

Meeting of the Swim England South West Region Water Polo Technical Committee.
Held by Zoom on Monday 6th July 2020

Present: Ian Mackenzie, Swim England President (IM)
Mike Coles, Swim England South West President, Water Polo Secretary,
Officials & Development Coordinator & Somerset Representative (MC)
Chrissie Robinson, Swim England South West Chairman (CR)
Roger Downing, Swim England South West Vice Chairman (RD)
Stuart Noyce, Swim England South West Water Polo Technical Committee Chair (SN)
Chris Elliot, Swim England South West Regional Board Representative (CE)
Simon Tomlinson, Chief Water Polo Coach for girls (ST)
John Spicer, Chief Water Polo Coach for boys & Gloucestershire Representative (JS)
Brian Steer, Devon County Representative (BS)
Chris Pryke, Dorset County Representative (CP)
Andy Hicks, Wiltshire County Representative (AH)
Martyn Thomas, Water Polo Specialist

1. Apologies

- 1.1. Phillip Whiting, BWWPL Representative
Anthony Stevenson, Cornwall Representative.

2. Approval of Minutes of the meeting held on 2nd February 2020 at Regional Office.

- 2.1. Proposed by Roger Downing and Seconded by Simon Tomlinson.

3. Matters arising from aforementioned minutes:

- 3.1. There were no matters arising.

4. Notice of Any Other Business.

- 4.1. MC had two pieces of AOB. They were a non-SE Session proposed in Dorset and clubs talking to pool providers.

5. Updates from Swim England Water Polo Leadership Group and Swim England.

- 5.1. IM of the Leadership Group said that the minutes of this meeting had been published (Appendix I) to all members of this Water Polo Technical Committee.
- 5.2. SN updated the meeting on all cancellations of the Inter-Regions for the remainder of the year.
- 5.3. ST confirmed that all England and GB training had also ceased.
- 5.4. CR updated the meeting on the present situation with Swim England's restructuring process. She said that approximately 40 per cent of the staff would lose their jobs.
 - 5.4.1. The question was asked of CR and IM on what effect this would have in relation to water polo in England, and how many professional staff were still in post?
 - 5.4.2. IM answered that Andy Fuller, the National Development Manager had already gone. Norman Leighton, who was presently furloughed, was very likely to remain as Talent ID Officer, and would directly answer to Rachel Bailey, who was heading up National Performance across all disciplines at Swim England, avoiding duplications as there has been in the past. An example was given by Mr Mackenzie, that if swimming were using Ponds Forge in Sheffield, for a camp, then there were times when the pool could necessarily not being used for blocks of say five hours, and as such could be used by other disciplines, such as water polo or artistic swimming, including the diving pit. It also opens up the use of other facilities and personnel, such as neutralists or sports psychologists, etc. being used by the swimmers.

5.4.3. ST, who is part of the national team of water polo coaches team, praised Rachel Bailey, saying she is looking into everything to do with water polo, and has personally spoken to all the coaches. She is doing a terrific job.

6. Covid-19 Update

- 6.1. That the remaining Regional Training Academies (RTCs) for 19/20 had been cancelled
- 6.2. Many clubs had now attended Swim England's Guidance on Return to the Pool for water polo
- 6.3. RD raised the work that is presently being done on Safeguarding and DBS checking. At the moment in the South West, there are two coaches who do not presently have DBS, and several where their DBS is due to expire in the coming months. There are also 35 coaches who do not have safeguarding certificates. This will have a direct result on those coaches not being allowed back on poolside.
 - 6.3.1. MT related that he had renewed his safeguarding certificate, but still received a message from Swim England saying he had not, but later, on checking, they discovered they had been mistaken, and this seems to be happening a lot, especially with SE staff being furloughed, etc.
 - 6.3.2. RD and CR said that they were trying to sort the problem out within the region.
 - 6.3.3. ST explained that in some multi-discipline clubs, if the message is sent to the general club secretary, then this is not always relayed to the water polo section
 - 6.3.4. CR explained that all of the coaches concerned would have received an email in the last week, telling them of the situation, and they needed to act on it!
 - 6.3.5. When asked if the region's water polo secretary could receive the names of those concerned to chase up, it was explained that the region could not release the personal information to the him because of GDPR. Further discussion took place as to whether this came within the jurisdiction of GDPR amongst the committee if only names or ID Nos. were passed over.
 - 6.3.6. MC suggested that all the regional representatives at the meeting should go back to their clubs within their counties and inform clubs that this needed to be complied with, otherwise, come 1st December, if not done, under Stronger Affiliation clubs could face suspension.
 - 6.3.7. RD said he would go back to SE and request if the water polo secretary can notify the named individuals as it was deemed not sensitive or personal information.

7. Update on Inter-regional competitions

- 7.1. As all competitions have been cancelled, the regions head coaches were asked if all hotel bookings had been cancelled. JS confirmed that he had not made any, and ST said he would double check.
- 7.2. 2021 dates had been investigated by SE, and had proposed dates, but at present it was not known if these would go ahead said IM. The first of these dates were for the Under-18s, scheduled for February.
- 7.3. Discussion took place that regional training needed to be worked around these dates, and as booking of Millfield needed to be done as soon as possible, the information would be gratefully received said SN.
- 7.4. IM said he would pass this on.

8. 2020 Swim England South West Region Inter-County Competition

- 8.1. This had previously been scheduled for November, but SN explained that this would not now be going ahead.
- 8.2. The question was asked by ST if it was planned to run the competition in January, but SN said this seemed unlikely now, so it was agreed unanimously to not hold 2020, and look to planning the 2021 event.

9. Swim England South West Regional Training Academy

- 9.1. This matter had been discussed between the South West Coaches involved at a meeting held via Zoom in May.
- 9.2. The plan was to split the sessions into three sections, so two sessions being held at the same time, and the centre section being used for match training.

- 9.3. It was also hoped to fit in a land training session and a session on the rules of the game, so an hour of non-water-based activities.
- 9.4. Going forward the academy would be based on competition years as opposed to academic years, as had been done in the past. Therefore, we can progress all participants in December.
- 9.5. Further discussion took place on the formation of the academy. It was agreed that this would need to be discussed further by the coaches going forward prior to the 2021 sessions starting up.
- 9.6. It was further agreed that the region would like to set up four sub-regional development sessions around the areas. These could be Wiltshire and Dorset, being held in Dorset, Somerset and one part of Devon, South Devon and Cornwall, say at Plymouth; and the final area being in South Gloucestershire, involving Bristol and Cheltenham.
- 9.7. The idea of these development sessions was to explain the parameters required to attend the Regional Academy, and to further, go forth and produce joint teams that could enter the National Age Group Competition.
- 9.8. ST asked if it was possible to ask clubs if they were preparing to enter the 2021 NAGs competition.
- 9.9. It was agreed that this was a suggestion that could be discussed at a forum of South West coaches. MC suggested that this be held after the proposed national forum that had been scheduled for July. It was generally agreed that if we held a regional forum, this would enable us to get all coaches involved with the Regional Academy.
- 9.10. Four Regional Academies had provisionally been budgeted for the remainder of 2020 due to the changes in the regional to the financial year, giving a nine-month period as opposed to a 12-month period. But this would have to be updated following the closure.
- 9.11. The new sessions would also see the new player age groups and parents, and explain what was required of them.
- 9.12. The question was asked of IM if he knew if the Under-18s Inter-Regional Competition would go ahead in February, which would give the bench mark for the regional academies, but he replied that it was still up in the air.
- 9.13. It was explained that the first sessions could only be core skills sessions and swim sessions, and there would also have to be a Covid Lead and spotters to make sure the guidance was being followed.
- 9.14. CJ pointed out the risks of the early sessions to players coming back to the water. Other disciplines were not doing anything until the end of the year. SN said he would investigate into whether Millfield could be booked, and what their cancellation policy would be.
- 9.15. ST explained that players were desperate to get back onto the water, and many were booking to go on foreign water polo camps, etc.
- 9.16. It was agreed that SN speak with Millfield and get their conditions.

10. Finance Report and Budgets (Included in these minutes)

- 10.1. The revised budget had been circulated prior to the meeting. It was pretty much had everything cancelled, and following on from previous discussions, the regional academy would also now be cancelled.
- 10.2. The equipment budget required rebound nets to allow for the three sections mentioned under Item 9.2, at Millfield for skills, and also a dozen new Size 3 balls and some replacement match balls in size 4 & 5.
- 10.3. It was further proposed that coaching and officials' courses be held if they could be done, online.
- 10.4. A Level 1 Coaching Assistant course was about to start online, with the practical sessions to follow on when back in the water. It was suggested that these practical sessions could be run in conjunction with the regional academy, and MT agreed that this was possible.
- 10.5. SN informed CR that he still had some money from the last academy. CR said she would email him the region's bank details to enable him to pay this in.

11. Training Courses relating to Water Polo

- 11.1. MC informed the meeting that the Level 1 Assistant Coaches Course had a closing date of June 30th, and this was about to start online. He was aware that several people from the South West had enrolled, particular from Taunton Deane, as there had been an issue with TYR Grant Funding given to them by Andy Fuller, but when they asked for this to be granted to enable them to pay the £100 course fee, the money was no longer available. However, MC had managed to put them in touch with Somerset County and they had provided bursary money, match funded by the region.
- 11.2. Table Officials Online Courses were now available, and he was working with Chris Stephens from the Water Polo Leadership Group on getting a referees' course online. There had been several hiccups, but it was now agreed that it would consist of two online sessions, followed by a classroom session as and when this could be done.
- 11.3. MC had explained to Mr Stephens that the South West had a stringent mentoring system already in place using local and county leagues, as well as regional competitions to ensure they did not get exposed to unnecessary abuse before they were ready by having to officiate games on their own.
- 11.4. IM confirmed that 71 new assistant coaches nationally had now received online training, and were awaiting their practical sessions.

12. County Reports submitted prior to the meeting

- 12.1. Cornwall Report by Anthony Stevenson: I can think of nothing at the moment, especially as we are tied by pool availability. I think it's just a case of listening to what information is brought to the meeting about the short-term and long-term future, and procedures to cope with situation at hand.
- 12.2. Devon Report by BS: Devon have cancelled all their leagues for the 2020 season, however we intend, government permitting, to have the cup competitions run at the end of the year on a tournament basis, with the games being played on the same day at the same venue. This will be done with the exception of the Under-17 age group, which will be on a different day.
- 12.3. Dorset Report by CP: Dorset looks forward to hosting both a Grade D Referee course and Table Official's course in the very near future. All water polo competitions and training, alongside other counties has been cancelled since the lockdown was announced in March, and this includes the Lyme Splash tournament which had been due to take place in late August.
- 12.4. Somerset Report by MC: Somerset are not holding their tournament in October which is the Somerset League and selection of the senior team. It is not known when this will be allowed to be held, but are now looking at early January. Taunton received a bursary from the county, match funded by the region, towards the costs of a Level 1 Assistant Coaches Course, after a failure to receive the promised TYR funding from Swim England. Both Taunton and Weston have sent out a return to the pool surveys to see how many will be returning to the pool once given the go ahead from Swim England.
- 12.5. JS had nothing to report from Gloucestershire.
- 12.6. AH had nothing to report from Wiltshire.
- 12.7. There were no questions for any of the county representatives.

13. Written or verbal reports from:

- 13.1. Management Board Representatives: This had already been covered under previous items.
- 13.2. Water Polo Development Officer: This had already been covered under previous items.
- 13.3. Region's Club Development Officer: No report had been submitted.
- 13.4. Water Polo Officials Coordinator: This had already been covered under previous items.

14. Correspondence direct to Water Polo Technical Committee

- 14.1. Any correspondence had already been covered in previous items.

15. Any other business (as previously noted under Item 4.

- 15.1. MC informed the meeting that he had become aware that Dorchester Leisure 1610 were planning on holding a water polo development session sometime in the near future. Unfortunately, the centre were not Swim England affiliated and as such no Swim England affiliated club could not advertise the event to their club members and club should not promote the event to its players .
 - 15.1.1. Private individuals could not be stopped from attending, but they could not attend in a club capacity.
 - 15.1.2. MC and RD were looking further into the issues, and were advising Dorset County.
 - 15.1.3. The leisure centre were putting it on as part of their business development plan. However, Dorset County would prefer to run their own session, which of course would be Swim England registered event, but would exclude members of Dorchester Leisure 1610 from attending if not swim England members.
 - 15.1.4. CP said he was aware of the course and that Fred Fowler was aware of the situation and liaising with the clubs in the county.
 - 15.1.5. MC advised the meeting that he was further aware of a similar situation involving Tiverton Leisure Centre in Devon. This was run as a leisure centre session. However, he was trying to convince those members to affiliate to Swim England.
 - 15.1.6. It was agreed that nothing could be done directly and for the situation to be monitored.
- 15.2. MC asked county representatives to inform clubs to get in touch with their pool providers regarding their return to the pool once they reopened.
 - 15.2.1. He had been informed by Newton Abbot that Teignbridge Leisure had told the club that they would be one of the last users to return to the pool, whilst Parkwood, who controlled Legacy Leisure, had said the complete opposite and that clubs would be one of the first back into pools because of their lane discipline and membership lists to get in touch with people if there was a local breakout.
 - 15.2.2. Mid Devon Leisure were taking a similar stance, and as such Exeter City Water Polo were talking with them as regards hiring pools at Crediton, etc, as Parkwood, who are the present leisure providers, their contract runs out in August and Exeter City Council are considering taking the pool running back in house and are not even talking to clubs at this stage.
 - 15.2.3. In Taunton, the pool is managed by Everyone Active, and the provider is Sport & Leisure Management. Their contract is about to be renewed by Taunton Deane Council.
 - 15.2.4. CE said that Parkwood, who run one pool in Cornwall, had been talking with the club to say they would be first back in; however GLL who run 12 pools in Cornwall, despite the clubs being in regular talks prior to lockdown, were now saying nothing of their plans on reopening, but it is rumoured that the clubs will be the last back in.
 - 15.2.5. Furthermore, unlike North Somerset Council, who were planning to financially assist the leisure centres in their area, Cornwall Council are not prepared to give any financial help to the centres, so some may not open at all.
- 15.3. CP raised a subject as requested by Dorset County on the subject of the suspensions that were received by some of his counties players in the 2019 Inter County Competition. He asked if these were still in place? MC explained to him that the actual wording on the letters received by those concerned, with copies to him and county secretaries, was that the suspensions would be served from 30th January 2020 in any event promoted by Swim England South West Region Inter Counties in which you would have been eligible to participate. Therefore, the suspensions would stand in the 2021 competition.
- 15.4. CR brought up the subject of Team Managers Training, informing the meeting that the ratios in the latest issue of Wavepower had changed, but unfortunately, she was not aware what these were. MC said he would seek out the information and let the members of the committee know for future reference.

Post Meeting Information: MC contacted Jackie Hilliard as regards to this, and was informed that there was a Team Managers Seminar for members of South West clubs on the 8th September, 2020, at 7.00 pm. Water Polo Team Managers welcome to apply.

She went on to say that the information on ratios given in Wavepower was only a recommendation not law.

The ratios are now 1-8 for 11 and under, and 1-10 for ages 11-18.

Teams can be covered if they have 1 team coach, 1 team manager, and 1 team volunteer. The team volunteer does not need to be poolside, but can be in the spectator area.

The coach and the team manager do need to have a valid DBS and Safeguarding Certificate.

She also mentioned the problem with Safeguarding Certificates not being noted and gave guidance regarding how to upload your own certificate to ensure it appeared on your record (Appendix II). She did say that if you do a South West Course then this is uploaded on your behalf by the course tutor.

Dates of next meeting:

Monday 5th October 2020 at 7.00 pm via Zoom

Monday 1st February 2020 at 7.00 pm via Zoom

Monday 5th July 2021 at 7.00 pm via Zoom

Swim England Water Polo Leadership Group and Regional Managers

Minutes of the Zoom meeting held 22 April 2020

Group Members: Toby King - TK (Chair)

Mike Hesketh - MH (Competitions Lead)
Ben McDonald – BM (Volunteering Lead & South East Region)
Adam Older – AO (Officials)
Chris Stephens – CS (Officials)
Sean King – SK (Coaching Lead)
Fiona Gorman – FG (Communications Lead)
Ian Mackenzie - IM (SOC Rep)
Norman Leighton - NL (Water Polo Talent Officer)

Regional Managers: Dawn and Richard Cousins - RC (North East Region)

Mike Coles - MC (South West Region)
Michael Dixon - MD (North West)
Nigel Greenwood – NG (West Midlands)
Simon Lecomber – SL (East)

Attendees: Claire Coleman – CC (Head of Volunteering and Pathways)

David Meli – DM (Consultant)
Siân Breen - SB (Senior Administration Officer)

1. **Chair's Welcome, Introductions and Apologies**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, noting that Peggy Etiebet (London) and Helen Pack (East Midlands) were not in attendance, and explained the roles of the Leadership Group members.

It was noted that Andy Fuller (AF - Water Polo Development Manager) was not present at the meeting as the day marked the end of his employment with Swim England. With the structure change following the introduction of a new Head of Performance Operations position it was recognised that, to fall in line with the other disciplines, the position of Development Manager was no longer required. Once the strategy is published and Swim England is in a position to recruit, it is anticipated that Water Polo will be resourced accordingly. AF's work and contribution to the sport were recognised and all present expressed their thanks and wished AF the best for the future.

The Chair expressed his sadness at the news of the passing of Mike Glover, widely known and respected in the Water Polo community. The Leadership Group and Regional Managers sent their best wishes and thoughts to Mike's family.

2. **Covid-19**

Ongoing work to keep athletes mentally and physically fit was outlined, from S&C sessions to baking competitions and 120 attending a Zoom yoga class the previous weekend. Issues with sleep had been raised as a concern and as such the Talent team were working with a psychologist to provide advice.

There was discussion on activity around the regions and it was considered that clubs associated with swimming clubs were generally more active. MC stated that the time was being used to ensure learning was up to date and CC highlighted the Safeguarding courses available, a key element of Stronger Affiliation guidelines. More Team Manager courses were requested and CC explained that demand had far surpassed expectations and as such a new priority list system, with names pulled from a waiting list, was to be put in place. It was noted that the West Midlands was the most active region in terms of courses.

ACTION 17: CC to circulate list of contacts for courses.

Requests for any further initiatives and resources for players both during and after the pandemic were welcomed. SL proposed a classroom session, with the theory behind various aspects of water polo explained. It was noted Water Polo is now on the GCSE and A Level PE curriculum and as such work has begun on creating such resources. Consideration was also given to training days to help struggling clubs come out of lockdown and NL confirmed the Talent team were exploring ideas around this.

3. **Strategy – overview and publication schedule**

The Chair recognised the need to strengthen communication with the community and outlined the steps being taken to improve this. An annual plan was to be published outlining expected delivery, with a meeting held at the end of the year for the community to attend and provide feedback. FG was welcomed to her role, noting the assistance already provided with marketing of the Strategy and developing a communication plan.

The five strategic themes were outlined, with confirmation that each has a series of KPIs

1. Widening participation – increasing the number and diversity of people playing every level of water polo. Acquiring just a small proportion of those that stop swimming would greatly increase numbers and, with water polo on the curriculum, there would be a focus on engaging schools.
The Chair outlined how progress had already begun, with clarification of the definition of low level competition.
2. Competitions – determine how the competitions coordinated by Swim England fit with other national events. A review of the NAGs would ensure their suitability in fulfilling the needs of the community and there would be consideration of whether the Inter Regions be brought under Swim England organisational control.
A standard published national calendar is being developed with MH as the single point of contact controlling addition of events which is hoped will bring clarity and limit the number of clashes. It was confirmed this would not include local leagues.
3. Coaches – increasing the number and their collaboration will contribute towards theme one. It was recognised that standardised testing in the talent programme was crucial to ensure parity across the country.
SK outlined plans for a coaching forum, which, if there was one coach for every inter region age group, would be made up of 96 coaches. The first session will focus on developing potential and fostering a passion for the game in beginners. A coach's conference is the long term goal.
Courses will be updated to ensure they are fit for purpose and SK will work with the Swim England workforce team on technical content. Swim England will subsidise a number of courses to help bring in a new cohort.
Recognition of prior learning will be another key development.
4. Officials - feedback regarding the expense and limited number of courses will be a focus and it was recognised that practical experience is a huge part of

developing good officials. A mentoring pathway will be designed to tackle development issues, with more hands on support.

Acquiring the data on those who are qualified and active will be an essential part of this.

ACTION 18: CC, CS and AO to discuss improved communications with officials.

5. Talent pathway – ensure understanding of what the pathway entails, providing clarity on how to progress, with standard and consistent selection. DM explained how the DiSE programme will be part of this, with the investment helping to improve the overall pathway. Swim England will take over delivery, linking with Loughborough college to help provide elite athletes with the knowledge to set them up for future life in or out of sport. NL acknowledged that greater contact with players on the pathway was required and a scoping exercise was taking place around a LEN U15 European event to provide appropriate competition for this age group. This was recognised as a British decision but feedback from those present was sought to feed in to this.

The Chair outlined that a number of key enablers, such as Swim England staffing requirements, the role of the Leadership Group, funding and the marketing of water polo, would help achieve the strategy.

There was discussion on developing links with schools and it was noted that the Manager of Membership was looking into how school and universities could take part in basic competition. For the latter, the need for further guidance to ensure individuals supporting BUCs were able to do so at an appropriate standard was raised.

ACTION 19: CS and NL to discuss required improvements to BUCs officials.

CC confirmed that the Strategy would be published on the website in the next week.

4. **Events**

There was discussion on the possible running of the U14 inter regions, considering Swim England guidance details that a pool should be open two months prior to any competition. It was confirmed that BWPL also intend to operate to this timeframe.

NL will be creating 'return to play' guidelines which will look at how quickly athletes can safely return to competition fitness.

5. **Input from SOC**

The Chair outlined that all discipline Leadership Groups had been asked to review a number of factors:

- Definition of Low Level Competition (LLC): considered that this had been completed.

ACTION 20: CC to ensure correct definition of LLC present on the website

- Information in the Handbook – ensure list of trophies and competitions criteria is fit for purpose.
- Safety regulations – up to date and include all required information.

ACTION 21: SB to circulate relevant Handbook sections to the LG to review.

6. **Regional Feedback and discussion**

The Chair noted this was covered under item 2 but welcomed further points by email.

7. **Any other business**

NL informed those present that he would commence furlough following the meeting.

Actions

Action Number	Action	Completion Date
17	CC to circulate list of contacts for courses.	Prior to next meeting
18	CC, CS and AO to discuss improved communications with officials.	Prior to next meeting
19	CS and NL to discuss required improvements to BUCs officials.	Prior to next meeting
20	CC to ensure correct definition of LLC present on the website <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Information in the Handbook – ensure list of trophies and competitions criteria is fit for purpose.• Safety regulations – up to date and include all required information.	Prior to next meeting
21	SB to circulate relevant Handbook sections to the LG to review.	By 17 July

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- A Local Safeguarding Children Boards' (LSCB) safeguarding course for those in regular contact with children – certificate must include an LSCB logo
- National Health Service accredited safeguarding training for those in regular contact with children.
- Safer Activities for Everyone (SAFE) CIC standard safeguarding training, which has to be completed every two years.
- Child Safeguarding training delivered by the Football Association or the England and Wales Cricket Board.

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Certificate Type	View	Upload Date	Valid from	Valid to	Status
scUK Safeguarding & Protecting Children		07/05/2019	01/01/2019		REJECTED

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Once your certificate has been submitted Swim England will verify your training and upload this on to your membership information. Once this is complete you will receive a confirmation email. If your training is not part of the approved list (shown at the beginning of this document) it will be rejected and you will receive an email to confirm this.