

# Water Polo Leadership Group

23<sup>rd</sup> February 2023 - 18:30 – 20:00 - Zoom

## Attendees:

Ian Mackenzie (IM) – Interim Chair/ SOC Representative  
Chris Stephens (CS) – Officials Lead  
Mike Hesketh (MH) – Competition Lead (from action 9)  
Craig Figes (CF) – Water Polo Programme Lead  
Claire Coleman (CC) – Swim England Head of Development  
Gareth Picken (GP) – Swim England Development Team Administrator

## Apologies:

Elliot McHugh (EM) – Youth Representative

1.	<b>Welcome, Apologies &amp; Conflict of Interest</b>
1.1	IM opened the meeting and welcomed everyone. IM updated the group that Ben McDonald has resigned since the last meeting (16/12). Apologies were received by Elliot McHugh. Mike Hesketh notified us that he had been delayed and would attend later in the meeting. There were no conflicts of interests.
2	<b>Action Log</b>
2.1	All actions were either reviewed or items on the agenda.  Action 8.1 and 10.3 were both items on the agenda.  Action 1.2 – Craig to send out the competition paper to the rest of the group.  Action 1.3 and 3 – CC updated the group on a planned meeting with Leanne Brace (head of Membership Development). IM expressed disappointment at the proposed date for this meeting and requested if possible that the meeting should be brought forward.  Action 3.2 – IM updated the group that Toby King has confirmed that Basingstoke Swimming Club have agreed to host a second promotional video and are working to achieve this.
3	<b>SOC Update</b>
3.1	The SOC had a face to face meeting during which increasing diversity within all disciplines and throughout all regions was discussed.  SE will be sharing the strategy with the regions in May ahead of the official launch later in the year.

	<p>There are now new rules for officials who are attending events and require overnight accommodation. It is not a requirement for officials to room share.</p> <p>The dress code for officials at events now require only Speedo branded or neutral clothing.</p>
4	<p><b>Development Updates</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 4.1 Tutor training</li> <li>- 4.2 Club Health Tracker</li> </ul>
4.1	<p>CC updated the group that Sarah Green was the Head of Educator Training and is now the Head of SEQ and Educator Training. Educator Training has been conducting a targeted recruitment for Water Polo in the North West, however no one has come forward to join the tutor training programme.</p> <p>Despite this, there is a good stock of tutors nationally but the main challenge currently for SE and the IOS is getting tutors to commit to delivering on certain dates.</p> <p>In addition, following Norman Leighton's retirement from the SE, there is the possibility that he could deliver courses in various regions.</p> <p>The current coaching courses due to take place are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- One course in the South West</li> <li>- One course in the North West</li> <li>- One course in the East Midlands</li> </ul> <p>The current assistant coach courses due to take place are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- One course in the East Region</li> <li>- One course in the North East</li> </ul> <p>Both assistant coach courses currently have low booking figures but there is still time for this to increase.</p> <p>CF asked how easy could we make attending the coach and assistant courses given that half of the content is delivered online? Could we move the practical element of the course to near wherever the greatest area of attendees is located?</p> <p>CC answered that in the past this has been explored, however, for the course to go ahead, there needs to be a certain level of Water Polo player involved in the practical element of the course. The Regional Academies, have been explored as potential host venues, this idea has not developed further.</p> <p>CC concluded that upcoming courses should be included in every monthly club newsletter, and coaches' newsletter (although the coaches' newsletter is only released once a quarter).</p>
4.2	<p>CC updated the group that the Club Health Tracker is still live and emails have been sent to all club chairs and secretaries for all disciplines nationally. The Tracker will be closed on Wednesday 22nd March for data analysis and reporting back to the regions. The Tracker will be opened again at a future point.</p>

	<p>Alice Fairhall, has been managing the Club Health Tracker since joining the team in January 2023 and has sought feedback from clubs. One of the key concerns raised by some clubs was that the Tracker is fully online. Alice has worked around this and those clubs struggling will be offered the chance to fill out the Tracker on a paper document.</p> <p>The first set of baseline results for Water Polo will hopefully be ready by the end of April/early May so long as the sample is strong enough.</p>
5.	<p><b>Officials</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 5.1 World Aquatics update</li> <li>- 5.2 Update on the OJA process</li> </ul>
5.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- World Aquatics update</li> </ul> <p>CS updated the group that he has put together a summary of the new Water Polo rules as published by World Aquatics. The new rules have been included in all new referee training courses.</p> <p>CS doesn't anticipate having issues rolling out the new rules across the country. However, CS and CC are looking into holding a zoom clinic in a couple of months to support clubs/coaches understand.</p> <p>The new Water Polo rule changes:  <a href="https://www.swimming.org/waterpolo/new-rule-chages-2023/">https://www.swimming.org/waterpolo/new-rule-chages-2023/</a></p>
5.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Update on the OJA process</li> </ul> <p>CS and CC met with Guy Ward from the OJA and there is now more clarity between the sport and the OJA. CS has simplified the sanction report forms and this has been agreed by Guy.</p> <p>The main focus at the moment is how the process of reporting an offence can be sped up. Guy Ward has mentioned to CS that there could be a fast track process, titled 'Continued Misbehavior'. This will need the agreement of the OJA.</p> <p>This process would only apply to domestic (within England) matches.</p> <p>CS has been redrafting the disciplinary guidelines and which has now been sent out to CC and Guy Ward for review. One of key areas within the guidelines which have required reviewing has been the number of warning letters a player received before being given an automatic ban. Current rules state that a player can receive five warnings before they are banned. The new idea is that a player has two warnings before they receive an automatic ban.</p>
6.	<p><b>Leadership Group</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 6.1 Group Recruitment</li> <li>- 6.2 Regional Representative</li> </ul>
6.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Group Recruitment</li> </ul> <p>IM mentioned that there are a number of roles vacant in the WPLG. Current vacant roles are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Chair</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Communications Officer</li> <li>- Coaching Lead</li> <li>- Assistant Competition Lead</li> <li>- Volunteer Lead</li> </ul> <p>IM has been trying to promote the roles, however there is little interest in joining the group.</p> <p>The Volunteer role needs to go out to advert.</p> <p>CC highlighted that this is due to go out to advert shortly. The Chair position and Coaching Lead are out to advert. They were advertised in the members' newsletter and the clubs' newsletter.</p> <p>CC mentioned that Marcomms are keen to put a closing date however as these are volunteer roles, we are in danger of closing without any applications.</p> <p>CS explained that currently, he feels that people just don't have the time available to commit at the moment.</p>
6.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Regional Representative</li> </ul> <p>The group reviewed which regions had Water Polo officers. IM would like to invite the officers to attend the next WPLG meeting on the 30th March alongside the regional employed officers.</p> <p><b>Action – GP to contact the regional Water Polo managers and Regional officers to see if they can attend the 30th March.</b></p> <p>CF stressed that working with all the regions is a larger piece of work given that they all work slightly different ways. Therefore, CF feels that the next meeting should be purely to establish the aims and needs of the regions for Water Polo.</p>
7.	<p><b>NAGS</b></p> <p>-7.1 Proposal to review format</p>
7.1	<p>IM sent round a proposal from John Lane before the meeting regarding changes to the format of the NAGS.</p> <p>CF outlined the progress he has made to date on the completion review.</p> <p><b>Action - CF to review the proposal as part of the wider review for competitions.</b></p> <p>MH joined the group at 19:33</p>
8.	<p><b>Talent Squads</b></p> <p>-8.1 Update</p>
8.1	<p>IM mentioned that he has received a lot of negative feedback when attending competitions about the Talent Centers. The biggest issue has been the communications and the community's understanding of its purpose.</p>

	<p>CF added that there is a lot to learn around the communication however we have surpassed the number of predicted number of players who have engaged with the programme and are traveling to the centers.</p> <p>CC contributed that the communication has been good but is reliant on everyone looking at the main channels of communications whether that is through their clubs, in the newsletters or on the website. All regional officers were briefed on the 8<sup>th</sup> November and this should have filtered down to the volunteers at regional level.</p> <p>MH defended this position by mentioning that in the North West, clubs are aware of the Talent Centers and how they are able to get involved.</p> <p>Regarding the Talent Squads, the under 17 boys have their European qualification next month, the senior men have their World Cup event in March and the senior women's qualification event was cancelled. The senior women's team had entered the World Cup but not enough countries also entered so they have been automatically entered into the Intercontinental Championships. The under 17 girls team have also been entered straight into the European Championships.</p>
9.	<b>A.O.B</b>
9.1	<p>MH mentioned that there we have been struggling with officials for NAG events across the country.</p> <p>CF added that he would be attending the NAG's in Bristol to support with the set up and running of the event.</p> <p>IM detailed that Adam Older has formulated an event risk assessment which required sign off by the group. The group accepted this risk assessment.</p>
10.	<b>Date of Next Meeting</b>
	<p>Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> March at 18.30 The meeting closed at 20:00.</p>
	<p>Other meeting dates 2023 1<sup>st</sup> June 27<sup>th</sup> July 28<sup>th</sup> September 30<sup>th</sup> November</p>