



Scottish  
Swimming

# A Parent's Guide to Water Polo Competitions

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## Parents' Guide to Water Polo Competitions

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## **INTRODUCTION**

This document explains the available competitions for Scottish Players starting with the typical entry level through to Senior level competition. Volunteers are essential to making these competitions happen – Please read the Volunteer section at end of this document.

## **DEVELOPMENT & CLUB COMPETITIONS**

### **Development Tournaments**

Development tournaments are for players new to the sport and are held both regionally and nationally. Typically, teams play a few short games to allow for coaching and learning between games. The pitch size is adapted to what works locally. Most of these competitions are mixed gender teams, but occasionally they are single sex. Usually the ball used is a size 3.

National Development Tournaments are for the following age group:

- Under 13s mixed boys and girls
- National Finals annually for Under 13s mixed boys and girls

### **Friendlies & Club Tournaments**

Clubs set up “Friendlies” with other clubs for all levels of competition. Likewise, some clubs will host their own tournaments, often with special rules as they see fit to encourage competition.

## **DISTRICT LEAGUES AND CHAMPIONSHIPS**

Some Districts (especially the West District) hold their own leagues and championships. The competition categories are decided annually by the district water polo Convenor.

## SCOTTISH COMPETITIONS

### Scottish National Leagues (SNL) & Scottish Championships

Six Leagues and Championships are competed for in Scotland. See the following page for a visual timeline of these competitions. Scottish Water Polo is committed to creating gender equity in its competitions and having a competition pathway to prepare players for higher levels. Thus, Males and Females compete separately in 3 different age divisions each:

- Senior
- Under 19
- Under 16

The Scottish National Leagues commence in August and finish the next calendar year in June.

Scottish Championships age groups match those of the Leagues. This knockout competition is played near the end of the league season with first rounds in spring time and a finals day between April and June.

#### Player's eligibility

A player must be registered as a "swimmer" to Scottish Swimming and may compete for only one team for the entire period of each competition. However, through second claiming a player might play for one club in one Scottish competition and another club in a separate Scottish competition during the same year. For example, a 18 year old boy might compete for Club A in the Under 19 boys League and compete for Club B in the Senior Men's League so long as the player is registered with both clubs.

#### Scottish National Leagues

Each League's specific format is announced by the Domestic Convenor dependent on the number of teams entering it. The format is often a double round-robin. However, if there are many teams entered, it may split into a top half and a bottom half after a single round-robin. When Universities are entered into the senior leagues, their matches are typically scheduled to be completed by April 1<sup>st</sup>. Each player playing in the leagues pays a £35 annual league fee via their first claim polo club which covers them regardless of how many leagues they compete in.

#### Scottish Championships (Scottish Cups)

The Scottish Championships are the premier polo event in Scotland and are traditionally known as the Scottish Cup (The name of the Men's Championship Trophy). Each competition has its own dedicated trophy. Entered teams are put into a random draw. They then compete in a knockout tournament. Entries are £100 per team and the competition commences in late winter or early spring.

The Championship Finals day is a big event which includes the final two teams from each of the six categories battling for the Championship. Preliminary rounds and Senior semi-finals currently take place at the chosen pool of the first drawn team, though all competitions must take place in deep water pools. Junior Semi-finals occur at neutral venues. Medals are awarded to the Champions & Runner's up.

## Timeline of the Scottish league and championship seasons 2019-2021



## BRITISH LEVEL COMPETITIONS

### Swim England Inter-Regional Championships (IRs)

This “regional” competition is between British Regions: 8 English Regions, Scotland, Wales and Ireland. Separate Boys and Girls competitions are over one weekend annually typically at these times of year: Girls & Boys Under 14s (December), Girls & Boys Under 18s (January/February), Girls and Boys Under 16 (June/July). Scotland usually enters teams into these competitions as regional “Saltires” Teams.

### Swim England National Age Group Championships (NAGS)

This club competition typically during March and April for Under 19s and Under 17s and in October for Under 15s. Girls and boys compete separately. As there is not a “British Championships” for juniors this is the defacto British Championships as clubs from England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland are invited to enter. Often teams that enter are combined and “superclubs” formed of players from other smaller clubs from a region.

### **British Water Polo League (BWPL)**

The British Water Polo League is a club competition for Senior Men's and Senior Women's clubs across Britain. The league runs from September to March with 4 divisions of Men's clubs and 3 divisions of women. There are two phases of the season and the second phase determines promotion and relegation. Often juniors will play with seniors in the lower divisions.

### **British Championships**

The British Championships typically occur between the top 8 mens and women's clubs from the BWPL should they choose to enter. Typically this competition is held in April and May with preliminaries and then a finals weekend for the top 4 teams of each gender. The top two teams qualify for LEN European club competitions.

## **INTERNATIONAL COMPETITIONS**

### **Scottish National Squads**

Scottish Squads are chosen for "International" tournaments which allow Scotland to compete as a nation: typically these are the Commonwealths and EU Nations. Also, other International tournaments may be entered if approved by the Scottish Water Polo Committee. These International Tournaments are usually for either Under 18s, Under 21s or Seniors.

### **Great Britain Squads**

Great Britain Squads are chosen from amongst home country players in preparation for specifically approved tournaments. Great Britain usually competes in the European Championships put on by LEN for specifically announced age groups. Top 6 finishers in these competitions qualify for the World Championships.

## **VOLUNTEERING**

Parents, siblings and others with little or no water polo experience can become useful volunteers for water polo competitions as:

- Team Managers: Training with TM 1 & 2 courses
- Table Officials: Club Table Officials Course is the entry level course
- Drivers – to events
- Tournament Directors & League convenors – Administrative positions
- Event Management – typically for Championship events
- Referees – *95% are current or former players* – Grade D is entry level Referee's course