



## Orlando Thunder New to Water Polo FAQ's

**Can I do a free trial practice before I join?** Of course! Come to any practice and let us know you are trying it out. We'll get you acclimated, and you can see if it's for you.

**What do I need for my first practice?** Just wear a swimsuit! Bring a water bottle and a towel.

**But I don't know anything about water polo...** That's totally fine! Athletes are grouped by age and ability level, so it's okay to not know anything about water polo when you begin.

**Is practice all we do?** We do a lot of practice! We also do scrimmages, playdays and tournaments. As water polo is a growing sport, we often need the experience and competition of traveling teams in playdays or tournaments (both in and out of town) to bring our skills to the next level. Playdays are designed for experience and exposure. They are similar in game experience to tournaments in that you play other teams in USAWP refereed games, but unlike tournaments, in playdays there are no brackets, no advancement, and no trophies/medals. The tournaments we played in last year and plan to play in this year are:

- Halloween – October 9-11
- Battle of the Bay – November in Tampa
- Miami Cup - Nov 18,19, 20 - NEW THIS YEAR so it is a maybe (@Belen in Miami)
- Beast of the East - Dec 9, 10, 11 \*NEW\* WE ARE HOSTING
- Patriot - January
- UCF Knights - January - 18 U only
- International - in Coral Springs February
- Rise Up - WE HOST in April
- Mariachi - May
- Florida East Coast - June
- Central Florida Championship - June
- Sunshine State Games - June
- National State Championship in PA (possibility) in July
- Junior Olympics – July

Not all tournaments offer competition for every age, and athletes are selected from Orlando Thunder teams to play on tournament teams. It is an honor to be selected and a great learning experience.

**Why do I have to join USA Water Polo to play with Orlando Thunder?** USA Water Polo serves as our insurer for all club activities. Membership is also required for tournament play. Different levels of membership are available for different levels of commitment/involvement. The entry level, Bronze, is fine for beginners. See our USAWP page under Registration tab for more info.

**When is your next season?** We keep our water polo players active year-round, but in different ways. In the fall, it is traditionally swim season. We encourage all players to join a swim team and practice with us on Saturdays. After swim season, we engage in a full "Winter" season before high school kids have their water polo season at school. Then in the spring, when the high school players are busy doing school polo, we concentrate on the juniors and give them our full attention. After high school season is over in late April, we begin our summer league to take advantage of the extra free time and prepare for the many summer tournaments. Here's a rough outline:

Seasons:

- Fall (Sept. - Oct.) - practice on Saturdays (join a swim team during week)
- Winter (Nov. - Jan.) - practices after school during week (Juniors 2 days/HS 5 days)
- Spring (Feb.- Apr.) - practices after school during week (Juniors ONLY, 2 days)
- Summer (April - July) -
  - April-May: practices after school during week (Juniors 2 days/HS 5 days)
  - June/July: practices in AM (Juniors 4 days/HS 5 days)