

Canoe Sprint Performance **Strategy**



2022-2028

Contents

04 Forewords

06 Endorsements

07 Where are we now?

10 Where do we want to be? How we will measure progress?

12 Our Philosophies and Values

14 Coordination across the UK

16 The Action Plans

16 Action Plan 1 Providing the best possible athlete experiences

18 Action Plan 2 Developing a broader base of talent

20 Action Plan 3 Developing a community of engaged coaches

22 Action Plan 4 Providing competitions which increase participation and develop talent

23 Action Plan 5 Improving the use of insight and the sharing of knowledge

25 Action Plan 6 Building a strong sense of community and inclusion

26 Managing Delivery

28 Acknowledgements

Forewords

We are delighted and excited to introduce the British Canoeing Sprint Performance Strategy, which sets out the vision and ambitions for canoe sprint for the next six years to 2028, with more detailed actions for the next four years to 2025.

Whilst British athletes have achieved some outstanding individual successes in sprint racing in each Olympic cycle since 2000, we have not yet been able to deliver the broad and consistent success that would establish Great Britain as a leading canoe sprint nation. This would indicate that we don't currently have a system which develops a large participation base and talent pool, makes the most of the passion and talents of our athletes, coaches and community and supports our best talent to compete successfully with the best in the world.

A 'Situational Analysis' was undertaken in early 2020, to explore why this was the case. The findings recognised some gaps and challenged us to make some change including to;

- Agree a clear vision and long-term performance strategy for the sport of canoe sprint
- Ensure the whole talent and performance system is well coordinated and led

- Better understand how athletes develop and how we can measure and assess their progress
- Develop and deploy outstanding coaches alongside our best athletes
- Ensure that our national programmes within each National Association deliver significant experiences that meet the needs of our highest potential paddlers
- Ensure that the community of clubs has a clearly identified and meaningful role within the development of talented paddlers

In responding to these challenges and in developing this strategy, we have drawn heavily on the knowledge, expertise, passion, experiences and ideas of many individuals from across the whole sprint racing community. We would like to thank everyone involved for the time and energy they gave to this process.

In line with Stronger Together, this strategy has 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 unite and do this together.

This is only the beginning, but it's an essential and strong start. For the first time in a long time we now have a clear sprint performance strategy in place and it is a plan for the whole sport which has the support of the community.

We look forward to collaborating with you in its delivery and to the exciting developments which will come as a result of working together to deliver it.



Keir Worth



Director of Paddlesport
British Canoeing

Respecting paddlers as people and nurturing them on their journey is fundamental.

The Sprint Racing Committee (SRC) welcomes a plan that supports the development of precociously talented juniors but which also recognises that sprint athletes often mature later in their twenties.

We also appreciate that paddling and training with friends in a happy atmosphere can be hugely empowering and supportive of long-term development; the impetus of a training rivalry with friends creates its own momentum.

Ensuring these groups are nurtured by coaches who have the respect, courage and wisdom to guide paddlers forwards in a caring way is also fundamental. One to one coaching can be vital at times too as some will only flourish when given individual coaching. Adopting an agile and sensitive approach that responds to each paddlers circumstances is important.

The SRC are embracing these core philosophies. Within the new competition structure, we are creating exciting race formats that we hope will motivate paddlers, challenge a broad range of skills, and offer more K4 opportunities.

We recognise that success at junior level is about loving paddling while collecting all the tools to continue on the journey. Embracing all routes into sprint racing and having the freedom to switch disciplines where it can stimulate learning and development is important.

There is no single pathway to senior sprint success. For those under 23s who wish to pursue senior international sprint medals we will spread the message that being distracted by university or a first job is to be respected.

Paddlers will be nurtured through these life changing periods with understanding, and the support and advice will continue, but with everyone aware that at some stage the level of commitment to reach the very top has to be all consuming.

Our ambition is to attract more paddlers at grassroots level and encourage more to stay in the sport for longer. A deep love of paddling gained at an early age through opportunities to gather new and varied paddling experiences across disciplines is more likely to sustain paddlers through any thin times later in their competitive journey or coaching life.

We are promoting and pursuing equality. We must celebrate more widely the amazing work of so many volunteers and give them more recognition and help with training. We can direct more resources towards sharing knowledge and coaching philosophies.

This strategy takes a step towards some of these ambitions and for that it must be applauded. The invitation to write this foreword is a hugely positive step, which acknowledges that the Sprint Racing Committee can play its part.

The SRC are aiming to empower people with a passion for racing to be able to play a positive role. We intend to provide a strong link with British Canoeing paid staff, volunteers, parents, athletes, and other discipline racing committees.

Our ambition is for those who love the sport to be the ones who have the power to shape its future



Tim Scott

Tim Scott

Chair
Sprint Racing Committee

Endorsements

Richard Ramsdale,
Head of Talent at British Canoeing

“This Sprint Performance Strategy will help build stronger clubs and a more sustainable base of talent, supporting positive athlete experiences at every stage of the pathway. Given the context of Covid-19, the opportunity to support all to reactivate and re-enable sporting opportunities is hugely important and this strategy gives direction and alignment to this renewal.”

Andy McSweeney,
Performance Advisor at UK Sport

“UK Sport applauds British Canoeing for the comprehensive approach taken to define this strategy, for engaging openly and positively with the sporting community, and for setting an inspiring vision for the future. We are excited to see this strategy being enacted, with stated ambitions being realised and with athletes thriving on the world stage.”

Neasa Russell,
Head of Talent Development
at Sport England

“We support the aspirations and intent of British Canoeing’s Sprint Performance Strategy. We absolutely endorse the philosophies shared especially that of being athlete-centred and coached. In particular we support the explicit activity aimed at broadening the talent pool, being more inclusive and creating a link to community. We look forward to seeing the impact of this strategy on performances and on participants’ experiences.”

Jon Schofield,
Head of Performance
and Pathways at Scottish
Canoe Association

“I’m delighted to see such a comprehensive strategy for our sport being developed off the back of a huge group effort. I look forward to working with the community to implement it over racing seasons to come. With such passion going around and the knowledge that we have as a country, I’m excited about the future of the sport in the UK.”

Thomas Power,
Head Coach and Interim
Performance Manager
at Canoe Wales

“The collaborative approach taking in the construction of the sprint review, has produced a detailed strategy with a clear vision for the future of sprint racing. I’m excited for the opportunities that lie ahead, to help develop a system and culture where athletes can thrive and produce great performances.”

Attila Herbent,
Head Coach at Royal
Leamington Spa Canoe Club

“For us at Royal Leamington Spa Canoe Club, the new strategy represents a change in direction for our governing body British Canoeing, supporting clubs, club coaches and their paddlers is hugely important to us. We are aiming to take ownership over our part of the strategy at club level, whilst being part of the wider collective team, which sees the strategy through to its fruition in 2028. These are exciting times to be involved in flatwater racing!”

James Clark,
Trustee at Royal Canoe Club

“This strategy belongs to all of us and will succeed if we all work together, whether we’re a paddler, parent, coach, employee, or volunteer.”

Where are we now?

As we look to finalise the next four year strategic plan for British Canoeing (2022-26) and commence the Paris 2024 Olympic cycle, now feels like the right time to launch this new Sprint Performance Strategy. It is forward looking and sets out a vision and ambitions and presents the actions intended to bring about positive change.

British Canoeing has the responsibility for operating the World Class Sprint Programme for the UK and for talent, club and coach development in England. The other National Associations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have similar responsibilities within their own countries. The National Associations have agreed to work together where this brings most benefit and this is explored further from page 14.

Throughout the strategy, where there is reference to working with coaches and clubs, this is usually a reference to actions that will take place in England as part of the English responsibilities of British Canoeing.

Whilst we need to look forward, it is also important to recognise and record our starting point; the strengths and opportunities which exists and the threats, weaknesses and risks which will need to be managed. These are considered within the context for each of the Action Plans but are presented as headlines in this section.



Strengths and Opportunities

Sprint racing is an Olympic Sport

There are an equal number of medal events for men and women

Sprint racing is well established and has a strong tradition within British Canoeing

There is a track record of success with sprint medals being won by men in every Olympic Games since 2000 and an opportunity to develop more medal success for women in the future

There are some pockets of excellent, world class coaching

Sprint racing is supported by UK Sport World Class Programme funding

The coach education and development structure has greatly improved in the last few years

The development of talented young sprint athletes is supported in each of the National Associations by their respective Home Country Sports Councils

There is a strong network of clubs involved in flatwater racing

There is a reasonably strong participation base within marathon and sprint flatwater racing

There is an established competition structure in marathon and sprint racing which supports the growth in participation and the identification of talented athletes

The sport has many passionate people working hard to develop strong clubs and to support paddlers to improve

There is an opportunity for the Sprint and Marathon Racing Committees to work with the racing clubs and British Canoeing staff, to create a more integrated competition programme which builds on the strength of marathon racing and provides more opportunities for more juniors to race over short distances

There are a significant number of passionate coaches involved in flatwater racing and several coaches with considerable potential

There is shared and growing understanding of the need for change and for a more coordinated and joined up approach to the development of talent

Weaknesses and Threats

It appears that the World Class Sprint Performance Programme has been subject to a series of short-term approaches in a bid to achieve immediate success

There is no shared, long-term approach to athlete development, no shared technical frameworks or training principles aligned to coaching philosophies

There is a lack of published insight and knowledge to help coaches understand how to help athletes achieve their potential

There is a lack of understanding and confidence in the coach education and development provision for coaches on the World Class Programme, Talent Programmes and within clubs

There are too few women coaches and leaders

The culture on the World Class Programme has been defined as one of high challenge and low support

There is no clear crew and canoe boat strategy

The environment at Nottingham that hosts the centralised programme is uninspiring, does not appear conducive to developing elite athletes and some senior athletes choose not to attend the central programme

Training environments are not always conducive to developing female athletes

There is not a joined up approach between the clubs and the central programmes and a history of mistrust

Clubs resent that athletes are 'taken away', attracted by the funding that the World Class Programme provides, whilst not valuing the coaching offered on programme

Clubs tend to be recreational and have a marathon focus

Most clubs operate entirely on a voluntary basis, without well-developed business plans, paid coaches or development officers, which is unlike many other Olympic Sports

Most clubs do not yet carefully consider how they might diversify their membership and become more inclusive of under-represented demographics, through processes like equality, diversity and inclusion action-planning

There are too few sprint competitions at local and regional level for developing athletes

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

Where do we want to be?

How we will measure progress

Our Vision

What we will see in 2028

**A united and inspired
community from club to podium
delivering unprecedented
performances.**

Our Mission

What we will work towards 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.**

Objectives

How will we measure
our Olympic
performance?



Our Olympic Goals

2024-2028

2024 Paris 1 medal + 2 A finals

2028 Los Angeles 2 medals + 2 A finals



Performance Ambitions

What performances will
indicate we are on target?

Our World Class Performance milestones 2022-2024

**2022: World Championships:
2 A finals in Olympic classes**
Under 23 World Championships: 3-4 A finals

**2023: World Championships:
Qualify 3-4 Boats for Paris**
Under 23 World Championships 3-4 A finals

**2024: Second Round Qualification:
Target events not qualified in 2023**
Under 23 World Championships 3-5 A finals

Our Ambitions and Key Performance Indicators

Detailed performance measures are included within each of the Actions Plans from page 16. Presented below are the 10 KPIs that we will use to measure the progress of the strategy over the next four years.

KPI 1

- Achieve the medal and A final targets for the Olympic Games in Paris 2024
- Achieve World Championship targets and qualify four boats for Paris 2024

KPI 2

- Achieve the targets for A finals at U23 World Championships each year 2022-2024
- Improve the number of athletes progressing into A finals at Olympic Hopes, U18 and U23 level events, including Junior World and European Championships
- Achieve 25 A and B finals at the 2024 Olympic Hopes regatta, with an increasing proportion of these being A final performances.

KPI 3

- Within the annual Culture Health Check, World Class Programme athletes reporting that they are being appropriately supported with 80% + satisfaction scores annually from 2022

KPI 4

- 5 England Talent Club Partners established
- 2-3 Performance Academies established by 2023
- A minimum 5 clubs in England will have professional structures, robust and sustainable underpinning financial models

KPI 5

- The ethnic diversity of athletes within Talent Club Partner clubs increases annually from 2022
- The number of girls and young women within the Talent Club Partner clubs increases annually from 2022

KPI 6

- More sprint coaches will be engaged in coach learning and development from 2022

KPI 7

- A minimum of 3-4 local and regional regattas will be held annually from 2022 rising to more than 20 sprint regattas per year by 2024

KPI 8

- Technical frameworks and training standards are published by 2022 and recognised and used within 12 clubs by 2024

KPI 9

- Crew boat strategies are developed and published by 2022 and numbers of crew boats in regattas increases annually from 2023

KPI 10

- There is at least one annual meeting each year involving clubs, the Sprint Racing Committee and staff to consider strategic progress

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.

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. Coaches will be supported and developed at each stage according to the level of the athlete and will feel part of a coaching community.

Athlete-centred

Athletes will be coached, encouraged and empowered to take ownership of their own learning and development to make informed decisions in training and racing. They will be supported and guided through the different stages of their careers to be the best they can be as people and performers within a holistic framework that is underpinned by clear values, behaviours and standards.

Performance-focused

We will be clear on what influences athlete success and continuously strive to provide environments and people that enable athletes to thrive and develop. 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. We will recognise people as individuals and seek to improve the ethnic diversity and gender balance within the athlete group and coaches.

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.

EVERY PERSON MATTERS

STRIVING FOR EXCELLENCE

ALWAYS WITH INTEGRITY

ENJOYING THE JOURNEY

INDIVIDUALLY COMMITTED

STRONGER TOGETHER

Coordination across the UK

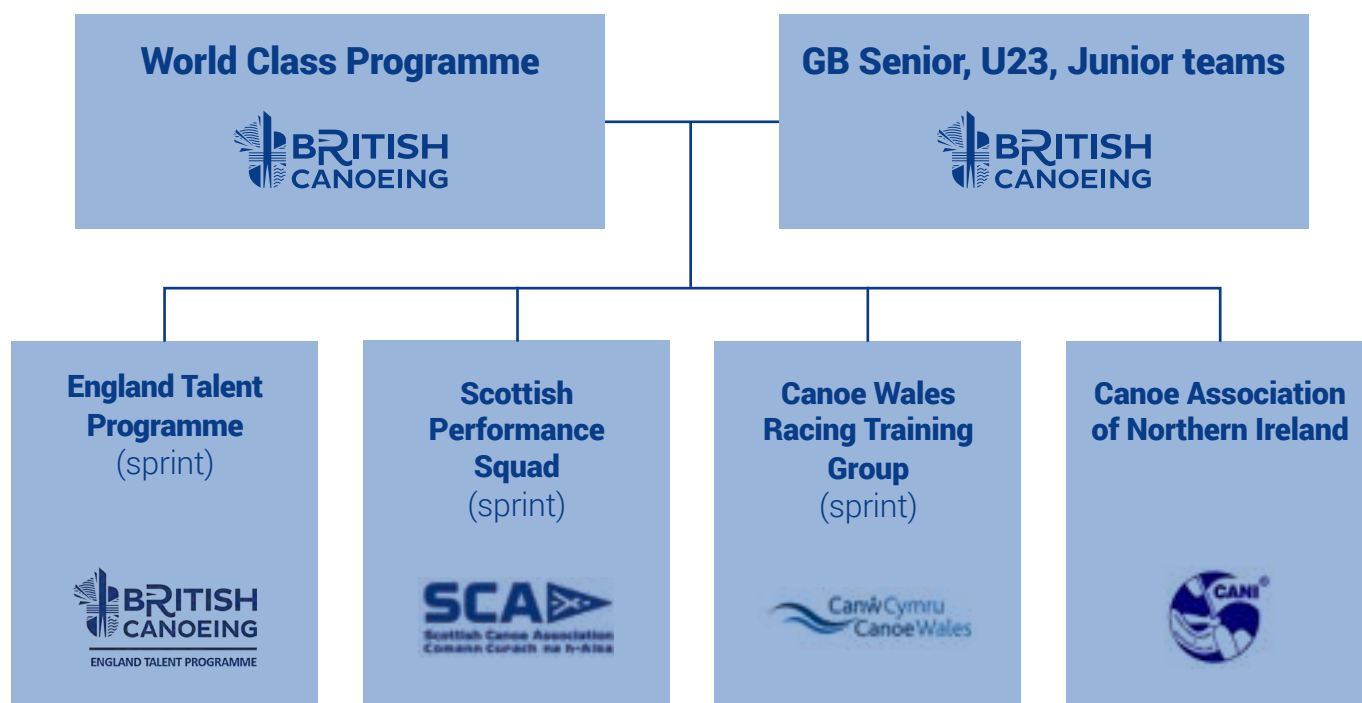
It is important that we create a UK-wide strategy for sprint racing, and that there is agreement and collaboration between British Canoeing and the National Associations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

In line with the UK Agreement (the agreement between the four national 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 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, the scale of activity and the club and coach capacity is different in each of the four countries. This requires different approaches to the development of talent. The plans for talent development for canoe sprint in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland can be found within the respective strategies of the National Associations.

Whilst there may be some differences within the approach in each country, there are many similarities. The national programmes in England, Scotland and Wales are 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. CANI, as the Governing Body in Northern Ireland, encourages athletes to progress into either British squads within British Canoeing or Irish squads within Canoeing Ireland.



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

Athlete

Development

Frameworks

National Associations will contribute to the development of athlete development frameworks and then deploy it in a context specific manner within their respective programmes.

Coach

Appointments

The National Associations will liaise over the appointment of coaches to GB junior teams.

Competition

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

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.

The Action Plans

These action plans are primarily focussed on those areas within the remit of British Canoeing, which include the UK wide World Class Programme, UK wide Coach Development Programme, the UK wide Regatta and Competition Programme, the England Talent Programme and the English Club Development Programme.

It is indicated where some of these developments may also be coordinated with the other national associations.

ACTION PLAN 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, coaches and practitioners can develop to fulfil their potential. We will ensure 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, athlete training environments will have the right balance of challenge and support as we know that where these are not in balance, athlete progress and athlete wellbeing is likely to be impaired. 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?

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

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
- 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 are not based at the National Performance Centre (currently the National Water Sports Centre, Nottingham) to receive the outreach support they need

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

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
- Providing wider opportunities for talented athletes not on programme to create greater inclusion in training groups to better allow for a continuum of development
- Establishing long-term development strategies for individual Academy athletes to progress into Podium performers

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, an athlete rest and recovery area and equipment at the National Performance Centre, Nottingham to support senior athletes from 2023
- 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 from 2022 onwards
- 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 by 2023
- Facilities, equipment and performance innovations will enhance the athlete experience and performance

Lead and support responsibilities

Accountable body for these actions; World Class Programme of British Canoeing

Supporting partners include; National Associations, Clubs and Academies, Committees, International Panel

ACTION PLAN 2

DEVELOPING 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 athletes drawn from minority ethnic communities and more girls and young women involved 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?

2.1 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 clubs are supported to undertake equality, diversity and inclusion action planning as part of their long-term development
- 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

2.2 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
- Ensuring Talent clubs undertake equality, diversity and inclusion action planning as part of their long-term development, and this process is part of the delivery expectations and requirements
- In England, deciding upon the right number of Talent clubs considering the funding available, and the resource and support to be provided
- 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

2.3 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
- 8-10 clubs in England will be meeting minimum delivery standards and engaging with the resources available
- 4-6 clubs in England will have professional structures, and robust and sustainable underpinning financial models with coaches that consistently develop athletes to Academy level
- 4-6 clubs in England will have Talent recruitment campaigns established with 15-20 junior athletes per club entering the pathway every two years

Lead and support responsibilities

Accountable body for these actions; England Talent Programme

Supporting partners include; National Associations, Clubs, Academies, Universities and Schools

ACTION PLAN 3

DEVELOPING A COMMUNITY OF ENGAGED 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 at all levels within the pathway 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 coaches' 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 their personal development and feeling part of the coaching community. There will be more paid coaches working in clubs, alongside volunteer coaches, as we start to create a professional pathway for coaches in clubs in common with many other sports. The coaching workforce will become more diverse with a greater number of female coaches and coaches from ethnic minorities.

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.

How will we get there?

3.1 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
- Ensuring that coaches and practitioners have a robust understanding of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and how that impacts on their work and undertake regular personal development in these areas
- 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
- Supporting clubs that want to appoint paid coaches and ensuring that those paid coaches have the opportunity to be fully engaged in the community of coaches

3.2 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

3.3 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

3.4 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, with more female coaches and more coaches from ethnic communities

Lead and support responsibilities

Accountable body for these actions;
British Canoeing Coach Development Team

Supporting partners include;
World Class Programme,
National Associations, Clubs

ACTION PLAN 4

PROVIDING COMPETITIONS WHICH INCREASE PARTICIPATION AND DEVELOP TALENT

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.

How will we get there?

4.1 We will develop clearly defined, competitive, exciting and well attended national regattas and expand the competition structure to support and embed competition at all levels

This will involve;

- Ensuring the National Championships and National Club Championship regattas are of the highest quality
- Developing a four 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
- Delivering inclusive events and increasing the diversity within our participation base

4.2 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 (for example, uniform groups, schools, universities) within the British Canoeing landscape
- Increasing the number of specific crew boat focused event race opportunities
- Increasing the use of alternative racing formats
- 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 competitive results
- Establishing national records for regional races where practical

How will we measure progress?

- A minimum of 3-4 local and regional regattas will be held annually from 2022 rising to more than 20 sprint regattas per year by 2024
- Developing athletes will be exposed to an increased number and range of international events appropriate to their stage of development
- Development and delivery of a detailed Sprint Racing Committee action plan

Lead and support responsibilities

Accountable body for these actions; Sprint Racing Committee and Regatta Committee

Supporting partners include; British Canoeing Events Team, Clubs, International Panel, Marathon Racing Committee

ACTION PLAN 5

IMPROVING 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 Athlete Development 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?

5.1 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 canoe sprint
- Researching and understanding the factors which impact development and motivations of female athletes and ensuring this informs the practice of coaches and practitioners
- 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

5.2 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 land-based testing
- Identifying and developing innovations specifically for Paris 2024, to align with the performance requirements for the sport and individual athlete enhancements

5.3 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

5.4 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

5.5 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 of the barriers to development in clubs and offering enhanced opportunities for crew and canoe boat development in those clubs that are able to
- Increasing crew and canoe boat skills camps and race opportunities across the pathway
- Refining and providing clarity on the national crew boat selection policy

5.6 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 clear pathway strategies 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
- Improved female athlete retention and satisfaction rates

Lead and support responsibilities

Accountable body for these actions;
World Class Programme

Supporting partners include; EIS,
National Associations, Clubs

ACTION PLAN 6

BUILDING 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 those leading the World Class Programme. 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?

6.1 We will ensure the role played in athlete successes by the wider community of individuals and clubs is better 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

6.2 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 community sessions each year
- Consistently reviewing and sharing athlete progress with relevant coaches
- Establishing a formal process for the transition of athletes between national and club coaches when athletes join or leave national teams and programmes

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

This will involve;

- An annual meeting each year involving clubs, the Sprint Racing Committee and staff to consider strategic progress

6.4 We will help the sport support 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, that we are working to identify barriers to access, development or performance, and supporting athletes to overcome them
- 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

Lead and support responsibilities

Accountable body for these actions;
England Talent Programme and Clubs

Supporting partners include;
Sprint Racing Committee, World Class Programme, National Associations

Managing Delivery

Where do we want to be by 2025?

If we are to deliver this strategy and achieve the purpose and vision, goals and targets, then the many people involved in its delivery will need to have clear responsibilities and be working as a team.

This section clarifies matters of leadership, the roles and responsibilities of officers of British Canoeing, committees, clubs, coaches and volunteers. It also proposes how funding will be committed to deliver the strategy and identifies the key risks to the strategy which will need to be managed.

Roles and Responsibilities in Delivering the Strategy

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 2022 to reflect any changes agreed within this strategy.

The focus for SRC will remain on competition, but as part of this strategy, the role of the SRC will be expanded to represent clubs and volunteers, to include the creation of a consultative forum for clubs and staff and committees to meet to discuss challenges and opportunities and to monitor the progress towards the goals within the strategy.

The International Panel

The International Panel (IP) will be responsible for shaping the selection policy for sprint racing and to consult widely in this process. The selection policy will continue to 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, with the new IP in place for the Paris cycle from 2022.

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 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.

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 Director of Paddlesport who is accountable to the CEO, who in turn is accountable to the Board of British Canoeing.

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, paracanoe and slalom in the next 4-12 years.

Sprint Academies

It is planned to establish a small number of Sprint Academies, which will be hosted by National Associations or based in clubs in England.

These Academies will be supported by and operate as a part of the World Class Programme within an agreement between British Canoeing and each National Association or club hosting an Academy.

Athlete Representatives Group and Wellbeing Group

The Athlete Representatives Group will continue to operate as an important part of the strategy delivery. New Reps were elected in November 2020 and the Terms of Reference were updated in consultation with them and relevant staff, and approved by our Governance and Risk Committee.

The Wellbeing Group will also continue. Terms of Reference were also reviewed in 2020 and the Group now have a clearer remit to advise.

The role of the Board and CEO

The powers of the Board are detailed within the Board Governance Policy. The Board delegates the day to day running of the organisation to the CEO, who is accountable to the Board for the work of the paid staff and the work and plans of the committees within British Canoeing. The CEO will work closely with the Director of Paddlesport, the Performance Director and other staff to oversee the delivery of this strategy, policies and procedures.

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.

Managing Risk

This strategy clearly sets out the plans to build on these strengths and opportunities and to overcome the weaknesses and threats. There are of course risks within this strategy and reasons why it might not succeed. These include risks associated with the continuation of public funding by the Sports Councils for the national programmes, the unwillingness of clubs or coaches to support the strategy and the failure to deliver the various programmes as presented. Each of the key delivery partners will need to create their own risk management plans and manage these risks carefully over the next few years.

Funding the delivery of the Strategy

The delivery of this Sprint Performance Strategy will require a funding commitment from all levels within the sport. 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 are achievable within the resources which are expected to be available during this period, if the following funding principles are applied;

- Funding received by British Canoeing from UK Sport and Sport England for these purposes, will all be allocated to fully meet the requirements of the respective funding agreements, and 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 agreed between the funding partner and each National Association to strengthen the talent pool across the UK
- British Canoeing and the other National Associations will actively seek out 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 in line with the ambitions of the strategy

Reviewing the Strategy

Progress towards the actions and goals set out in each section of this strategy will be reviewed and reported annually to the Sprint Racing Annual Consultative Meeting and the Board of British Canoeing. A new strategy, which is likely to build on these same pillars will be developed in 2024 for the period 2025-2028.

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The members of the Canoe Sprint Performance Strategy Group

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