



**SWIM
IRELAND**

Water Polo

Ireland Water Polo

Development plan 2021-2025



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Executive Summary

The National Water Polo Committee (NWPC) are delighted to present our development plan for 2021 – 2025.

The purpose of this plan is to start developing a sustainable platform, increase participation levels and build a solid foundation that will help rebuild our sport after Covid-19 and improve the standard of the domestic game to a level which will enable us to compete in LEN and FINA competitions on a regular basis.

To achieve this, we plan to work with provinces and clubs within our water polo community to develop a unified national pathway. It will benefit participants at all levels and guide water polo forward to greater success.

For us to fulfil our ambitions it requires us to develop a plan that will guide our efforts and define a common ambition that can focus all stakeholders on the important role they will play in us realizing our true potential as a sport.

Our vision is to develop and deliver Water Polo to the highest possible level for Ireland and to create an environment where our clubs are thriving, our volunteers are valued & adequately qualified, participation continues to increase, and our athletes & national teams are being nurtured, striving for excellence and maximising their potential.

To achieve this vision, we have identified four strategic pillars:

1. Leadership & People - The NWPC will provide leadership and direction and transform how we lead, serve and unite the Water Polo community in Ireland, adopting best governance principles and practices across all levels of the sport.

2. Education & Training - The NWPC will work with Swim Ireland to ensure that there are adequate education and training opportunities for our coaches and officials enabling them to develop their skills, improving standards at every level of the sport.

3. Participation - Increase the number and diversity of people participating in social and competitive water polo.

4. Develop & Compete - Build capacity, performance and development of participants through clear pathways and development opportunities for players, coaches, referees and officials and clubs through greater engagement and exposure of the sport.

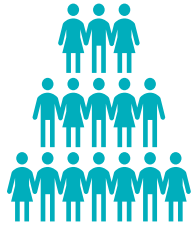
While we recognize that there is a lot of hard work and some difficult decisions ahead, we do believe we have an opportunity to have a positive and lasting impact on our game and we look forward to working with you in bringing this strategy to life over the next five years.

NWPC

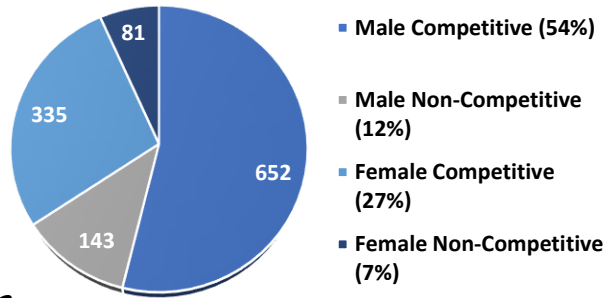


Ireland Water Polo

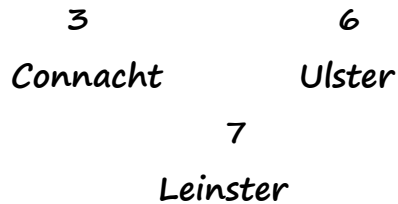
Where we were – Pre-Covid-19



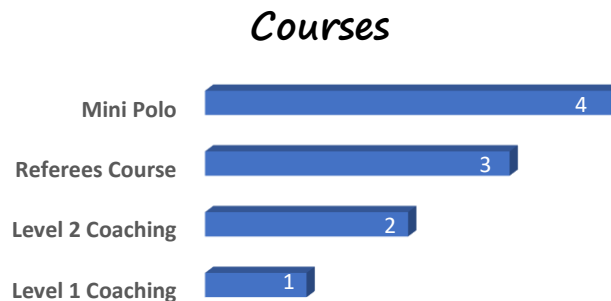
1,211 Members



16 Clubs



Education

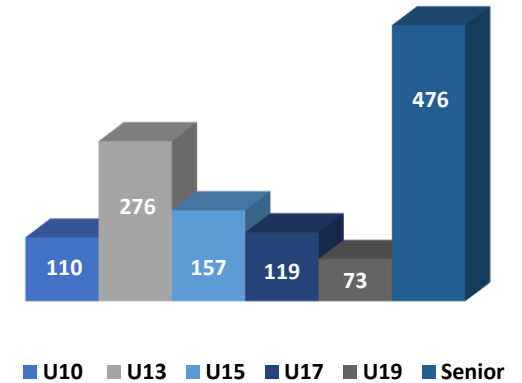


Officials

27	Referees
115	Level 1 Coaches
55	Level 2 Coaches
35	L1 Licensed Coaches
34	L2 Licensed Coaches



Age Groups



Club Mark

Water Polo Clubs with
Club Mark

4

Ireland Water Polo

Development Plan overview



Leadership & People

NWPC to transform how we lead, serve and unite the Ireland Water Polo Community.



Education & Training

Promote continued development and training amongst coaches and officials while ensuring the strengthening of governance within the sport.



Participation

Actively promote and provide opportunities that will increase participation in water Polo.



Develop & Compete

Build capacity, performance and development of participants through clear pathways and development opportunities

Targets

- Establish a strong NWPC that will drive the development of the sport whilst working with the regions/SI Board.
- Ensure strong governance in place through the promotion of SI Club Mark.
- Focus on building and improving relationships with Water Polo clubs through SI Club Support Officers.
- Put in place a strong coaching structure with creation of National head coach role.

Targets

- Support the development and roll out of education programs to help upskill and retain our officials and to ensure all officials deliver on our vision.
- Develop a coach's pathway and a program to recruit coaches and deploy the established standards.

Targets

- Engage with SI Staff on initiatives to increase grassroots participation in the sport
- Work with National Coach to create a pathway for participation from grassroots to national level
- Work with the Swim Ireland Education and Participation Departments to identify facilities who are running Mini Polo and link participants with Water Polo Clubs
- Establish partnership with swimming clubs to help create retention opportunities across the aquatic disciplines

Targets

- Support clubs to develop the fundamentals of Water Polo.
- Strengthen Inter provincials and align with National Cup age groups.
- Develop National Squad programs across all age group if pool time available.
- Enable National teams to be able to compete at LEN/FINA level.
- Host North Sea Cup in Ireland.

Ireland Water Polo

Key Challenges

Key Challenges to developing

- **Facilities**

Lack of 'water polo' pool time
Competing with profit making facilities
Weak stakeholder influence = low priority

- **Participation**

Reducing number of clubs
Lack of grass roots activity
Retention of players

- **Retention of Volunteers**

Too few doing too much – concentration issues
Increased compliance and regulation
Lack of focused development

- **International program**

Lack of strategy
No leadership
Low ambition

- **Funding**

Static/fixed budget



How can we remediate?

- **Facilities**

Targeted and agreed terms of service
Develop relationships with key individuals in facilities to improve stakeholder influence and improve priority
Identify additional facilities for water polo such as Lisnasharragh and new pool planned for Galway

- **Participation**

Increased club support – development officer
Mini polo rolled out as a SI Participation Programme
Target swimmers dropping out early & promote masters events

- **Retention of Volunteers**

Establish links to clubs who support all disciplines
Targeted low cost CPD program
Recognition and reward

- **International program**

Agreed & recognised pathway for players up to FINA level
Appointment of national head coach

- **Funding**

Dynamic budget agreed to suit progression and development

Our Vision

Develop and deliver
Water Polo to the highest
possible level for Ireland

Our Mission

More participants
enjoying and succeeding
in Water Polo

Strategic Pillars



Leadership &
People



Education &
Training



Participation



Develop &
Compete

Leadership & People

Objective:

Ireland Water polo will transform how we lead, serve and unite the Ireland Water Polo Community.



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Leadership & People

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Water Polo

	Target 	How will we achieve it 
1	Strategic leadership from NWPC that will drive the development of the sport at regional and club level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full quota of committee positions filled with the main officer positions attending 90% of the monthly committee meetings • Annual strategy day to create goals and performance measures for the year ahead • Monthly committee meetings – assessment of performance as per strategic plans • Mid-monthly tele-conference - review points of action and focus on agenda ahead of the Committee meeting • Quarterly meeting with the National Coach to review and assess performance and progress
2	Ensuring and maintaining strong governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued co-operation with Swim Ireland to ensure Clubs, members, officials adhere to the required standards • Through SI and the Support officer promote Club Mark as an achievable quality standard • Support and engage with Clubs that want to achieve and maintain Club Mark status
3	Improving relationships and communication with Water Polo clubs through SI and the SI support officer.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SI support officer to act as the first point of contact • SI support officer to engage with Clubs during registration and affiliation to support new Club personnel • Create an online Volunteer Hub with information that Club volunteers can access quickly and easily • Design and implement a specific Water Polo website to communicate with members
4.	National head coach role and the development of a strong coaching structure:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National performance standards agreed and communicated with Clubs • National Coach to communicate and help Clubs and coaches attain national performance standards through seminars, education and CPD modules • National Coach acts as central point of contact delivering a consistent message to develop a strong coaching culture

2025 Targets

V's 2019

Create National
Head Coach position

WP Clubs with Club Mark



8

4 in 2019

SI Club visits per season

2 per Club

Education & Training

Objective:

Promote continued development and training amongst coaches, officials and volunteers



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Education & Training



Water Polo

	Target 	How will we achieve it 
1.	Develop education and training programs to help strengthen and retain our officials/volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with Swim Ireland by identifying gaps across all official/volunteer roles to ensure adequate training courses are arranged to fill these gaps. • Design an appropriate, relevant and low cost CPD program promoted through the National Coach's engagement with clubs, coaches and players • Develop an official's retention and training program to enhance standards. • Implement the delegate pathway to deliver a national referee program and assessment model • Implement Mentor program to support the newly qualified officials.
2.	Develop a coach's pathway and a program to recruit coaches and deploy the established standards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a clear pathway for coaches to move from club level to International level • Create a coaches development/learning Hub that will retain programmes and support material that can be used at Club level • Proactive National coach engagement at Regional level delivering, communicating and improving National standards • Ensure that all of our coaching staff are suitably qualified and are engaging a programme of continuous development

2025 Targets

Vs 2019

Qualified L1/L2 Coaches



200

170 in 2019

No of courses per season



12

6 in 2019

Qualified Officials



40

27 in 2019

Participation

Objective:

Actively promote and provide opportunities that will increase participation in Water Polo.

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Participation



Water Polo

	Target 	How will we achieve it 
1	Increasing grassroots Water Polo participation in regional areas through SI Participation Programmes, Learn to Swim Programme and engagement with swimming clubs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with SI to identify facilities that are running Mini Polo and facilitate referrals to WP clubs • Develop a strategy of engagement with Swimming clubs to promote Water Polo as fun-based activity to include at youngest age group (aqua skills) – include Aqua diversity in the Club Mark scheme • Work with Swim Ireland to actively promote Mini Polo throughout the leisure industry
2	Water polo Support Officer and SI Participation Officer work together to increase numbers in WP Clubs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SI Participation Officer and WP Support officer to act as liaison between Leisure Centres, Swimming Clubs & Water Polo Clubs to create engagement and a referral system • Re-establish the Schools Water Polo competition • National coach to actively participate with Regional Academy programmes and club coaches • Identify sources of funding aimed at increasing participation such as Women in Sport Programme and promote initiatives that will help increase female participation within Water Polo.
3	Establish partnership with swimming clubs to help create retention opportunities across the aquatic disciplines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with swimming clubs to leverage early dropouts and to help keep more young people in the aquatic sports. • Examine reasons for players dropping out of the sport and if these issues can be addressed where possible.

2025 Targets

V's 2019

Women in water polo



60:40 to Male

75:25 in 2019

Competitive WP members



1,100

987 in 2019

Mini Polo sessions



8 per Season

4 in 2019

Develop & Compete

Objective:

Build capacity, performance and development of participants through clear pathways and development opportunities for players, coaches, referees and officials and clubs through greater engagement and exposure of the sport

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Develop & Compete

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	Target 	How will we achieve it 
1.	Support clubs to develop players and fundamentals of Water Polo.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding and application of the National performance standards to all abilities of players throughout club structures. Encourage players to attend regional trials to help broaden skills and prep for national and international standards.
2.	Strengthen Inter provincials and align with National Cup age groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual interprovincial competition across all National squad age groups aligned with the National Squad pathway and National Cup competitions. National teams to leverage Inter-pro teams for selection to National team training.
3.	Develop National Squad programs across all age groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Squad program designed to develop players from U13 to senior level Regional and club structures aligned with National Squad vision Implement selection assessment and National Standards issued by National coaches to help players understand expectation levels at Inter-pro and National level.
4.	Enable National teams to compete at International competitions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National teams that will compete on a recognised international stage - FINA/LEN competitions Organised and budgeted international calendar of events 3 & 5 year goals measured and reviewed against recognised performance standards Host an international tournament to promote and support the National Squad Program, starting with North Sea Cup in 2021/22.

2025 Targets

V's 2019

Further develop the
National Squad pathway

Align Inter-pro's with
National Cups

Compete in LEN/FINA
competitions regularly

National Squad Pathway

Objective:

Provide competition and participation opportunities for all levels of ability and development for athletes, coaches, referees and officials.

Deliver performance and produce winning teams.



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U13, U15, U17, U19 & Senior

Better player management, commitment & development through focused and varied training schedules producing a fitter and better skilled National Squad.

Foundation for Success

Strengthen

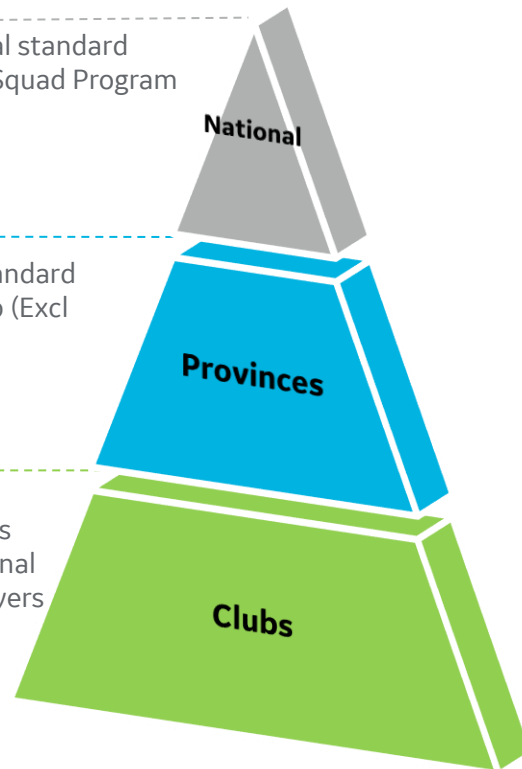
- Strengthen & preparation for International standard
- 30/25 best players invited onto National Squad Program
- Select 13/15 to travel to competition

Broaden

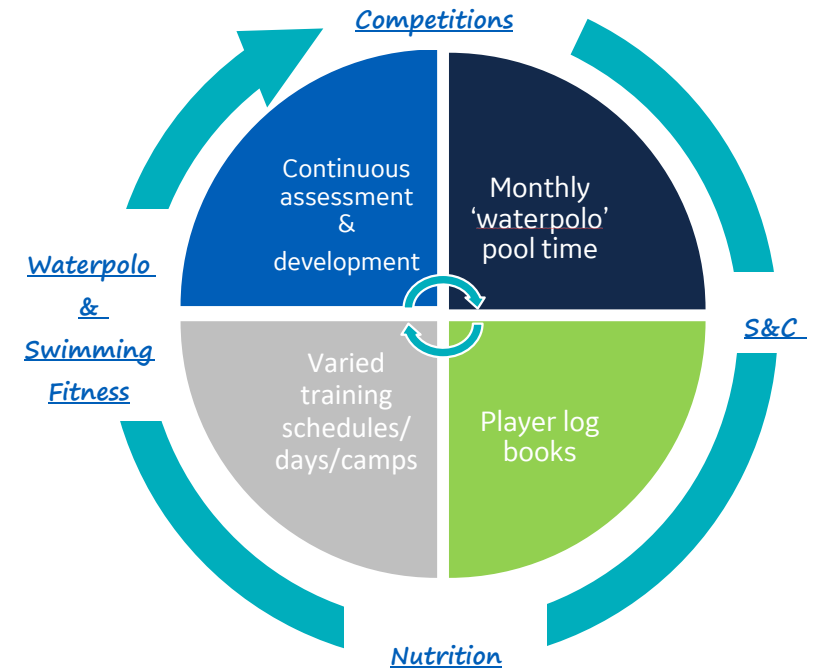
- Broaden core skills & prep for national standard
- Select up to 45 players for each age group (Excl senior) to play at Inter pro tournament

Develop

- Develop fundamental water polo skills
- Encourage players to attend regional trials
- Implement Selection assessment & National standards issued by National coaches to help players understand expectation levels at Inter-pro and National level



National Squad Program



Ireland Water Polo National Squad Pathway



Progression from U19 National Squad or by invitation from National Head Coach



Player development assessed according to Level 3 Development – competence skills



Selection of final 13/15 travelling to Challenge Cup/EU Nations



Selected players invited to attend senior squad sessions



Includes training sessions, camps and a personal development plan incl. log book



Progression from U17 National Squad or by invitation from National Head Coach



Player development assessed according to Level 3 Development – competence skills



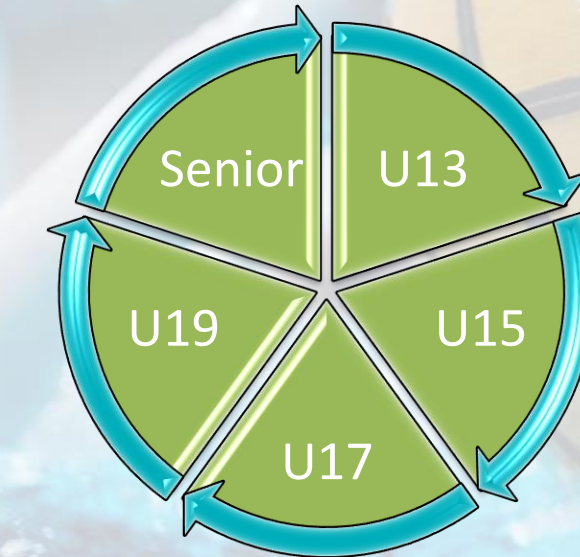
Selection of final 13/15 travelling to North Sea and Europeans



Selected players moved/invited to senior squad



Includes training sessions, camps and a personal development plan incl. log book



Progression from U15 National Squad or by invitation from National Head Coach



Player development assessed according to Level 3 Development – competence skills



Selection of final 13/15 travelling to UK Regionals and EU Nations/Europeans



Selected players moved/invited to U19 squad



Will include training sessions, camps and a personal development plan incl. log book



Attendance at the National Waterpolo Academy



Squad selection according to Level 1 Development – fundamental skills



Selection of final 13/15 travelling to UK Regionals - December / Hawabwaba



Selected players moved/invited to U15 squad



Includes training sessions, camps and a personal development plan incl log book



Progression from U13 National Squad or by invitation from National Head Coach



Player development assessed according to Level 2 Development – progression skills



Selection of final 13/15 travelling to UK Regionals



Selected players moved/invited to U17 squad



Includes training sessions, camps and a personal development plan incl. log book





Water Polo

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