

Swim England Water Polo Leadership Group

Minutes of the meeting held 22.06.22

In attendance: Toby King (TK) – Chair
 Ben McDonald (BM) - Volunteer Lead
 Chris Stephens (CS) Officials Lead
 Ian Mackenzie (IM) – SOC Representative
 Craig Figes (CF) – Coaching Lead
 Claire Coleman (CC) – SE Head of Development
 Gareth Picken (GP) – Administrator
 Ekaterina Boyd (EB) – SE Head of Events

James Ross (JR) – Item 3 only

Apologies: Mike Hesketh (MH) – Competition Lead
 Elliot McHugh (EM) – Youth Representative
 Rachel Bayley (RB) – SE Head of Performance Operations
 Adam Older (AO) – Joint Officials Lead

1.	Chair's Welcome, Introductions and Apologies
	Apologies from MH, EM, RB & AO
2.	Approval of previous minutes and matters arising from action log
2.1	The Group reviewed the action log. the following actions were discussed Face to face meeting: 17th/18th – Ponds Forge – Sheffield Action: GP, CC and EB to organise accommodation and a meeting room for the meeting. All other actions were completed.
2.2	TK requested a checklist to ensure all documents and details are always circulated to ensure all members of the Group have an opportunity to consider papers. Action: GP create a checklist and agree with TK by the 31st July and utilise for September meeting.

3.	Competition Update
3.1	<p>James Ross (JR) (Cheltenham WP) updated the Group on his perception of the impact of the restructure of BWPL (reduction of divisions over the next 3 years) and outlined the frustration felt by clubs he had spoken with. JR outlined three major issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Funding (no opportunity to raise funds within the league) - Quality of competition (once a month spread out over a long period of time) - The clubs themselves (have become complacent in event organising). <p>JR is seeking to create a new competition format with a home and away format which would tackle all three issues. He has been in discussion with some of the larger WP clubs and they want to get this up and running by 2023.</p> <p>Discussions have taken place with BWPL (the league) who have confirmed this is not something they would be interested in, so this needs to be club led.</p> <p>The development would occur over several years – e.g. Year 1 every club has to run a junior team competition team; Year 2 each home club hosts a development weekend.</p>
3.2	<p>CS asked how the proposal will help the clubs who aren't considered large. JR outlined that the competition would look at how geographically spread the clubs are and would put the onus back on the clubs to run the training and coaching courses. This would create a structure that encourages clubs to be more involved.</p> <p>CF commented that a reduced league is reflective of other countries. A league should determine what it is focused on - the participation or elite competition. If players want to compete, then they have to move to a different club. The league needs to refine the quality and is probably too big to ensure quality for the international stage.</p>
3.3	<p>BM raised whether the proposal would create a two tier sport between the larger and smaller clubs. JR commented that revenue needs to be pumped back into the sport at all levels. IM commented that development in this issue is paramount. The top 8-10 clubs should be able to support the lower clubs as feeder clubs.</p>
3.4	<p>CS outlined that one of the consequences of BWPL decision will be a loss of opportunity as junior development will now not be part of the league. The regions need to take an ownership over the development of the clubs that they cover to make sure that talent is identified.</p>

	The Group wished JR well in his ambition. JR left the meeting
3.5	<p>CS commented that there is a need to consider a better model for junior development. TK agreed, noting a need to see more age appropriate leagues at national and regional levels.</p> <p>CC agreed with CF statement that we have the opportunity to make sure that all regions move together in the same direction. We then know where we need the development in different regions.</p> <p>Action: Competition review to restart with CF in his role alongside CC working with regions.</p>
4.	<u>Officials Update - Appropriate qualification level and insurance & disciplinary procedures</u>
4.1	CS reported that CC and the team have done a great job in getting the revised referees grades in place. We need to insist on a certain level of qualification to ensure that a match is safe and making sure that referees are covered.
4.2	<p>CC noted a need to establish the landscape of leagues and know who referees were. CC to put together a plan for the proposal, share with CS who can then run through and check.</p> <p>Action: CC and CS to put together a proposal to establish the league landscape in England by 31st August 2022</p>
4.3	<p>CS outlined the proposed changes to the discipline procedures and the reasons this has been raised. The paper submitted has been provided to the Office of Judicial Administration and with the Group's agreement this will now be progressed,</p> <p>The Group agreed that the concept of a sport disciplinary panel would be beneficial for the sport and would resolve the confidence issue with referees.</p> <p>Action: CC & CS to progress with OJA and Director of legal.</p>
5.	<u>Talent Update - Pathway</u>
5.1	RB was unable to attend the meeting. EB confirmed commonwealth tournament has been postponed to 2023 from November 2022. Work is underway to set the new date.
5.2	<p>CS noted that BWPL had a space in its scheduling due to the cancellation and raised a question over whether this time and pool space could be used as part of the Talent Pathway</p> <p>Action: RB to consider effective use of the time and space if possible to benefit the pathway</p>
6.	<u>Development Team Update & Review of county roles</u>
6.1	CC outlined the report submitted covered the work of the whole team and no questions were raised.

6.2	<p>CC talked through the growth paper submitted to the Group for their decision. The paper outlined the concept of a sporting framework aimed at developing the key skills needed from Learn To Swim (LTS) stage 7. The framework is being developed alongside CF and his impending new role so would be supportive of the pathway going forward.</p> <p>The paper also confirmed the intention to redesign 'mini polo' to make it applicable to multiple audiences and as a competition format which supported the sporting framework.</p> <p>The Group agreed with the concept of the Framework and the reviewed competition format.</p> <p>Action: CC to progress pilot Framework via Club Growth Manager and update WPLG at next meeting.</p>
6.3	<p>CC outlined the work currently underway with the regions around the role of counties. This is currently in its analysis phase. Regions have indicated that they feel Water Polo should be managed at a regional level. CC added that this should be considered as part of the Competition Review (see minute 3.5)</p>
7.	<p><u>Recruitment – Communications Lead & Coaching Lead</u></p>
7.1	<p>CC confirmed the Communications Lead advert is live.</p> <p>Action: TK to approach potential candidates Action: CC to raise awareness via social media</p>
7.2	<p>TK and CF confirmed that following discussions CF will be standing down as the coaching lead on the Group. This creates a second vacancy.</p> <p>The Group thanks CF for his work and look forward to his new role and ongoing involvement with the Group.</p> <p>Action: CC to complete the advert for the Coaching lead</p>
8.	<p><u>Review of progress against strategy</u></p>
8.1	<p>TK noted that a review was needed to measure progress</p> <p>Action - TK to write the review</p>
9.	<p><u>Update/ questions from the regions</u></p>
9.1	<p>TK noted no questions had been received from the Regional Managers. The Group agreed a session with them is due.</p> <p>TK also proposed an opportunity to co-opt a regional manager on to the group.</p> <p>The Groups agreed with this proposal</p>

	<p>Action: TK to progress co-opting a regional representative and report back at the next WPLG meeting.</p> <p>Action: TK to decide which WPLG meeting will be utilised to engage with regional Managers and update GP. Minimum 4 weeks' notice required from date to issue invites.</p> <p>Action: GP to issue invites to Regional managers a minimum of 4 weeks' from agreed date.</p>
10.	<u>Recruiting new players</u>
10.1	<p>A film has been produced to increase participation in the sport focusing on those who have come from a swimming background and are considering reducing or leaving competitive swimming. The club finder is being revamped so that the film can be launched alongside an updated Water Polo Club finder.</p> <p>The video was viewed by the Group and GP will ensure group members have the details to view outside the meeting.</p> <p>CC noted this can be included in Inspired to Try and through operators to identify potential players.</p> <p>Action: ALL to scope out opportunities for the video to be shared and provide suggestions to GP by 21st July.</p> <p>Action: GP and CC to agree communications plan with TK and the Swim England Marcomms team to include the launch date. To be agreed by 31st July.</p>
11.	<u>AOB - Tutor training opportunity 2022</u>
11.1	<p>CC noted that the tutor training is due to open with the North West being targeted for an additional tutor. In addition, the West Midlands have asked to be included.</p> <p>Sarah Green is progressing this programme.</p> <p>TK noted that funding for Tutor Training had been received from the Swimming Trust and this had not yet been fully utilised.</p> <p>Action: CC to check status of funding</p>
12.	<p>Meetings for the rest of the year –</p> <p>Monday 19th September 2022, 6pm – Location – zoom</p> <p>Friday 16th December 2022 6pm – Sheffield – exact location TBC</p>