

Water Polo Management Group

Minutes of the meeting held 29 January 2019

Adlington, SportPark, Loughborough

Present: Ian Elliot WPMG Chair
Mike Jukes Officials Lead
Sarah Dunsbee Coaching Lead
Eamonn O'Rourke Participation Lead
Ian Mackenzie Sport Operations Committee Representative

Staff: Andy Fuller Water Polo Development Manager
Norman Leighton Water Polo Talent Officer
Siân Breen Senior Administration Officer

1. **Introductions and Apologies**

Ian Mackenzie was introduced as the representative from the Sport Operations Committee.

2. **Chair's Welcome**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

3. **Minutes from meeting held 13 November 2018, including update on actions**

Updates were provided on the following actions from the previous meeting:

1) Sponsorship: AF confirmed that national teams could not be renamed to include a sponsor's title but were able to fundraise and seek small scale deals which were athlete based, i.e. sponsored by local trusts or foundations. Swim England has been pursuing a large scale sponsor, achievement of which is considered to be through a relationship with Learn to Swim. The Group agreed that better progress is desired for the discipline which, thus far, has not seen any benefits of this approach.

ACTION 1: AF to liaise with Kate Rudkin regarding a timeline whereby Water Polo would be permitted to independently seek their own title sponsorship.

2) Payment of pre diem: AF explained the British Swimming view that payment obligations should be met and dialogue is ongoing to determine where funds for this will be made available from.

ACTION 2: AF to update the Group at the next meeting on any per diem funding resolutions.

3) Policy on late withdrawal of referees: draft version to be complete by mid-February.

4) IPT: AF confirmed that there is an attribute on Integra which will flag players that have undergone IPTs. Work is taking place with British Swimming to understand how Integra best be employed to ensure IPT rules are complied with.

ACTION 3: AF to meet with Byron Vaughan to discuss the process for IPTs.
Details to be circulated to WPMG.

17) Expectations on disciplines when dealing with head injuries: AF confirmed this is being dealt with by George Wood (GW) and the Legal department, but was unable to provide a timescale for potential resolution.

4. **Coaching Update**

SD updated the Group on work completed following a stakeholder meeting in December. Stage 8-10 PowerPoint is now with the Head of Learn to Swim (KT).

ACTION 4: AF to speak to KT to determine whether SD can run a test course with the current Stage 8-10 draft, enabling further refinement.

SD is waiting on sign off from the IoS regarding the Senior Coach programme. AF confirmed he had spoken to the Head of IoS Operations who was working to provide the required approval.

Recognition of Prior Level (RPL) is on hold until the Qualifications are complete and is likely to start in 2020.

ACTION 5: AF to request an update from Tanya Kesterton (Head of Learning Solutions) on any further progress with the FINA CPDs.

AF provided information on an equality piece that was being undertaken to understand the gender divide in various volunteer positions across the sport.

5. **Officiating Update**

The negative impact of the competition structure on attempts to build a development strategy was outlined. There was also discussion on Official lists and the importance of ensuring accurate records.

ACTION 6: MJ to provide his referee list to Martyn Hudson (Memberships). Target date in February to help ensure Integra data is up to date.

The potential for a licensing scheme was raised and it was agreed that a stakeholder meeting will be required to formulate a plan.

ACTION 7: AF to set up a meeting with all Officiating stakeholders, to include IM.
Meeting target date is February.

It was recognised that the plan should include a strategy to upskill local referees and improve the retention rate of those who take the initial D Grade training. MJ stated that a policy would help ensure that Officials are registered in the correct way, with consequences for those who do not comply. An understanding of the implementation of rules and regulations across the disciplines will be required for consistency.

ACTION 8: AF to locate previous work, completed with Suzy Stevenson, on a licensing scheme design.

The Group noted the new FINA rules will come into use from 10 February and there was discussion on the most effective way to deliver training across the regions.

ACTION 9: Press release on the new rules to be drafted by AF and approved by MJ ready for immediate publication.

There was discussion on which rules the first NAGs competition should be played under on 24 February. It was agreed that a session would be run for the referees at this event, prior to the start of the competition, with the three trained FINA officials at each of the venues.

All questions raised on the application of the new rules to be directed to MJ.

It was recognised that time would be needed to fully embed the rules and for the community to be completely comfortable with them.

6. **National Age Group Update**

AF confirmed that competition applications are now live, closing date Friday 1 February, with venues, conditions and all relevant information available on the Swim England website. Once the closing date has passed fixtures will be planned, including qualifiers as required.

ACTION 10: MJ to draft information on employment of new FINA rules

Dialogue is ongoing to ensure the requisite Officials will be in place but confirmation on team numbers will be required prior to referee allocation. Event Managers (EMs) are also being sought

The Group expressed their displeasure on the date of the NAGs and the process involved with the organisation and delivery. The WPMG volunteers have not been consulted not involved and are dissatisfied with many aspects of the management which have major repercussions for the sport, including; creating many clashes with the water within the calendar, cancellation of national programme training, cancellation of educational courses, undue pressure on athletes and officials. It was highlighted that this had happened in previous years but still the Group had not been involved in NAGs planning. Consideration was given to whether the February event could be rearranged.

ACTION 11: AF to investigate permutations of rearranging NAGs and disseminate findings to the Group prior to 1 February.

The challenge of ameliorating the problems for the future was discussed and AF requested a central repository of issues. The requirement for a chairing group to ensure mistakes were not repeated was noted, to include the Swim England Head of Events.

The extremely high demand on the Water Polo calendar was recognised and it was noted that better planning could occur as all pertinent training and match information is already held on the SE calendar which could be extended to include the additional educational programmes etc. to ensure all information is held in one place. Responsibility to keep up to date rests with the Talent Management team and NL.

ACTION 12: NL to collect information from all areas that require water polo time, including officials and coaches courses, to create a comprehensive Calendar To be up and running in February

ACTION 13: IE to begin construction of a strategic plan.

7. **National Academy – first session report**

A report was circulated and NL confirmed that the session had gone very well and was positively received by parents.

There had been discussion at the session on the number of players from each region and as a consequence all regional coaches were to be invited to a meeting to clarify how players were selected to attend.

Voluntary roles were outlined and attention was drawn to the physiotherapist, Vicki Dickens, who was recognised in the New Year's Honours List with an MBE for her services to Physiotherapy. It was noted that a replacement nutritionist was being sought, along with more volunteers from regions.

8. **National Programme Update**

AF confirmed he and GW had Manchester pool bookings until March 2020. Following discussion it was apparent that issues had arisen regarding lost pool time where block booking had not been made on the confirmed pool time.

ACTION 14: NL to block out pool time through to March 2020, copying EoR into the email.

It was agreed that any future issues should be raised with EoR.

The Senior teams will compete at EU Nations and all requisite action has been taken to ensure they are ready to step in to the University Games if a space arises. Communication will be prepared to send to the teams when it is known whether or not they will be invited to compete.

The Junior boys will be travelling to Croatia at half term and confirmation is outstanding for the girl's trip to Eger, Hungary, in the summer.

There was discussion on the Scotland International and the potential for the women to play an invited team, potentially Portugal, on the same weekend.

Dean Walker has been confirmed as the new '01 Men coach and a number of assistants have been approached, pending DBS checks. Second interviews are due to take place for the '01 Girls whilst the process for '04 appointments will start in September.

Issues arising before and during the Portugal trip in December 2018 were outlined. Following a lengthy discussion the group unanimously agreed that a formal complaint should be lodged with Judiciary.

ACTION 15: IE to coordinate delivery of submission following Portugal trip after discussion with Scotland and Wales (BSWPMG representatives)

It was explained that there is currently a total deficit of £17,000 for the national teams, invoices outstanding from the Madeira trip being the major contributors. There are also issues with recouping some historic monies from the senior men's EU Nations as some of the athletes are now retired.

ACTION 15: AF to gain advice from Judicial Commissioner regarding the most efficient method to obtain the outstanding debts.

SD stated that Team Managers should have been made aware of debts and thus been in a position to assist with chasing payments.

It was noted that going forward this was being closely monitored by the Administrator.

There was discussion on the cost of the Administrator and where the funding for the position originates. It was considered that British Swimming should be supporting all disciplines equally.

9. **2019 Implementation Plan Update**

Due to the length of the meeting this agenda item was postponed.

10. **European Qualification Event: Manchester - Update**

EoR confirmed plans for the event are progressing well and a fantastic event can be anticipated. EoR also reiterated that the events in Manchester must be part of the wider water polo strategy, as they are long term investments for international senior representation.

It was agreed that for a Commonwealth Tournament to take place support in principle from Swim England was essential as well as real commitment from all

partners. IM agreed that he would raise this topic at the next Swim England Board meeting.

11. **Finance Update**

Key areas on this agenda item were covered earlier in the meeting.

12. **150th Celebrations**

AF explained that each discipline was developing ideas to celebrate the 150th anniversary. A potential for water polo was to request clips of goals scored throughout the year in a competition for 'goal of the year'. AF asked for further suggestions or thoughts.

13. **Judicial cases - implications**

It was noted discussions on head injuries were still ongoing and the group agreed that, where a lifeguard was provided, the Pool Operator was responsible for first aid. It would be ensured that all venues for NAGs and the Manchester Aquatic Centre understood this.

14. **Meeting dates for the remainder of 2019**

ACTION 16: SB to circulate doodle polls to determine dates.

15. **Any Other Business**

International procedures for nominating officials was outlined, including the potential need for temporary insurance for those travelling into the country.

ACTION 16: AF to speak to the Head of Legal and disseminate information on this as appropriate.

ACTION 17: NL to provide a report regarding the behaviour of a player at the LEN U19 boys which will then be registered by AF. Appropriate action to then be taken against the player.