

ASA Water Polo Performance Pathway

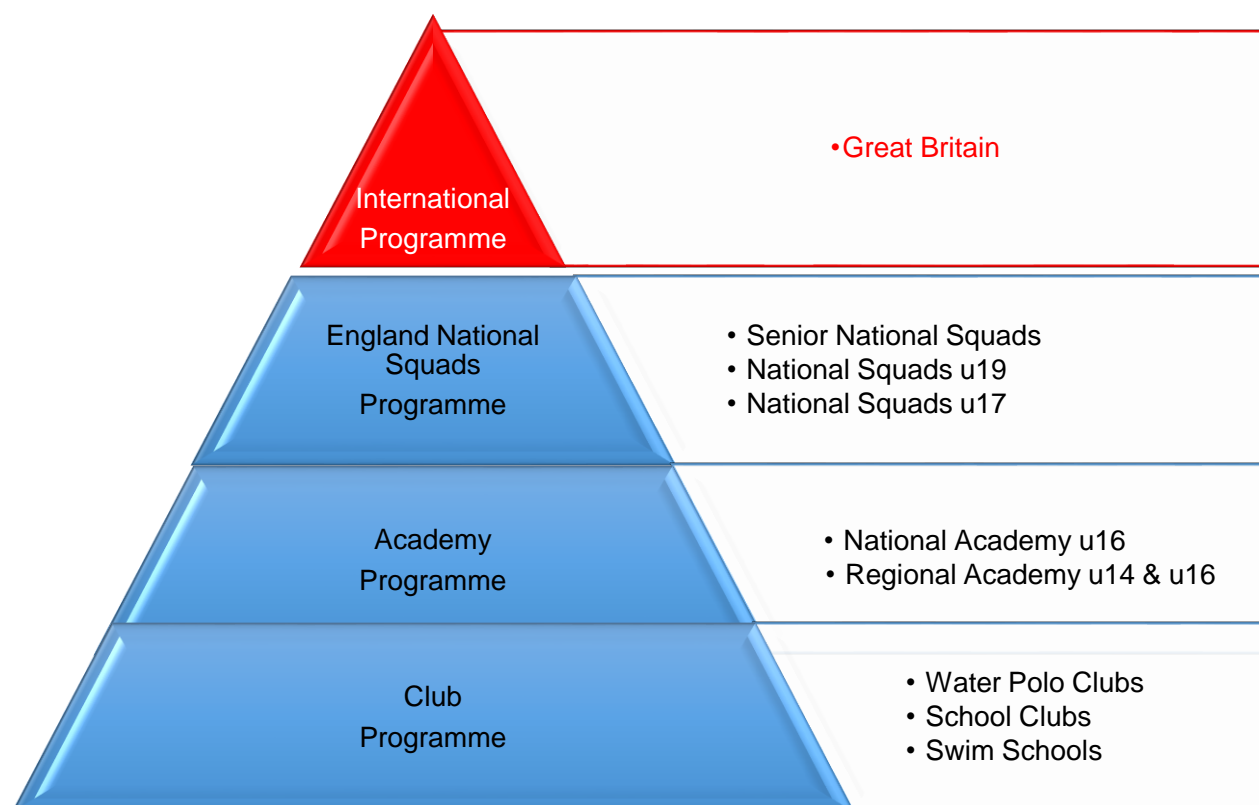
Following the Tunnicliffe Review, the water polo performance pathway has been reviewed and re-designed in light of the following key considerations:

- number of quality coaches available at each level
- number of quality athletes available for selection at each level
- frequency and intensity of training for a junior water polo player
- level of funding available

The new performance pathway will:

- have clear, published athlete standards (technical & tactical) required to be part of each level of the performance pathway
- use the agreed athlete standards to become the focus of the coach development programme and parental education on what athletes need to develop further
- shift the emphasis of performance programmes to individual player development, rather than competition-specific team preparation

There are four levels to the performance pathway:



The 'World Class Programme' (International Programme) for other aquatic disciplines is managed and delivered by 'British Swimming'. Following the removal of funding by UK Sport in 2013, there is currently no world class programme for water polo. This document refers only to the English performance pathway, with a key aim of driving performance standards as a Home Nation in order to return to the world stage and influence UK Sport and British Swimming to re-establish a funded world class programme.

1. Club Programme

Clubs are essential to the development of fundamental athlete skills as well as talent identification and talent confirmation phases. Throughout an athlete's journey on the player pathway, it is an expectation that the athlete will rely upon and return to their 'home club' in order to access regular, club training and to compete alongside their peers in club representative competitions of the National Championships.

Club coaches will be supported to deliver quality training environments through the offer of an appropriate, fit-for-purpose, qualification scheme that includes; level 1, level 2 and level 3 (due for release late 2017) Coaching Water Polo qualifications supplemented by five additional CPD workshops (due for launch 2018) that will build up specific tactical and technical knowledge required to coach at club level. Alongside the formal qualification route, club coaches will also be encouraged to link with their Regional Academy for mentor, shadow appointments and knowledge-share opportunities.

The publication of clear athlete standards for the 'Academy Programme' will ensure that club coaches understand what individual players should be working towards within their club sessions and what is required to progress players through the pathway.

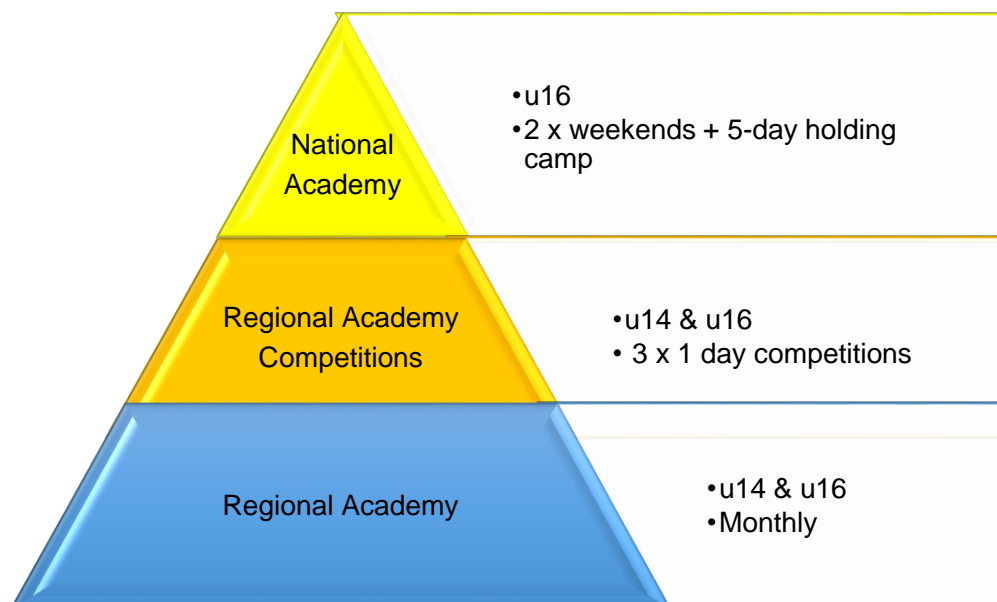
2. Academy Programme

The first step onto the talent pathway is through the 'Academy Programme', which is made up of two levels;

1. Regional Academy – monthly training within Regional Squad (u14 & u16)
2. National Academy – triannual training across 2 weekends + 5 day camp (strongest from Regional)

2.1: Regional Academy:

The 'Regional Academy' is a monthly training programme as part of regional squad preparations. Training sessions will be delivered and funded by Regions to include a minimum of 1½ hours of water time and at least 45 minutes strength & conditioning.



Four squads in each region:

- u14 boys
- u16 boys
- u14 girls
- u16 girls

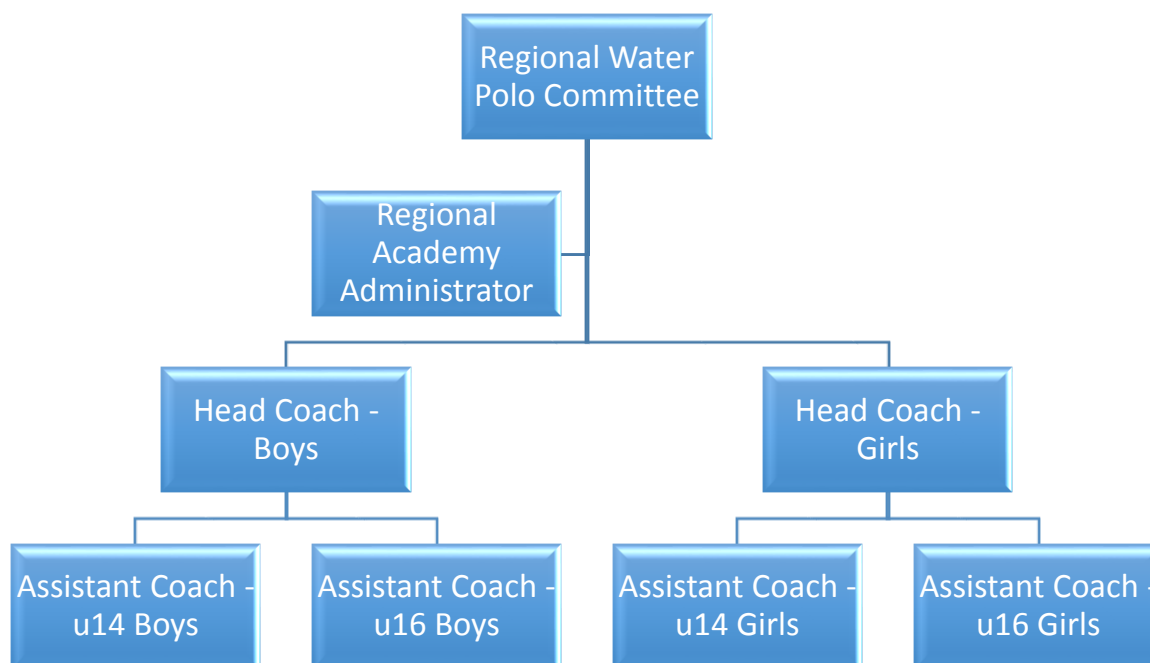
Seven regions:

- North West
- Midlands
- South West
- South East
- North East
- East
- London

NB. The u18 Regional Programme will continue under auspices of the Regions and while not a formal part of the talent pathway, the u18 Regional Programme forms an important part of the player pathway.

To ensure a wide base of talent selection, any athletes selected as part of the National Squads Programme **are not eligible** to be part of the Regional or National Academy Programmes.

Regions will be supported to recruit and implement the following Regional Academy structure to deliver the monthly programme. The Regional Academy Administrator will act as the main point of contact between the Regional Academy and The ASA and the two Head Coaches will be supported through a bespoke coach development programme, delivered and funded by the ASA.



Regional Academy Players will be selected by the Regional Coaching Teams to represent their region in the annual 'Inter Regional Championships' as their first taste of 'representative water polo'. National Squad coaches will attend the Inter Regional Championships as part of the talent identification process.

In addition to a monthly training programme the top Regional Academy Players, who meet a prescribed selection criteria, will compete in a triannual 'Regional Academy Competition' (RAC), designed to provide appropriate-level competition for the strongest players and act as talent confirmation step for consideration to national squads. As well as the players, the two Head Coaches of the Regional Academy will be expected to attend the RAC as part of the coach development programme.

The 'Regional Academy Competition' will be a one day, gender-specific tournament, for the strongest Regional Academy players who are **not part** of the National Squad Programme, **regardless of age**. The competition days will be hosted in a centralised venue, delivered and funded by the ASA:

RAC 1: 26th-27th November 2016

- Saturday 26th November – Top 60 female Regional Academy players compete (6 x 10)
- Sunday 27th November – Top 60 male Regional Academy players compete (6 x 10)

RAC 2: 25th-26th February 2017

- Saturday 25th February – Top 60 female Regional Academy players compete (6 x 10)
- Sunday 26th February – Top 60 male Regional Academy players compete (6 x 10)

RAC 3: 27th-28th May 2017

- Saturday 27th May – Top 60 female Regional Academy players compete (6 x 10)
- Sunday 28th May – Top 60 male Regional Academy players compete (6 x 10)

Head Regional Academy Coaches will be appointed and managed by Regions and there are clear expectations with regards to the pursuit of continual professional development as a coach in addition to engagement with and commitment to the coach development programme.

Regional Coaches will be supported to deliver quality training environments through the offer of an appropriate, fit-for-purpose, qualification scheme that includes; level 2 & level 3 (due for release late 2017) Coaching Water Polo qualifications supplemented by five additional CPD workshops (due for launch 2018) that will build up specific tactical and technical knowledge required to coach at regional level. Alongside the formal qualification route, Regional Coaches will be expected to attend Regional Academy Competitions where the coach development programme will be delivered. Head Coaches will also be encouraged to link with their National Academy or National Squad Programme for mentor, shadow appointments and knowledge-share opportunities.

The publication of clear athlete standards for the Academy Programme will ensure that Regional Coaches understand what individual players should be working towards within their regional training sessions and the publication of athlete standards for the 'National Squads Programme' will ensure that they know what is required to move players through the pathway.

2.2: National Academy

The 'National Academy' is a gender-specific, triannual training programme as part of squad preparations and will provide athletes with their first taste of attending a residential, domestic training camp including water time and lifestyle support.

National Academy athletes will be selected from Regional Academy Players, who are **not part** of the National Squads Programme, regardless of age and will be based on meeting clear selection criteria as well as individual performance at the Regional Academy Competitions:

- Top 30 u16 girls
- Top 30 u16 boys

The National Academy will be delivered by National Academy Coaches and funded by ASA central budget plus an athlete contribution. The Programme consists of three training camps leading to a competition and should be attended by selected athletes, three times per year in addition to attending the Regional Academy Programme, **but not as well as** the National Squads Programme:

- National Academy 1: 7th-8th January 2017
- National Academy 2: 6th-7th May 2017
- National Academy 3: 26th-30th August 2017 (residential training camp/School Games holding camp)
- Sainsbury's School Games: 31st August-3rd September 2017

National Academy athletes will be selected to represent an English squad in the annual Sainsbury's School Games who will compete against Home Nation counterparts.

Each National Academy will have Strength & Conditioning workshops (performance sessions) following an agreed national strategy and will include a measurable testing programme. Players will also be introduced to Sport Psychology and Physiotherapy sessions. These again will form an integral part in all Academy camps following an agreed national strategy, established by the National Squads Performance Staff.

National Academy Coaches will be supported to deliver quality training environments through the offer of an appropriate, fit-for-purpose, qualification scheme that includes; level 3 Coaching Water Polo qualification (due for release late 2017) supplemented by a personal coach development programme that will encourage links to National Squad Coaches for mentor, shadow appointments and knowledge-share opportunities.

The publication of clear athlete standards for the Academy Programme will ensure that National Academy Coaches understand what individual players should be working towards as individuals and the publication of athlete standards for the 'National Squads Programme' will ensure that they know what is required to move players through the pathway.

Academy Programme 2016-17

23-Sep	30-Sep	07-Oct	14-Oct	21-Oct	28-Oct	04-Nov	11-Nov	18-Nov	25-Nov	26-27 Nov	02-Dec	03-04 Dec	09-Dec	10-11 Dec	16-Dec	23-Dec	30-Dec	06-Jan	07-08 Jan	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	RAC	11		12		13	14	15	16	15	
Regional Academy u14 u16				Half Term	Regional Academy				Regional Academy	Regional Academy Comp		U14 Boys Inter Regional Champs		U14 Girls Inter Regional Champs	Regional Academy					National Academy

13-Jan	20-Jan	27-Jan	03-Feb	04-05 Feb	10-Feb	11-12 Feb	17-Feb	24-Feb	25-26 Feb	03-Mar	10-Mar	17-Mar	24-Mar	31-Mar	07-Apr	14-Apr	21-Apr	28-Apr	05-May
16	17	18	19	20	20	21	22	22	RAC	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32
		Regional Academy		U18 Boys Inter Regional Champs		U18 Girls Inter Regional Champs		Regional Academy	Regional Academy Comp				Regional Academy					Regional Academy	

06-07 May	12-May	19-May	26-May	27-28 May	02-Jun	09-Jun	16-Jun	23-Jun	30-Jun	01-02 Jul	07-Jul	08-09 Jul	14-Jul	21-Jul	28-Jul	04-Aug	11-Aug	18-Aug	26-30 Aug	31Aug-03Sep
33	34	35	36	36	37	38	39	40	41		42		43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50
National Academy			Regional Academy	Regional Academy Comp				Regional Academy		U16 Boys Inter Regional Champs		U16 Girls Inter Regional Champs			Regional Academy				National Academy	Sainsbury's School Games

3. National Squads Programme

The next step on the performance pathway is through the 'National Squads Programme', which is made up of three levels;

1. u17 National Squads
2. u19 National Squads
3. Senior National Squads

All squads provide gender-specific, residential, monthly training programme made up of domestic weekend camps and overseas camps, funded by ASA central budget and athlete contributions.

Each squad will train on the same weekend every month in order to facilitate the creation of a national calendar for water polo to promote athlete, coach and officials planning and allow the opportunity for competitions and events (including British Water Polo League fixtures) to be planned around regular programme activity.

3.1: u17 National Squads

The 'u17 National Squads Programme' is designed to be a two-year programme and provides monthly, gender-specific weekend training camps delivered by national team coaches on a set weekend every month.

u17 National Squad athletes will be selected from Regional and National Academy Players, based on meeting technical selection criteria and performance throughout the Academy Programme:

- Top 20-25 u17 boys
- Top 20-25 u17 girls

Pinnacle competitive opportunities for u17 National Squad:

- England u17 teams will be selected from the u17 National Squad athletes for the biennial 'ESSA International u17 Championships'.
- u17 National Squad athletes will be considered for selection to represent Great Britain (along with the respective Scottish and Welsh athletes) in the biennial 'LEN Junior Championships'.

u17 National Squad Coaches will be supported to deliver quality training environments through the offer of an appropriate, fit-for-purpose, qualification scheme that includes; level 3 Coaching Water Polo supplemented by a personal development programme that will encourage links to Senior National Squad Coaches for mentor, shadow appointments and knowledge-share opportunities.

The publication of clear athlete standards for the National Squads Programme will ensure that u17 National Squad Coaches understand what individual players should be working towards throughout training sessions and will ensure that they know what is required to move players through the pathway.

3.2: u19 National Squads

The 'u19 National Squads Programme' is designed to be a two-year programme and provides monthly, gender-specific weekend training camps delivered by national team coaches on a set weekend every month.

u19 National Squad athletes will be selected from u17 National Squad athletes, based on meeting technical selection criteria and performance throughout the Performance Programme:

- Top 20-25 u19 boys
- Top 20-25 u19 girls

Pinnacle competitive opportunities for u19 National Squad:

- England u19 teams will be selected from the u19 National Squad athletes for the biennial 'ESSA International u19 Championships'.
- u19 National Squad athletes will be considered for selection to represent Great Britain (along with the respective Scottish and Welsh athletes) in the biennial 'LEN Youth Championships'.

u19 National Squad Coaches will be supported to deliver quality training environments through a personal development programme that will encourage links to Senior National Squad Coaches for mentor, shadow appointments and knowledge-share opportunities.

The publication of clear athlete standards for the National Squads Programme will ensure that u19 National Squad Coaches understand what individual players should be working towards throughout training sessions and will ensure that they know what is required to move players into the Senior National Squad.

3.3 Senior National Squads

The 'Senior National Squads Programme' provides monthly, gender-specific weekend training camps delivered by national team coaches on a set weekend every month

Senior National Squad athletes will progress from u19 National Squads based on meeting technical selection criteria and performance throughout the u19 National Squads Programme

- Top 16 women
- Top 16 men

Pinnacle competitive opportunities for Senior National Squad:

- England Senior teams will be selected from the Senior National Squad athletes for the quadrennial Commonwealth Water Polo Championships
- Senior National Squad athletes will be considered for selection to represent Great Britain (along with respective Scottish and Welsh athletes) in the biennial 'LEN Senior Championships'

Senior National Squad Coaches will be supported to deliver quality training environments through a personal development programme that will encourage links to world class coaches for mentor, shadow appointments and knowledge-share opportunities.

Competition Pathway

The Performance Pathway must be underpinned by appropriate level competition both home and abroad. As such, each stage of the performance pathway is reliant both upon athletes training and competing on a regular basis with their home club in order to compete at the highest level accessible to them, as well as accessing overseas competitions as part of a representative team. Competitive opportunities include:

Club/Schools/Uni representative competitions:

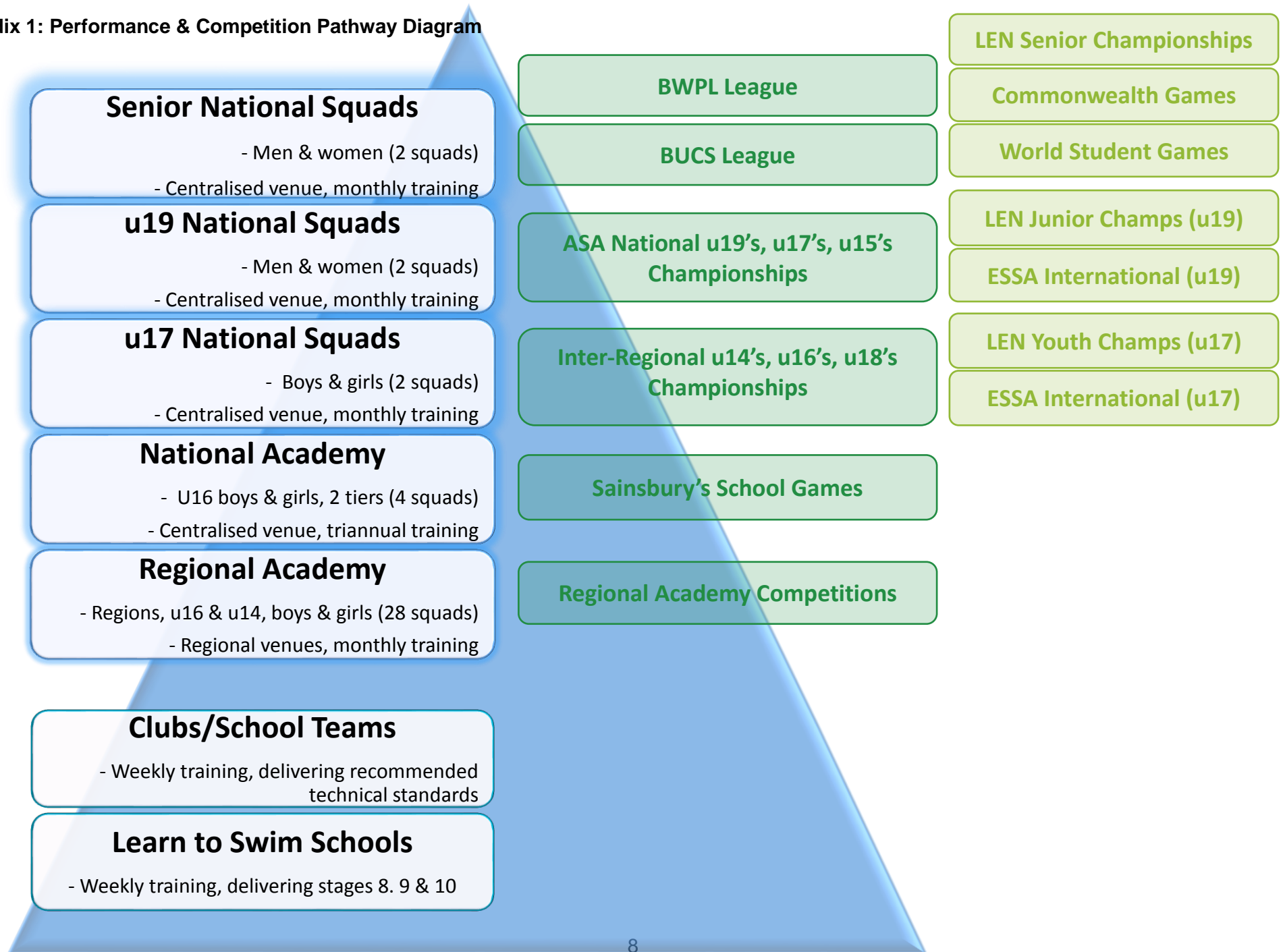
- ESSA u13 & u15 Water Polo Championships
- National u15 Championships
- National u17 Championships
- National u19 Championships
- British universities Colleges Sport (BUCS)
- British Water Polo League (BWPL)
- British Water Championships
- LEN Club Championships

Representative squad competitions:

- Inter-Regional Championships u14 u16 u18
- Sainsbury's School Games
- ESSA International u17 Championships
- EU Nations u17
- LEN Youth Championships
- ESSA International u19 Championships
- EU Nations u19
- LEN Junior Championships
- World Student Games
- Commonwealth Games
- LEN Senior Championships

NB. The domestic competition pathway is subject to review.

Appendix 1: Performance & Competition Pathway Diagram



Appendix 2: Talent Programme-Year of Birth Matrix

The table below maps out the water polo talent programmes available according to an athlete's year of birth with the pinnacle competitive opportunity, year by year. Please note other competitive opportunities will be pursued as part of each programme, however this matrix reflects the main target competition for the programme in that year.

If an athlete misses out on selection to a talent programme outlined below, they are encouraged to keep working hard on the athlete standards required for selection back in their club environments and where eligible should also participate in the u18 Regional Squad Programme, delivered by their Region. This will ensure continued player development and provides opportunity for selection at a later date.

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Born in 2000	National U17 EI U17 National U19 LEN U19	National U17 LEN U17 National U19 EI U19 National Senior WSG	National U19 LEN U19 National Senior CW WPC	National U19 EI U19 National Senior WSG	National Senior ?	National Senior WSG
Born in 2001	Regional & National Academy School Games National U17 EI U17 National U19 LEN U19	National U17 LEN U17 National U19 EI U19	National U17 EI U17 National U19 LEN U19 National Senior CW WPC	National U19 EI U19 National Senior WSG	National U19 LEN U19 National Senior ?	National Senior WSG
Born in 2002	Regional & National Academy School Games National U17 EI U17 National U19 LEN U19	Regional & National Academy School Games National U17 LEN U17 National U19 EI U19	National U17 EI U17 National U19 LEN U19	National U17 LEN U17 National U19 EI U19 National Senior WSG	National U19 LEN U19 National Senior ?	National U19 EI U19 National Senior WSG
Born in 2003	Regional Academy IRC U14/U16 National U17 EI U17 National U19 LEN U19	Regional & National Academy School Games National U17 LEN U17 National U19 EI U19	Regional & National Academy School Games National U17 EI U17 National U19 LEN U19	National U17 LEN U17 National U19 EI U19	National U17 EI U17 National U19 LEN U19 National Senior ?	National U19 EI U19 National Senior WSG
Born in 2004	Regional Academy IRC U14/U16 National U17 EI U17 National U19 LEN U19	Regional Academy IRC U14/U16 National U17 LEN U17 National U19 EI U19	Regional & National Academy School Games National U17 EI U17 National U19 LEN U19	Regional & National Academy School Games National U17 LEN U17 National U19 EI U19	National U17 EI U17 National U19 LEN U19	National U17 LEN U17 National U19 EI U19 National Senior WSG

Key:

Red – Regional and/or National Academy Programme
Bronze – National U17 Programme
Silver – National U19 Programme
Blue – National Senior Programme

IRC – Inter Regional Championships
EI – ESSA International Competition
LEN – European Water Polo Championships
WSG – World Student Games
CW WPC – Commonwealth Water Polo Championships