

BRITISH CANOEING DRAFT SPRINT PERFORMANCE STRATEGY (V1)

October 2020

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SECTION ONE: INTRODUCTION

We are pleased to share this Draft Sprint Performance Strategy for consultation. It presents draft proposals for the Sprint Performance Strategy 2021-2028, with some detailed actions for the next four years to 2025.

Why do we need this strategy?

Whilst British canoeing has had some outstanding individual successes in sprint racing in each Olympic cycle since 2000, we have not yet been able to deliver the consistent success that would establish Great Britain as a leading Sprint Canoe nation. That would indicate that we don't currently have a system which makes the most of the passion and talents of our athletes and our community.

The recent Sprint Situational Analysis explored why this is the case, and challenged us on a number of fronts. In response to this, the Strategy proposes how we will ensure that;

- We have a clear vision and long-term performance strategy for the sport
- We better understand how athletes develop and how we can measure and assess their progress
- We develop and deploy outstanding coaches alongside our best athletes
- Our national programmes within each National Association deliver significant experiences that meet the needs of our highest potential paddlers
- Our community of clubs have a clear and vital role to play in the development of our elite paddlers
- The whole system will be well coordinated and led

Developing the Strategy

We want to respond to these challenges and to develop a strategy which is produced *by the sport - for the sport*, and which draws together the expertise, passion, experiences and ideas from across the whole community.

We want the Strategy to resonate with the whole community, to lead to the creation of a more united system from club to podium and right across the UK and to generate a sense of excitement and optimism throughout the sport.

This strategy has therefore been written from a whole community perspective; where the strategy refers to 'we', this means the whole sport – athletes, volunteers, coaches, clubs, committee members, stakeholders and staff at British Canoeing. If we are going to be successful, we need to do this together.

Sprint Strategies across the UK

British Canoeing has some responsibilities which are UK-wide and other responsibilities which are only English. The UK-wide responsibilities are focussed on the delivery of the World Class Programme and GB teams. The English responsibilities of British Canoeing are very similar to those held by The Scottish Canoe Association, Canoe Wales and The Canoe Association of Northern Ireland and in the context of this strategy, are focussed on talent development, clubs and coach development.

This British Canoeing Sprint Performance Strategy is focussed on the British Canoeing responsibilities across the UK and within England. The plans for talent development in sprint in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland can be found within the respective strategies of the National Associations.

These issues are examined in more detail within Section Five of this Strategy.

Feedback from the Draft Strategic Framework

Feedback from the consultation process on the draft strategic framework (August 2020), suggested there was broad approval and encouragement for the general direction of the strategy, although a sense that more detail was required. Some suggested that it is unrealistic to expect the whole community to support the strategy.

Some reported feeling that the strategy was insufficiently bold and lacking in real conviction, whilst many encouraged greater clarification around the key priorities and the funding available. There were comments that there was insufficient clarity about the positioning of the strategy in relation to the other national associations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

There was a recognition that the process undertaken to develop the strategy and the language contained within the framework was seeking to encourage greater collaboration and involvement of the racing community. However, there was concern that the strategy was not explicit enough on the nature of the British Canoeing club partnership moving forward.

A full account of the feedback has been made available on the British Canoeing website and the detailed recommendations were fully considered in developing this draft strategy.

This consultation process on this Draft Strategy

The consultation survey to share your feedback on this Draft Strategy can be [found here](#). The closing date for responses is 15 November 2020.

A Final Draft Strategy will then be circulated in late 2020 for final consultation, with the Strategy due to be approved in early 2021.

SECTION TWO: A STRATEGY FOR CHANGE

This Draft presents a strategy for change, which builds on existing strengths and addresses the challenges set out in the recent Situational Analysis and highlighted through this consultation process. The headline challenges and statements of intent are highlighted below:

There is no shared, long-term approach to athlete development

We will develop technical frameworks and training principles that align the language and coaching practice across the pathway

There is a lack of evidence-based decision making

We will make better use of insight and knowledge to understand how to help athletes achieve their potential

The coaching provision on the world class programme and in the clubs should be improved

We will invest in the development of our coaching community, providing enhanced learning opportunities, embedding new insights, and ensuring we have experts at all stages of the pathway

The culture on the world class programme is one of high challenge / low support

We will put athletes at the heart of our decision-making and place a greater emphasis on developing culture and prioritising athlete wellbeing

There is no clear crew and canoe boat strategy

We will develop our understanding of the skills and qualities required for Crew boat and Canoe success and clarify our long-term strategy

The facility at the National Water Sports Centre, Nottingham is uninspiring and not elite

We will emphasise the importance of developing inspiring environments and develop a sport-wide facilities strategy

The compulsory nature of the world class programme in Nottingham is not ideal for all athletes

We will develop a small network of Performance Academies and offer outreach support to those athletes that choose not to train in Nottingham

Training environments are not always conducive to developing female athletes

We will develop a better understanding of the factors specifically affecting female athlete development and place a greater emphasis on the development of female athletes and coaches

There is division between the clubs and the central programmes

We will work together in partnership to develop athletes and deliver the strategy, incentivising and recognising the contributions that clubs make

Clubs are run on a voluntary basis

We will develop business models within our clubs that allow long-term sustainability, including developing more paid coaching roles

There are insufficient competitions for developing athletes

We will develop a broad, diverse and tiered competition structure that offers more opportunities for athletes

There is insufficient diversity and representation of minority groups within the sport

We will recruit more paddlers into the sport from local communities and encourage a more diverse representation of athletes and coaches

SECTION THREE: OUR VISION AND MISSION

Vision – *what will we see in 2028?*

A united and inspired community delivering unprecedented athlete success

Mission – *what will we seek to accomplish by 2025 that will set us on course to achieve our vision?*

To build a culture, a system and a sense of team, working together to provide athletes with outstanding experiences

SECTION FOUR: OUR PHILOSOPHIES AND VALUES

Our Philosophies

Values-driven

Our values will drive how our coaches, athletes, staff and volunteers behave and operate on a daily basis. They will guide us when there are difficult decisions to make, and they will help shape the culture within which athletes are developed.

Athlete-centred

Athletes will be encouraged and empowered to take ownership of their own learning, and coached to make informed decisions in training and racing. All decisions will consider the long-term interests of athletes.

Coach-led

Coaches will be responsible for leading, supporting and challenging athletes to improve and will motivate, empower and inspire them to be the best that they can be.

Performance-focused

We will be clear on what influences athlete success and continuously strive to provide environments and people that enable athletes to thrive. We will recognise effort as well as achievement.

Our Values

Every Person Matters

We will build a culture that is people-centred and inclusive, and offers support to all of our people based upon their individual needs. We understand that an athlete's development and performance will depend upon their mental, physical and emotional wellbeing, and that medals are an outcome of a system that prioritises looking after athletes as people first.

Striving for Excellence

We will set and expect high standards of athletes, coaches and practitioners as they strive towards success on the world stage. We will focus on continual growth and improvement, creating a thirst for learning through the sharing of knowledge, expertise and philosophies.

Always with Integrity

Our culture will be built on the foundations of mutual trust, respect, honesty and transparency.

Enjoying the Journey

We will provide stimulating, challenging, positive and supportive environments that enable athletes to have the best possible experiences in the sport.

Individually Committed

People will be inspired and empowered to pursue their passion for the sport, and their efforts and contributions will be recognised and valued.

Stronger Together

There will be a strong sense of team and community, where volunteers, clubs, coaches and support staff work together in an inclusive, open and collaborative partnership, aligned behind a long-term strategic vision for the sport.

SECTION FIVE: THE UK CONTEXT

It is desirable that we create a UK-wide strategy for sprint racing, but given the independence of each of the National Associations, it will require agreement and collaboration between the bodies for alignment to occur.

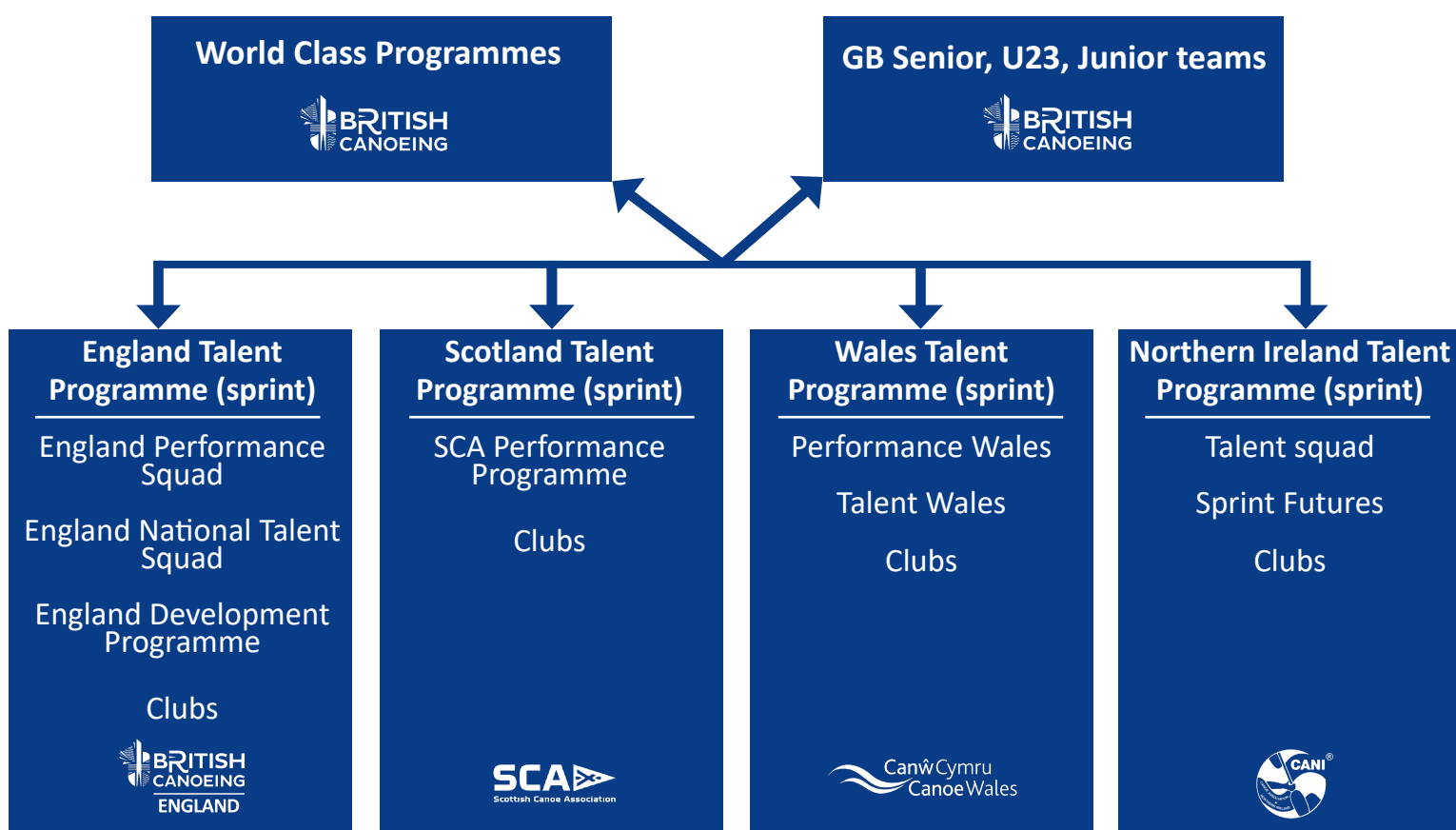
In line with the UK Agreement (The agreement between the four governing bodies which defines roles and responsibilities), British Canoeing has the responsibility and the resources to deliver the UK-wide World Class programme, which is largely funded by UK Sport. British Canoeing also has the responsibility to deliver the England Talent pathway which is largely funded by Sport England.

The other national associations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have the responsibility to deliver their respective talent programmes, which are largely funded by the Sports Councils in each country, who each have different priorities.

Funding levels are different, the scale of activity is different, as are club and coach capacity. This is requiring different approaches to the development of talent, which is reflected within each of the national association sprint talent plans. Each national association has to take into account their own capacity, challenges and opportunities and will seek to align them to this strategy where it is possible to do so.

This may lead to some differences in approach in each country, but the similarities are clear. Each is focused on supporting athletes to be the best they can be and each programme seeks to support their athletes to progress into British squads and World Class Programmes.

Linkages between the National Association Talent Programmes and the World Class Programme and GB Teams



How the national associations have agreed to work together around talent development

The National Associations of the four countries have agreed to work together to align programmes in the following key areas of this strategy;

What it Takes to Progress; National Associations will contribute to the development of the What it Takes to Progress model and then align athlete and coach delivery within the talent programmes with the model

Coach Development; National Associations will share thinking and resources to develop a UK-wide community of coaches invested in the sprint strategy. This will include the hosting of virtual and physical coaching seminars and conferences on a UK basis, for those coaches invested in the pathway

Coach Appointments; The National Associations will liaise over the appointment of coaches to GB teams

Competition; The National Associations will work together in the development and delivery of the an agreed competition structure for racing in the UK

The Sprint Plan for Talented Athletes within England

The Talent Development Strategy for sprint in England is largely funded by Sport England. The lead responsibility for this work in England rests with British Canoeing. British Canoeing does not have this same responsibility in each of the other three national associations.

The headlines of this programme are outlined below and then further developed within section 7 of this draft strategy.

The approach to talent development in England will be to focus investment, resource and work programmes in 3 key areas; Athlete development, Coach development and Club development.

The athlete development framework

The principles within the What It Takes To Progress model will underpin the athlete, coach and club development models and guide the work of athletes and coaches in all settings.

The England Talent squad structure may develop in time as the Talent Club and Academy programme develops and becomes established. Over the next two years it will continue to operate broadly as it is, with increased efforts to engage with and recognise the coaches of talented club athletes within the squads and teams.

The England Talent Programme athlete pathway will continue to operate at 3 tiers.

The aim is to provide additional support and opportunities to athletes at each level within the pathway, in order to deliver Junior World Championship A final results and equip them to transition successfully to the World Class Programmes.

The England Development Programme (EDP) will look to provide support to athletes and coaches. It will focus on those club-based athletes who are progressing towards the top of the national racing structure and who may be challenging for the GB Junior team in the next 2-3 years. There is additional support and provision at this level to try to increase the depth of talent pool in the female classes.

The England National Talent Squad (ENTS) will support the development of those athletes (and their club coaches) that are the best in their age group and who are currently challenging for GB Junior team. Resources will be used to facilitate the tailoring of individual athlete development plans and provide appropriate sport science interventions (Strength and Conditioning, Physio, Psychology etc.)

The ENTS programme is also supported by a **Canoe Development Programme**. This Programme is an intensive recruitment and development programme based in Holme Pierrepont for those athletes based locally. It also helps coordinate support for those clubs who are investing in Canoe groups. The Canoe Development programme seeks to encourage a greater emphasis on upskilling coaches and athletes to develop a stronger pool of canoe athletes within the clubs.

The England Performance Squad (EPS) provides support to those athletes in England who have been selected for, or who have a realistic chance of selection to the GB U23 Team and subsequent progression to the WCP within two years.

The Club development programme is delivered through the England Talent Club Programme. This programme seeks to further strengthen and support the talent environment in selected clubs across England.

The **Coach Development Programme** is focused on the support and development of those coaches working within the national programmes and with talented athletes in clubs. Support is aligned to the What It Takes To Progress model and focused on helping coaches to obtain and update their qualifications, engage in communities of practice and develop their coaching knowledge and expertise. Support is offered through a mix of delivery including bank side mentoring, remote support, and regional and central workshops.



SECTION SIX: MANAGING THE DELIVERY OF THE STRATEGY

Managing Delivery

In any successful team or venture, the importance of creating a shared sense of purpose, shared vision and goals, and clear roles and responsibilities are well documented and evidenced. The work we are now undertaking to bring clarity to these matters within the Sprint Performance Strategy is therefore very important.

Roles and responsibilities

This section sets out to answer some of the questions being asked around leadership, and the roles and responsibilities of paid staff, committees, clubs, coaches and volunteers. It also proposes how funding will be committed to deliver the strategy.

The role of the Board and CEO

The powers of the board are detailed within the Board Governance Policy. The Board delegate the day to day running of the organisation to the CEO, but reserve to themselves the responsibility to approve the long-term strategy and budget, annual plans and budgets, the values, major policies and procedures, the management of risk and the appointment of the CEO and senior staff.

The CEO is accountable to the board for the successful delivery of the organisation's 4 year strategic plan Stronger Together, and as such is also accountable to the board for the work of the paid staff and the work and plans of the committees within British Canoeing. The terms of reference of the committees reflect this accountability to the board.

The difference between the roles and responsibilities of non Olympic and Olympic/ Paralympic discipline committees within British Canoeing

There is a difference in the terms of reference agreed between the board and the committees for sprint and slalom. This recognises the positioning and responsibilities of the World Class programme in relation to the development of lottery funded athletes and in the management of GB teams. This is different in the non Olympic disciplines where these responsibilities also rest with the discipline committees eg marathon, canoe polo, freestyle etc.

The Sprint Racing Committee

The Sprint Racing Committee (SRC) will continue to operate according to the Terms of Reference approved between SRC and the Board. These will be reviewed in 2021 to reflect any changes agreed within this strategy.

The focus for SRC will remain on competition, but as part of this strategy, it will be explored to expand the role of the SRC to include establishing consultative forums for clubs and staff and committees to discuss challenges and opportunities and to monitor the progress towards the goals within the strategy.

This will ensure that members of the sprint racing community will have opportunities for their opinions to be shared. It will create formal mechanisms for dialogue and ongoing conversations, and whilst staff within the World Class Programme will retain decision making powers, the opportunities for discussion and engagement will be opened up through this mechanism.

The International Panel

The International Panel (IP) will be responsible for shaping the selection policy for sprint racing. There will continue to be extensive consultation in this process and the selection policy will ultimately be approved by the Governance and Risk Committee of the Board. The IP will continue to be responsible for selection of international teams.

The composition of the IP will be reviewed within the next 6 months with the new IP in place for the Paris cycle from October 2021.

Clubs and coaches

Clubs and coaches will have lead responsibility for the development of the athlete environment and athlete development within their own clubs.

Clubs and coaches will have the opportunity to engage in club and coach development opportunities created as part of strategy delivery.

Clubs will be invited to engage in consultation and review meetings facilitated by the SRC twice a year, to discuss progress, successes and challenges in delivery of the strategy.

Clubs in England will have the opportunity to apply to become part of the Talent Club Programme, with the potential to become an Academy as part of the UK World Class Programme. An Agreement will be signed between British Canoeing and each Talent Club.

The World Class Sprint Programme

The World Class Programme is funded by UK Sport. Staff are appointed to lead the World Class Programme. They are accountable to the Performance Director who is accountable to the CEO.

The World Class Programme within British Canoeing will continue to be focussed on providing support to those athletes with the potential to win Olympic and Paralympic medals in sprint and slalom in the next 4-12 years and the management of GB sprint teams.

Sprint Academies

It is proposed within this strategy to set up Sprint Academies hosted by National Associations or based in clubs in England. This development is expanded within Section 7 of this draft strategy. These will be funded through the World Class Programme and established when lottery funded athletes are choosing to stay within Academies rather than centralising to the programme in Nottingham.

These Academies will still be part of the World Class Programme and an agreement will be signed between British Canoeing and each National Association or club hosting an Academy.

Athletes Group and wellbeing

The Athlete Representatives Group will continue to operate and we will take an opportunity in 2021 to review with the athletes and refresh as required.

The Wellbeing Group will also continue and the same opportunity will be taken in 2020/21 to review and refresh as required.

The relationship with the funding partners – UK Sport and Sport England and the other National Sports Councils

UK Sport and Sport England fund British Canoeing for the delivery of the World Class Programme and England Talent Programme respectively. The CEO is the accountable officer to UK Sport and Sport England. These awards are made on the basis of plans submitted and there is a high level of monitoring of progress against plans.

The funding for the Talent programmes in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland is agreed between the respective Sports Council and each national association and is paid directly to them for delivery in each country.

Coordination between the four National Associations

The Performance and Talent leads within each National Association will continue to meet regularly to ensure the appropriate alignment and collaboration in delivery of the strategy.

The Funding

The delivery of this Performance Sprint Strategy will require a funding commitment from all levels within the sport.

It is difficult to accurately cost the delivery of all the actions at national, regional and club levels as so many organisations are involved. No single organisation will underwrite the full cost of delivery.

New funding models will need to be explored at academy and club level to meet the increased costs of delivery and the appointment of part-time and full-time paid coaches in academies and some talent clubs.

The actions presented within the Strategy for the next four years must be achievable within the resources which can realistically be expected to be available during this period. To achieve this, the following funding principles are proposed;

- Funding received by British Canoeing from UK Sport and Sport England for these purposes, will all be allocated in ways which fully meet the requirements of the respective funding agreements, but also contribute significantly to achieving the ambitions within this strategy
- Funding received by the National Associations from the respective Sports Councils for the Sprint Talent Programmes in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, will be allocated in ways which fully meet the shared outcomes within the requirements of the respective funding agreements, but also contribute significantly to achieving the ambitions within this strategy
- British Canoeing and the other National Associations shall actively pursue other sources of income to support this strategy from sources such as commercial partnerships and public sector partnerships
- Clubs and national committees will be encouraged to each annually review their own plans and allocate budgets in line with achieving the ambitions within this strategy and to support enhanced programmes and paid coach structures at club level
- All stakeholders will actively seek to develop new partnerships and to actively pursue new sources of grant and partnership funding which can be secured and which is on line with the ambitions of the strategy

SECTION SEVEN: THE ACTION PLANS

These actions plans are primarily focussed on those areas within the remit of British Canoeing – UK wide World Class Programme and England Talent Programmes.

It is indicated where these may also be coordinated with the other national associations in some areas of talent development.

7.1 PROVIDE THE BEST POSSIBLE ATHLETE EXPERIENCES

We will provide athletes with significant developmental experiences that inspire them, challenge them and support them to be the best that they can be

Where do we want to be by 2025?

Athlete pathways will provide aspirational and inspirational environments within which athletes (and coaches and practitioners) can develop to fulfil their potential. We will make certain that standards of coaching and support are of the highest quality, and ensure that the athletes benefit from experiences that are focused on their individual needs. Importantly, development environments, where athletes can train together with their peers, will have the right balance of challenge and support as we know that where these are not in balance, athlete progress (as well as their wellbeing) is likely to be impaired. Furthermore, the various stages of the athlete journey will be aligned and connected to provide clarity for athletes, and to ensure that their progress is optimised.

How will we get there?

7.1.1 We will emphasise the importance of the performance culture and athlete wellbeing across the pathway

This will involve;

- Focusing on the development of both the person and their performance
- Revising the Performance Wellbeing Strategy
- Providing education to athletes and other stakeholders on the performance culture
- Establishing an annual Performance Culture review
- Establishing a clear framework setting out the behaviours and standards expected of athletes and coaches
- Ensuring mental health and wellbeing support is accessible to athletes and staff

7.1.2 We will develop a team of outstanding coaches and practitioners to work with the very best athletes on the World Class Programme

This will involve;

- Establishing an elite, focused, senior group of athletes for the Paris campaign
- Engaging with senior athletes to identify and deploy the right coaches to work with them
- Providing high quality coaching and practitioner support, with deliberately low coach to athlete ratios

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- Developing a 'team' approach to coaching and support
 - Providing high quality camps and competition programmes focused on preparing athletes to peak at World Championships and Olympic Games
 - Enabling senior athletes that choose not to be based at the National Performance Centre (currently the National Water Sports Centre, Nottingham) to receive the outreach support they need

7.1.3 We will develop a Performance Academy programme to provide high quality, localised support to the best developing athletes involving a small network of racing clubs

This will involve;

- Establishing the role, function, expectations and requirements of the Academies, and the central support they will receive
- Determining the optimum number of Academies based upon the funding available, and the resource and support required
- Developing an implementation plan so that athletes can make decisions towards 2028
- Identifying potential Club and University partners with the desire to be involved, and ability to meet minimum requirements

7.1.4 We will establish a clear, connected and aligned athlete pathway to enable athletes to progress

This will involve;

- Clarifying the pathway for athletes across the UK, from entry to Olympic success
- Agreeing roles and responsibilities across the pathway
- Developing resources to promote the pathway to all stakeholders
- Developing a system to manage how athletes transition effectively across the pathway
- Establishing long-term development strategies for individual Academy athletes to progress into Podium performers

7.1.5 We will provide inspirational daily training environments across the pathway that enable athletes and coaches to thrive

This will involve;

- Delivering a long-term, sport-wide facility strategy to provide a clear framework for facilities at each stage of the pathway
- Conducting a feasibility study on the viability and options for a British Canoeing "Home for Canoeing"
- Ensuring there are the facilities to support the competition proposals
- Ensuring the provision of world class facilities, athlete rest and recovery area and equipment at the National Performance Centre, Nottingham
- Informing and supporting the establishment of the Performance Academies
- Establishing consistent overseas training bases that add value to winter, pre-competition and pre-season training camps

How will we measure progress?

- World Class Programme athletes will report being appropriately supported with consistent scores > 80% on the Culture Health Check
- Podium and Academy athletes will be progressing in line with required standards, and aligned to strategies for Paris 2024 and Los Angeles 2028
- 2-3 Performance Academies will be established in England
- The athlete pathway will be clear and understood by all stakeholders, with defined roles, responsibilities and supporting resources
- Facilities, equipment and performance innovations will enhance the athlete experience and performance

7.2 BUILD A STRONG SENSE OF COMMUNITY AND INCLUSION

We will work together in true collaboration and partnership with all those playing an active role in the development of athletes so that there is shared responsibility and recognition across the community

Where do we want to be by 2025?

We will have established effective working relationships between the clubs and the National Performance centre. There will be strong agreement that the model to bring the most success involves both clubs and national squads, with all parties being committed to collaboration and partnerships to best support athlete development.

Clubs will feel part of the system and recognise the benefits in being so. When athletes are selected onto national programmes, clubs will feel proud and be rewarded and recognised for the role they have played in developing the athlete. There will be a two-way flow of information and communication, both formal and informal, and a greater visibility of national coaches in the clubs and club coaches within national squads and teams.

How will we get there?

7.2.1 We will ensure the role played in athlete successes by the wider community of individuals and clubs is incentivised and recognised

This will involve;

- Working together to define the roles and responsibilities at each stage of the pathway
- Allocating responsibility within the national Sprint programme for ensuring community engagement
- Establishing mechanisms for recognising and rewarding clubs' impact on athlete success and coach development

7.2.2 We will work together to develop athletes on national programmes

This will involve;

- Club coaches attending national programmes
- National coaches committing to a minimum of 5 club visits each year
- Consistently reviewing and sharing athlete progress with relevant coaches
- Establishing a formal process for the 'hand-over' of athletes between national and club coaches when athletes join or leave national teams and programmes

7.2.3 We will continue to work together in delivering and monitoring the performance strategy

This will involve;

- Establishing twice-yearly forums to discuss progress against strategic objectives
- Conducting a whole sport annual consultation for progress against the long-term direction of the sport

7.2.4 We will ensure that the sport supports a diverse range of participant athletes and coaches

This will involve;

- Monitoring representation within our athlete and coach performance pathways
- Engaging with targeted athlete and coach communities to ensure environments are optimised and there are no barriers to entry, development or performance
- Taking targeted measures to address any imbalance or under-representation within the pathway

How will we measure progress?

- Clubs and club coaches will report that their role and investment in the athlete's journey is valued, recognised and celebrated
- Club coaches will be formally engaged as an integral part of the support team around the athletes on national programmes
- Clubs will be represented and engaged in regular reviews against the Sprint Performance strategy with > 75% of people confident in the direction of the Sport by 2023
- The participation base and coaching workforce will be more diverse

7.3 DEVELOP A BROADER BASE OF TALENT

We will work collectively to build a broad base of talent from which future racing champions can emerge

Where do we want to be by 2025?

Whilst the routes into paddling are varied, clubs are usually the starting point for talent development in the sport. They will be responsible for building the foundations upon which future athlete success is based, and will become stronger at recruiting more juniors to participate and compete in the sport and in identifying and developing talent. Clubs will recruit a more diverse athlete group which is representative of the local community of the club and, overall, there will be more BAME athletes within our clubs and talent programmes.

Young athletes will have high quality, enjoyable experiences and feel supported throughout their journey. They will be recognised and treated as people, and supported and encouraged to remain in the sport for longer, to achieve their potential, and have a positive story to tell of their time in the sport.

Success at junior level will be measured through athletes loving the sport, collecting all the tools to continue on the journey, and developing life skills for their benefit within and outside the sport, whilst performances may also indicate progress towards senior ambitions.

How will we get there?

7.3.1 We will seek to recruit paddlers from all sections of society, and to ensure that any new entrants' initial experience in the sport is positive

This will involve;

- Creating a recruitment programme and promoting the sport widely in different communities
- Developing processes and resources to enable clubs to deliver a high quality first experience to paddlers
- Ensuring the sport is accessible for all and that clubs are representative of their local communities
- Establishing a development framework to guide and support the early progression of flatwater racing skills for young people in clubs

7.3.2 We will develop a network of clubs that are focussed on developing talent and able to meet minimum quality standards

This will involve;

- In England, agreeing the role and function of Talent Clubs, the delivery expectations and requirements (of coaching, athlete support, recruitment, facilities etc), and support that the Clubs will receive from British Canoeing
- In England, deciding upon the right number of Talent Clubs considering the funding available, and the resource and support to be provided

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- Ensuring that developing athletes from non-Talent Clubs are able to access appropriate support
 - Sharing an improved understanding of how to develop successful athletes (including the role of non-sprint activities and when specialisation should occur)
 - Developing a framework of best practice that recognises, supports and rewards excellent racing club environments

7.3.3 We will develop business models within our clubs that allow long-term sustainability

This will involve;

- Creating a business planning pack and resources to help improve and professionalise club operations and coaching
- Sharing knowledge, learning and best practice across the network relating to the effective management of racing clubs
- Developing full-time and part-time paid coaching roles in racing clubs

How will we measure progress?

- Recruitment frameworks and support material will be developed and published
- There will be a more diverse participation base and increased retention from new participants to the sport
- 8 to 10 clubs will be meeting minimum delivery standards and engaging with the resources available
- 4-6 clubs will have professional structures, and robust and sustainable underpinning financial models with coaches that consistently develop athletes to Academy level
- 4-6 Clubs will have Talent recruitment campaigns established with 15-20 junior athletes per club entering the pathway every two years

7.4 IMPROVE THE USE OF INSIGHT AND THE SHARING OF KNOWLEDGE

We will generate and capture insight and share knowledge so that athlete selection, development, preparation and performance is based upon individual and stage-appropriate need

Where do we want to be by 2025?

The *What it Takes to Win* and *What it Takes to Progress* frameworks and standards will provide guidance, clarity and consistency to coaches and practitioners across the UK, ensuring that there is alignment and connection between all stages of the athlete journey. They will be welcomed, recognised and valued across the pathway and in clubs, and provide guidance on developing athletes at all levels.

Emergent benchmarking and insight will be collected and used to further validate methods, create new areas of exploration or disprove myths should they exist, whilst existing gaps in frameworks will be further explored and work undertaken to ensure these frameworks are improving consistency and effectiveness across the coaching workforce.

Crew and canoe boats will be used as a vehicle for enhancing athlete development and engagement through greater competition exposure, whilst there will be a greater understanding of the factors impacting upon the success and development of female athletes.

How will we get there?

7.4.1 We will identify and share the performance requirements that are crucial to future success at all stages of the athlete journey

This will involve;

- Researching and capturing insights to better understand how an athlete progresses to world class standards in sprint canoe
- Establishing a Performance Matrix that sets out the standards required to be successful at future World Championships or Olympic Games, and the skills, qualities and performances that indicate progression
- Publishing the benchmark standards and providing education and support to athletes
- Ensuring that the athlete development system is suitably aligned to identify and develop athletes to the published standards
- Evolving and adapting the standards annually in response to changes in world-level performances

7.4.2 We will undertake systematic benchmarking and insight collation in order to better understand athletes' journeys and future trajectory

This will involve;

- Developing a performance database and a formal review framework for the long-term tracking, assessment and development of athletes
- Ensuring athlete selection onto programmes at all stages of the pathway is underpinned by evidence-based standards linked to those requirements deemed critical for future success
- Basing athlete development plans upon enhanced understanding of their current status and future potential
- Seeking out new methods of gaining insights into athlete performance and progress across the pathway, including increased and consistent use of ergometers
- Identifying and developing innovations specifically for Paris 2024, to align with the performance requirements for the sport and individual athlete enhancements

7.4.3 We will develop and share technical frameworks for each event that align language and coaching practice across the pathway in support of athlete progression and training interventions

This will involve;

- Establishing a steering group to build a consensus around the technical frameworks
- Ensuring the technical frameworks are regularly reviewed to take account of new insight
- Agreeing the process for assessing and benchmarking athletes according to their stage of development
- Building the technical framework into the athlete development planning process
- Providing increased opportunities to promote technical development within athlete development and competition programmes
- Engaging and educating athletes on the technical framework

7.4.4 We will develop, clearly describe and share the training principles, developmental experiences and coaching practices required for future athlete success across the pathway

This will involve;

- Profiling previous successful athlete journeys based upon data and athlete / coach insights
- Agreeing the principles, experiences and practices most critical to athlete success (including the role of non-sprint activities and when specialisation should occur)
- Embedding key training principles across the pathway with a common language and approach aligned to technical frameworks and benchmarks

7.4.5 We will increase our focus on Crew (and Canoe) boat development by generating greater understanding of the key skills and qualities required for success

This will involve;

- Identifying and targeting long-term medal opportunities in crew (and canoe) boats
- Identifying the skills, qualities and performance standards required for success
- Better understanding the barriers to development in clubs and offering enhanced opportunities for crew (and canoe) boat development in those clubs that are able
- Increasing crew (and canoe) boat skills camps and race opportunities across the pathway
- Refining and providing clarity on the national crew boat selection policy

7.4.6 We will increase our focus on the development of female athletes by generating greater understanding of the key factors impacting upon success

This will involve;

- Undertaking research to better understand the factors impacting upon female retention in the sport, the key environmental challenges, the female-specific critical success factors and the female-specific factors in the coaching process
- Taking measures to tackle those known factors which are counterproductive to female athlete development
- Explicitly prioritising the development of female athletes through, for example, targets for female / male athlete and coach ratios or representation targets
- Providing targeted opportunities for female athletes, including establishing a mentorship programme

How will we measure progress?

- Age and stage appropriate levels of respective performance requirements will be in place and be fully represented in how athlete progression is assessed on the World Class Programme
- There will be a technical framework and training standards in place with suggested 'how to coach' and 'what to look for' for singles, doubles and crews
- There will be a clear pathway strategy in place for crew and canoe boat development that describes when and where the focus should be
- There will be a focused strategy in place to address 3-4 key areas targeted to enhance female representation

7.5 DEVELOP A COMMUNITY OF COACHES

We will develop a community of highly skilled coaches across the UK that are equipped to offer outstanding support to athletes based upon their individual needs

Where do we want to be by 2025?

We will place a greater emphasis on the importance of supporting the continual development and growth of coaches, and great coaching and coaches will be recognised by all as being key to an athlete's development. Coach development will be focussed according to the specific demands of the coach's role and built around supporting coaches to meet the requirements of the athletes they are working with. More coaches will be inspired to be the best they can be, actively participating in personal development and feeling part of the coaching community.

Whilst we will continue to take account of the specific support requirements of athletes at each stage of their development, we will have a much closer alignment around coaching philosophies which act as a compass point in the way coaches across the pathway communicate, present and deliver.

7.5.1 We will develop a greater understanding of 'expert coaching' at all stages of the athlete journey, in order to inform coach recruitment, deployment, learning and development

This will involve;

- Identifying the key knowledge, skills and understanding that coaches need to support the development of athletes at each stage of the pathway
- Designing an 'Expertise in the role' framework that coaches can use as a reference point for their development
- Integrating the framework into decision-making for recruitment, deployment, retention and succession
- Recognising the important role that coaches play at all stages of the athlete journey

7.5.2 We will provide aligned, purposeful and effective learning opportunities for coaches and emerging coaches within the Talent Club, Academy and Podium programmes

This will involve;

- Establishing individualised development plans for all coaches working in Talent, Academy and Podium settings specific to their area of work based on the 'Expertise in the role' framework
- Providing specific racing club coach education
- Establishing a mentoring system to support all coaches within Talent, Academy and Podium settings
- Establishing communities of coaching practice across the network that are able to share knowledge and learning
- Developing and deploying high quality, expert resources based upon the 'Expertise in the role' framework
- Providing scheduled and targeted athlete and coach clinics

7.5.3 We will ensure that new insight and knowledge is embedded within the coaching pathway

This will involve;

- Providing education and support to coaches around critical athlete performance requirements and benchmark standards
- Engaging and educating coaches on the technical framework
- Engaging coaches from across the pathway in determining how to transfer the new insight on training principles into daily practice
- Developing a coaching framework that best supports the development of crew (and canoe) boats
- Formalising coach education around key female athlete experiential needs

7.5.4 We will broaden the representation of people involved in coaching

This will involve;

- Implementing a coach apprenticeship programme to support the transition of athletes into coaching
- Inspiring and encouraging female coaches into the sprint coaching community
- Exploring and developing new routes into coaching for aspiring coaches
- Aligning with the wider sport policy to encourage under-represented communities into coaching

How will we measure progress?

- A framework will be used to support decision making in the recruitment, deployment, retention and succession of coaches across the pathway
- More coaches will be engaged in appropriate Continuing Professional Development, have individualised development plans, be linked to mentors and in receipt of supporting resources
- Coaches will be delivering against agreed frameworks, principles and philosophies
- The coaching workforce will be more diverse

7.6 OFFER A RANGE OF COMPETITIONS

We will develop a diverse, high quality competitive landscape that provides appropriate challenging opportunities for all paddlers

Where do we want to be by 2025?

Competition needs to support the athlete journey and provide stimulating racing opportunities to develop the required skills and motivation needed to perform at the elite level, whilst at the same time maintaining athlete enjoyment and engagement with the sport. We will develop a more diverse competitive landscape which integrates all routes into sprint racing, removing barriers to entry and providing a seamless transition between disciplines. We will vastly increase the number of high-quality competitive events which foster the development of both the physical and mental skills that enable performance at the highest level.

7.6.1 We will develop a clearly defined, integrated and tiered competition structure that offers opportunities for recognition and progression

This will involve;

- Ensuring the National Championships and National Club Championship regattas are of the highest quality
- Developing a 4 year, co-ordinated and aligned domestic and international racing calendar ensuring age and stage appropriate exposure for our developing athletes
- Ensuring that appropriate competitive events are held at a time to support selection for national teams and to enable optimal performances at major championships
- Undertaking research to identify and promote the most appropriate quantity and quality of competitive opportunities required throughout the pathway to enable athletes to fulfil their potential

7.6.2 We will offer a greater number and range of quality competitive experiences that inspire a love of the sport, as well providing opportunities for development

This will involve;

- Recognising, promoting, integrating and aligning existing competitions from other groups within the British Canoeing landscape
- Increasing the number of specific crew boat focused event race opportunities
- Increasing the use of alternative racing formats, including ergometers and unspecified racing craft categories
- Developing local participation opportunities for non-club members to race
- Providing training and development for volunteers in running competitions
- Creating an events promotion team to support and promote the domestic racing calendar
- Creating a national athlete performance database of all competitive results for every athlete throughout their racing career
- Establishing national records for local and regional sprint event locations

How will we measure progress?

- 3-4 Regional regattas will be held annually to support the 3-4 national regattas
- More than 20 local or club-based competitions will be held each year
- Developing athletes will be exposed to an increased number and range of international events appropriate to their stage of development