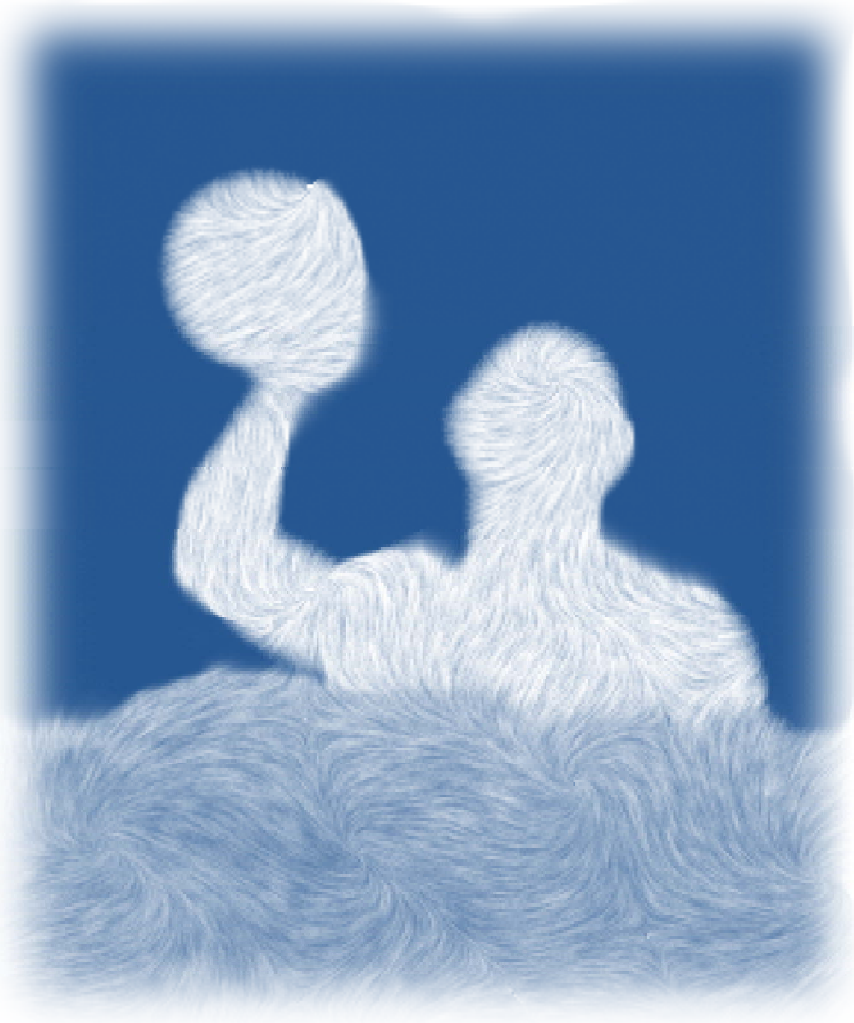


# Professional Water Polo Association



**Marian University A-Team**

**Fall 2009**

## Introduction

Business Creation & Development student consulting, also known as the A-Team, is an opportunity for students to direct and execute an engagement of their choice. Students are presented with various business situations by prospective principals, from the local business community, who seek recommendations from the A-Team. As highly motivated students from Marian University, with diverse disciplines, they come together and synergize their strengths to create a dynamic group.

The water polo engagement was conducted by Zach Davis, Melissa Coutz, and Kristina Watson. As a junior from Fairborn, OH, Zach Davis is a double major in Finance and Economics with a minor in Management. Melissa Coutz is from Indianapolis, IN and is a triple major in Marketing, Accounting, and Finance. Kristina Watson is from Zionsville, IN and is a major in Mathematics with a double minor in Psychology and Chemistry.

Water polo is a very strategic sport that requires the utmost physical capabilities while maintaining an insightful outlook on the game. However, the sport of water polo encompasses a relatively small community of enthusiasts and is not widely known to the American public. Joan Gould presented the A-Team with an opportunity to create a branding strategy for a future professional water polo league with defining features.

The following report describes the process taken by the A-Team to acquire the necessary data and generate the branding strategy for the professional league.

## Plan of Action

We began our endeavor by brainstorming ideas and meeting with Joan Gould. During the initial meeting we were able to agree upon objectives and a course of action. We then proceeded to create a survey and post the survey on [www.waterpoloplanet.com](http://www.waterpoloplanet.com). The goal of the survey was to acquire basic demographics and discover what name consumers would prefer for the professional water polo league. Next we presented local high school and college students with the opportunity to create a logo that would be used for the league. A logo competition among graphic design students was used to generate ideas from the target demographic.

We then had the opportunity to attend the Southern California Water Polo tournament to increase our understanding of the sport and the atmosphere provided by the spectators. This was an invaluable experience that greatly increased our knowledge and ability to provide concrete recommendations for Ms. Gould. Upon returning we assessed the data and revised the survey based upon the data acquired from [www.waterpoloplanet.com](http://www.waterpoloplanet.com).

For the last step in our research we attended the Men's National Collegiate Club Championship in Gainesville, Florida. This tournament provided us the opportunity to interact with water polo players, fans, and coaches from across the country. While there, we passed out 150 surveys, but only 145 were returned.

Afterwards, we analyzed the data and formulated our proposal.

# Surveys

## Online

The online survey, found in Appendix A, was formulated to determine basic information regarding our target demographic and their preferences. We inquired about other interests that may pertain to each individual's choice of activities. Furthermore, we asked about their affiliation with water polo and their consumer preferences in respect to attending a professional water polo game. We also presented questions as to whether consumers would be willing to join an association and receive a newsletter. The survey was posted on [www.waterpoloplanet.com](http://www.waterpoloplanet.com).

## Results

From the online survey, we discovered that the majority of respondents (88.5%) were male. The age groups ranged from 6 years old to 50 years old and older. The largest amount of respondents (30.4%) was between the ages of 17 and 23, while the second largest (20.3%) was the 50 plus age group. The majority of those who answered (66.9%) had at least an Associate's degree. Out of the surveys received, 83% of the respondents were Caucasian. Football, baseball, and basketball were the top three other sports followed by survey participants. The top two responding groups (85.3%) were players and coaches. Most responses (75.8%) to the online survey came from residents of California.

We then asked what title would be most appealing. 64.6% of respondents agreed that *Professional Water Polo Association (PWPA)* should be the name of the league. 92.4% of respondents would be most likely to attend a game on Friday (18.4%), Saturday (60.1%), or Sunday (13.9%). Late afternoon options were the most popular responses. Respondents overwhelmingly (81.6%) wanted a double header as opposed to just a single game. Also, most respondents (89.9%) wanted the games to be played outdoor; while 34.2% of the total respondents said that they would prefer cover with outdoor games. As for the willingness to pay for a professional water polo game, the majority of respondents inputted a value of

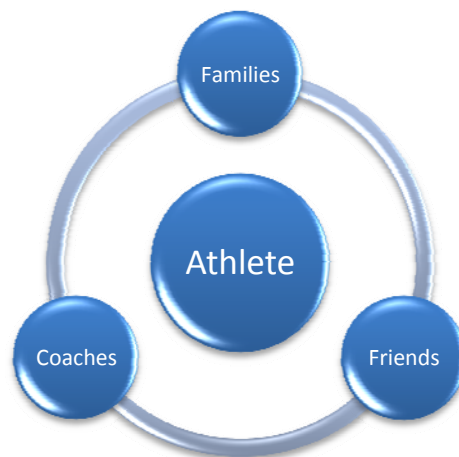
between \$5.00 and \$30. We asked if respondents would be more willing to pay for outdoor cover and found that there was no significant difference between yes and no answers.

When asked about discounts, the majority of respondents (88.0%) would like discounts offered. 86% of respondents would be willing to join a water polo association if memberships were available. Also, 85.4% would be interested in receiving a newsletter from the association.

Data tables of the results from the online survey can be found in Appendix B.

## Analysis

The information we received from the online survey led us to change and omit certain questions for the Florida survey. Overall, the respondents of the online survey were either athletes, or they had a direct relationship with a water polo athlete.



We omitted the question regarding other sports followed due to the massive variety of answers provided by respondents. Due to the strong preference for the name of the association, we were able to determine the name, and therefore we omitted the question. For the next survey, we limited the options for the days of the game to Friday, Saturday, and Sunday because those were the top three answers. We also limited the times to the top four responses because the 10:00 AM and 8:00 PM responses were insignificant. Based on the information received, we specified price values to determine an ideal price point. We began the price options at \$5.00 and incrementally added \$5.00 to each option until reaching the

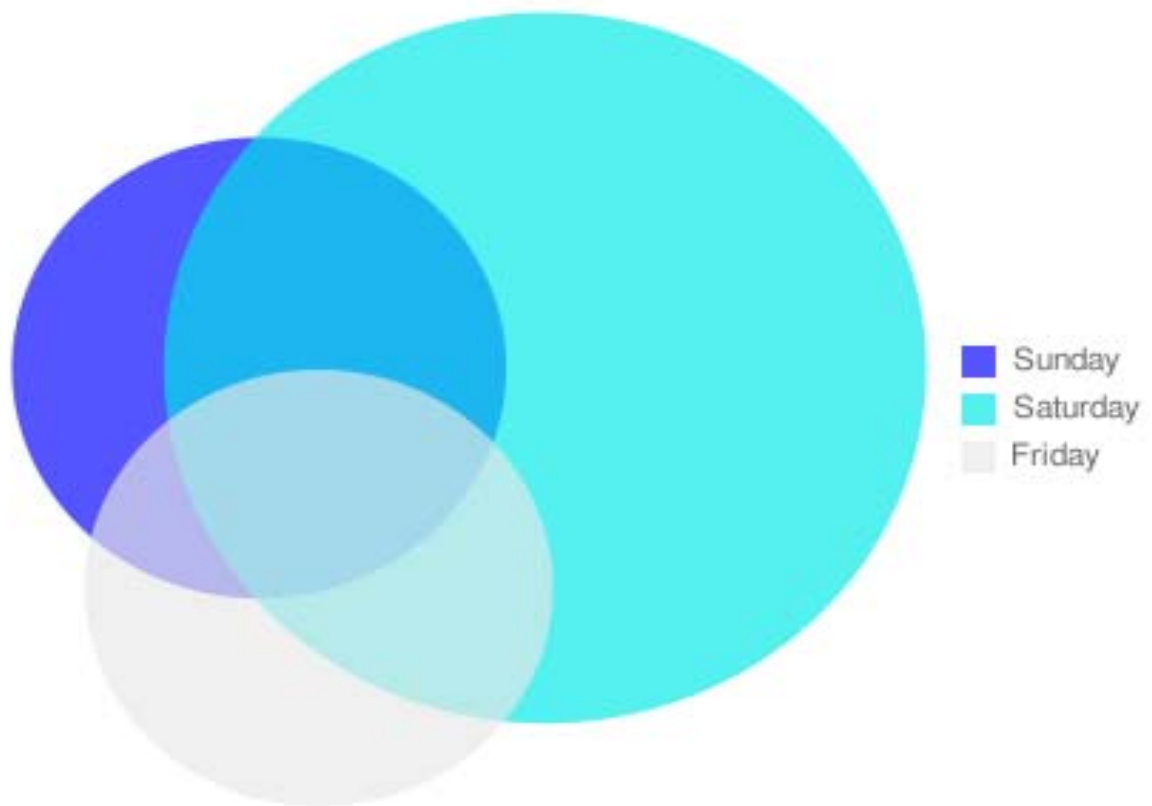
maximum of \$30.00. We combined the questions about state and country of residence because of the low response rate for countries other than the United States. We deleted the question regarding the type of area lived in, such as suburban, because we did not see a value in continuing to ask that question. We had to omit the data for the number of children who live in the household, under the age of 16, due to inadequate response options. We did not place a zero option on the online survey and revised that for the Florida survey.

## **Florida**

The survey handed out in Florida, found in Appendix C, was a spin-off of the online survey. 150 surveys were passed out during the water polo National Collegiate Club Championship Tournament. The surveys were completed by players, coaches, and spectators from various parts of the country. Survey respondents were able to interact with the A-Team members and had the opportunity to ask questions. Respondents also contributed ideas, recommendations, and criticisms for the league.

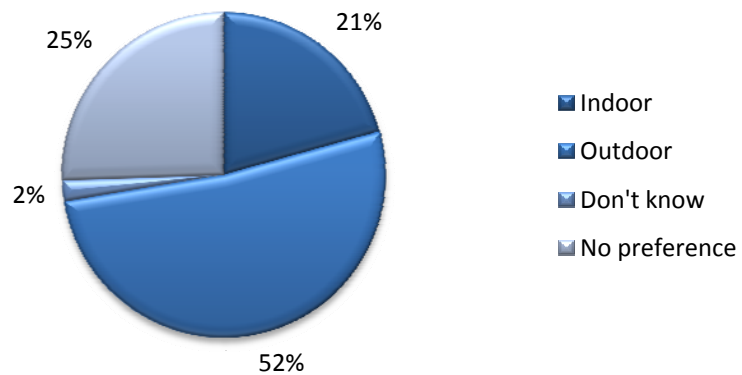
## **Results**

From the Florida survey we discovered that the 61.4% of respondents were male with age groups ranging from 6 years old to 50 years old and older with 55% being between the ages of 17 and 23. The second largest group was the 50 plus age group at 21.4%. Most respondents (49.3%) had an Associate's degree or higher, while 42.8% indicated that they had only received some college education. Out of the surveys received, 87% of the respondents were Caucasian. The top two responding groups were players (44.8%) and family (34.5%). 25.4% of respondents reside in Florida, 15.2% live in Pennsylvania, and 10.1% live in Texas. Overall, the other 17 locations indicated were each represented by less than 6% of the sample. Also, the majority of respondents (76.1%) do not have children under the age of 16 living within their household.



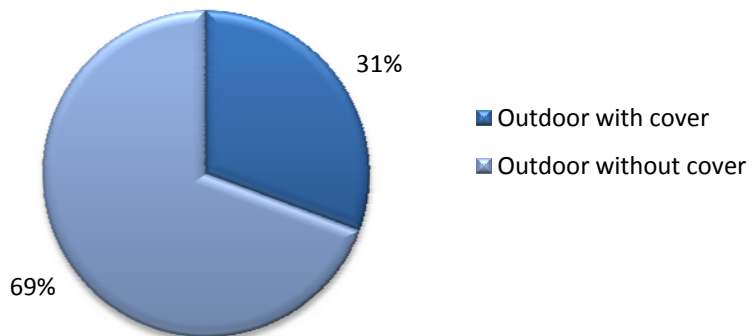
78.6% of respondents would be most likely to attend a game on Saturday. Based on the data, early afternoon options were considered to be the best start times. If the games were to be held on Friday, evening start times were preferred. Slightly more than half (57.2%) wanted a double header as opposed to just a single game, while 24.1% indicated no preference. As for the willingness to pay for a professional water polo game, 34% indicated \$10.00, while only 31.3% were willing to pay \$5.00. When asked about discounts, the majority of respondents (80%) would see discounts as an incentive to attend a game.

### Event Location Preference



51.8% of respondents wanted the games to be played outdoors. Of those respondents only 31% prefer cover while at an outside game. When asked if respondents would pay for outdoor cover, 57.2% said they would not be willing.

### Preferences regarding Outdoor Cover



37.9% of respondents would be willing to join a water polo association, while 29% would not be willing. The remaining respondents were unsure. Additionally, 43.4% of total respondents would not like a newsletter from the association. Only 38.6% said that they would be interested in receiving a newsletter.

Data tables of the results from the Florida survey can be found in Appendix D.

## Comparison

A significant difference was the variety in the number of states indicated. The Florida survey gathered more data from a variety of locations, whereas the online survey respondents were mainly from California. Furthermore, we were able to capture more female responses in Florida, which allowed us to gain greater perspective on their consumer behaviors. The online survey provided insight from players and coaches, but not a great deal from families. In contrast, the Florida survey provided a large percentage of spectator responses. Another difference was highlighted by the potential for a membership with the water polo association. The online survey clearly indicates a desire for membership along with a newsletter. The Florida survey participants did not express a clear indication as to whether a membership and newsletter would be desired.

In combination, the online survey and the Florida survey provided us with the following information. An overwhelming majority of respondents would prefer games on Saturday. Additionally, there was a preference for double header games rather than a single game. Overall, Saturday early afternoon times were favored over other day and time options. Also, outdoor games are preferred. However, anecdotal evidence suggests that the climate of the state in which the game is held has a significant impact on the preference of indoor or outdoor games. Furthermore, respondents expressed a distinct opinion on their lack of willingness to pay an additional fee for outdoor cover. Although, based on conversations with respondents, we noticed that there is a greater demand for cover from female spectators than male spectators. Discounts were heavily agreed upon by all respondents.

# Branding Strategy

## Introduction

The creation of a branding strategy for the Professional Water Polo Association is an important step in recognizing the potential of developing a league. This strategy is focused on creating a brand name that people will associate with quality entertainment and interactive fun for all ages. The primary values of the association should be focused on transparency, honesty, responsibility, and respect. There should be an emphasis placed on open communication and contact between sporting officials, players, and fans. Integrity must be upheld at all times to maintain the trust and respect of the consumers. Furthermore, the association must accept accountability for the actions of the teams and athletes that it will represent.

## Positioning

Professional Water Polo Association would be the ideal brand name for the league. The acronym PWPA could be widely used. Ultimately, the acronym is easily recognizable and could primarily be used for all marketing and promotional efforts.

## Brand Definition

The Professional Water Polo Association can be defined as a source of entertainment. As such, the league will offer an opportunity for spectators to observe men playing water polo who have demonstrated an ability to compete at a professional level. According to research conducted, the league should offer back-to-back games during regular season play. Special circumstances, such as a championship or tournament, will require a different set of guidelines. Ticket prices should range from \$5.00 to \$10.00 depending on teams playing. It should be noted that prices can fluctuate during tournaments, post-season play, and championship games due to the possible increase in demand.

## **Brand Image**

The logo was created using the silhouette of a player throwing the ball. A variety of versions can be seen in Appendix E. This logo can be placed on any item associated with the PWPA. Several other merchandise logos were created for general water polo products, not necessarily league merchandise. These logos are displayed in Appendix F.



## **Location**

The professional water polo games should be played across North America. Seeing as there was not a significant response from residents of Canada or Mexico, the focus will be on the United States. For games in Canada and Mexico, new research must be done due to different preferences, demographics, and cultural pastimes. For games in the United States, it appears that there is a potential fan base in the west coast, the east coast, the gulf coast, and the central mid-west. The location of professional teams should consider areas where there is a high concentration of collegiate water polo play. Also, due to survey results, the majority of games should be played outdoors. When planning games, the climate should receive heavy consideration.