



EDISON BOYS WATER POLO PLAYING TIME QUESTIONS



There have been some questions about how we select teams (Varsity, JV etc.) and what criteria we use to select which team and/or how much playing time is right for the kids. Before I delve into this let me say that:

- **This is the worst part of coaching, it is never easy nor is it enjoyable.**
- The alternative is to offer a spot for everybody on varsity. With this approach, some kids will only play 2 minutes per game. This leads to kids and parents feeling that we wasted their time/money in bringing them with the level that was chosen.
- We choose players based on their position, ex: we won't take 3 goalies on varsity.
- This is not an "AYSO" Everyone Plays type of program. We consider our varsity team to be college preparatory. As such- skill is paramount. Unfortunately, athletic skill is not equally distributed; some of you will have to work harder and longer than others to achieve your goals.

When I was younger, I attended my cousin's football game; he didn't play much, but after the game, I got to speak with him about playing time. He informed me that his coach's attitude was that the upperclassmen had the "right" to play; they earned it with their tenure. Basically, if a senior and a sophomore are equally talented, the senior plays.

I have a problem with this form of thinking; chief among them is that it does not, in my opinion, foster a competitive environment in practice. It sends the message that once you "earn" your spot, you can stop trying, your minutes are assured. Underclassmen know that they have to do "just enough" work to succeed. Through this, excellence is discouraged. Second, the long term development and associated skill level of the team will be stymied as upperclassmen have zero incentive to push themselves or their teammates and build upon the collective strength of the team.

The coaching staff will choose to use a method opposite to the above stated, for example: if a 15 year old and an 18 year old are equally talented, we'll choose the 15 year old. We believe it reinforces our views on how the athletes are **always competing**:

- You are competing against the other athletes on the team for minutes.
- You are competing with your teammates against the opponent.
- You are competing against every other athlete in the country for a college athletic scholarship/spot on a college team.

There are other issues that go into the selection and playing time conversation, such as attitude, attendance and leadership. Please do not view this as an attack, but rather a tough question with an equally tough answer. If a player is ever unsure of their status, they are encouraged to approach a coach and ask. This is not a playing time debate, simply an opportunity for the coach to explain their decision making process. We will always be honest with the players in our assessment.