



The National Swimming League

National Secretary's report 2026

The past League year 2025/2026 saw some changes in governance and in the venue for the Finals weekend.

The 'B' Final was renamed the 'Plate' Final, but proposals to change the selection of teams for the Cup Final and the Plate Final were not accepted. The proposals would have seen the top ten teams from the virtual gala swimming in the Cup Final irrespective of which constituent league they belonged to. The Plate Final would have been composed of the next highest-placed teams from the virtual gala but ensuring that the winner and runner-up of each constituent league was included in one of the Finals galas. This would have ensured a truly National Cup Final of the fastest teams but would also, in the Plate Final, given all the constituent leagues team representation.

So once again this year, the winners of the constituent leagues had a Cup Final place, and the runners-up of each constituent league had a place in one of the Finals.

Unfortunately, the Secretary of the North West league stood down prior to the first round, but the rest of the committee rallied and ensured that the three rounds took place. They did not, however, comply with the constitution and license all the galas. Hopefully that will be corrected this year otherwise the winners of their league may not be invited to the finals as it would not be a level playing field.

Once again, the leagues struggled to find appropriate pools to run their galas to ensure that the clubs had appropriate facilities without having to travel long distances. The cost of facilities has also become a big challenge as well as the times available to hire them.

Clubs have rallied around to support their athletes so they can take part in this National League. More officials have been recruited by the clubs to ensure that the correct officials are available to comply with licensing requirements. There has been more liaison between the clubs, working together so that there are fewer cases of fines imposed for non-compliance.

Swim England has had a drive to improve governance across the country. The League being directly affiliated with Swim England is outside of the normal governance structure, so I worked with the Swim England Governance team directly and arrived at an acceptable constitution for all parties. The League constitution is now being used as a template for others.

As mentioned in last year's report, the Finals weekend was moved to Sandwell Aquatics Centre. Solo Sport, the League's sponsors, not only supported the move to Birmingham but provided a massive amount of new branding, ensuring that everyone was aware that it was an ARENA event. This included an impressive banner of the League's logo hanging from the 10m diving board to the water edge. The staff at the venue were very supportive and worked with us in every aspect of the weekend. We also had the additional benefit of the diving pit for warm-down which we have never had before. The League also purchased 'walls', identifying the six leagues. These were erected along the width of the pool behind the starting blocks, and these will now be available for use by the leagues at their rounds.

Whilst we have been trying to have greater consistency across the six leagues there are still variances that need to be resolved so that all the teams are operating under the same constitution and conditions. Everyone is swimming the same 51 events, but not all galas are licensed, so the quality of officiating is not consistent. All the leagues have sufficient funds to support the galas so that they can be licensed and pay for automatic officiating equipment operators. All galas must be licensed and officiated in compliance with the licence obtained.

The concern going forward is succession planning to ensure the continuance of the League. Getting the support of volunteers is becoming a challenge - in particular finding the correct people with the time not only to run the constituent leagues but also running the National League. There is also the Junior League to be considered. A face-to-face meeting will be convened of the six leagues in September 2026 to get positive ideas on how the League can move forward, taking away the concerns of succession planning and running the League nationally. Obviously Solo Sport will need to be included in the discussions.

A massive thank you to the league secretaries and all the volunteers who support them to ensure that our athletes have a good experience. A massive thank you too to Solo Sports for their continuing sponsorship. The input by the team at Solo Sports, as well as the sponsorship, is vital to the continuance of the League. So, keep buying arena kit, supporting our most valued sponsors.

Ian Mackenzie May 2026