

National Water Polo Committee Meetings

Points of Note

15th January - 24th February - 26th March 2026

For Clubs, Regions, and Staff

- The committee welcomed Brian Mongey as chairperson of the NWPC, Brian was co-opted to the committee at the Dec 2025 meeting, and acted in an interim capacity until his formal election at the Annual Conference on 3rd March 2026
- The committee acknowledged the resignation of Sharlene Urry as Secretary of the NWPC and Eamon Caulfield as Fixtures Secretary of the Competitions Committee, and recognised the commitment and dedication both have given to their roles
- The committee acknowledged the importance of appointing a secretary and will reach out to the Water Polo community for support
- At each meeting the committee received an update from Swim Ireland's Aquatic Sports Development Manager (Damian Ball) on several operational matters, which included:
 - Competitions Workshop preparations and follow up review
 - Annual Conference preparations and follow up review
 - Delivery of Table Officials course & practical sessions
 - Commencement of mandatory Table Officials Forums every quarter
 - Setting up two Referee courses & practical sessions for April 2026
 - League and Cup updates
 - National Programme updates
 - Respect Charter and Safeguarding updates
- The committee acknowledge the first meeting of the new Competitions Committee and agreed that the Competitions Committee must provide progress reports in advance of each National Committee meeting. (see note below)
- The committee approved the entry of a female team to the European Aquatics Under 20 Championships and invited our National Head Coach to a meeting to provide an update on the 2026 National Programme plan (see note below)
- The committee acknowledge the lack of coach education courses and the challenges faced with delivering courses. The committee agreed this will be priority area to address in 2026. The committee invited Swim Ireland's Head of Clubs and Education (Aisling McKeever) to a meeting to provide a progress update on education courses (see note below)
- The Committee acknowledge the need for better transparency and visibility of the work undertaken by the National Committee and Competitions Committee. Points of Note from committee meetings will now be issued to clubs
- The committee received a financial update from the Water Polo Treasurer (Joan Hynes) the 2025 accounts showed a bigger deficit than expected and this was due to increased expenditure in travel costs for international teams. Budget support from Swim Ireland has remained the same for 2026 and the accounts are estimated to break even

Competitions Committee Updates

- The Competitions Workshop was delivered on 28th February. 11 clubs attended and 6 clubs were not represented. The feedback received on the day was subsequently reviewed by the Competitions Committee and several actions agreed
- 1- Set up an U14 Blitz working group to review the format and rules for 2026-2027
The group consists of:
 - Alex Malone - Swim Ireland
 - Goran Sablic – National Head Coach
 - Brian Morrissey – Ulster
 - Siobhan O’Driscoll – Leinster
 - Mariusz Smialek – Connacht
 - 2- Survey clubs on the preferred dates for the Irish Senior Cup
7 clubs responded to survey and the majority in favour of late April date running Thurs to Saturday. Final dates will be dictated by venue availability
 - 3- The Competitions Committee approved a new Fixture Change Policy for the 2026-2027 season (subsequently approved by the National Committee)
- A full audit of all WP equipment is to be carried out in all our venues to determine what is coming to end of life and what needs replacing
 - An Irish Senior Cup working group has been established to plan & prepare the delivery of the Irish Senior Cup. The group consists of:
 - Damian Ball – Swim Ireland
 - Alex Malone - Swim Ireland
 - Pat Daly - Swim Ireland
 - Phil Kelly - - Swim Ulster
 - Renato Lopes – Tournament Director
 - Decky McKerr – Senior Referee
 - Anna Riley – Referee and Senior Table Official
 - The Competitions Committee reviewed an enquiry around the Senior Cup player eligibility and residency rule, the matter was subsequently reviewed by the National Committee, who reached the same outcome.

National Programme Update

- National Head Coach (Goran Sablic) attended the meeting on 24th February and presented an update on the 2026 season. The presentation included:
 - Status of each National Squad
 - Proposed 2026 plan for each Squad
 - Purpose of attending U20 European Championships
 - Objective for U20 European Championships
 - Progress so far with U20 European Championships
 - Beyond 2026 – Long term future
- The committee reviewed several recommendations made by Swim Ireland’s Head of Safeguarding, Ethics and Youth Development (Kate Hills) following the de-brief process with team staff and players of the 2025 European Aquatics

Under 18 Championships. The recommendations mainly related to the selection, training, and reporting mechanism for team staff, and have been incorporated into a revised Selection Policy for 2026 European Aquatics Under 20 Championships.

- A key objective for 2026 will be to develop a long-term strategic plan for the National Programme which will include a clear performance pathway
- The committee will consider appointing a Performance Advisory Group to assist in the creation of a National Programme strategic plan

Education Course Update

- Head of Clubs and Education (Aisling McKeever) attended the meeting on 26th March and presented an update on the development of the new single Water Polo qualification.
- The education team have been working closely with four newly qualified tutors to develop the course content, which is nearing completion.
- It is intended that courses will be delivered in Dublin, Galway and Belfast during May and June (tutor and pool time dependent).
- Several individuals are awaiting Level 2 course practicals and will be facilitated on these courses.
- Clubs may be approached to provide access to club training hours; the NWPC encourages clubs to support where possible. Course dates will be announced once tutor availability and pool times are confirmed.
- WP has been prioritised and pushed out ahead of other disciplines.

The next meeting of the National Water Polo Committee will be held on Thursday 30th April 2026