributions, but expenses will be on the basis of saving the players as much money as possible, in order to gain the most from the experience.

As it stands, existing examples of cost effective programme management include:

- Player funds are to be invested into Australian based games, not NZ based training camps.
- Funding has been received to contribute to costs associated with the Australian series.
- A uniform sponsor has been secured.
- Payment arrangements with NZ Water Polo to support players.

Additional funding partners and opportunities are being sought by the management team.

### **Player Actions**

Athletes who want to be part of the programme will need to 'opt in' by completing the form (link below). In doing so, you will be acknowledging the substantive commitment required and a level of sacrifice and discipline beyond that of a club based player. It is from this group of players that the squad will be selected.

- [Senior Men Expression of Interest form](#)

In addition, you will need to immediately make arrangements for annual (or study etc) leave for the period 25 July through 1 August, as this series with Australia will form the basis for developing our NZ style, but also to determine selections for the Sydney Super League.

For those players who will have changing and/or challenging circumstances, please note this, and/or discuss with Matt Claridge or Quentin Quin.

### **Summary**

A comprehensive programme has been planned to primarily leverage Australia in the short term (and ongoing) whilst putting in place a national team agenda that delivers New Zealand players the opportunity to be their best and play at the greatest level of all...