

Artistic Swimming Leadership Group

10th November 2022 – 19:00 - 21:00 – via Zoom

Attendees:

1. Maria Ramos – Chair
2. Sarah Clarke - Athlete Reward and Recognition Lead
3. Keith Munday - Sport Operations Committee Leadership Group Liaison
4. Claire Coleman – Head of Development
5. Gareth Picken – Sport Development Team Administrator
6. Ian Atkinson – Competition Lead
7. Sarah Robinson – Project manager – FINA rule changes (Guest for the duration of the meeting).
8. Mike Hawkes – Head of Inclusion and Diversity (Guest for item 2)
9. Karen Thorpe – Performance Manager - Artistic Swimming Manager

Apologies:

1. Louise Ross – Coaching Lead
2. Hannah Secher – Technical Officials Lead

Standing Items	
1.	Meeting welcome
	MR opened the meeting and introduced MH, who joined to the meeting to talk through the Certificate of Exception, and SS, who will be supporting the group on the roll out of the FINA rule changes.
2.	Certificate of Exception
	<p>MH explained that Certificate of Exception (CoE), previously known as the certificate of swimming disability is in place so that a disabled person is not penalised during competitions for something beyond their control.</p> <p>The updated certificate no longer requires medical evidence of impairment, but now only a co-signatory from the club. In addition, there is a swimwear consideration. The aim is to make it easier for people, predominantly those with a disability, to access competitions without barriers and participate within the rules.</p>

The process of obtaining a CoE requires a participant to apply during which they would state the exemption they would need and why. This would be signed off by Swim England with technical advice from a sport expert and the participant would then receive a laminated card which they would show to the judge at each competition.

MR asked whether there are any plans to connect the CoE to the membership system so that it is easy to access?

MH answered that whilst this might be a possibility, if a participant has a physical card, then this negates the risk of the judges missing anything online prior to the competition.

CC asked the group whether there are other technical exceptions which Swim England would need to consider for Artistic Swimming (AS)? This is more focused around physical ability to perform certain figures.

SC responded saying that currently there are only one set guidance for AS which doesn't have the flexibility to account for physical exceptions. The only exception relevant to AS is around the use of goggles during competitions. SC raised a concern that current AS rules state that additional clothes and goggles are not permitted unless for a medical reason, however if the CoE doesn't require medical evidence of a sight condition, then this could leave it open to anyone with poor eye sight. How can this be regulated for competitions?

MH explained that this would be something for the group to decide. MH went on to ask what are the current priorities for the sport; are they around increasing participation and accessibility to AS or the protection of fairness?

The Group agreed this was an area which needed further discussion.

KM asked if there is anywhere in the world where AS has been adapted for physical disabilities?

MH responded that this isn't anywhere to his knowledge where the rules have been adapted for the inclusion of disabled people. There are pockets of communities where disabled people do participate but they are inclusively for disabled people as opposed to the integrated system that the CoE would enable.

SC highlighted that during the world disability championships, athletes who competing were predominantly those with cognitive disabilities.

	<p>MR explained that the sport’s priority is to grow the overall membership. The sport itself is already inclusive at all ages and abilities and there is no intentional barrier to access. However, there are many other barriers to focus on such as inclusion of boys and men, socio economic conditions, pool availability, number of coaches and lack clubs available in cities and towns that need to be considered as well as ensuring those with disabilities are attracted to the sport.</p> <p>MR concluded that there is no right or wrong answer. AS doesn’t require medical proof of a disability when someone joins a club, however the nature of the sport does have certain expectations of the athlete and the points systems represents how well those expectations have been performed.</p> <p>The Group agreed that anyone wishing to use goggles should continue to follow the existing process of submitting evidence to the Referee in advance of the competition.</p> <p>The Group decided not to adopt the CoE, but would consider this in the future if the situation changes.</p> <p>MH left the meeting.</p>
3.	<p>SOC Update</p>
	<p>KM provided an update from the SOC to the group. The point for AS was the signing off and addition of SR to support the group with the ‘FINA rule change’ roll out plan.</p>
4.	<p>Rule changes – plan roll out</p>
	<p>MR explained to the group that SR has joined the group to establish how big of a change the new rules actually are and how they can be rolled out across the country over the next year. SR will support each member of the group around their workload relating to the project and ensuring that the implementation plan it up to date.</p> <p>Over the coming weeks SR aims to meet with each of the group members to assign tasks towards the project and share out the workload equally. SR presented the project working document which she had created in the weeks leading up to the meeting, outlining the different pieces of work that need to be completed. SR asked the group to consider how they could ensure that all clubs are taken through the transition process at the same time, preventing some clubs from falling behind.</p> <p>SC explained that, in the past, when new rules have been announced at a national level, it is down to the regional FINA judge/referees to run additional course and support with each of the regions.</p>

	<p>KT highlighted that the two key areas within roll out; the coaching (the new rules and terminology) and the judge education. KT felt that the group could support which the roll out of the coaching element by formulating presentations of the new rules to increase understanding amongst all coaches and athletes.</p> <p>Action – SR to produce a short piece explaining the information she requires from the group to support the creation of the implementation plan and the timescales.</p> <p>Action – the group to forward any relevant information regarding the new FINA rules to SR.</p>
5.	<p>Conference Preparation / LEN clinic update</p>
	<p>Conference Preparation - MR asked CC whether the details of the changes to be presented at the conference could be signed off without the SOC. CC explained that this would require SOC sign off on 22 November before information could be released.</p> <p>KM asked whether the conference would be recorded for those who couldn't attend?</p> <p>MR answered that currently there are no resources in place to stream the event. Additionally, there is a fee to attend the event which would cover the support in understanding the changes which will be available at the conference. Slides will be made available to those in attendance and they can circulate if necessary.</p> <p>[note post meeting: The meeting will be recorded and the link will be shared with those in attendance]</p> <p>LEN clinic update - MR updated the group that KT, Katie Clarke and Ali Pratt attended the LEN clinic recently during which all the new FINA rules were discussed.</p>
6.	<p>AOB</p>
	<p>KT updated the group that duet trails took place on the weekend of the 5th & 6th November during which four athletes were selected to be part of the senior team. In addition, the team will be traveling to Dubai to work with Anastasia Davydova on the 22nd November.</p> <p>Action – MR and GP to work together on DONM</p>