

Swim England East Region
Minutes of the Water Polo Leadership Group Meeting
26th June 2024

Present Dean Walker (DW)	Manager
Ian Mackenzie (IM)	Director Representative
Toni Fenton (TF)	Hitchin SC
Jonathan Lowy (JL)	Hertford SC
Callum Malcolm (CM)	Cambridge University WP & SC
Jackie Spinks (JS)	Hitchin SC
Tim Whitwham (TW)	Regional Coach/Bedford

Also present James Salmon, Regional Manager (JSa) and Emma Winter, Regional Administrator (EW)

24/01

Apologies

24/01.1 Apologies received from Martin Hackett (MH), Dunstable WPC.

24/02

Declarations of conflict of interest

24/02.1 There were none.

24/03

Previous minutes

24/03.1 The previous minutes had been circulated prior to this meeting.

24/03.2 The minutes were approved.

24/04

Matters arising

24/04.1 The Trevor Hyde cup for U13s and U11s is for mixed school teams and mixed club teams. DW asked to be advised if there is any free pool time which may be available.

JS asked if it can be made clear that the age is as of 1st September, which is the beginning of the school academic year.

- 24/04.2 Grand Prix uptake is not massive, so this will be looked at it in the new academic year, and go out to clubs when players are back from summer holidays. DW confirmed waiting until the end of the summer for local leagues dates to look at possible dates. At the next meeting the Grand Prix will be discussed: whether clubs will just enter, or whether it will be a regional event.
- 24/04.3 DW confirmed that there is currently no budget for an Inter-County competition, and there is currently no ask for an Inter-County competition within East Region.
- 24/04.4 Instead of having a regional club tournament, to support Hitchin with their club tournaments, DW asked TF and JS to share the dates of the tournaments so that they can be put on the website.
- 24/04.5 TF asked if Milton Keynes and Dunstable joining together is just for senior players. DW confirmed that it is just for senior players.

24/05

2024/2025 Plan and Budget

- 24/05.1 DW will email all clubs to respond before the next meeting with ideas of what they would like to see happen within the Region for Water Polo, so that planning can start for next year's budget at that next meeting.
- 24/05.2 DW explained that he had put in a proposal to the Region to start paying Coaches to attend the session, and this will be worked into the budget for next year.
- 24/05.3 JS suggested that the system which Coaches use to book on will need to be looked at, otherwise there will be too many Coaches coming forward for the session.
- 24/05.4 An expression of interest form will be set up for Coaches to register their interest in becoming paid Coaches for sessions.

24/06

Updates from representatives

- 24/06.1 JS confirmed that, in future, they will send through the list of any tournaments in 2025, so that they can be advertised on the website.

24/07

Any other business

Regional Academy

- 24/07.1 DW stated that Regional Academies are not really working well. Feedback he has received from Coaches is that a Head Coach and an Assistant Coach should be named to look after the U14s, U16s and U18s, so that the Regional Academies become the training sessions for the Inter-Regionals.
- 24/07.2 Having the Regional Academy at a regular venue meant that the Coaches knew when and where the sessions were taking place. Since losing the regular venues, the same Coaches have attended the session, but there has been a change in players at each session due to travel.

24/07.3 When there is a 2-hour session two age-groups are invited, and when there is a 1-hour session one age-group is invited.

24/07.4 The U18s Inter-Regional is in September and the U14s at the beginning of December.

24/07.5 JS informed the Group that there are not many players in the Girls U18s, and most of them already train at Haberdashers' (Habs.). Most of them are already playing in the British Water Polo League (BWPL) or Conference League too. It is the same with the Boys U18s.

24/07.6 JS and TW are very focused on the U14s in December, as they are confident that they can take a team who can play at that level.

24/07.7 There was discussion about the cost of the venue hire, and the need for players to attend the session to cover the cost of the hire. For the remainder of the year the sessions do need to be full. The ages and the ability of the players at the sessions was also discussed.

24/07.8 JS asked if there is a way for the September session to be turned into something like a Grand Prix, inviting other clubs/Regions to attend, and charging them per team, and making it into some sort of tournament, splitting the pool into two.

DW agreed with the idea - making it a focus for the U18s to prepare for the Inter-Regionals.

ACTION: DW to contact other Regions and clubs to see if there is the interest in a tournament.

24/07.9 DW asked EW if it would be possible to use the regional card payment machine to be able to take payment on the door for teams which turn up on the day. EW confirmed that she would need to check.

The players must be Swim England members for insurance, and this must be checked either in advance or on the day.

24/07.10 JS suggested doing the same for the U14s in October at Habs. or in November.

For November, TW suggested having the 2008/09 Boys and Girls, along with the 2011 Boys and Girls.

24/07.11 IM confirmed that the dates for the Inter-Regionals 2025 are on the Swim England calendar.

ACTION: DW to find the link for the Water Polo calendar with the 2025 Inter-Regional dates, and send the link to EW and JSa to circulate with the minutes.

- 24/07.12 For the rest of the year for Regional Academy:
July to go out to every player and push for the age-group 2011/12.
The September session to be an U18s tournament for boys and girls.
October to focus on the U14s' tournament, and the November tournament to invite other Regions.
- 24/07.13 For 2025, a three-month cycle will be looked at, working with age-groups.
- 24/07.14 EW informed the Group that James Salmon (JSa) is the new Regional Manager, and he will be covering her work while she is on maternity leave.
- 24/07.15 A regional Referee Course is being held on Saturday 13th July at Riverside, Chelmsford. Chris Stephens will be running the course. This is for anyone who is a Swim England member, and is 16yrs and over.
- 24/07.16 TF asked if the club level needs to be done before going on to the regional level course. DW confirmed that they do not need to do the club level to do the regional level.
- JS asked if attendees who have done the club level course can be signed off at the tournament in September. DW confirmed that they can, with a qualified referee on poolside.

24/08

Confidential items

- 24/08.1 No confidential items.

24/09

Next meeting

- 24/09.1 EW informed the Group that as this was the first meeting since September 2023, the Group need to hold at least another three meetings in 2024. Next meeting to take place on Wednesday 11th September 2024 at 6:30pm via Zoom.
- 24/09.2 DW suggested that CM continues to attend the meetings as it would be good to start working with the universities.