

MINUTES

Swim England South West Region Water Polo Technical Committee

Monday, 5th July 2021, via Zoom, commencing at 19:00 hours

Present: Roger Downing, President (RD)
Chrissie Robinson, Chair SESWR Board (CR)
Stuart Noyce, Chair SESWR WP Technical Committee (SN)
Mike Coles, SESWR WP Manager (MC)
Gerry Griffin, SESWR Financial Officer (GG)
Jackie Hilliard, Regional Development Coordinator for first item only (JH)
Brian Steer, Devon County Representative (BS)
John Spicer, Gloucester County Representative (JS)
Bradley Poole, Somerset County Representative (BP)
Phillip Whiting, BWWPL Representative (PW)
Nicholas Tod, Gloucester County Secretary (NT) invited to observe.

1. **Apologies:** Received from Anthony Stevenson, Cornwall County Representative; Chris Pryke, Dorset County Representative; Martyn Thomas, Specialist; Andrew Hicks, Wiltshire County Representative; and Andrew Smart, SESWR Board Representative.
2. **Presentation by Jackie Hilliard on Stronger Affiliation and development items:**
 - 2.1. JH gave an outline to those present on Stronger Affiliation and SwimMark for clubs and emphasised its importance to all, and what it meant if it was not achieved, i.e. suspension from Swim England, and the inability to participate in either training or competition at any level. She explained that she was there to help any clubs who were struggling to get to grips with this.
 - 2.2. JH was thanked for her contribution by the chair, SN, and she then left the meeting.
3. **Approval of the minutes of the meeting held on 01/02/2021**
 - 3.1. JS proposed that there was a true and accurate reflection of the meeting, and this was seconded by BS.
4. **Notes from the meeting with Rachel Bailey on 05/02/2021**
 - 4.1. SN asked the meeting if anyone had anything to comment on following the meeting attended by himself and MC with Rachel Bailey? No one had anything further to ask.
5. **Matters arriving from the aforementioned minutes and notes:**
 - 5.1. SN suggested that there be a follow-up meeting with Rachel Bailey, and cover some items that had not been completed as promised, mainly the national water polo calendar, which was causing some difficulties.
 - 5.2. MC agreed to make contact to see if this was possible?
ACTION: MC contact Rachel Bailey. *Post-meeting Note: Email sent to Rachel Bailey and Toby King*
6. **Notice of any conflicts of interest on any items on the agenda:**
 - 6.1. This is a new item placed on the agenda for legal purposes.
7. **Notice of any items for Any Other Business:**

- 7.1. SN thought it was only proper to announce at this point his intention to stand down as chair, due to his workload in his job, and also that he needed to oversee business within his club, and could not do more for the region.
- 7.2. SN continued that he was happy to continue as the Finance Officer for this committee.
- 7.3. He had been in post now for four years, following on from an emergency committee with Dave Flack, RD, MC and BS when the committee was having serious problems following the resignation of James Baker.
- 7.4. SN had agreed to take on the role of chair for an interim period. He felt that the four years was a good enough interim period!
- 7.5. SN was thanked by CR for all the good work he had done over those four years and had taken the water polo technical committee to a better position than when he started, with more people involved in the work of the committee.
- 7.6. MC and RD also agreed that SN had done some excellent work over the years, and wished him well.
- 7.7. MC asked CR if a new chair needed to be advertised, or could they be appointed from within those present at the meeting? CR said they could be appointed from within.
- 7.8. MC continued that he wished to propose NT be appointed as chair of the water polo committee, and this was duly seconded by PW.
- 7.9. NT asked if he could have a little time to think about it and discuss it with his family, and this was agreed. *Post-meeting note: NT had agreed to take on the post.*
- 7.10. BS requested if he could include a change to the General Competition Conditions, particularly the rule that states: "Who has resided in the SW Region for a period of not less than 60 days prior to the date of the competition". This had been forwarded to the secretary, who had informed him that the General Condition applied to all disciplines, not just water polo, and as such a change would also affect their competitions.

8. Updates from Groups:

8.1. Swim England Water Polo Leadership Group

- 8.1.1. Minutes had been circulated to all from the meeting of the Swim England Water Polo Leadership Group held on 4th May 2021, to which Regional Water Polo Managers had been invited. These minutes have been sent to the South West Regional Office.
- 8.1.2. MC explained that he had obtained these direct from the chair of the leadership group, Toby King, as SE had yet to publish them on their website.
- 8.1.3. The next meeting of the group was scheduled for 21st July. MC explained that it would not be certain whether he would be invited to attend this meeting, and if not would request to be on the mailing list for copies of the minutes.

8.2. Swim England including Competition Calendar

- 8.2.1. No updates had been received as yet and raise with Water Polo Leadership Group and Swim England.

8.3. Swim England South West Management Board

- 8.3.1. MC informed the meeting that the Board had discussed whether the Water Polo Technical Meeting had the power to exclude a county from competing in the championships if the said county refused to accept a condition set by the committee regarding payment towards the cost if the event was cancelled for any reason other than Covid reason. This followed conditions imposed on bookings from Millfield Enterprises.
- 8.3.2. After much discussion, it was agreed that as the region had now agreed to underwrite the championship, the matter had become irrelevant.
- 8.3.3. The region continues to hold Safeguarding courses free of charge, however, counties should note that this will not continue next year.

9. Update on Inter-regional competitions

- 9.1. U18s Boys and Girls 2022 – (dates to be confirmed)
 - 9.1.1. No new dates had been received awaiting news from SE Water Polo Leadership Group.
- 9.2. U16s Boys and Girls 2022 – (dates to be confirmed)

- 9.2.1. No dates had been received, awaiting news from SE Water Polo Leadership Group.
- 9.3. U14s Boys and Girls – (dates to be confirmed):
 - 9.3.1. No dates had been received, awaiting news from SE Water Polo Leadership Group.

10. 2021 SESWR Inter-County Championships (Millfield for 30th & 31st Oct)

- 10.1. Entries received from Devon, Dorset, Gloucester County and Somerset. No entries from Wiltshire or Cornwall. SN was willing to sort out the received entries and allocate games and times.
- 10.2. Because of the reduction in water time required by the inter-county event on October 30th & 31st, SN proposed that the South West invite the Midlands and South East Regions to participate in a mini-inter-region tournament. This could be financed by the increase in revenue received from a large number of participants in the Regional Academies of £1,300.
- 10.3. SN had already discussed this with the head coaches of the two sections, who agreed that with the possibility of no inter-regional competition foreseeable, then it would be a good idea. However, they fought that some extra water time would be a good idea.
- 10.4. The proposal was seconded by MC, and all those present agreed to proceed. SN would contact the two regions and formally invite them to participate and also ask if they were willing to contribute to the cost and each bring an appropriate level referee to the event at their own cost.
- 10.5. Entries received:
 - Devon: Senior Men
Senior Women
18 & Under Male
16 & Under Female
16 & Under Male
14 & under Female
12 & Under Mixed
 - Dorset: Senior Men
Senior Women
14 & Under Mixed (if this competition took place).
 - Somerset: Senior Men
12 & Under Mixed
 - Glos County: Senior Women
18 & Under Male
16 & Under Female
16 & Under Male
14 & Under Female
14 & Under Female
12 & Under Mixed
- 10.6. SN proposed that the 14 & Under Female and Male now become a Mixed competition and asked if Devon and Gloucester were prepared to merge their two teams to enter two mixed sides. BS for Devon agreed that this would be acceptable if it would bring Dorset into the competition. Glos County, however, and JS said he would need to go back to the county to see if they agreed, but in principle, he agreed.
- 10.7. PW was happy to appoint referees to the event, and MC would look at getting table officials.
- 10.8. MC suggested to PW that if there was to be an inter-region tournament, then an appropriate level of referee would be required for that. This was agreed upon and PW would investigate.

11. SESWR Regional Academy

- 11.1. SN briefed the meeting on the three Regional Academies so far. Attendance had been good and had grown at each one. More could be done with at the earlier age group, but it was hoped that after the inter-county and teams entered into that, then more could be invited to participate.

- 11.2. JS said there were approximately 25 attending the younger age group with which he was happy, although more were always welcome.
- 11.3. JS continued that more coaches were also helping out, which included many who were involved at a national level, and they were able to pass on to the other coaches, what was expected of players moving forward.
- 11.4. MC was asked to look at a date and time for a parent and coaches get-together, to inform parents of the player pathway, etc. and what is expected from those athletes attending regional academies.
- 11.5. Furthermore, a printed pamphlet was also needed in the future, which could be handed to new parents.
ACTION: MC to liaise with coaches and regional office to set up a Zoom meeting. SN will give MC the name of the contact who is acting as liaison officer for the parents.
- 11.6. The remaining dates were 11th September, 9th October and 13th November. SN said that usually, he would be looking to book further dates for the following year. However, without a national calendar to go by, it could be rather hit or miss as to whether the dates booked could clash with national academies or competitions.
- 11.7. MC suggested that we should go ahead with these bookings, and SN said that he expected that bookings might be harder to come by as the region emerged from the pandemic and clubs and counties looked to book Millfield for events. Therefore it would be good to open a dialogue with them to see what was available.
- 11.8. No discussion took place on the proposed criteria.

12. Finance Report and Budgets

- 12.1. 2021 Spend update
 - 12.1.1. SN apologised to the meeting for not being able to get anything circulated before the meeting. However, GG had been sent an update, and he was due to send another update in due course.
 - 12.1.2. The budget is ahead of the prediction by about just under £2,000. However, £3,000 had been allocated to courses which had not happened.
 - 12.1.3. GG pointed out that it was as good that the committee had been working on a budget, but pointed out that no budgets had been agreed by the region to date. He continued that the water polo committee had been doing a good job in keeping spend sensibly.

13. Training Courses

13.1. Water Polo Coaches Level 1 and 2

- 13.1.1. MC had been liaising with the regional office, who were in term speaking with the IoS on what courses were required for 2022.
- 13.1.2. He commented on a paper he had been forwarded by the Swim England South East Water Polo Committee saying that they had been few and far between. He thought that here in the South West we had fared a lot better because of planning and letting clubs and individuals know about future courses.
- 13.1.3. He said that he would continue to push for all types of water polo courses, both for coaches and officials at all levels. He had been speaking with a company in the South West, Swimming First, that was run by Jane Husion, as regards coaches courses being run locally.
- 13.1.4. Swimming First was a business that ran swimming teachers and coaches courses and was accredited to Swim England, and as such anyone taking a course with them received their accreditation from Swim England. They were interested in working with Simon Tomlinson to do the same with water polo as they did with the swimming.
- 13.1.5. That way we could keep courses local, not just at a regional level, but county or even club. Cost-wise it might be a little more expensive.
- 13.1.6. SN asked if the tutor would be able to use the same presentation, because, from experience, it was branded via the IoS. MC answered that Swimming First was prepared to rebrand to their branding, of the course.

13.1.7. MC would work with Swimming First to see if this avenue could be fruitful.

13.2. Water Polo Table Officials

13.2.1. Now available online, and MC would be working with Paula Manning to get one up and running in September.

13.3. Water Polo Referees

13.3.1. MC and PW will hopefully run the first referees' course online in September. Swim England was just putting the final touches to the presentation and they would be ready to go.

13.3.2. It was hoped that this could be tied in with the inter-county event in October.

13.4. Water Polo Tutor Training request (2 proposed candidates)

13.4.1. MC had received a request from Swim England earlier in the year to see if there was any interest in the South West for new people to training as tutors, working in the south of England. He had put forward two names, Damian Orton of Yeovil Spartans and Rhys Tamlyn of Newton Abbot. He had heard nothing back from Swim England.

14. Questions for County Officers (from written reports submitted before the meeting)

14.1. **Cornwall:** Cornwall will NOT be attending this year's inter-county water polo tournament. But hope to be back in some capacity next year.

St. Austell junior section has had to stop training sessions due to rising costs of pool hire. However, a number of their players still travel to Devonport to train and play. Penzance remains the only junior club training in Cornwall. Newquay seniors will commence when regulations allow.

14.2. **Devon:** We have finally managed to get back to polo training and this month sees the start of our league programme. All Clubs within the County are participating in some age groups.

Teams entered are Barnstaple, Devonport, Exeter, Newton Abbot, Paignton and Taunton.

We are running under 13 (as a tournament), under 15, under 17, under 19 (although only 2 teams have entered), ladies and men.

Due to the shortness of the season, it has been decided that the games will be run on a friendly basis with no penalties for cancellation of games, as long as it is done before the date of the game. The games are also being played based on either one home fixture or one away fixture, not home and away.

It was decided not to arrange a cup competition this year.

14.3. **Dorset:** We have submitted our entry to attend this year inter-county water polo tournament for Senior Intermediate and Senior Ladies.

The Dorset County committee declined to support the cancellation financial clause. The county treasurer will be able to explain the reasoning and objections.

We do not have sufficient numbers to submit single sex 14 & Under teams, however if this competition changes to a mixed-sex event then we may be interested.

Some clubs have only just returned to training after Covid in the past week and have subsequently planned a joint training session for 11th July to see what numbers and quality would be available for a team. Whilst we have not submitted an entry at this stage, depending on the outcome of this training session we may be interested in an entry if an opportunity remains open.

We have not entered other junior age groups as we do not have sufficient numbers or quality and feel they would benefit more from training and one to one county friendly matches and to return next year.

All clubs in the county have now returned to training

We have no dates yet for the County championships.

We intend to hold a table officials online course in late September.

14.4. **Gloucester County:** Cheltenham training almost back to full pre-covid times.

The youth team already played two games in the Midland League.

A great weekend of senior polo at the Lido, Cheltenham Men retaining the title. Bristol back training as well, looking to promote junior fixtures.

- 14.5. **Somerset:** Somerset teams are finally getting back into the pool after an absence of almost 14 months.

Yeovil Spartans went back in May, as did Taunton Deane, however, Frome had to wait until June, whilst Weston-super-Mare is not back to training until 11th July. But some good news from that club in that a recent change of committee are looking to revitalise the team by giving them extra water time and a new programme within the club sees mini water polo being put into the Learn to Swim programme, and new training time to introduce junior water polo and a women's team.

- 14.6. No written report received from Wiltshire.

15. Written or verbal reports from:

- 15.1. **Water Polo Manager:** MC said that he had nothing further to add from what had already been covered under previous items. He did say, however, it would be good if Swim England could sort out one inter-region competition in December, but realised that time was running out for this to happen.
- 15.2. **BWWPL Representative:** PW reported that the BWWPL was staging a junior competition involving clubs from Welsh Wanderers, Devonport Royal, Newton Abbot, Exeter and City of Bristol. The competition would be run on a home and away basis, with the league appointing referees to the fixtures.
- 15.3. MC had a question for PW, which would also involve the BWWPL. Devon League had issued instructions to the officials. His question was that the guidance said that "verbal communication to teams should be kept to a minimum during match play, between periods of play social distancing should be in place when speaking to teams. Coaches should NOT shout instructions to teams during match play". MC pointed out that referees were there to oversee the rules of the game, and we're not responsible for overseeing Covid Guidance issued by the Devon league. Therefore he wished to know, as this would certainly be carried over into the BWWPL, who was responsible. CR agreed and asked that the Devon League look closer at this guidance. She did not see that it was the responsibility of the referee, but for the Covid Leads from the clubs or the promoters of the competition.
- 15.4. A further explanation would be sort by the Devon representative.

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

- 16.1. BS raised the query on the General Competition Conditions regarding the 60 days wait on members before a player could play for a club or county. He asked if this could be waived for water polo. SN added that this rule did not apply to either the BWWPL or BWPL.
- 16.2. CR asked why the Devon Water Polo League were following South West General Conditions and did not have their conditions in place. This was not a South West Competition, but competition for Devon County.
- 16.3. SN agreed that it was a case for the Devon County Water Polo Committee to sort out.
- 16.4. MC pointed out that this was not the case in Somerset County, and was sure it was similar in other county competitions. MC said that Somerset had separate conditions for their competition.
- 16.5. CR suggested that it was one for the Devon Water Polo Committee to sort. She, together with RD, said that they would need to revisit their rules and seek an amendment.
- 16.6. NT asked if there was anyone else who would like to take on the role of chairman of the committee, he was happy to stand aside, but there were no takers.

Dates of Next Meeting:
Monday 4th Oct 2021
Monday 7th Feb 2022
Monday 4th July 2022