



ESSA Water Polo Competitions 2021 onwards

Patron: HRH Duke of Cambridge

**Boys/Mixed U13 (Year 7- 8); Boys/Mixed U15 (Year 7-10);
Boys U18 (Year 9-13)
Girls only U13 (Year 7 - 8); Girls only U15 (Year 7-10);
Girls only U18 (Year 7-13)**

*For ease of identification purposes these age groups are known in ESSA as
Junior - U13, Intermediate - U15 and Senior - U18.*

ESSA Water Polo competitions will adopt the New FINA Rules introduced in May 2019 in line with those applied from within the British Water Polo League, Swim England and British Swimming Water Polo Management Groups, from September 2019 onwards – these can be found at the final page of this document.

Age qualification rules

All year age groups run from 1 September of the current school academic year (or the first day of term if thereafter). Players must be in full time education in school and on roll from the start of the school academic year. Any player resitting exams or arriving in school and retaking a year (i.e. is older than their peer group) is ineligible for this younger age group.

School Administration

- Teams are invited to enter for all age groups in the second term of the preceding school year to enable the regional groups to be organised to meet school calendar deadlines for the new school year / book suitable venues.
- Late entries are at the discretion of the ESSA Organiser and can only be accepted before the first round of that age group starts and where a space in a regional group may exist.
- Cost of entry is £35 per age group team and the fee is reviewed and set annually. Regionalised Cadet cost of entry is £20 per age group.
- Staff & coaches must return the ESSA Child Protection documentation each year signed by the I/c water polo and any other teachers/coaches that will accompany the team.
- A school may only enter one school team per age group.
- A school may not compete if the ESSA Organiser has not received their entry form, signed Child Protection form and payment. Deadlines are clearly marked on the entry forms.
- It is the responsibility of the school to take to each round completed ESSA team documentation/declaration sheet and pass it to the organiser of the round/competition as required.
- Schools are responsible for their own travel costs to at ESSA Competitions.
- Teams will share the cost of pool hire/neutral referee expenses for a tournament if required, consideration being taken of the proportionate cost for the different teams taking part / distance travelled where appropriate.
- The entry forms and signed Child Protection forms for all water polo competitions are held securely with the ESSA Honorary Secretary for the duration of the competition then disposed of appropriately in line with GDPR guidelines.

Photography and filming during ESSA water polo tournaments

Photography and filming at all ESSA water polo events is permitted provided the guidelines from Wavepower 2016-19: Child safeguarding policy and procedures for clubs is followed the latest Wavepower guidelines can be found on:

www.swimming.org/swimengland/wavepower-child-safeguarding-for-clubs/

This publication sets out clear child safeguarding policies and procedures and is adopted by all Swim England affiliated clubs and organisations. Photographs and filming can take place during an event; by entering the competition a School has agreed to adhere to these guidelines. However, should a School (on behalf of their pupils) object to their pupils being photographed or filmed during an event they should make this representation on their entry form and/or prior to the event commencing on the day of competition. The lead tournament organiser on the day must be made aware of this if the ESSA Honorary Water Polo Secretary isn't present. Please note that some council/private centres do not allow photography at any time. In this situation clearly, no photography will be allowed.

Competition Groups

- All competition groups and deadlines for playing a round are set by the ESSA Organiser or ESSA nominated water polo competition organiser.
- All schools will receive information for all the groups in their competition with completion / deadline dates to meet the Competition schedule. On release of the competition dates there will be a 'recommended 2-week period' that group tournaments should take place.
- Host Schools will get in touch directly with the schools in their groups to establish possible available pool dates for their group. The electronic data by group shows the host school highlighted. Host Schools are responsible for making sure that the appropriate safety measures/announcements are in place prior to an ESSA tournament commencing.
- All schools will have the contact name(s) and e-mail address of each school provided electronically on an updated ESSA Water Polo Contacts list.

Tournament/Game criteria

- The emphasis for ESSA water polo is to get players to play and get more positive experiences of the sport. Competition structures are designed to help achieve this. All Championship and Plate tournament finals days will now have 6 schools competing.
- In all tournaments prior to the actual Championship, Plate or Bowl finals Schools are permitted to play from a squad of 15 players to increase a greater number of pupils participating during the earlier group stages of competition should they so desire.
- Teams to play in appropriate swimwear, schools to have a schoolteacher with them and bring a home and away set of 13 caps in contrasting colours.
- All girls' teams and boys with exceptionally long hair will need a swim hat to wear under their match polo cap.
- For all qualifying rounds play a round robin format if possible (all play all). Each game will be 2x6 minutes minimum continuous play. If time allows for the older age groups, then teams can play 2x7 minutes all in.
- Tournament draw will usually take place on the poolside before the first game - first named team in each match to wear white caps and defend the end to the left of the table. Tournament structures are prescribed and must be adhered to. For 3 Schools, 4 Schools, 5 Schools and 6 Schools tournaments please refer to the official ESSA tournament structure which prescribes the order of play.
- Competition Ball size by age group to be used – U13 Girls only & U13 Boys/mixed Size 3; U15 Girls only & U15 Boys/mixed Size 4; U18 Girls only Size 4 and U18 Boys Size 5.
- Neutral referees to officiate or staff to share duties with experience taken into consideration. If the host School is unable to provide a neutral official(s) they should notify all attending Schools at least 48 hours before the tournament which should allow the other Schools to try and provide a neutral official(s).

- A tournament league table will decide who progresses in the competition (see STRUCTURE & PROGRESS below) based on 2 points for a win, 1 point for each team for a draw and the losing team receives 0 points.
- If the organiser is unable to separate teams on points alone then the decision to be made using (in the following order of importance)
 - 1) Goal difference; 2) result between tied teams; 3) goals scored; 4) a penalty shoot-out.
- The penalty shoot-out is to take place immediately after the main tournament with 5 different players per team shooting at a deep end only (if time is running short and with both team's agreement the initial number of penalties can be reduced to 3 penalties). If the game remains tied after the initial 5 penalty shots (or 3) from different players a different player is then nominated from the team on a sudden death basis (and so on) until a result is decided. If all players have taken a penalty shot, then the order begins again from the very first player to take the penalty shot. N.B. if there is an imbalance of numbers between the two teams when the team with the smallest number of players goes back to their first penalty taker the other team has the option to do the same.
- The Goalkeeper in the shoot-out must be one of the 2 players numbered and named on the team sheet i.e. who wore cap numbers 1 and 13 during the competition. The Goalkeeper is unable to take a penalty shot during the penalty shoot-out.
- Player exclusion for brutality to another player is an automatic removal from the game and from the tournament. They will then miss the next game the player's team competes in that is under ESSA direction. The School will then decide their own course of action and sanctions with their pupil. ***This will run over into the next school year if necessary.***
- Player exclusion for offensive behaviour is an automatic removal from the game and a one match ban. ***This will run over into the next school year if necessary.***
- Coaches red carded at a tournament will leave the poolside immediately. For the team's next match, the coach will not be permitted to be involved in either the warm-up or game itself, see ESSA Code of Conduct document 2021 onwards.

Structure & Progressing to the Finals for U15 Boys/Mixed and U18 Boys

First round: To be played by **10th December**. Top 2 teams in each regional cluster tournament will progress to the ESSA Championship Round. The next two teams (3rd and 4th placed) will advance to the ESSA Plate Competition and the remainder will go through to the ESSA Bowl Tournament.

Championship: Round 2 - Twelve teams will contest the Championship competition in two groups of 6 **by February half term**. If in 2 groups, the top 3 in each group will go on to Round 3 the ESSA Finals in March. Teams in 4th place in Round 2 are the reserves for the 6 team Championship Finals if a team who qualified in the top 3 places cannot for any reason play on the day. If played in 3 groups, the top 2 in each group will go through to the ESSA Finals.

Plate: Round 2 - Twelve teams will contest the Plate competitions in two groups of 6 **by February half term**. Top 3 in each group will advance to Round 3 the ESSA Plate Final which will take place in March. Teams in 4th place in Round 2 are the reserves for the 6 team Plate Finals if a team who qualified in the top 3 places cannot for any reason play on the day. If played in 3 groups, the top 2 in each group will go through to the ESSA Finals. The decision to play in 2 or 3 groups to win through to the ESSA finals day will be based on the number of schools entering the competition.

Bowl: Round 2 - All teams who qualify for the Bowl will play in a tournament **by February half term** if necessary, to decide the top 2 teams from each group who will qualify for Round 3 the ESSA Bowl Final in March.

Structure & Progressing to the Finals for U13 Boys/Mixed tournament

First round: To be played **by the end of the Easter/Lent term**. All teams in each regional cluster tournament will continue into the ESSA Championship Round 2. Teams will be seeded based on the first-round results.

Championship: Round 2 – All teams will contest the Championship competition in 5 or 6 groups which will be played **before the end of April**. The winners will go through to the ESSA Championship Finals in May/June. Teams in 2nd place in their Round 2 are the reserves for the winning team who qualified for the Championship Final if that team cannot for any reason play on the day.

Structure & Progressing to the Finals for U15 and U18 Girls only tournaments

First round: To be played **by the end of February half term in the Easter/Lent term**. The Top 2 teams from each regional cluster tournament will advance to into the ESSA Championship Finals directly. Teams in 3rd place in their Round are the reserves for the winning and runners up team who qualified for the Championship Final if that team cannot for any reason play on the day. The Championship Finals will be played in March.

Structure & Progressing to the Finals for U13 Girls only tournament

First round: To be played **by the end the Easter/Lent term**. The Top 2 teams from each regional cluster tournament will progress to the ESSA Championship Finals directly. Teams in 3rd place in their Round are the reserves for the winning and runners up team who qualified for the Championship Final if either team cannot for any reason play on the day. The Championship Finals will be played in May/June.

ESSA Championship/Plate/Bowl Finals – each of the competing Schools must complete an ESSA Team Declaration form and submit this before the finals tournament commences. This form should include the names of all pupils and their dates of birth and must be countersigned by the School Head teacher/Deputy Head verifying that each pupil has been on the School roll since the start of the academic for the year of the competition. The ESSA Presentation Policy will be circulated to all Schools competing at their respective finals tournaments and this must be adhered to by all Schools. School's competing in the Championship finals Schools will be asked to make a nominal contribution towards the officials for these tournaments to help support the appropriate standard officials for such an occasion. Following the Championship finals each School will be sent an invoice for their contribution.

Structure of ESSA Championship and Plate Finals

Usually this will be for 6 qualifying teams and there will be 11 games in total. The teams are assigned into 2 mini leagues of 3 teams and set up the playoffs rounds to establish the finalists. **Bowl Finals** will normally be for 4 qualifying teams and will be structured on a round robin format.

Cadet competition entries for U11 and U13 Boys/Mixed teams

This competition takes place in the summer term (entry details come out in January/February each year) and is regional based. One preliminary 'friendly round' is followed by a finals tournament in the North, Midlands and South of England for both age groups. Guidelines/rules can be found in a separate document on the ESSA website under water polo.

Duke of Cambridge Cup Representative honours

This is a one-day tournament for the best 39 boys and best 39 girls, nominated by schools and England Water Polo, from a specific age group (identified at the start of the academic year by the ESSA Council). To be considered for selection in this competition a pupil must attend School in England. Schools and Swim England talent squads will be notified of how to nominate pupils.

International honours

These can be achieved following selection by the ESSA Head Coach, usually at the Duke of Cambridge Cup one-day tournament. Since 2015 International teams have represented the ESSA at tournaments in Malta and Hungary and also played Home internationals against Romania and Australia.

Results of ESSA Finals

ESSA Finals tournament results from events are found on the ESSA water polo website page.

Rule Changes – ESSA Water Polo will adopt the following rules in line with the British Water Polo League, Swim England and British Swimming Water Polo Management Groups from September 2019.

NEW FINA RULES, April 2019

The changes are probably the most significant since the early 1960s when the 'modern game' was born by introducing substitutes instead of seven-a-side as well as four periods instead of two. The aim is to speed up the game and make it even more attractive for the spectator.

British Water Polo League will be operating these rules from September 2019:

- Reduced possession time of 20 seconds in the following situations:
 1. Award of a corner throw;
 2. Award of a penalty throw without a change of possession;
 3. Award of an exclusion foul without a change of possession (unless there is more than 20 seconds remaining);
 4. When the attacking team regains possession after a shot at goal.
 - A free throw taken at the location of the ball rather than the foul.
 - When taking a corner throw or a free throw awarded outside 6m, a goal may be scored from (a) an immediate shot at goal or (b) having visibly put the ball into play, after faking a shot or swimming with the ball.
 - Goalkeepers can now go past half-distance line (and take penalties).
 - Two time-outs per team at any time in the match instead of one per quarter – *not relevant for ESSA*.
 - Holding the ball is no longer a reason for a player not to be awarded a penalty throw. An attacker facing the goal and making a shooting action in 6m will be awarded a penalty throw when impeded from behind if the tackle prevented a *probable goal*.

Mainly for practical reasons, BWPL will not be operating these rules (although all these changes will be kept under review for possible future use):

- *Flying substitutions using an additional lateral substitution re-entry area between the goal line and half-distance line.*
- *Duration of play – the new rules stipulate a 3-minute half-time interval. BWPL will continue with a 2-minute interval.*
- *Introduction of a time-out button for use by team officials.*
- *Automatic visual effects for signalling the last five seconds of exclusion time as well as the time an excluded player can re-enter the field of play.*
- *Video Assistance referee to alert match referees of doubtful goal/no goal situations.*
- *Audio systems for officials.*
- *The Game Video Monitoring System (GVMS) for identifying and sanctioning incidents of brutality / violence not appropriately punished during a game.*

ESSA Honorary Water Polo Secretary, 2021 onwards