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## **Sprint Performance Strategy Group meeting #3**

### **17<sup>th</sup> July 2020**

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#### **Group members present**

<b>David Joy</b>	<b>CEO and Chair of the Group</b>
<b>Imogen Collins</b>	<b>England Talent Coach/SRC member</b>
<b>James Clark</b>	<b>Club/Independent</b>
<b>Brian Cunniffe</b>	<b>EIS Head of Performance Support</b>
<b>Paul Dimmock</b>	<b>International Panel/independent</b>
<b>Abi Edmonds</b>	<b>Independent ex WCP athlete</b>
<b>Rene Olsen</b>	<b>Sprint Head Coach WCP staff</b>
<b>Paul Ratcliffe</b>	<b>Performance Director</b>
<b>Ian Wynne</b>	<b>SRC member/Independent</b>
<b>David Parsons</b>	<b>Independent Expert</b>
<b>Tim Scott</b>	<b>Club/Independent</b>
<b>Laura Duffin</b>	<b>WCP staff</b>
<b>Andy Maddock</b>	<b>WCP staff and Chair of Facilities Group (part attendance)</b>
<b>Richard Ramsdale</b>	<b>WCP staff and Chair of the Clubs and Talented Athletes Development Group (part attendance)</b>
<b>Lee Pooley</b>	<b>WCP staff and Chair of the Coach Development Group (part attendance)</b>

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#### **1. Welcome, Apologies and Introductions**

- 1.1** DJ welcomed the group and presented apologies from Jon Scofield, Hayleigh Mason and Andy McSweeney.
- 1.2** DJ introduced Tim Scott, as a new group member. He referenced the work being undertaken independently by a group of club representatives chaired by Tim and the importance of the work of all groups being joined up in this process. Tim introduced himself as a full time coach at Norwich CC and involved in the racing clubs community.
- 1.3** DJ emphasised the focus on creating a right strategy and the importance of developing more trust and shared ownership and that it was important that all were working to this agenda. DJ reminded the group that the primary business of this meeting was to consider the emerging strategy.

#### **2. Minutes of the meeting on 12/06/2020 and matters arising**

- 2.1** The minutes of the last meeting were approved as a true record.

- 2.2** In matters arising a member of the group asked for clarity around item 3.7 and the reference to a reduction in athlete places and funding. DJ confirmed an update on funding was on the agenda, but explained that UK Sport had indicated a planning figure for sprint in the Paris cycle, which was approximately 50% less than the funding received in the Tokyo cycle. The number of athlete places had been indicated to drop from 22 to 10. We would have an opportunity to present a case for this to be increased within our final submission in October 2020.
- 2.3** A group member asked if the meeting papers could be sent out at least 7 days in advance of meetings to give longer to review papers ahead of the meeting. DJ apologised for delayed papers and hoped that this would not occur in the future.

**Action: DP and PR to explore the timings of Chairs' meetings to fit better with preparation of Strategy Group papers**

**3. Consider and approve the Strategic Framework prior to consultation**

- 3.1** PR thanked all Chairs and task groups for the huge amount of work they have undertaken to this point. PR stated that he wanted healthy debate and feedback on the work of the task and finish groups and agreement of the content of the Draft Strategic Framework to be released for consultation the following week.

***World Class Programme and Athlete Development Group overview***

- 3.2** This group has looked at the development phases of an athlete from recreational level through to elite performance level and explored how they get support at each stage of the journey. A particular focus had been on the transition points, making sure athletes don't have too many challenges at key points of their life.
- 3.3** The group had begun to explore a three tiered pathway, a club base, a regional hub or Academy and a centralised Podium programme.
- 3.4** A group member asked for confirmation that there will be a pathway structure run in the clubs? It was agreed that clubs and Academies will be important parts of the structure but that more clarity is required on the whole structure and roles and responsibilities.
- 3.5** The introduction of academy/hubs will be based around on the racing clubs that want to take this on, be a part of the structure and work closely with the performance department. Academies could support satellite clubs around them. It will be important that clubs can develop in their own ways and have freedom to explore ways of working.

- 3.6** There was discussion about what would be the role of universities and what support they may offer. It was considered that there was untapped opportunities in S&C and sports science and medicine.
- 3.7** There was discussion about the preference for full and part time coaching roles in academies. It was recognised that this was an important step to ensure that daily training provided for athletes was at the required level and that this shift would take clubs to consider new financial models.
- 3.8** There was discussion about whether or not Podium level athletes would have to centralise within the new structure. A group member pointed out that it is currently implied that athletes have to centralise as the investment principles are geared towards and all the provision and coaches are at the HPC. It was discussed that athletes would have a choice to stay within clubs and academies but that this needs more work in designing the system and support that might be available.

#### ***Clubs and Talented Athlete Development Group overview***

- 3.9** It was recorded that there has been some good consultation with other sports on this topic by the group. The principle approach being explored is that we develop a system that will allow the support of more people for longer. Recruitment should not be left to chance. We need to explore how to we drive recruitment and look across paddlesport as a whole. Opportunities for coaches to develop needs to be prioritised too.
- 3.10** There was discussion about the various entry points to the sport such as uniformed groups, leisure centres, schools DoE and that this isn't recognised here although is within competition planning. A lot of our elite and promising paddlers have been outside the elite clubs and centre in the past. We need to create environments that are accessible and inclusive. The success of an athlete shouldn't be measured by them being on a programme.
- 3.11** The sharing of knowledge and expertise across clubs and British Canoeing and fostering strong relationships was recognised as important. Formalising relationships between clubs and the various programmes will be important to ensure a joined up approach.
- 3.12** There was discussion about the work required for clubs to explore how they can be more self-sufficient financially and generate more income to invest in the talent work.
- 3.13** A group member asked if this planning was looking far enough into the future as partnerships with universities, paid structures and financial modelling in clubs etc will require at least 8 years to establish significant benefits and change. We need to present this new future and persuade UK Sport that the landscape will be different. It was noted that in many other sports parents are generally happy to pay to get a good opportunity for their children but that quality needs to be ensured. The professionalisation of the clubs might be welcomed by some and resisted by others.

This will mean something different to each club and there needs to be a care taken in explaining this as the volunteers in clubs will still be an essential part of this model.

- 3.14** It was clear the work in this group overlaps work around the World Class Programme and Athlete Development task and finish group. This model could pave the way for at least 5 strong academies by 2024/2026.
- 3.15** A group member pointed out that there needs to be more clarity on what measuring progress looks like across the pathway and what form the What it Takes to Win (WITTW) framework will take. Discussion took place as to whether the WITTW has ever been properly explained to clubs and would they really understand it? There was discussion about successful clubs and coaches doing this anyway, but that they just don't put a name to it. There was discussion that athletes' progress should be tracked against some key performance requirements, but that these have not been set and agreed and used consistently.
- 3.16** There was discussion about an increased use of ergos and the potential to look for better data from the ergos.
- 3.17** A group member highlighted that there needed to be more reference to culture and welfare and impact on athletes in this section. PR emphasised the importance of an athlete centred strategy and experience and that culture and welfare whilst running through all sections would have some focus at the start of the Strategic Framework document.

#### **Coach development overview**

- 3.18** It was noted that this group has consulted with other sports and the draft has the collective support of the whole group. This draft presents 'the who and the how' not the 'what'. Racing and sprint skills are recognised within the document. The draft highlights that expertise in the coaching role is fundamental to the success of the strategy. There needs to be a positive and healthy culture to advise and nurture and to provide opportunities for coaches to grow with athletes. The group has recognised the need to provide much more support to encourage more females in to coaching roles.
- 3.19** The Strategy Group felt that the importance of paid coaching needed to be articulated more strongly within the draft. This pathway will require more time from coaches, not only in their coaching but in reflection, planning and their education.
- 3.20** Coaches should have opportunities to grow with the athletes with no limits as to how far they can go. Sometimes athletes might progress to another coach and sometimes they may choose to stay with the same coach throughout their progression.

- 3.21** There was discussion about where coaches come from. Currently the pool appears to be only from within the sport. More help is needed in clubs to help people develop. Athlete to coach apprenticeship has been discussed but currently there doesn't appear to be a clear pathway in place. A module in canoe and kayak racing for universities to deliver as part of the course should be explored

### **Competitions overview**

- 3.22** The competitions group had outlined the importance of removing barriers for entry into the sport as well as the need to significantly increase opportunities for competition. Towards the performance end the format of the competitions need to be more restricted than at the lower levels where they should be diverse and unconstrained.
- 3.23** The group is exploring the opportunity to integrate events with uniformed groups, universities and colleges as well as schools and to reach out to these groups.
- 3.24** The opportunity to establish national performance standards and a find a way of capturing them within a database was being explored.
- 3.25** We need to do more to lift the importance and value of the national championships, so that athletes want to compete in it and are proud to be national champions. It was felt the National Championships currently don't hold the prestige they should.
- 3.26** The group discussed the need for events to match and enhance the athlete development, skills and experience. The competition model should align to WITTW. There is a need to look across and ensure everything aligns within a framework and this group needs to make sure the whole strategy is aligned. This job will never be finished it should be a live working piece that constantly evolves and is checked and challenged.
- 3.27** International level competition is not mentioned in the framework, in terms of hosting international events, influencing the international landscape or talented athletes competing internationally as part of their development. The group noted the aspiration for hosting international competitions but our infrastructure doesn't currently allow us to bid for them. Lower level international exposure, club trips to different countries for example is important.
- 3.28** A group member asked about athlete development in competition and having enough opportunities to race without fear of judgement. It was argued that there are limited opportunities currently so this creates pressure to get results at domestic regattas, which can remove the enjoyment as all racing opportunities are critical, without the chance to experiment.
- 3.29** The importance of having a selection event that is high quality, consistent and aligns with what the athletes are training for each year is the essential. The group felt that

selection should be part of a bigger competition and not just a selection event, therefore having selection at the right time of year is essential.

### **Facilities**

- 3.30** Task and Finish group see facilities as an enabler to the strategy not driving the strategy. The group is still awaiting emerging themes from other group groups. Work so far has been around the creation and development of criteria framework for an elite and club facility. A gap analysis was conducted including HPP to identify key areas where investment is required as well as looking sideways to other options.
- 3.31** The group has established that the programme need to be more strategic about use of overseas facilities for training and pre competition and have identified the requirements for pre competition camp venues and a warm weather camp facility.
- 3.32** A member of the group asked where South Cerney sat as a priority for British Canoeing. DJ confirmed that it is on the radar with discussion required. DJ identified the need to develop a facilities strategy and that investment decisions were more difficult without this.
- 3.33** The Group noted that the International Event Strategy aligns to this facilities work. Elite training facility requirements aren't identical to an international competition venue but investment in HPP as an international venue would bring daily training environment benefits.
- 3.34** A group member asked if the decision has been taken that HPP will be the home of the national training centre. It was confirmed as the likely direction of travel certainly for the next 4-8 years as the athletes were based there and there was no obvious alternative. It was recognised some developments were required at HPP including sheltered water training.

### **The independent club draft paper**

- 3.35** The document developed by the independent club group had also been circulated and was considered and discussed briefly. It was noted that there were similarities and differences in the two documents.

## **4. Confirming the consultation process for the Sprint Strategic Framework**

- 4.1** It was agreed that DP would take all comments from the discussions and consider the club document and to work with PR to draft the Strategic Framework for consultation. This will set out the headlines of the new strategy for comment. There will be a widely distributed electronic survey and 6 focus groups in this phase of consultation.

- 4.2 DJ urged that from this point, efforts should be focussed on producing one joined up strategy rather than two separate pieces of work and hoped that this consultation exercise would consolidate this process.
- 4.3 Further work will be undertaken prior to the next draft (v2) to be circulated at end August or early September. This also be discussed in detail in focus groups.
- 4.4 The Draft strategy will be produced in mid-September to feed into the Paris funding submission. The final strategy will be released in the New Year.

## **5. UK Sport funding**

- 5.1 The UK Sport submission for Paris funding will be made on 16th October 2020. The outcome will be communicated in December. Some aspects of this strategy will need to be included in the funding submission and require considerable focus between now and then. These areas include; WITTW, athlete matrix, matching athletes against the bench marks in the matrix, budget for all three programmes, staffing structure.
- 5.2 There needs to be a clear focus on goals and ambitions, not just the outcome measures of medals and performances. This submission will provide an opportunity to demonstrate to UK Sport that we will be taking a different approach in the pathway and around coach development. It will be important to demonstrate the wider impact the sport can have on society and how we will inspire and generate an interest in the sport.

## **6. Satisfaction or any concerns about the work**

- 6.1 The group concluded that the strategic framework is progressing along the right lines and are encouraged about the amount of work and progress. There is a concern that if this is a funding application to UK Sport, that it is not yet sufficiently developed to be persuading. This also came out in the discussions with Chairs.
- 6.2 The group are slightly apprehensive about the WITTW/P area, and how this will relate to clubs and be applied in clubs.
- 6.3 There was a view that in its current format the document feels too impersonal and needs to be more people centred and that it should encourage people to enjoy the pathway. At the same time it needs to be recognised that this is a performance strategy which aims to support athletes to win medals on the world stage.
- 6.4 Within the next meetings the intention will be to consider more detail in each area. The next meeting will also consider feedback from the first consultations.

END

