



2025-2026
National Leagues & National Cups

Information Guide

Introduction

Swim Ireland and the National Water Polo Committee are pleased to publish the details for the 2025-2026 National Water Polo Leagues and National Cups. This season we are launching a revised structure which has been streamlined and adapted to provide a more sustainable and developmental framework. The National Competitions Committee has designed a new league and cup structure which aims to make the Water Polo competition framework more enjoyable and manageable for all clubs, players and officials.

The new framework for the National Leagues and National Cups is detailed below

National Leagues

- ❖ National League - Division One Men & Women
- ❖ National League – Division Two Men & Women
- ❖ Development League – Division Three Men
- ❖ Under 16 League – Division One Boys & Girls
- ❖ Under 16 League – Division Two Boys
- ❖ Under 19 & 14 Blitz Series

National Cups

- ❖ Irish Senior Cup
- ❖ National League Division One Cup
- ❖ National League Division Two Cup
- ❖ Under 19 Cup
- ❖ Under 16 Cup
- ❖ Under 14 Cup
- ❖ Under 12 Cup
- ❖ Under 18 & Under 16 Inter Provincial cups

Key Contacts

Information relating to the National Leagues and National Cups can be found here:

- Ireland Water Polo Website - [Click Here](#)

The “Swim Ireland Water Polo” app can be downloaded here:

- Apple – [Click Here](#)
- Android – [Click Here](#)

General enquires relating to the National Leagues and National Cups can be directed to:

- Waterpolo@swimireland.ie

Enquires relating to fixtures can be directed to:

- wpfixtures@swimireland.ie

League Format

National League - Division One Men & Women

	MNLD1	WNLD1
No. of Teams	7	6
Format	2 Rounds Home & Away	2 Rounds Home & Away
Duration	4 X 8 mins	4 X 8 mins
Timeouts	2	2
Ball Size	5	4

National League - Division Two Men & Women

	MNLD2	WNLD2
No. of Teams	7	7
Format	2 Rounds Home & Away	2 Rounds Home & Away
Duration	4 X 7 mins	4 X 7 mins
Timeouts	2	2
Ball Size	5	4

Development League - Division Three Men

	MDL3
No. of Teams	5
Format	3 Round Home, Away, Neutral
Duration	4 X 7 mins
Timeouts	2
Ball Size	5

Under 16 League – Division One Boys & Girls

	BU16LD1 Born 2010 and younger	GU16LD1 Born 2010 and younger
No. of Teams	6	9
Format	3 rounds Home, Away, Neutral	2 Rounds Home & Away
Duration	4 X 7 mins	4 X 7 mins
Timeouts	2	2
Ball Size	5	4

Under 16 League – Division Two Boys

	BU16LD2 Born 2010 and younger
No. of Teams	6
Format	2 Rounds Home & Away
Duration	4 X 6 mins
Timeouts	2
Ball Size	5

Under 19 & 14 Blitz Series

Blitz	Date	Time	Venue	Closing date for entries
Under 14 Boys	20 th Sept	14:00-20:00	Lisnasharragh	1 st Sept
Under 14 Girls	20 th Sept	14:30-20:00	NAC	1 st Sept
Under 19 Men	27 th Sept	14:30-20:00	NAC	1 st Sept
Under 19 Women	28 th Sept	14:30-20:00	NAC	1 st Sept
Under 19 Men	25 th Oct	16:00-20:00	Lisnasharragh	8 th Sept
Under 19 Women	25 th Oct	15:30-20:00	NAC	8 th Sept
Under 14 Girls	17 th Jan	14:30-20:00	NAC	1 st Dec
Under 14 Boys	18 th Jan	14:30-20:00	NAC	1 st Dec
Under 14 Boys & Girls	7 th Mar	13:00-20:00	NUIG	9 th Jan
Under 14 Boys & Girls	16 th May	14:30-20:00	NAC	16 th March

Entries will be requested from clubs in advance of each Blitz, the exact format of each Blitz may vary depending on the number of entries received

Points System

For National League Division One Men & Women, all matches will have a declared winner. If a match is tied at the end of full time, then a penalty shootout (PSO) will be used to determine the winner. Points will be awarded as follows:

- ❖ Win in regular time - 3 Points
- ❖ Win after PSO – 2 Points
- ❖ Loss after PSO – 1 Point
- ❖ Loss in regular time - 0 Points

For all other National Leagues and underage leagues, the points will be awarded as follows:

- ❖ Win - 3 Points
- ❖ Draw - 1 Point
- ❖ Loss - 0 Points

Where teams are tied with the same number of points in the final points table and where a decision must be reached in relation to final positions, it shall be decided in rule 13.7 of the Ireland Water Polo rule book (**Appendix 1**).

Match Fees

League	Match Fee
MNLD1 & WNLD1	€115/€145 for matches in international pitches NAC, UL and Bangor
MNLD2 & WNLD2	€115
MNLD3	€115
BU16D1/2 GU16D1	€90
U19 & U14 Blitzes	To be decided based on the number of entries received

Walkover & Unregistered Player Charges

Please remember that failing to turn up for a scheduled match will be classified as a walkover. A Walkover will be recorded as a 4-0 win to the opposition team and carries a fine as detailed below. Any team recording 3 walkovers in a season will be eliminated from the league.

Please remember that all players must be registered as competitive members with Swim Ireland and hold a valid competitive Water Polo License. Unregistered players will not be insured under Swim Ireland, and clubs fielding an unregistered player will be subject to a fine as detailed below.

Offense	Fine
Walkover fee for matches using international pitch set up	€400
Walkover fee for matches 4x8 and 4x7	€300
Walkover fee for matches 4x6	€200
Playing an unregistered player	€120

Digital Match/Team Sheets

Digital match sheets will be used during league and cup matches. For league matches the team sheets will be completed, where possible, by the table officials immediately prior to each match.

For the smooth operation of all National Cups, digital team sheets will be completed in advanced by the Swim Ireland office staff. Please ensure that all players and coaches are correctly registered with Swim Ireland and hold a valid Water Polo License in their Just Go account.

Unregistered players and coaches will not be visible in the system and cannot be added to a digital match sheet.

Named Players

For clubs with more than one team across Division 1, Division 2 and the Development League, or with two teams in the same league, must nominate (11) named players (10 for the women) who can only play in a particular division. Named players must be submit as per Ireland Water Polo rules to waterpolo@swimireland.ie no later than Monday 15th September 2025.

New Rules

All National Leagues and Cups will be conducted in accordance with the Ireland Water Polo Rule Book which can be found on the Ireland Water Polo website [RULE BOOK](#). *Please remember that the NWPC may update the rule book from time to time. Any updates to the Rule Book will be fully communicated, in advance, to all Water Polo clubs.*

The new World Aquatics rules will also be adopted and will come into effect from the start of the 2025-2026 season. A summary of the new World Aquatic Rules can be found in **(Appendix 2)**.

Training and education on the new World Aquatic rules will be provided for all coaches and referees at the Water Polo Club Conference taking place on Sunday 14th September. Further details can found on the Ireland Water Polo website and places can be booked [HERE](#)

Fixture Listings

The Fixtures Secretary has produced a full fixtures list for the coming season and details can be found on the [Ireland Water Polo app](#) and [Website](#)

Every effort has been made to avoid fixtures taking place in multiple venues on the same day, and the fixture dates also try to work around known National Programme & National Team activities. To ensure a settled and consistent season, other than in exceptional circumstances, the Competitions Committee will not accept requests to change fixture dates.

Any club withdrawing a team from a National League before the commencement of the season may be subject to a **€500 fine**.

National Cup Dates and Venues

Cup Competition	Venue	Date	Team List Due
Under 14 Cup	University Sports Centre – Galway	Oct 31 st – Nov 2 nd	Wed 8 th Oct
'25 National League Division One Cup	Bangor Aurora Aquatic & Leisure Complex – Bangor	Nov 14 th – 16 th	Wed 22 nd Oct
Under 19 Cup	UL Sports Arena - Limerick	Nov 28 th - 30 th	Wed 8 th Nov
Inter Provincial Cups	National Aquatic Centre - Dublin	Jan 31 st – Feb 1 st	Wed 7 th Jan
'26 National League Division One Cup	Lisnasharragh Leisure Centre Belfast	Feb 13 th - 15 th	Wed 21 st Jan
Under 16 Cup	Lisnasharragh Leisure Centre Belfast	March 27 th – 29 th	Wed 4 th March
Irish Senior Cup	Bangor Aurora Aquatic & Leisure Complex – Bangor	May 21 st – 23 rd	Wed 29 th April
Under 12 Cup	National Aquatic Centre – Dublin	June 6 th – 7 th	Wed 13 th May
Under 12 Cup Finals	National Aquatic Centre – Dublin	June 13 th	Mon 8 th May
National League Division Two Cup	University Sports Centre – Galway	May 1 st – 2 nd	Wed 8 th Apr

National Cup Formats

Irish Senior Cup

	Men	Women
YOB	Open	Open
No. of Teams	TBC	TBC
Duration	4 X 8 mins	4 X 8 mins
Timeouts	2	2
Ball Size	5	4

National League Division One and Division Two Cups

	Men	Women
YOB	Open	Open
No. of Teams	TBC	TBC
Duration	4 X 8 mins	4 X 8 mins
Timeouts	2	2
Ball Size	5	4

Under 19 Cup

	Men	Women
YOB	2006	2006
No. of Teams	TBC	TBC
Duration	4 X 7 mins	4 X 7 mins
Timeouts	2	2
Ball Size	5	4

Under 16 Cup

	Boys	Girls
YOB	2010	2010
No. of Teams	TBC	TBC
Duration	4 X 7 mins	4 X 7 mins
Timeouts	2	2
Ball Size	5	4

Under 14 Cup

	Boys	Girls
YOB	2012	2012
No. of Teams	TBC	TBC
Duration	Groups 2x7 mins Semi & Final 4x4 mins	Groups 2x7 mins Semi & Final 4x4 mins
Timeouts	Groups X 1 Semi & Final X 2	Groups X 1 Semi & Final X 2
Ball Size	5	4

Under 12 Cup

	Mixed
YOB	2014
No. of Teams	TBC
Duration	Group 2x5 mins Semi & Finals 4x5 mins
Timeouts	Group X 1 Semi & Finals X 2
Ball Size	3

Inter Provisional Cup Under 18

	Boys	Girls
YOB	2008	2008
No. of Teams	3	3
Duration	4 X 7 mins	4 x 7 mins
Timeouts	2	2
Ball Size	5	4

Inter Provisional Cup Under 16

	Boys	Girls
YOB	2010	2010
No. of Teams	3	3
Duration	4 X 7 mins	4 x 7 mins
Timeouts	2	2
Ball Size	4	4

Please note the following

- ❖ Please note that for all National Cups, including the Irish Senior Cup qualifiers, all matches will have a declared winner. If a match is tied at the end of full time, then a penalty shootout (PSO) will be used to determine the winner.
- ❖ Where teams are tied in the group phase of a cup competition, places should be decided as laid out in Appendix 20.9.1.11 of the World Aquatics rule book (**Appendix 4**).
- ❖ *In competitions where the best runners up have to be determined, this will be decided based on the highest points after the round of group games, then GD, GF, GA or if still level a coin toss.*
- ❖ *U12 Mixed Cup: Special Rules used in 2025 will apply in 2026, and will be published in the tournament*
- ❖ *Please note, specific details on cup format may change and can be updated in each tournament pack*

Accreditation

Please remember it is mandatory that all Team Staff have a valid accreditation for each National Cup competition. Accreditations must be applied for in advance and must always be visible when in any field of play area. An accreditation link for each cup will be included in each tournament pack.

Respect Charter

The values outlined within the Water Polo Respect Charter and Code of Behaviour apply to all those involved in Water Polo which includes all players, coaches, team staff, and officials. The Respect Charter will be visible and enforced across all National Leagues and National Cups.



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RESPECT CHARTER

We understand respect means:

Respect is valuing the feelings, wishes and rights of others; treating everyone equally, kindly and fairly. We accept others on an equal basis.

Understanding that your actions have an impact on others and knowing how to act within the boundaries of the game.

INTEGRITY
We have a right to be respected and enjoy our sport. We are all responsible for creating a safe environment for our players, coaches and officials.

TRUST
Our code of behaviour is a standard for all. We know we can speak up if we need to.

FAIRNESS
We must promote and encourage fair play and behave in a sporting manner.

INCLUSIVITY
We must be kind, encouraging and supportive to everyone. We must lead by example and understand our actions affect others.

PLAY WITHIN THE SPIRIT OF THE GAME.



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WATER POLO CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

This code of behaviour is for **EVERYONE**.
Our code of behaviour applies at all times: in the water - on and off the ball, on pool deck, in training and at matches/tournaments.

ACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOURS	UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOURS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be kind Be fair and transparent Encourage others Be supportive Be friendly Be inclusive Play by the rules Behave in a sporting manner Explain mistakes Accept decisions Know how to raise issues properly Be calm and considerate Be courteous Show equality Listen to other's views Have respect and regard for others 	<p>We must not be aggressive in our behaviour:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No kicking/ pinching/ punching Do not encourage aggression in others Do not intimidate or threaten others No grabbing others' private parts No attempting to drown others Do not unzip or pull other players suits <p>We must not bully others:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No body shaming No calling people offensive names No making fun of others <p>We must not take part in rude or insulting behaviour:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No swearing No shouting We must not be racist, sexist or show prejudice