

Southern California Aquatics Federation (SCAF) Policies and Procedures

Updated January 2026

I. Declaration of Policy:

- A. Water polo sanctioning bodies have entrusted us to assist them in the development of their youth through athletics. The proper operation of such a process requires that officials be independent, impartial, and responsible to the people with whom they interact, including both the public and fellow officials. The purpose of the Code of Ethics is to establish guidelines for ethical standards of conduct for all officials. The Code of Ethics does not exhaust the moral and ethical considerations of professional behavior and attitude. Compliance with this Code of Ethics depends primarily upon understanding and voluntary compliance, secondarily upon reinforcement by peer and public opinion, and finally, when necessary, upon enforcement through disciplinary proceedings by the SCAF-WP Officials Board of Directors. The make up of the Board of Directors is listed in the SCAF-WP Federation bylaws.

II. Ethical Standards / Conflict of Interest:

- A. SCAF members must be free of obligation to any interest other than the impartial and fair judging of competitions. Without equivocation, game decisions that are slanted by personal bias are dishonest and unacceptable.
- B. SCAF members recognize that anything that may lead to a conflict of interest, either real or apparent, must be avoided.
- C. Gifts, favors, special treatment, privileges, employment or a personal relationship with a school, team, or coach that can compromise the perceived impartiality of the official must be avoided.
- D. SCAF members have an obligation to treat other officials with professional dignity and courtesy and recognize that it is inappropriate to criticize other officials publicly.
- E. SCAF members have a responsibility to continually seek self-improvement through the study of the game of water polo, playing rules, referee mechanics, and the techniques of game management. SCAF members have a responsibility to accurately represent their qualifications and abilities when requesting or accepting officiating assignments. For example, an official will not accept a college level game if they have not officially been nominated and accepted onto the College List by the SCAF-WP Board of Directors.
- F. SCAF members shall protect the public (fans, administrators, coaches, players, etc.,) from inappropriate conduct and shall attempt to eliminate from officiating all practices which can bring discredit to it.
- G. Water Polo officials shall not be a party to actions designed to unfairly limit or restrain access to officiating, officiating assignments, or association membership.

This includes selection for positions of leadership based upon economic factors, race, creed, color, age, sex, physical handicap, country, or national origin.

III. Affirmations:

- A. As a water polo official, I devote time, thought, and study to maintain the highest standards of our sport. I strive to perform in as professional a manner as possible:
1. By acting within the governing rules and mechanics of competition.
 2. By acting in a spirit of good sportsmanship.
 3. By having a protective rather than a punitive attitude toward enforcement of the rules.
 4. By being impartial.
 5. By maintaining my focus on observation, not expectation, not anticipation, not preference.
 6. By ensuring the conditions of a competition are fair and equitable for all participants.
- B. I strive to work with officials in a spirit of harmony and cooperation. I am respectful and courteous of others, cognizant that difference of opinion and interpretation may occur. I critically evaluate my performance after each competitive session as a step toward improvement and growth.
- C. I resist any temptation and outside pressure to use my position as an official to benefit myself. Under all circumstances, I avoid promoting the special interest of any person or group of persons other than the athletes and schools we serve. I recognize that it is important to honor contracts regardless of possible inconvenience or financial loss.
- D. I do not use illegal drugs, recreational drugs, or alcohol immediately before, during or immediately after any competition session where I am working or in attendance as an observer.
- E. I have not engaged in, nor will I ever engage in, any behavior that utilizes the influence of my position to encourage inappropriate sexual intimacy with any minor, any athlete, coaching staff, or any facilities staff.
- F. I agree to abide by the Code of Ethics. Failure to follow these policies may result in my termination with SCAF-WP by the SCAF-WP Federation Board of Directors.
- G. Further, I acknowledge that I am an independent contractor and SCAF-WP has no responsibility to guarantee employment as a result of training received.
- H. I have obtained and maintained personal liability insurance coverage, insuring myself and holding SCAF-WP harmless against any legal claims made by others in connection with my activities as a SCAF-WP official.
- I. Upon registration with SCAF-WP I agree to the SCAF-WP Policies and Procedures in full and accept any disciplinary action brought against me by my Area Board of Directors and/or the SCAF-WP Federation Board of Directors.

IV. General Policies:

- A. It shall be the policy of SCAF-WP that during the scheduled CIF boys and girls water polo playoffs, from the wild-card round to the CIF Finals, that only referees listed on an area associations playoff ranking list, that has been properly submitted to the SCAF-WP Jr. Chair and to the CIF Southern Section Office, may be used to officiate playoff games. If an area association is short officials due to a large number of playoff games, or other related reasons, that Areas Assignor may use available officials from another Association Area with the approval of that area's assignor and President

B.

Due to the importance and influential nature of the Instructional Chair position, no individual may be on the coaching staff of any institution (High School or Community College) that SCAF-WP is responsible for training and or assigning officials, and be named as the Instructional Chair for any SCAF-WP Associated Areas. This limitation will be for the entire season of the sport, for example, the 2022-23 high school season boys and girls water polo season.

V. Statement of Policies for Water Polo Officials:

A. Certification of Officials:

1. An official will be certified to officiate assigned games only upon completion of the following criteria:
 - a) Pass a written rules test (content, score, and policy to be determined by SCAF-WP Board of Directors).
 - b) Attend / Complete instructional clinics
 - c) Participate in practical sessions as required.
 - d) Be a member in good standing of SCAF-WP.
 - e) Complete, or be in the process of completing a minimum of 18 hours of instructional training each year. This includes a written exam and evaluation of said exam, instructional clinics and meetings, technical training, and evaluations.
 - f) Only those who have met these requirements or are on track to complete them will be certified and allowed to officiate games.
2. Current members are responsible for updating their membership data either via the SCAFWP.org website, or direct communication with their Area President. Notice of all meetings will be sent to all members in good standing at the email address of record, no later than seven (7) days prior to any mandatory clinic or practical session.
3. Absence from a mandatory meeting, clinic, or practical session may be grounds for disciplinary action. Absences may be excused ONLY at the discretion of the member's Area President or their designee. The absence

does NOT exempt the member from mandatory make-up of the missed instruction.

- a) Referees are allowed one "free" makeup clinic. If subsequent makeup clinics are required, each makeup clinic will be a \$40 charge, paid to SCAF (fee must be paid before receiving makeup clinic information)
4. Disciplinary actions against those who don't complete the required training may be handled by either the Area Board of Directors or the SCAF-WP Federation Board of Directors. These may include loss of assignments, suspension, or removal from officiating in the Southern California area supervised by SCAF-WP.

B. Uniform and Equipment:

1. A proper uniform consists of long white pants, a white collared shirt, a white belt, and white shoes. The uniform should always be neat and clean. Since water polo games are often conducted outdoors, sometimes in inclement weather, appropriate provision should be made, but not including an umbrella. If additional items of clothing are worn (hat, jacket, etc.,) they shall also be white. In all cases, such attire must be appropriate and professional.
2. Each official must provide their own equipment to include:
 - a) Whistle
 - b) Red/Yellow Cards
 - c) Current rule book
 - d) Watch or other timing device.

C. Relocating Officials:

1. An official from outside of the area that SCAF-WP serves, who is unknown to the SCAF-WP Board of Directors, will be accepted as a "trainee". Upon receipt of a letter (physical or digital) certifying comparable training or certification by another recognized water polo official's association, he/she will be placed on the appropriate SCAF list, subject to the certification rules stated herein for any member.

D. Guest Officials:

1. The SCAF-WP Board of Directors may designate officials for assignments who visit temporarily from outside of the area that SCAF serves, based on direct personal knowledge by a SCAF-WP Director, based on the comparable training or certification by another recognized water polo officials association.

E. Independent Contractors:

1. According to the California State Department of Education and Justice, “an official at a high school athletic event is an independent contractor and therefore is not covered by Workers Compensation statutes”. As an independent contractor, it is the officials responsibility to comply with the appropriate laws and regulations.

F. Assignments:

1. Definition of a “Season”:
 - a) A season is defined as: a specific assignment period, level of competition, gender of the players, supervised under a recognized water polo sanctioning body. For example, CIF boy’s season, NCAA women’s season, or Junior College men’s season.
2. Assignments to games:
 - a) SCAF-WP trains and certifies officials who are then assigned by the various assignors to games. Assignors make contact with officials by email, text, or even a telephone call. Some assignors may charge an administrative fee for their services. It is imperative that each official be familiar with the policies of the assignors. Failure to adhere to such policies usually results in the removal of that official from that area’s assignments for the current or immediate next season.
3. Changing assignments”
 - a) All game assignments must go through the appropriate assignor. An official may NOT change an assignment without contacting the areas designated assignor. An official may not accept a game directly from a coach or school without clearing the assignment through the designated area assignor. Failure to do this can result in disciplinary action by the Area Board of Directors or the main SCAF-WP Board of Directors. Once an assignment has been accepted from the area assignor, an official may not cancel that assignment to officiate a game in another area or level (V/JV/FS/Novice) without clearing the change with BOTH ASSIGNORS. Failure to adhere to this policy may result in a loss of the officials next game or games and could also affect the officials consideration for championship and/or postseason game consideration for the current season or immediate next season.

4. Play-off policy:

- a) It shall be the policy of SCAC-WP that during the scheduled CIF boys and girls water polo playoffs, from the wild-card round to the CIF finals, that only referees listed on an area associations playoff ranking list, that has been properly submitted to the SCAF-WP Junior Chair and to the CIF Southern Section office, may be used to officiate games. Any official not on an area's submitted list may not officiate a CIF playoff game. If an area association is short officials due to a large number of playoff games, or other related reasons, that area's Assignor may use available officials from another area with the approval of that area's Assignor and President.

5. Returned Assignments and No-Show Policy:

- a) Assignments to officiate water polo games are administered by the SCAF-WP Board of Directors. Officials are assigned to high school games in the CIF Southern Section and Junior Colleges in the Western States Conference, South Coast Conference, and Orange Empire Conference in Southern California. The following is the Returned Assignment and No-Show Policy as it relates to games that come under the jurisdiction of the above listed entities. Qualified officials shall obtain assignments to referee water polo games through a process prescribed by the SCAF-WP Board of Directors.

- b) Non-Sanctioned games:

- (1) Any High School or Junior College game, to include "off-season" or "Summer league" games, that are not sanctioned by the proper governing body will not be assigned by any Area Associations or the SCAF-WP Board of Directors. Any officials who participate in these non-sanctioned games agrees to hold harmless the SCAF-WP Board of Directors, Area Associations, and Area Associations Board of Directors, and/or Area Assignors for all liabilities for injury or damages sustained as a result of officiating said games, including and without limitations all claims and medical expenses incurred by said official.

- c) Returned Assignments:

- (1) Officials who want to referee in any Area Association, to include High School and Junior College, shall follow the prescribed procedure and only accept games in which they can actually participate. Returning assignments to the assignor is discouraged and may result in the imposition of

a \$10.00 fee per returned assignment. Returning more than one assignment per season may result in the elimination of, or reduction of, the number of assignments granted in the future or other disciplinary actions as determined by the SCAF-WP Board of Directors. Any fines will be paid directly to the Area Associations Treasurer.

d) No-Show Policy:

(1) Failure to be present and perform duties of an official for an assignment without notifying the assignor (No Show Official) shall be considered a breach of contract in the performance of the duties as an official. A No Show Official may be fined \$50.00 per occurrence. The fine shall immediately be due and payable to the Area Associations Treasurer. One half ($\frac{1}{2}$) of said fine shall be dispersed to the single official who worked alone during the contest in question. The other half ($\frac{1}{2}$) shall be deposited to said area accounts. In addition, any official failing to show for any assignment without notifying the assignor (and home school where appropriate) shall be subject to disciplinary action as follows:

- (a) First occurrence: the official shall be placed on a "probationary" period subject to the discretion of the Area Association where the incident occurred.
- (b) Second occurrence: the loss of all or a portion of the remaining assignments for that season. Further assignments will be at the discretion of the Area Associations Board of Directors.
- (c) Third occurrence: elimination of all assignments for that season and suspension from any assignments for the next high school and/or Junior College season for which that official seeks.
- (d) In addition to the above disciplinary action, the SCAF-WP Board of Directors may determine that said official may be placed on indefinite suspension, to be determined by the Executive Committee of the SCAF-WP Board.
- (e) Imposition of penalties pursuant to this policy may be appealed to the SCAF-WP Board of Directors through written correspondence (including digital correspondence) with the SCAF-WP President. Any action taken by the SCAF-WP Board of Directors in matters such as those described in Section IV, 1D (a-d) will be binding.

6. Due Process Policy:

- a) Any member of SCAF-WP shall have the opportunity to address grievances with their local area Board of Directors and subsequently, the SCAF-WP Board of Directors. Written communication with the area President and SCAF-WP President will suffice to begin the process of resolution. The local area Board of Directors shall have initial jurisdiction with SCAF-WP acting in a support role, unless the local authorities feel that to avoid bias or conflicts of interest, the SCAF-WP Board of Directors will address the members grievances. The SCAF-WP President, or his/her designee, shall have the responsibility of addressing the grievance in a timely manner.

G. Advancement to the College List:

1. SCAF-WP will develop / maintain a list of college quality officials to work at the Community College and 4-year college levels.
2. College List minimum qualifications for consideration (advancement is not guaranteed by meeting one or more of the listed criteria):
 - a) The official has been a SCAF-WP member in good standing for at least 3 years, or the equivalent experience from outside the area SCAF-WP serves, as approved by the SCAF-WP Board of Directors.
 - b) Minimum 3 years of experience at the high school level or equivalent level.
 - c) Endorsement by a College level assignor, either a 4-year assignor or a 2-year assignor.
 - d) CIF semi-finals and/or finals experience at any level
 - e) Involvement with USA Water Polo: Zone head ref and/or assignor endorsement, and also a minimum of 3 years of experience.
 - f) Demonstrated desire to improve, work with different partners and ability to adapt to different levels of competition.
 - g) After consideration, if a positive evaluation is made, the official's name may be added to the College List for the following season as a regular member.

H. Rating and Listing:

1. Goals:
 - a) Our work at SCAF-WP aims to do two things: train and assign officials. Fairness to all members demands that assignments reward performance. Without some neutral method of measuring performance our assignors are faced with repeated charges of favoritism. The result: 1) members believe discrimination keeps them down, and 2) they retain a built-in excuse to ignore their

performance deficiencies. Fair measurement of performance is a prerequisite to rating officials, which is the key determinate of assignment to regular season and post-season games. There are many challenges to fair performance evaluation in any endeavor, perhaps even more in the subjective environment of sports officiating. That alone should not prevent us from trying. By giving every SCAF=WP director a hand in the process, in turn we render collective judgement, thus reducing personal bias.

2. General Definitions:

- a) Advancement Pool: SCAF-WP list of officials for assignment to grade quality games of various levels for advancement.
- b) Evaluation: subjective interpretation of skills by observers, to provide individual referee instruction.
- c) Graded games: selected group of games which serve as the base by which officials may advance.
- d) Grading: survey of skills by a control group of observers, to rank and rate performance among a pool of refs.
- e) Ranking: placement of officials on a list in order of performance according to survey results.
- f) Rating: placement of officials into classification levels, according to observable results.

3. SCAF Rating Committee:

- a) Members: consist of: President, Senior Programs Chair, At-large appointees (2) selected by the SCAF President and approved by the SCAF-WP Board of Directors.
- b) Responsibilities:
 - (1) Appoint a control group of observers/Board members.
 - (2) Supervise activities of the observers
 - (3) Collect championship pool of officials for High School, based on consultation with the SCAF-WP Board.
 - (4) Identify Graded Games for each level of play
 - (5) Act as a mentor to all officials.
- c) Policy:
 - (1) A SCAF-WP rating committee is responsible to administer the ranking and rating of referees for High School, Community College, and CIF Southern Section, subject to approval by the SCAF-WP Board of Directors.

d) Process:

- (1) Rating for Season Assignment: Facilitate each area to perform a post-season rating of their officials by selected evaluators.
- (2) Nominations are made through the area Board of Directors to SCAF-WP Senior Programs Chair.
- (3) SCAF-WP Board of Directors evaluates nominees and selects those to advance to the college list.

VI. SCAF-WP Board of Directors:

- A. The SCAF-WP Board of Directors meets at least six (6) times a year. All meetings are open to all members of SCAF-WP if they choose to attend. They can contact any member of the SCAF-WP Board or their area representatives for further information.

VII. Remediation:

- A. Any official may be required to attend remediation sessions in order to continue officiating during the current or immediate next season. Only the SCAF-WP Board of Directors may sanction a member, but any person making a written complaint of the performance or behavior of any member official may initiate remedial action. Any complaint made for technical competence must be referred to the SCAF-WP Board of Directors. It will be the responsibility of the official in question and the SCAF-WP Instructional Chair or his/her designee to establish a series of remedial steps that must be successfully completed prior to assigning the official in question to future games. The review sessions may consist of:
 1. A review of the playing rules and their interpretations.
 2. The passage of a written rules test.
 3. A written evaluation of a scrimmage to be conducted by the SCAF-WP Instructional Chair or his/her designee.
 4. A written evaluation of an actual game observed by the SCAF-WP Instructional Chair or his/her designee.
 - a) Must be formally observed and recorded upon the completion of the review sessions.
 - b) The SCAF-WP Instructional Chair or his/her designee will submit a written report and evaluation to the SCAF-WP Board of Directors that shall review the reports and make recommendations regarding the reinstatement of the official in question.
 - c) The "official in question" may appeal the SCAF-WP Board's decision in writing within a period of ten (10) calendar days of the Board's decision. The "official in question" must arrange to repeat the remediation process with at least the SCAF-WP Instructional Chair or his/her designee, plus two additional members of the Board present at both the practical session and the official game.
 - d) Sanctions may take one or more of the following forms:

- (1) Assignment of games at a lower level of competition.
- (2) Suspension for the remainder of the season
- (3) Suspension from the next season of competition.
- (4) Removal from the water polo association's list of qualified officials.
- (5) Note: Sanctions against officials who have gone through the remediation process may not be for more than one (1) calendar year.

5. If the complaints are of a more serious nature or a violation of the Code of Ethics, the official may be suspended immediately from all of his/her assignments until the Area Chapter and/or the SCAF-WP Board of Directors can conduct a hearing.