

## Swim England confirms funding to develop English water polo talent in 2020

Further to England Water Polo learning that GB would not be entering Senior Men's Water Polo Team in 2020 FINA World League, Swim England has now confirmed its financial investment in developing English water polo talent in 2020.

The financial commitment from Swim England will help fund the training and competitive opportunities for English players, whilst recognising there will still be a requirement for self-funding for international competition.

In March 2019, Sport England funding for water polo came to an end and Swim England agreed to cover the £37,500 for the remainder of that year.

For 2020, the Swim England board has agreed an investment of £80,000 to support English water polo talent. In addition, Swim England employs a talent development officer and funds a programme administrator.

George Wood, Swim England Sport Development Director, said: "Swim England is committed to progressing the sport of water polo and, to that end, supports the concept of British teams entering European competitions at U17 and U19 level in addition to the World University Games.

"Following the loss of UK Sport funding for a British programme, Swim England financed a wholesale review which provided a platform to build up the game at home country level. Since the publication of this report in late 2014, British Swimming has not entered senior teams into major LEN or FINA events.

"A change to this approach so that a senior British team can compete in major LEN and FINA competitions requires approval by British Swimming. Decisions will be made on performance ability alongside a full understanding of how costs will be met, regardless of whether events are funded or self-funded."

### Decision over FINA World League entry

Swim England recently received a request for the men's senior British team to enter the FINA World League in 2020.

George said: "With the short time frame provided, this application could not be considered effectively before the closing deadline by either Swim England in terms of finance and logistics or British Swimming who would ultimately sign off an entry in terms of performance.

"Along with British Swimming and the other Home Nations, I share the keen desire for senior teams to compete effectively for Great Britain in top level international events in the future. I also recognise the significant investment that athletes and their families put into funding their careers."

"However it is vital that when teams compete in LEN or FINA events, British Swimming is able to field a competitive team, have clarity about what the goals are for the event and, above all, performance reflects the high performance nature of British Swimming."

The Home Countries Water Polo Working Group will now consider the way forward for senior British teams at its next meeting – and plans to gain the views of head coaches to identify the next key steps.

George said: "We're delighted to be able to confirm £80,000 of investment next year into the considerable English talent we have but we also want to move water polo towards the point where it can attract external funding to support the performance squads and make them more viable for the athletes. I will continue to fight hard for this although external funding is far from being a certainty.

"For us to have any chance of achieving this, we require a well-planned approach so that decisions can be considered properly and agreed so that players, coaches and the national governing bodies move forwards in the same direction."

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