

Water Polo Leadership Group

22nd May 2023

Time: 18:30 – 20:00

Attendees:

Ian Mackenzie (IM) – Interim Chair/ SOC Representative
Chris Stephens (CS) – Officials Lead
Mike Hesketh (MH) – Competition Lead
Craig Figes (CF) – Swim England Water Polo Programme Lead
Elliot McHugh (EM) – Youth Representative
Paul Metcalfe (PM) – General Member
Steve Kinloch (SK) – General Member
Ekaterina Boyd (EB) – Swim England Head of Events
Claire Coleman (CC) – Swim England Head of Development
Gareth Picken (GP) – Swim England Development Team Administrator

1.	Welcome and Introductions
	IM opened the meeting and welcomed SK and PM to the group. Each member introduced themselves for the benefit of the new members.
2.	Apologies
	No apologies received. Everyone in attendance
3.	Conflict of Interest
	No conflict of interests was raised.
4.	Minutes of Regional Managers meeting
	4.1 Correct Record
	The group agreed that the minutes were a reflection of the previous meeting.
	4.2 Actions
	All actions were either complete, included in the agenda or stated below. <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Action 6th October - 8.1 - <i>CC / GP / CS to continue to work with the OJA to progress the changes to process and rules around disciplinary procedures – work to continue.</i>- Action 16th December - 1.1 - <i>Establish an officials map for those currently active in Water Polo and produce guidance on how to progress through the officials' pathway – work to continue by Andrea Startin within the Development Team</i>- Action 16th December 1.3 – this action is now led by the Head of Membership development as part of a wider project reviewing affiliation to Swim England

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Action 16th December 3.1 – verbal update to confirm the video was included in lapsed members’ communications - Action 16th December 3.2 – will be progressed with support from CC following a request from IM in May 2023 - Action 16th December 3.2 – meeting has been held with MH and some actions have been completed. Regroup meeting needed with MH - Action 5.1 30th March – IM to work with the Development Team to look into the possibility of a mini polo competition across the regions. - Action 30th March 5.1 – IM to draft SOC paper to agree the lowering of the age to 9 years of age to compete. - Action 30th March 8.1 – not actioned
5.	Development Update
	5.1 Sporting Framework
	<p>CC provided the group with the background to the operator led programme to encourage participation from the Learn to Swim pathway. SE has launched the pilot of the Sporting Framework which will be focused on the transition between swimming lessons into the clubs for athletes. The framework aims to take a swimmer through the levels of Learn to Swim and teach the core skills for Water Polo so that they can integrate into clubs. The aim is to run three successful pilot programs this year starting in the May Half Term school holidays. CC to keep the group updated with the progress of the programme.</p>
6.	Water Polo Programme Lead
	6.1 Programme update
	<p>CF updated the group that the Senior men and Senior women teams are preparing for the LEN championships. Under 17’s women are preparing for the Europeans at the end of July to the start of August. Under 19’s men are in training for competitions later in the year. Both the under 17’s and under 19’s are training infrequently due to GCSE and A-level exams currently taking place.</p> <p>The England men team were in Dublin for a home nations tournament over the weekend in which they won.</p> <p>Adverts for the 07/08 all England Men and Women team staff is about to be released along with the recruitment of the head coaches for the two teams. The assistant head coach and team managers’ adverts will follow shortly. There will be one advert for the different roles in which the applicants can specify which role they would like to apply.</p> <p>Action – GP to include recruitment adverts in the weekly email.</p>
	6.2 Competition Review update
	<p>CF updated the group that a meeting has been planned whereby one representative from each of the different competitions that take place throughout the year will attend. The Competition Review document has become a point of</p>

	<p>discussion for the Water Polo competition representatives. The meeting to take place on Wednesday 24th May in Loughborough.</p> <p>CC asked which key competition representatives will be attending.</p> <p>CF responded that representatives for the BWPL, the Super League proposal, the Conference League, the Inter-regional competition. IM will chair the meeting from the WPLG, potentially more discussion to come following the meeting.</p> <p>CF thanked everyone who had been involved in the running of the NAG's which took place at the end of April in Sunderland.</p> <p>Action: CF to provide update on outcome of meeting and progress of the review</p>
7.	Strategy review
	7.1 Look at where we are
	<p>Ahead of the meeting IM asked EM to take a look at the current Water Polo strategy which was created in 2019 to establish areas which may need modifying or updating.</p> <p>EM noted that daily life and subsequently the culture of Water Polo between when the document was written and now has changed significantly due to the Covid-19 pandemic and therefore some of the targets would need modifying to ensure they are achievable. EM highlighted that some of the aims needed to be more specific with achievable deadlines. Additionally, the work that CF is carrying out around the competition calendar should be included in the strategy as it is a key project.</p> <p>EM raised a suggestion that the strategy should review how Water Polo includes and develops in schools and within the education system. The group agreed with all of the points that EM raised.</p> <p>IM asked EM to formulate an action plan from the strategy review.</p> <p>EM agreed that this would be something he would do.</p> <p>PM explained that the onus should be on the clubs to help support SE with the implementation of the strategy and encourage this work so that the discipline can develop.</p> <p>CC mentioned that within Artistic Swimming (AS), the Combo Cup (which is the biggest mass participation competition in the AS calendar) is moving to Sheffield during which SE are going to run an Inspired to Try programme. The programme aims to encourage clubs around the Sheffield area to run 'have a go days' to increase potential participation. Those clubs who engage in the projects will receive a reduced entry fee for the Combo Cup. This could be a potential option for WP going forward.</p> <p>Action - EM to create an action plan in relation to the strategy review identifying key areas which need adapting or including.</p>
8.	Officials

	8.1 Referee & Table update
	CS updated the group that referee courses have been recently run in London, the South East Region and the South West. Tables courses have taken place in London and at the Talent Games with another course due to take place shortly in the South East.
	8.2 Update on the OJA process
	<p>Besides courses, CF and CS have been working on the implementation of the new Water Polo rules which will be rolled out across the country. World Aquatics have recently reviewed and rewritten the rules for Water Polo. Whilst many of the rules have remained the same/similar, there are occasional differences which clubs and the group should be aware of.</p> <p>PM asked whether with the increase presence at an athlete level at international competitions, do we need to develop international referees.</p> <p>CS answered that yes there is a need to develop referees and this process has already begun.</p> <p>CC on behalf of CS provided an update on the OJA process, highlighting that the next course of action is the redraft the SE Water Polo regulations in line with the World Aquatics updates rules.</p> <p>Action - CS, Guy Ward and CC to meet to discuss how to redraft the Water Polo regulations.</p>
9.	Leadership Group
	9.1 Group Recruitment – Update
	IM asked the group to continue to think about anyone who would be beneficial for the group.
10.	Communications review
	10.1 How are we to progress communications
	<p>SK is making connections to develop the communication pathways with the wider Water Polo community.</p> <p>SK mentioned that the SE website is not easy to navigate for Water Polo which could be more streamlined for easy access. Furthermore, the club finder tool raises a number of clubs which say that they are full. This is unlikely to be a fair and up to date reflection of Water Polo clubs nationally.</p> <p>EB asked which members of the SE team SK had spoken to.</p> <p>SK replied that he had spoken to Ian Whadcoat from the comms team but no one else currently. He would be happy to develop this role further by engaging with more staff members of SE.</p> <p>EB highlighted that the development of the digital structure of SE is part of the overall SE strategy so this could be included as part of a wider project.</p> <p>CC and EB would be around to support the work of SK and if needed able to push work through more quickly.</p>

	<p>Action - SK to develop a communications action plan and connect with CC and EB</p> <p>MH left the meeting at 19:56.</p>
11.	Events review
	11.1 Event Management going forward
	As MH left ahead of his update to the group, the Event Management update will be provided at the next meeting. IM mentioned that the SE National Age Group championships, both preliminary and final championships were very successful.
	11.2 Officials Clothing
	<p>EB submitted a guidance document for SE national events. There is not a requirement going forward for officials to wear white 'bottoms' (Trousers, skirts etc) black 'bottoms' may be worn at competitions. EB asked if there were any questions about the document.</p> <p>EB, MH and CS have consulted external to the meeting with the WPLG regarding the potential changes to the requirements. Table officials already wear black 'bottoms'</p>
12.	Coaching Courses
	12.1 Update
	<p>IM believed that the number of courses has improved immensely for Water Polo.</p> <p>CC updated the group that of the four courses that are currently on advert, the one in the East Region has met the minimum requirement. Two courses in the South are at risk of being cancelled due to a low uptake, however GP will push this out to the regions and subsequently clubs through the weekly email. One course in the North West is also looking likely to go ahead.</p> <p>Action – GP push the courses out to the regions through the weekly email.</p>
13.	A.O.B
	Floor
	<p>CF notified the group that he would be unavailable for the next meeting.</p> <p>CC and Toby King (former Chair of the WPLG) met on Friday 19th May to discuss the development of the Water Polo promotional video.</p>
14.	Date of Next Meeting
	27 th July 2023