

Swim England East Region
Minutes of the Artistic Swimming Leadership Group Meeting
14th September 2024 at 10am, via Zoom

Present	Amy Davis (AD)	East Region Artistic Swimming Manager
	Amy Bryant (AB)	Hatfield
	Karen Brennan (KB)	Aqualina
	Tom Brennan (TB)	Aqualina
	Kerri Clewlow (KC)	Aqualina
	Emily Gower (EG)	Norwich
	Sheila Mackenzie (SM)	Regional Director Representative
	Jayne Jarvis (JJ)	Potters Bar
	Emma Chapman (EC)	Dacorum
	Laura Neary (LN)	Chelmsford
	Also present James Salmon (JSa) Regional Manager	

24/21 **Welcome and apologies**

- 24/21.1 AD welcomed everyone to the meeting.
- 24/21.2 There were no apologies for absence.

24/22 **Declarations of conflict of interest**

- 24/22.1 Item not raised.

24/23 **Previous minutes**

- 24/23.1 Minutes from the previous meeting were circulated prior to the meeting.
There are a few changes to be made from a linguistic point of view.
- 24/23.2 SM requested clarification on item 24/13.2. 'AB asked where the difficulty is
shown on the coach cards'.
- 24/23.3 AB responded that difficulty has been gradually added in as part of the
transition to the new rules, but she was unsure of the scoring system and
how it all worked with the new rules.

24/23.4	The decision was taken to put 'AB asked for clarification around difficulty and final scores at regionals.'
24/23.5	At a regional level, the minutes are being reviewed once written to ensure they can be understood by anyone. Once reviewed, they will be sent to the Discipline Manager for approval, and then published on the website.
24/24	Plan and Budget 2024
24/24.1	An amendment was made to this year's budget for training for the Regional Games. This covered the expenditure on pool hire and the income from fees. TB has provided a spreadsheet for this year which will help with planning for 2025. AD thanked TB for this.
24/24.2	AD informed the group that this year's budget differs from last year's, as there was no competition in May, as scheduled. It will be held next month.
24/24.3	Next year's budget will be discussed at the next meeting.
24/24.4	EC asked whether the October competition will be held every year. AD said that plans for next year will be discussed at the next meeting.
24/25	Grading days - dates / venues for 2024/5
24/25.1	TB is organising a grading day for routine grades.
24/25.2	10 th November figures in Hemel Hempstead.
24/25.3	AD advised of a possibility of having a date (maybe 8 th) in December, if required. Potential venues (Hemel Hempstead and Witham) were discussed, considering available hire time, location, and numbers of potential attendees.
24/25.4	It was confirmed that this would be for routine grades and figures.
24/25.5	AB asked whether this would replace the usual one held in January, just before the cut-off date for Nationals in March.
24/25.6	It was confirmed that the December date was 28 days after the November date already in place. It was also confirmed that the target attendees would be for those swimmers who would require the next grade up to qualify for National Age Groups in March.
24/25.7	Consideration was given as to whether to wait until after November to book the December date, but this would depend on the cancellation periods required.
24/25.8	It was suggested that having the January day could be reviewed following the results of the December day. The day could be at the end of January but bearing in mind the cut-off dates for entries to Nationals.
24/25.9	AD asked for confirmation of 8 th December.

- 24/25.10 JJ raised the difficulty of having a period of nothing, and then gradings in October, November and December, and trying to fit it all in with the training. In response, AD said that grading days were organised for the end of the year as there is no competition then.
- 24/25.11 The possibility of having more grading days in January and February was raised. It was suggested that putting in the grading day dates now would be helpful. AB suggested putting in competition dates and working grading around it.
- 24/25.12 The matter of requirements had been raised, and AD responded that she has a Regional Managers' meeting at the beginning of October where she hopes to get some more information on whether it will be different from last year.
- AB asked AD also to ask at that meeting, whether all cut-off dates for grading for the national competitions can be provided.

24/26

Competitions for 2024/5

- 24/26.1 Normally regional competitions are in February, March and June. June is not possible next year as the two referees are not available.
- 24/26.2 There was discussion as to whether to have the competitions spread throughout the year or at the beginning of the year.
- 24/26.3 Potential dates were discussed for a competition in May to prepare for the Combo Cup. KC advised that there is a regional development session on Sunday 18th May, and the Regional Games are in half-term.
- 24/26.4 It was decided to have a competition for figures and combos on 10th May
- 24/26.5 There was discussion about whether four competitions are still wanted, with February and March leading into Nationals, or should one be missed out.
- 24/26.6 KC advised keeping the February competition, before Nationals, in view of the numbers aiming for Nationals.
- 24/26.7 LN asked what was included at the respective East Region competitions.
- 24/26.8 AD responded that in March it is figures of all levels, age-group solos and duets. The combos are normally done twice - in March and June, or May. Normally at the March event it is champ solos and duets, so it is free and technical.
- 24/26.9 Regarding Masters: AD thought that they were at each one. In March they did it as champs, so they could still enter, but not with the Masters' rules. She suggested that Master's could be separate at the March event, depending what was wanted.

AB said Masters are definitely needed in the May competition for National Masters. She suggested also putting Masters in the March competition.

AD explained if they did age-group it would be purely routines with champs, 15+ solos and duets free and technical. Masters section for duet and solos. It was agreed to add teams.

24/26.10 AD asked for clarification from KB about the February competition – whether there were teams there as well rather than combos.
KB said she might have a team for nationals, but it would be a free team.

24/26.11 The following competitions were confirmed:

8th February: Figures, free teams, age-group solos and duets.

29th March: Age-group, 15+, Masters, teams, combo, solos and duets.

10th May: Practice for combos, ungraded figures and Masters.

24/26.12 AD asked for discussion as to whether a competition is still wanted in October or later in the year, or should a decision be made depending on how the year progressed.

It was decided that a competition was wanted later in the year, especially since there was little opportunity for figures. However, KB pointed out the need to have a break from competition to enable work on development and figures.

The potential dates for the competition were discussed.

24/26.13 AD raised the issue of complaints from the swimming pool in Stevenage about people turning up early and expecting to use their rooms. Other issues raised were damage, rude behaviour, the use of chairs, rubbish left behind, and people gathering in front of the fire exit to the pool and refusing to move. AD did not get this impression at the time, and felt they were accommodating.

24/26.14 There was discussion on the resolution of the situation.

The following were suggestions made:

1. Asking if people can be allowed onto the balcony earlier to free up room in the lobby.

2. Having the meeting room, where the team managers can meet the swimmers.

3. Team managers could bring a bin bag and, after the competition, check for rubbish in the areas used by the swimmers.

4. Booking the meeting room for the whole duration, so it can be shared between the teams, and booking the studio.

KB mentioned being mindful of the times for booking the rooms, i.e., just doing it near the teams' section, to keep costs down.

6. Checking, before the event, how many chairs are needed.

7. Locating any shop facility in the gallery where the timing suite is situated.

8. Addressing the issue of blocked fire exits at the time, so action can be taken then.

9. Making sure nobody enters the changing rooms until they are told, so the changing areas can be checked for cleanliness before anyone enters.

24/26.15 It was suggested that team names could be put up on the changing rooms. AD agreed to do this.

24/26.16 LN mentioned that a registration desk had been used in the past, with people not being allowed in until they were registered and were with their team managers. This would give time to check the changing rooms for cleanliness before starting. She suggested giving the team managers a printout to outline what they are responsible for.

24/26.17 There was consideration of the use of other pools.

24/26.18 AB had spoken to Joan Wheeler from the Sport Operations Committee about the issue of facilities and deep-water availability. Joan suggested Robinson Pool in Bedford.

AD mentioned that the location of a pool is also an important consideration.

24/26.19 Potential pools were discussed:
Haberdashers' Aske - 2m deep, but limited balcony space.
Southgate – deep enough - 3.8m to 0.9m
Potters Bar - not deep enough.
Chilterns Lifestyle Centre, Amersham – has a diving pool section
Hemel Hempstead – only 12m long, and with small balcony space, complete changing room area cannot be hired.

AD will investigate.

24/26.20 AB asked AD to ask at the Regional Managers' meeting if there are any restrictions on depths for competitions, and whether competition conditions will not be approved if the restrictions are not met.

24/26.21 There was discussion about the number of grading days required, and the dates for these.

Athletes cannot enter competitions if they do not have the grade, but equally they cannot attend a grading day if there are competitions at the same time.

The need to provide grading days to accommodate those who fail was recognised.

There was consideration of the issue of asking volunteers to give up so many weekends in a row.

24/26.22 It was suggested that routine grades could be organised in a training session, with three clubs, and with judges from all clubs.

24/26.23 Figure gradings are more of a problem, as if these are not available, athletes could be held back. It was suggested that athletes could attend another Region's grading days to accommodate individual athletes.

24/26.24 AB suggested that someone from London Region could be asked to facilitate a grading day in June.

24/26.25 LN raised the issue of no dates being listed on the website.
JJ added that there is also nothing on the website for coach/ judge training.

24/26.26 AB requested that AD asks about judge training, and the expectations for training new judges in the Region.

24/26.27 AB raised that the training courses need to be made more accessible, as there are people interested in the course who would prefer online. AD said Level 2 and 3 would have to be in person.

24/26.28 There was discussion about giving guidance to potential participants before putting them on the course. The clubs should make sure people are ready and prepared.

AB suggested bringing back an online 'Introduction to judging' resource explaining the basics - scoring system, figure descriptions etc.

24/26.29 LN asked about numbers of potential participants for the judges' course. LN has four that want to do Level 1. The group have about 12.

At the Regional Managers' meeting, AD will raise getting help with organising an in-person course and finding out who to approach.

24/26.30 KB asked about having a day in the summer to refine things after the Combo Cup.

24/26.31 The grading dates were confirmed as:

5th October – routines

10th November – figures

8th December – both

25th/26th January (potentially at Potters Bar) – both/as needed

26th April – grading day for figures - at Witham

19th July – TBC

AD to book venues.

24/27

Coaching courses

- 24/27.1 AB reported interest in the Assistant Coach course.
- EG mentioned that Norwich potentially have three or four who are interested, and she was hoping to get them through the course before Christmas.
- 24/27.2 AB to check with the Institute of Swimming (IoS) about minimum numbers for a course at short notice.
- AD has two people interested in the course. KC potentially has five, and JJ potentially has a couple.
- 24/27.3 AD confirmed that everyone has to start at Grade 1. - i.e. swimmers with Figure Grade 3 have to take Routine Grade 1, they cannot start at Grade 3 Routine.
- 24/27.4 AB to approach the IoS with numbers and find a date.
- 24/27.5 AB also mentioned the IoS potentially bringing a tutor to the Region to run a Level 2 course. Full days are required with a classroom and pool time, and swimmers would have to be available.
- TB suggested using one of their regional development days, if it aligns with the syllabus. This was discussed and some options for swimmer-provision were given.
- 24/27.6 AB to get more information from IoS about the format and requirements. The group are happy to direct swimmers to help the course run. AB confirmed it is free for the swimmers to attend. A team manager is required. Venue to be looked at.
- 24/27.7 **Scorer's course**
- AD does not have the updated course. She suggested that any interested participants help at the October competition, or shadow someone. She requested potential participants to come forward by October.
- She will get more information about the course and update the group at a later date.

24/28

Regional Games

- 24/28.1 TB reported that 32 athletes are taking part in a first session on 15th September. Any coaches who want to join to shadow or work with them are welcome. There is a good range of swimmers. Only 15 will progress.

- 24/28.2 TB advised that the parents will have a briefing when they arrive to explain the training plan, and give them understanding of the competition etc.
- 24/28.3 EC asked KC about the run-through of the GB trial, and how it will work. KC responded that it has been planned into the session. EC is still happy to coach.
- 24/29 Any other business**
- 24/29.1 SM raised that the Declaration of Conflict of Interest item on the agenda needs to be taken as an agenda item from a governance point of view.
- 24/29.2 Regarding the amendments to the previous minutes - SM queried item 24/14.5 and its contradiction with 24/14.6, and will clarify wording with AD, after the meeting,
- 24/29.3 LN reported that a query about being advised of changes which impact on choreography, received a response that they had been informed there are likely to be changes, but it is unofficial information.
- 24/29.4 KB asked where Nationals will be held. The venue is still to be confirmed.
- 24/30 Confidential items**
- 24/30.1 There were none.
- 24/31 Next meeting**
- 24/31.1 The next meeting will be on 9th November.