

National Water Polo Committee Meetings

Points of Note – 11th June 2026

For Clubs, Regions, and Staff

Damian Ball provided the committee with an operations and education update which included:

Operations

- Alex Malone has accepted a permanent position with Swim Ireland as an Aquatics Sports Officer for Water Polo, Diving, Masters, after successful completion of his probation period
- The 2025-2026 Season concluded – acknowledged that not every fixture was completed, and fixtures effecting winning positions in leagues or seedings for 2027 ISC were prioritised and completed
- League & Cup entries for the 2026-2027 season sent to clubs - deadline of 29th June
- Damian Ball in conjunction with Phil Kelly (Swim Ulster) have completed extensive work to secure nationwide facility bookings for next seasons leagues & cups
- A reported breach of the Respect Charter occurred during the 2026 ISC. This was delt with by the Tournament Directors, and a subsequent disciplinary report submitted to Swim Ireland's Complaints & Disciplinary Committee (SICDC)

Education Update

- Referee course practical concluded in Leinster and Ulster
- On-going work to secure dates for coaching courses in Ulster and Leinster for Sept/Oct 2026

Joan Hynes (Treasurer) provided a financial update which included:

- Latest year to date financial figures against budget
- The importance of early budget planning for 2027

Regional Representatives provided an update on activity in their regions which included:

- **Ulster** - Update on Tommy Kirk tournament, update on referee practical, dates for next meeting
- **Leinster** – No update provided
- **Connacht** – Raised some questions received from a club
- Brian Mongey – NWPC Chairman highlighted that regional updates and engagement will become an integral part of each NWPC meeting. Asking for each region to ensure formal committees are in place and holding regular recorded meetings

Damian Ball provided an update from the Competitions Committee which included:

- A Competitions Committee meeting was held on 4th June
- An extensive discussion was had again on the 2026-2027 league format, and the same outcome reached that the league format will remain unchanged for next season
- A discussion was had on the feasibility of changing the U19 Cup to an U18 Cup – this was not accepted by the Competition Committee
- A discussion was had on further developing the Inter-Pro competitions and bringing more importance to these events
- The Irish Senior Cup will be held in late April for 2027, and every effort should be made to conclude Div1 before the ISC

The working group established to develop an action plan to tackle ongoing incidents of unacceptable playing tactics in junior water polo matches met on 9th May. Their recommendations were presented to the Competitions Committee for review and successively to the NWPC for approval. The outcomes were as follows:

- Formalise the referee committee – giving the group equal status to the Competitions Committee – **Approved**
- To task the referee committee to provide a training and development pathway for referees - **Approved**
- To provide training for Tournament Directors and Team Managers to ensure correct reporting of incidents - **Approved**
- To adapt the rules at U14 level to encourage better technical and tactical development – new format endorsed by the National Head Coach – **Approved – Details to follow in due course to all clubs**
- Appointing delegates at junior games and upgrading the scope of a delegate's role to include mentoring of referees during match play – **Not approved and requires further discussion**

Damian Ball provided an update on National Programme which included:

- A selection panel meeting was on 11th June to select the U20 team travelling to the European Aquatics Championships. Players will be notified, and a formal team announcement is planned for early July
- Some National Squad trips for the summer have been cancelled due to lack of player availability
- Formal team announcements will be made for all summer tips by late June or early July

The NWPC discussed the planning and consultation process needed for commencing work on a new strategy / development plan (2027-2030)

- Brian Mongey and Damian Ball will schedule regional in-person meetings with club chairs over the summer – **dates to be confirmed**
- The NWPC will meet late August early September for a planning day

Next Meeting date to be confirmed