



ESSA Water Polo Competitions

Competition Rules

(effective from 2017)

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.*

Age qualification rules

All year age groups run from 1st September of the current school academic year. 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.

Photography and filming during ESSA water polo tournaments

Photos and filming can only take place at ESSA Water Polo competitions with the consent from all competing schools and venue (as per ASA guidelines). It is the direct responsibility of the tournament organiser to make sure all competing schools are in agreement that photos and/or filming can take place.

However, if all schools are in agreement and happy for either photographs or filming to take place (for example a pupil may need video evidence for GCSE purposes) a written log must be taken of the name of the person photographing/filming, the School that they are affiliated to, date, time and contact number by the hosting School and forward these details to ESSA water polo organiser. At the finals for all ESSA competitions the ESSA water polo organiser or member of the ESSA Council will take responsibility for this.

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.
- 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), phone number 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 tournament finals days will now have 6 schools competing.
- Teams to play in appropriate swimwear, schools to have a school teacher with them and bring a home and away set of 13 caps in contrasting colours.
- All girls, 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 and match order 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.
- 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.
- A tournament league table will decide who progresses onwards 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.
- The Goalkeeper in the shoot-out has to 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.
- Player exclusion for brutality/offensive behaviour to another player or official is an automatic removal from the game and from the tournament. They will then miss the next game the player competes in that is under ESSA direction. The School will then decide their own course of action and sanctions with their pupil.
- Coaches red carded at a tournament will leave the poolside immediately and are unable to take the team for their next match. See ESSA Code of Conduct document 2017 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 continue into the ESSA Championship Round. The next two teams (3rd and 4th placed) will move into 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 go on to Round 3 the ESSA Plate Final. This 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. This will take place 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 continue 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 continue 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 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 should include the names of all pupils and their dates of birth which has been 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.

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 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.

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.

Results/Notification of ESSA Finalists

ESSA Finals qualifying teams, tournament finals results/scores and images from events are found on the ESSA website.

ESSA Water Polo Organiser