

Water Polo 2006

National Update
June 2006

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Water Polo 2012 Update

Since UK Sport announced funding for British Water Polo the national programme has been developing a plan to move the sport forward.

UK Sport is clear in its mission. They will only fund National Governing Bodies and Athletes who are serious about the Olympics, who have a realistic possibility of **winning medals** or at the very least be **highly competitive** in 2012. The money can only go to 'Performance' programmes (i.e. not Development) and the sport shall be continually assessed as to its validity to participate in the 2012 Games. However if we get the next 6 years right we can build and leave a massive legacy for the sport.

Over the short term (next three years) water polo will need to meet agreed UK Sport Key Performance Indicators in order to release their funding. Water polo is for the moment categorised as a World Class 'Development' Sport by UK Sport, and so long as we keep meeting the agreed targets then there will be a further formal review in late 2008 and ongoing monitoring to assess the need and value of continued funding through to 2012.

It's true that everyone involved in the sport wants the best possible future. To that end the number one target must be to compete at the Olympics in both the men and women's events and to compete with distinction and even consider getting into the Podium Zone. To do this it will take an enormous acceleration in performance, the likes of which have never been seen before. The timeline is tight, water polo has an initial three years to prove it's heading in the right direction and then another three to prove it's internationally competitive.

The mountain ahead is steep but climbable. UK Sports financial input gives a fantastic opportunity, one that could never have been dreamed of previously. If we get it right it will catapult Great Britain into

the upper echelons of World water polo in 2012 and beyond. But to be realistic in achieving this it will mean a radical overhaul of our current structure and practices.

We have to be pragmatic about whether the clubs can raise Performance to a World level. As we currently stand, and in the short space of time available, the answer is unfortunately "no", clubs throughout the country don't have the coaches, facilities nor back up support to develop their athletes to become truly world class.

The immediate challenge therefore is to strengthen the 2012 pathway and create an environment that trains athletes to attain that stature. All potential 2012 athletes need to be identified and they're training overseen by the national programme. UK Sport funding will then go into supporting those national team athletes and their training programmes.

The following points outline the immediate restructuring that is taking place to support this process.

- Full-time Performance Men and Women's Head Coaches to be employed.
- Selected Athletes to receive Athlete Performance Awards (APA's) that includes financial and service support
- A men and women's High Performance Centre to be formally based in Manchester.
- An agreement with the English Institute of Sport for Science and Medical support.
- Talented Athlete Scholarship Scheme (TASS) or equivalent support for athletes in Higher Education training at the High Performance Centres.

So what does this mean to the athletes, coaches, clubs and parents? Recently a letter was sent to all current members of the men and women's youth, junior and senior national teams. That let-

ter was the first step in identifying who wants to be part of the 2012 journey. It asked for their prepared level of commitment along with an outline of what kind of commitment would be needed.

Water polo is moving into uncharted waters. The sport is in effect moving from amateur to semi-professional status.

The following are answers to some questions that have recently asked.

Q. What exactly is the World Class Development Programme?

A. The World Class Development Programme is financed by UK Sport and directed and managed by British Water Polo. It offers potential 2012 Olympic athletes a package of services and support that include training camp opportunities, competitions, coaching services, sports science/medical support and access to English institute services.

Q. Who will receive an Athlete Performance Agreement?

A. As part of UK Sports World Class Development Programme everyone selected to represent Great Britain will receive an Athlete Performance Agreement which is being prepared at the moment by the ASA Legal dept in consultation with UK Sport and the National Performance Director (this will be reviewed in 2009).



Q. What financial support is included in an Athlete Performance Agreement (APA)?

A. All National team athletes will receive an Athlete Performance Agreement, however, only those who fulfil the tight UK Sport criteria will receive financial support. The APA selection policy is currently being worked on with UK Sport the ASA legal Dept along with the National Performance Director and will be published in the near future. That document will detail all funding allocations and criteria. It will set out how players qualify for funding, the levels of funding, and how players must progress and develop to maintain funding.

Q. What are the recognised training levels for juniors and youth players?

A. The training levels can be seen in water polo's "Player Pathway" LTAD document (available through the Awards section on the www.britishswimming.org web site or call ASA purchasing on 01527 514 288)

Q. With the Talented Athlete Scholarships Scheme (TASS) who gets it and what financial support do you get?

A. Water polo was accepted as a trial sport on the TASS scheme last year and we are currently negotiating to get more awards for the coming academic year. The criteria is getting tighter with athletes having to train in conjunction with a High Performance Centre. Scholarship awards are valued at £3,000 and can go towards physio, strength and conditioning, nutrition, time management and other areas of athlete services. It's not means tested.

Q. What happens if in 3 years the teams don't make the Performance Criteria that UK Sport stipulates and the funding stops?

A. Ultimately the decision lies with UK Sport. However, we have tried to negotiate realistic and achievable targets so that funding will continue. However the athletes commitment to the programme

and performance will decide the outcome

Q. In Manchester are the universities or other institutes of Higher education offering unconditional places on any course to these athletes?

A. No, qualification is via the normal process. We only have the ability to talk to faculties and make them aware of our athletes; potentially we can assist through clearing.

Q. Is it really necessary for me to participate in Water Polo's World Class Development Programme in order to receive an Athlete Personal Award?

A. Yes! Your involvement in the programme is key and ensures that British Water Polo can work with you to service your needs and monitor your progress participation is fundamental in maximising your potential towards 2012.

Q. They would only be at University for about 30 weeks a year, if they live in halls while they are university, where are they going to live for the other 20 weeks.

A. The current athletes are in student accommodation and stay all year. The programme will assist athletes finding accommodation but it is the athlete's responsibility. Married/couples will be in the same situation as other athletes we will try to assist them finding somewhere but it is the athletes overall responsibility.

Q. When do we I have to move?

A. The time span for athletes to be in Manchester is dependent on individual circumstances, however, at some stage they will need to move to continue to be part of the 2012 programme. Therefore all athletes will need to recognise how that pertains to them. The High Performance Centres will formally start in September.

Q. How much will selected athletes receive and will they receive a pension?

A. The exact amount is still to be confirmed with UK Sport. Pensions will not

be paid, it is for the athlete to make their own arrangements.

Q. What is the house-moving package?

There isn't one.

Q. Would I be able to have a full time job?

Yes but you would need to be at training and any deviation from the expected sessions would need to be agreed by the appointed coaches. You would be expected to attend training camps with water polo being your number one priority. Weekend training camps will probably still happen but not in the same way as now. There will be more overseas training and week long camps, therefore all of this would need to be considered when you are looking to decide your National Programme commitment.

Q. What does a recognised programme overseas mean?

A. A recognised overseas programme is generally a club that is deemed suitable by the national programme and offers GB athletes training and competition that is equal to or above the Performance Centre. The suitability of the overseas programme will be made by the national coach, the NPD and in discussion with the player and overseas coach.



National Academy

Sunday 6th- Friday 11th August.

Required: All current and prospective

Coaches & Team Mangers

The week will be Full Board and deliver an intensive programme of education and professional development.

Topics to be covered include: Nutrition, Psychology, Core stability and land training

Plus- Core Skills and Drills delivered by:

International Team Staff & the National Performance Director

In addition: Coaches will be assessed for suitability as a

Regional Training Centre Coach.

Team Managers- will manage the athletes and will receive additional training and be assessed for suitability to become a national team manager.

Price: Coaches and Manager s FREE Venue Millfield School Somerset.

To apply complete the form below and send to the Water Polo Office at the following address

by July 9th 2006 (Please note extended deadline)

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Position Applying for-

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Coach

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