

Water Polo Leadership Group

28th October 2025

Time: 18:30 – 20:00

Attendees:

Ian Mackenzie (IM)	Chair
Steve Kinloch (SK)	Communications Lead
Chris Stephens (CS)	Officials Lead
Mike Hesketh (MH)	Competition Lead
Paul Metcalfe (PM)	Co-opted 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

Apologies:

Craig Figes (CF)	Swim England Water Polo Programme Lead
Richard Blackshaw (RB)	Swim England Head of Performance

MINUTES

25.26	Welcome
	IM welcomed the group to the meeting. This is a follow-on meeting from the 8th of October.
25.27	Conflict of Interest
	There were no conflicts of interest declared during the meeting.
25.28	Action Log
	The action log was reviewed. All actions were complete.
25.29	SOC Update
	The minutes of the last meeting were circulated ahead of the meeting. There were no questions raised by the group.
25.30	Development Report
	The development report was circulated ahead of the meeting. Following the regional managers meeting, CC has been engaging with the regions who have been in contact. RB and CC are meeting with the West Midlands shortly with potential meetings with the London, North West and South West regions. Action – CC to produce a report per meeting to update the group on the work with the regions.
25.31	Water Polo update

	POSTPONED TO A LATER MEETING
25.32	Events Update
	<p>EB updated the group that the female under 15 first stage competition is taking place this weekend in Coventry.</p> <p>CS raised that the player registration, team sheet and fixtures are being handled by the BWPL system for the first start. The group thanks BWPL for the use of this system.</p> <p>At the last meeting it was suggested that the Under 17's and under 19's competitions should be held, as part of a hybrid pilot event, alongside BWPL Super 5's and Champions Cup. The group previously suggested that this would need to be consulted with the teams who made the NAG's finals this year.</p> <p>EB shared with the group the feedback received from four of the nine clubs consulted. The primary concern was around the dates of the competition weekend particularly around school mock exam periods. EB shared with the group the plan of proposed dates and locations for 2026 competitions.</p> <p>EB agreed to share the proposed competition plan with the BWPL following the meeting.</p> <p>Action – EB to send the competition plan with the BWPL.</p> <p>IM raised that the Inter-Regional Championships will be taking place in Walsall before the next meeting.</p> <p>CC left the meeting at 19:00.</p>
25.33	Coaching Update
	<p>IM updated the group that new coaching courses will be rolled out from September 2026. Current course tutors are being upskilled currently to ensure they are prepared for the changes to the courses. Current coaches will be required to complete new CPD to upskill their understanding.</p>
25.34	Communications Update
	<p>There were no new updates for the group from SK.</p>
25.35	Officials Update
	<p>CS explained that money from the referee development funding from World Aquatics to run a female referee development programme called Making Waves. The programme was launched two weeks ago, although some details are still to be decided. There has been interest from Scottish clubs for the programme to expand beyond the remit of Swim England and for potential collaboration.</p> <p>CS further raised a conversation that he had with the West Midlands region who lack people who are able to assess new referees. The proposed solution includes allowing the three international referees to present the referee course. CS has approached the</p>

	<p>three referees who have all agreed to support domestic referee development. The group agreed to proceed with this proposal.</p> <p>CS raised a concern discussed within the delegates group that current delegates are started to retire from the sport so how should the sport bring in new delegates. CS proposed people are invited by the group to become delegates in training as “Referee mentors” who would support the training of referees. This would be the start of a development process for a delegate pathway. The group agreed with the proposal.</p> <p>CS has drafted a version of the referee code of conduct which is currently being reviewed by members the Development Team as there is currently no such document specific to referees officiating at domestic and overseas competitions.</p> <p>EB raised that there is an overarching Code of Conduct for all SE members within Wavepower, which SE members must abide by. EB asked whether this new version of the document would differ. Also, if there was to be a specific code of conduct for Water Polo referees, should that be the same for all officials in every discipline. CS replied that the difference between referees and other officials in other disciplines is that referees have authority over all aspects of the match.</p> <p>.</p>
25.36	<p>AOB</p>
	<p>After investigating the Swim England insurance policy, CS understood that the insurance only covers members resident within England. For a team sport, this poses an issue if a player is injured by another player who is playing for a team for a limited period and isn't an official resident of England (e.g. international students). MH explained that the insurance policy is only valid if a person is an official resident for a year or longer.</p> <p>Action: EB to email Leanne Brace to clarify the insurance requirements.</p> <p>There were no more items raised during the meeting.</p>
25.37	<p>Dates of the next meeting</p>
	<p>The date of the next meeting is 10th December.</p> <p>Action – GP to plan proposed WPLG meetings for 2026.</p>