
BALMAIN WATER POLO CLUB

It is rare to find a sporting club in Australia with as much history, tradition and loyalty of its members as Balmain. Don't be surprised if you turn up to the home of Balmain, the Dawn Fraser Baths, and be welcomed with open arms. A Club with many families as members, you will feel part of the family we call Balmain.

The following information highlights some of the features of this truly great Club.

History

The Balmain Swimming Club was founded in March 1884 at a public meeting held in the Warwick Castle Hotel, situated on the corner of Mort and Darling Streets, Balmain. It is the oldest swimming club in Australia and rivalled by none other for tradition.

The Pool (Dawn Fraser Baths)

The Balmain Council constructed a 30 yards long Baths at "White Horse Point" in 1883. The Baths were situated within the boundaries of the existing Dawn Fraser Baths. In 1903, the original 30 yard baths were replaced by a 60 yard swimming area and in 1924 the pool length again changed to 73 1/3 yards. In 1964 the pool was re-named in honour of Dawn Fraser, Balmain's favourite daughter.

The atmosphere at home-games contributes to the success of the teams, it doesn't hurt having a rowdy bunch of stalwarts cheering and urging you from the grandstand. With a sausage sizzle and friendly drink enjoyed by all after games, it is often hard to leave the pool once the sun goes down.

A tidal pool with views of the harbour, the baths have some of the most beautiful surrounds to be found anywhere in Sydney. Situated below Elkington Park, locals hold close to their hearts Balmain's little treasure.

Our Teams train at the Dawn Fraser Pool as well as the Sydney Aquatic Centre, Homebush, and the Leichhardt Swimming Centre.

Competition

Balmain won their initial First-Grade NSW Polo Premiership in season 1895/96. Subsequent wins were often against a Balmain B Team indicating the depth of talent in the Club.

With over 160 members, Balmain can fill teams in all grades both Men and Women. The Club boasts many State and National representatives. Our women's' first grade won the premiership last year, with the strength of the team coming from young National team members. It is hard seeing the Women's team being beaten for some time to come. The Men's team also has a good representation of State and National players.

In NSW very few semi-final series are conducted without a Balmain Team competing. Our Junior Teams have had great success over the last several Seasons.

Some of Balmain's current National Squad players include:

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Men

Ray Mayers- Retiring as Captain of the Australian team last year Ray has had a long and distinguished career at the top. Representing Australia at 3 Olympics, Ray is one of the strongest players in the water.

Guy Newman - At 28 Guy has been the Australian Senior Goalkeeper since 1991. He is captain of our National League side and joint winner of the 1996 Club player of the year. Guy also picked up the first Grade player of the year and the 1996 National League Players' Player Award. Guy was an Olympian in 1992.

Daniel Marsden - Daniel recently came back to the Club after coaching and playing for ACT. Daniel has been a member of the Senior National Team since 1989 and is truly one of the most gifted attackers to ever play the game. He is often approached by professional clubs in Europe, but at this stage prefers to stay and play in Australia. Daniel was an Olympian in 1992.

Gavin Woods - Gavin is without doubt the best junior player in Australia today. A member of the senior squad as well, Gavin is the most promising Centre Forward Balmain has seen for a long time. His father, David Woods, is coach of the National League Team and his sister, Taryn, a member of the National Team. Growing up with a view of the Baths from his bedroom window, it is no wonder Gavin excels at Water Polo.

Dean Semmens - Dean is one of the most enjoyable players to watch. A member of both Senior and Junior National Squads, Dean has a deceptive shot and often makes other juniors look, well quite silly, with his ability to read the game and score seemingly at will.

Geoff Clarke - Living in the USA, Geoff has returned to Australia to prepare for the World Championships with the senior team. One of the best Centre Forwards in the World, Geoff will certainly add experience to the team considering he has represented Australia since the late 80's. One of the fastest players to play the game, Geoff could have represented Australia at swimming, but chose our beloved sport.

Balmain has many players current and past who have represented our country. Looking through the ranks of 2nd, 3rd and even 7th grade reads like a who's who of Australian Water Polo.

Women

Taryn Woods - Having played professionally in Italy, Taryn is regarded as one of the strongest players in the world today. She was instrumental in Australia's Gold Medal performance at the World Cup and will surely be the backbone of the team for many years to come.

Bronwyn Maycr - one of the youngest players to ever play for Australia, Bronwyn's strength lies in her superior understanding of the game. She reads the game better than most and with great swimming speed is always one of the highest scorers for both Balmain and Australia.

Yvette Higgins - A dynamic player with a quick and accurate shot, there aren't many players in the World that can stop Yvette. One of the fastest swimmers in the sport, Yvette's counter-attack game ensures Balmain plays at a frenetic pace.

Threatening to win the competition for years, the Ladies Team dominated the competition in 1996 and will no-doubt dominate for many more.

Committee

Balmain's strength is in its people. With our Committee, we are in the hands of some of the most dedicated people who selflessly and lovingly give up their time to ensure ours is the best-run Club anywhere in the World. Our Committee truly love our Club and it is this dedication that flows through to the players.