

The Swim England South West Region Water Polo Committee Meeting held on Monday, June 24th, 2024 via Zoom

Attendees: Simon Tomlinson, Chair of SESWR Water Polo Technical Committee (CT)
Paul Robbins, Vice-Chair & Director, SESWRL Ltd. (PR)
Mike Coles, SESWR Water Polo Manager (MC)
Jim Robinson, Finance Officer for Water Polo (JR)
Brad Poole, Somerset ASA Representative (BP)
Glen Mitchell, Dorset Representative (GM)
Toby Hogg, Cornwall Representative (TH)
Chris Selby, Wiltshire Representative (CS)
Laura Kania, Gloucester County Representative (LK)
Becky Bellett, Girls Administrator, BB

1. Welcome from the Chair and apologies

- 1.1. ST welcomed those who had joined the meeting, giving up their time. As several new people were on the call, he asked if everyone could introduce themselves.
- 1.2. Apologies were received by Chrissie Robinson, Nick Hume, John Spicer and Sue Webb.
- 1.3. PR gave an update on Mrs Robinson, who is in hospital, and ST sent the committee's best wishes for a speedy recovery.
- 1.4. A warm welcome was given to LK, who had taken over the role of representative to Gloucester County.
- 1.5. It was noted that there had still not been an appointment for a representative for Devon. MC to write to their secretary expressing concerns by the SESWR Committee.

2. Declaration of Interests

- 2.1. ST declared an interest with Wyvern Swimwear regarding equipment supply. Any discussions that took place on this, he would withdraw.

3. Approval of the meeting minutes held on Monday, February 19th, 2024.

- 3.1. These were formerly agreed upon as an accurate record of that meeting. A copy can be found [here](#).

4. Matters arising from those minutes.

- 4.1. No matters were arising — everything was covered in the agenda.

5. Updates from Groups (noted as read):

- 5.1. Swim England Water Polo Leadership Group met on April 3rd, 2024. A copy of the minutes of this meeting is attached. The Group had agreed that following the successful referees' course held entirely online, the South West could continue to run their courses the same way.
- 5.2. Swim England Competition Calendar ([click here](#)). ST explained to the meeting that so much had been shoe-horned into the water polo calendar that there were bound to be clashes. One of the victims of this was the inter-county competition, in which the women competed in the British Water Polo League on that day. However, this should be seen as an opportunity to encourage players not involved in that competition to be selected by the county teams. MC explained that he was now making bookings for 2025 and looking to 2026. Unfortunately, the national calendar was not proactive in sorting dates out because of international events. This had been raised at the last Water Polo Leadership Group. The question was asked regarding other regions, but it was explained that not all regions ran to the same agenda as the South West, whose many aspects were ahead of the game.
- 5.3. Swim England South West Management Board: PR explained that the board were not meeting until July 10th, so there was nothing relevant to report back on.

6. Diversity and inclusivity

- 6.1. PR reported on this subject as the Board's representative responsible for Diversity and inclusivity and pointed out that we needed to incorporate the recommendations into our inter-county competition.

- 6.2. He provided details of a Swim England Course (<https://www.swimming.org/ios/course-information/foundations-of-inclusivity/>), which MC encouraged all committee members to attend, and it would only take an hour at tops.
- 7. Codes of Conduct**
- 7.1. All committee members, coaches, parents, players (over 18 and under 18), and officials must immediately sign and return the appropriate Code of Conduct to MC. Copies of the Codes of Conduct were provided to the committee for signature.
- 8. Updates from Head Coaches**
- 8.1. In the absence of both head coaches, no reports were forthcoming, and no competitions had yet to occur this year; nothing was to be reported.
- 9. Update on inter-regional competitions.**
- 9.1. 29th/30th June - Under-16 Boys – Liverpool. The team had been selected. CS had been appointed as the referee representing the South West. The Head Coach was John Spicer.
- 9.2. 29th/30th June Under-16s Girls – Liverpool. The team had been selected. Tom Bossom had been appointed as the referee for the Girls. The Head Coach was Nick Hume.
- 9.3. 28th/29th September – Under-18 Girls - Habs
- 9.4. 12th/13th October – Under-18s Boys - TBC
- 9.5. 30th November/1st December – Under-14 Boys, Walsall. John Spicer confirmed he had booked the hotel rooms for the coaching team and official.
- 9.6. 7th/8th December – Under-14s Girls, Walsall.
10. 2024 SESWR Inter-County Championships at Millfield, Saturday & Sunday, September 21st & 22nd
- 10.1. MC reported that he had only received entry forms from Devon, Dorset, and Gloucester County by the deadline. The representatives from Somerset, Wiltshire and Cornwall were asked their intentions. BP of Somerset said they intended to enter a men's team and the lower levels of competition at Under-15s and Under-13s. CS of Wiltshire said he was undoubtedly looking at a men's team but was struggling for numbers at the lower age group, so he would be looking to join other counties with spare players. TH said Cornwall was in the same predicament and, as such, would be looking for spare players from other counties.
- 10.2. ST pointed out that the most important thing was to get as many younger players competing, so the deadline was extended until July 15th.
11. SESWR Regional Academy & Update on Talent Camps in the South West
- 11.1. MC gave an update on the RTA, and BB also gave input.
- 11.2. More coaches were needed to attend, and Clubs and Counties were encouraged to send coaches and players along. The girls' session was reduced to just one, while the boys kept to two sessions. It was said that the younger girls did struggle with this as they felt intimidated by the older girls. This will be reported to the head coach.
- 11.3. ST thought it might be a good idea for some of the younger coaches in the region to be encouraged to attend.
- 11.4. It was suggested that younger age groups should be encouraged to attend the September session. That would be the birth date of 2013. This would be advertised.
- 11.5. Some parents had been informed that the RTA would not accept cash payments. This was denied, and the administrators were happy to receive cash. However, it was suggested that a card payment system would be of benefit. It was agreed to take this back to the board for their July meeting.
- 11.6. The Talent Centre at Bristol is holding trials for their younger age groups. This had been circulated.
- 11.7. Dates remaining in 2024:
Saturday, July 6th, 12 noon until 3.00 pm
Saturday, September 9th, 5.00 pm- 9.00 pm.
Saturday, October 12th, 5.00 pm-9.00 pm.
Saturday, November 16th, 5.00 pm-9.00 pm

- 11.8. Provisional Dates for 2025 (Millfield):
Saturday, January 18th, 5.00 pm-9.00 pm.
Saturday, February 15th, 5.00 pm-9.00 pm
Saturday, March 29th, 5.00 pm- 9.00 pm
Saturday, May 17th, 5.00 pm-9.00 pm
Saturday, June 21st, 5.00 pm-9.00 pm.
Saturday, July 5th, 5.00 pm-9.00 pm.
Saturday, October 11th, 5.00 pm-9.00 pm.
Saturday, November 15th, 5.00 pm-9.00 pm.

12. Training Courses

- 12.1. The IoS was advertising a coaches course in September.
12.2. A successful table officials course was held on Monday, April 22nd, with 30 candidates attending. They were now working towards gaining their club certificates. They would all be invited to the inter-county competition and achieve their regional certificates if they wished.
12.3. Almost 30 people attended the online Referees Course on Monday, April 8th. The regional coordinators were now working through them to get mentored games and fully qualified.

13. Regional Reports

- 13.1. Cornwall: The junior water polo activities in Cornwall have remained relatively consistent over the last six months, with St Austell and Newquay continuing to train within their club. St Austell has numbers between 10 and 15 train each Sunday with ages ranging from 8 – 13 years; they have been hosting Newquay juniors of the same age for inter-club training on a 6 – 8 week basis.

Newquay with numbers between 20 & 30 training on Wednesday evenings. Alongside our younger juniors participating in St Austell training sessions, their elder juniors played their first inter-club friendly against Newton Abbott last month. They will look to arrange more friendly fixtures for their under-16s. After a small advertising campaign to increase the number of younger juniors at their training sessions, they have also seen several new starters.

No Inter-county submissions have been made, but the plan is still to enter three teams, two junior teams and a senior men's team, and this will look to be resolved in the commencing weeks.

Senior Water polo in Cornwall is taking place with Newquay's men's team, who are currently part way through their Devon League season and training on Tuesday evenings. They also look forward to hosting their inaugural tournament at Trevassack Lake with Exeter, Devonport, Frome, Fleetwood & a nomads team attending.

- 13.2. Dorset: Junior Polo Development: Breakdown of players attending Monthly Dorset training sessions:

Three players u19 male

Nil players u19 female.

14 players, u17 male

Three players, u17 female

16 players, u15 mixed

Nine players u13 mixed.

We have decided to enter teams at the Inter-county championship for U17 male and U15 mixed.

Men's Water Polo: No entry for the Dorset men's team into the Inter-county tournament.

The Dorset Coaches are concentrating on our youth development teams, and no volunteers have come forward to organise a men's team at the game.

Women's Polo: No entry for the Dorset women's team into the Inter-county tournament.

- 13.3. Wiltshire: A slow start for the year for Wiltshire water polo. Struggling for numbers in all age groups (Male & Female)

Swindon Numbers: Junior (8), Seniors (21)

Bradford on Avon: Juniors (13), Seniors (4)

They were looking to contact all swimming clubs in Wiltshire to understand why they don't offer water polo and build some dialogue and taster sessions to get more players involved. Attracting players is also an issue around locations and team offerings. Bigger

clubs quickly poach any excellent players that develop with a better offering, leaving us to start over again. This is a constant battle – which we don't often win.

We have downloaded the Swim England 'Inspired to Try' toolkit and will push this through Swindon and BOA. Swindon also offers a parents vs. Junior game at the end of July.

- 13.4. Gloucester County: LK reported that there were trials to be held in Cheltenham to select the teams for the inter-counties with John Spicer and Nick Hume. LK was asked if any spare players did not get selected for the Gloucester County Teams and if they could contract the other counties to see if they could play for them.
- 13.5. Somerset: BP reported that with the number of players now representing Taunton Deane, Frome and Weston-super-Mare, they could probably turn out teams at Under-17, Under-15 and Under-13, but this would be confirmed in due course. They would certainly be turning out a men's team at the inter-counties.
- 13.6. No report from Devon.
14. Any other business
 - 14.1. MC asked if he could request new water polo balls for the RTA, 12 Size 4s and 12 Size 3s. This was agreed upon, and he would go back to JR, the Financial Officer, for approval.

The meeting closed at 20:50.

Dates of next meetings:

Monday, September 23rd 2024

Monday, December 2nd 2024

Monday, January 20th 2025

Monday, June 23rd, 2025