

## Promising progress made on Swim England Water Polo Strategy

### Toolbox



[Print](#)



[PDF](#)



[RSS Headlines](#)

Published

12:45:00 07.09.2020

Promising progress has been made on several key objectives in the Swim England Water Polo Strategy 2020-25 – despite the coronavirus pandemic preventing the sport being played.

The Swim England Water Polo Leadership Group published its comprehensive vision to develop the sport in April and is now ready to publish its [first update](#).

The strategy aims to [double the number of registered water polo players over the next five years](#) and was developed following months of consultations with players, officials, volunteers and sports administrators.

Feedback to the strategy has been overwhelmingly positive and Toby King, the chair of the Swim England Water Polo Leadership Group, was pleased with the work achieved so far.

He added: “Obviously 2020 has been a frustrating year for players. But we are really pleased with the progress we are already making to ensure that water polo appeals to a broader community and is in good health when we get the go-ahead to resume competition. There is plenty still to do, but we have made a promising start.”

The work achieved so far includes:

#### Widening participation

Securing agreement from the sport’s governing body to reduce the minimum age for competition from 12 to 7, and for schools to have Swim England (SE) affiliation so that they can enter teams into low-level competitions (including those involving SE clubs) without every child needing to be an SE member.

Beginning work on mini-polo/Habawaba initiatives to attract more U12s into polo, as well as looking at how to attract former competitive swimmers who have decided to leave that discipline.

Making an application for funding for various initiatives to widen participation in water polo.

Clarifying the rules to ensure that only Cat 1 membership is needed for low-level competition, so that players in local or junior leagues only need Cat 1 status.

#### Competition

A review is being undertaken into competition structure, in terms of which competitions are run by SE and what the purpose is of each event.

Starting work on a competition plan for 2021, which includes the possibility of running a multi-discipline festival, to incorporate the finals of a junior competition.

#### Coaching

A coaching forum has been set up that meets regularly and is focusing on how best to deliver consistent coaching through the age groups.

Sean King is leading work to ensure that player selection processes throughout the country are consistent at all levels of attainment.

#### Officials

In the South East region, 23 participants have completed the theory section of the two-part table officials course. BWPL have run three further courses.

Looking for funding for refereeing masterclasses, to be run with BWPL.

A review of the refereeing course content has been completed. This now features an online theory section and a face-to-face practical session, reducing the cost of the course. This is ready to roll out.

#### Talent pathway

Rachel Bayley has been recruited as Swim England Head of Performance Operations.

Work has begun on the overall talent strategy.

#### Other

Work has begun on negotiating a partnership deal to help athletes access sports scholarship to US universities.

<https://www.dorsetwaterpolo.org/cms/index.php?section=news&cmd=details&newsid=955&pdfview=1>