

Minutes of the Swim England South West Region Water Polo Technical Committee

Held on Monday 1st February 2021 via Zoom

1. Attendees:

Chrissie Robinson, SESWR Chair (CR)
Gerry Griffin, SESWR Finance Officer (GG)
Roger Downing, SESWR President (RD)
Stuart Noyce, SESWR WP Tech Committee Chair and Finance Officer for discipline (SN)
Mike Coles, SESWR WP Tech Committee Secretary (MC)
Simon Tomlinson, SESWR Chief Coach, Girls
John Spicer, SESWR Chief Coach Boys & Gloucester County Representative (JS)
Helen Martin Hicks & Andy Hicks, Wiltshire County Representative (HMH)
Bradley Poole, Somerset County Representative (BP)
Brian Steer, Devon County Representative (BS)
Chris Pryke, Dorset County Representative (CP)
Phil Whiting, Bristol & West Water Polo League Representative (PW)
Martyn Thomas, SESWR WP Specialist (MT).

Apologies from Andy Smart, SESWR Board Representative and Anthony Stevenson, Cornwall County Representative.

2. Approval of the minutes of the meeting held on 5th October, 2020

2.1. PW proposed acceptance and seconded by MT

3. Matters arising from the aforementioned minutes

3.1. There were no matters arising.

4. Notice of any items of Any Other Business

4.1. SN raised three items:

4.1.1. Funding for schools playing water polo

4.1.2. Coaches Forum for the South West

4.1.3. Swimmer of The Year for Water Polo

4.2. CR interjected that the Swimmer of The Year had been suspended due to the pandemic, so that item was taken off.

5. Updates from the Groups:

5.1. Swim England Water Polo Leadership Group

5.1.1. MC informed the meeting that the minutes for this meeting had been circulated and therefore just needed to be noted. One item from there was a meeting with Rachel Bayley, Swim England Head of Performance, would be having a meeting with SN and MC on Friday 5th February.

5.2. Swim England Competition Calendar

5.2.1. MC informed the meeting that nothing further had been done on this, and this matter would be raised with Rachel Bayley at the forthcoming meeting.

5.3. Swim England South West Management Board

5.3.1. In light of Andy Smart giving his apologies, CR was asked if she would like to comment on this. She referred to the numbers attending the forthcoming regional academies and referenced to the monies coming in to the region. SN commented that a lot were holding off until confirmation of the first session. GG confirmed that SN had sent all the relevant details to him regarding the academies.

6. Update on National Inter-Regional Competitions

- 6.1. Under-18s Boys & Girls Competition, due February 2021 – Cancelled
- 6.2. Under-16s Boys & Girls Competition – Date to be confirmed
- 6.3. Under-14s Boys and Girls Competition – Date to be confirmed.

7. 2021 SESWR Inter-County Championships – 30th & 31st October 2021

- 7.1. Confirmed that a request for entries from the counties via entry form with an agreed deadline of 31st May 2021.
- 7.2. To include a guarantee by the counties to support the deposit in case of cancellation of the event.
- 7.3. GG said that he had not been informed of this as treasurer of Dorset, although CP said it had been confirmed by the county water polo secretary, Fred Fowler, and the county secretary Di Gibbs. SN asked all parties to get together and if this could not be agreed then Dorset would not be eligible to enter.
- 7.4. JS said the Gloucester County Secretary, Keith Smith had been asked about the guarantee, but he was against it, however, it was agreed by their Executive Committee.
- 7.5. Devon had put in the request and it had been agreed.
- 7.6. Somerset had also agreed to the request
- 7.7. Nothing had come from Cornwall or Wiltshire Counties.
- 7.8. PW and HMH both agreed to join SN and MC on the working party in charge of organising the event, and would have a meeting later in the year before the event to discuss plans.

8. SESWR Regional Academy

- 8.1. There had been seven sessions booked up with Millfield, for 6th March, 17th April, 8th May, 12th June, 11th September and 13th November. However, because it now looked like restrictions would not be lifted in time, the March date would be cancelled and another session maybe fitted in during July.
- 8.2. CR asked if this was part of the regional's talent programme and could anyone attend? It was pointed out that only the first session was open to all, but the remainder had a criteria to be reached before attending. The reason for asking this, CR went on, is that she understood that Swim England were set to bring in a charge for coaches and team managers attending regional talent programmes, and as such the regional academies would be unable to be self-sufficient as budgeted.
- 8.3. Both chief coaches, ST and JS stated that they would not be claiming the amounts stated by CR. SN went on to point out that when Swim England paid any contribution towards the costs of the regional academies, then they could dictate what is paid to the staff, but at the moment they make no such contribution.
- 8.4. It was agreed that this would be one of the questions put to the Head of Performance, Rachel Bayley, at the meeting on Friday 5th February, for confirmation.
- 8.5. GG pointed out that Swim England's revenue from membership was down by 45 per cent on last year, and also the region's competition revenue from swimming was non-existent.
- 8.6. RD said this was going to make a huge hit for SE and would reflect back on the region, as well, especially as they were unable to get revenue from swimming competitions which supported the other disciplines. Therefore, regions are finding it increasingly difficult to plan for the future. The meeting with the Head of Performance coming up, was an ideal opportunity to put the South West Region's point across.
- 8.7. It was finally agreed to cancel the March session for the regional academy and find another date to make the seven sessions as originally planned. This was agreed by the majority of the meeting.
- 8.8. SN said that he had met with the two head coaches regarding coaches and team managers for the various teams. It was agreed that for the boys, Stuart McKie and Jimmy Walsh would take on coaching for the eldest group; Lee Barnes would take the middle group, whilst JS and PW would take charge of the youngest boys.
- 8.9. ST said that Katy Cutler would be responsible for the eldest group of girls, whilst Jim Robinson and Nick Hume would look after the youngest group; whilst Luke Bray would look after the development group.

8.10. The criteria was in the process of being reviewed from top to bottom and therefore the head coaches would revisit this at a later date and see what was needed for the South West.

9. 2021 Spend Update

- 9.1. Nothing had been spent to date, but would require the costs of the pool hire for the regional academies to be met.
- 9.2. £70 was required for all sessions of the regional academies by those attending, but it was agreed that only £10 would be requested from those attending for the first session for the first time, but if they wished to attend further, then the remainder of £60 would be requested. The reasoning behind this was not to discourage new attendees.
- 9.3. GG stated he still had concerns regarding numbers, but would hold off for now.

10. Training Courses

- 10.1. Water Polo Coaches Courses Level 1 & 2
 - 10.1.1. Courses for Level 1 and 2 assistant coaches and coaches were now in the planning stages with the IoS for 2021.
 - 10.1.2. ST and MT were able to give further assurances that dates were being looked into with them.
 - 10.1.3. ST was congratulated for obtaining his Tutor qualification by the committee.
 - 10.1.4. IoS were insistent that Coaching Courses were not solely for the South West Region, but they did have priority for places.
 - 10.1.5. Lots of people require to take their practical sessions, and hopefully these would take place at forthcoming regional academies.
 - 10.1.6. ST said that the model being set up by the IoS is for tutors in the various areas of the region.
 - 10.1.7. MT expressed a view that if the IoS want to use our regional academies for practicals, then they should contribute towards the cost of hire, and this was agreed. MC to take it further.
- 10.2. Table Officials Courses
 - 10.2.1. MC told the meeting that these were available online and were free of charge. Paula Manning and MC were qualified volunteer educators to take these courses, together with Mike Hesketh from the Water Polo Leadership Group.
 - 10.2.2. It had been decided by MC to wait until there was a start date for water polo competitions before running a course, and it was felt that this could also be run prior to the inter-county competition. At present there were about 12 candidates from clubs in the region, but it was felt that there could be more.
- 10.3. Water Polo Referees Courses
 - 10.3.1. MC and PW were the volunteer educators for these courses. The only hold up with the Water Polo Leadership Group and Swim England reaching agreement for the grading system that was being implemented. The course would consist of two online parts followed by a class room session, and practical sessions would be overseen by mentors across the region.
- 10.4. Water Polo Tutor Training Request
 - 10.4.1. Swim England had made a request for two tutors to be recruited in the South West, to help cover course across the south of England. Two had been found and had submitted their applications to Swim England.
 - 10.4.2. Swim England had agreed that they would be funding this training.

11. Questions for County Officers (from written reports submitted prior to the meeting)

- 11.1. Only Dorset had submitted a report: Liaison has taken place between the relevant parties (Fred Fowler, Simon Tomlinson, Dan Kinsey, myself & Stuart Noyce) regarding the development of an academy incorporating South Somerset, Dorset & Wiltshire. They were awaiting confirmation of a water polo referees' course & a table officials' course once a return date for competitive water polo is known.

12. Items to be raised at the forthcoming meeting on Talent Pathway with Head of Performance Rachel Bayley

- 12.1. It was felt that these had been raised throughout the meeting, and that SN and MC had note of the questions to raise.

13. Any other business (as previously noted under Item 4)

- 13.1. SN raised the matter regarding a pot of money by Swim England to enable school teams aged seven and above, to compete against club sides without all players having to have a SE membership.
 - 13.2. The question was raised as to were any schools in the region planning to take this up, and had their been a change in SE Law that enable the age for competition be taken from 10 down to 7.
 - 13.3. ST replied that SE President, Ian Mackenzie had been working on this, and that SE were offering funding for equipment. It was felt that it would have been nice to have been told about the change for age to take part in competition being lowered.
 - 13.4. A Coaches Forum would be organised by MC prior to the regional academies to explain what players could attend.
 - 13.5. Clarification was requested regarding SE Category 1 and 2. It was explained that they needed to be Cat 2 to play in the inter-county competition or representing the region, also if they played water polo in the British Water Polo League. However, it was felt that if they played in the Devon League or the Bristol & West Water Polo League only, then they could be Cat 1. CR and RD both expressed concern on this and that care should be taken.
14. Meeting closed at 20:30 hours.

Dates of next meetings:

Monday 5th July 2021

Monday 4th October 2021

Monday 7th February 2022