

Dear British Canoeing Member

**10<sup>th</sup> December 2020**

## **ANNUAL REPORT**

The Annual Report provides an opportunity for all stakeholders to read what's happening at GB Freestyle. Feedback and questions are always welcome.

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## 1. Welsh Report - Justin Bunn

2020 promised to be a great year for Freestyle in Wales, building upon the successes of last year's Freestyle development sessions @ CIWW, there were plans to take this format on the road to give budding Welsh paddlers coaching opportunities at a variety of locations such as Hurley & HPP, however when COVID – 19 struck, the planned events started to get cancelled & then with further local lockdowns & greater travel restrictions than seen across the border in England it's fair to say this has had a significant impact on Freestyle paddling in Wales this year.

### Freestyle Activity across Wales & publicity

- Jan 4<sup>th</sup> Winter Wonder Loops @ CIWW – Freestyle Development session run by Inspirers Vanessa Hiller, Matt Stephenson, Daithi O'Brien

Due to COVID 19 Restrictions the following planned events were cancelled:

- 28<sup>th</sup> March – Inspirer Freestyle Development Session @ CIWW
- Welsh Open Freestyle
- May & June – Slightly Intermediate Freestyle sessions with Mayo
- Younguns Freestyle (Tryweryn).

### Canoe Wales Magazine - Ceufad content

I have continued to write reviews & taken photos at events which have featured in Ceufad (Canoe Wales) Magazine, & supported the Inspirers programme, attending & photographing the Development days @ CIWW.

December 2019 – (Freestyle on front cover with photo of Owen Maddox @ HPP) Article on Euro & British Open by Lisette Nixon.

March 2020 – Freestyle Development Sessions (Winter Wonder Loops) feature - write up & photos by myself. Run by Inspirers Vanessa Hiller, Matt Stephenson, Daithi O'Brien @ CIWW, article outlining plans for future Development Sessions.

### AOB

Meeting held March 2020 with Canoe Wales to obtain funding towards Welsh Open – however all funding was then pulled due to the ongoing COVID situation.

Planned development of Freestyle Features @ CIWW hampered significantly as centre was shut for 4 months, when it did re-open it was with limited numbers, which was then further complicated by local lockdown restrictions preventing cross county border

travel. The centre has been closed again due to the latest Welsh National Firebreak. (I will endeavour to re-start conversations when access permits)

There have been informal meets in North Wales on the river Dee (at Mile End Mill) but again numbers limited due to travel restrictions & COVID regulations.

**Justin Bunn - GB FS Welsh Officer**

## **2. Scottish Report - Garry O'Donnell**

Following changes to the board of trustees, Pinkston Water sports have begun conducting several volunteer site development projects. Included within these is development of the short course for the explicit purpose of providing a suitable freestyle training venue, with initial testing scheduled for Sunday the 13<sup>th</sup> of December 2020. The course is designed to feature a friendly yet retentive hole suitable for training at a wide range of skill levels and a wave suitable for beginner and intermediate level paddlers.

Interest in collaboration between Pinkston Water sports and SCA Freestyle for the launch of the re-developed short course has been expressed by members of the Pinkston board of trustees. Members of the Pinkston board will seek to attain grant funding to conduct a launch day comprising of subsidised or free water time, coached sessions, workshops, and a guest paddler with a view to continue sessions indefinitely under the Park & Play model.

The introduction of additional open sessions on a weekly basis – three from one – at Pinkston has been beneficial in allowing paddlers to train on a regular basis, however the cost of these sessions continue to prohibit regular attendance by many who wish to.

The Scottish Canoe Association training nights which typically operate once a month were put on hiatus following the February session as a result of the travel restrictions in place due to the COVID-19 epidemic; These sessions are due to resume once deemed feasible and will continue to provide subsidised time on the water. At present there are no plans to focus these sessions on developing freestyle – which remains a point of contention in the community.

Unfortunately, events during the first and second quarters of 2020 resulted in the resignation of three members of the Scottish Canoe Association Freestyle Committee. An additional member was successfully recruited in the fourth quarter, as such the committee now comprises of three members.

As a result of the restrictions in place due to COVID-19 no 'development days for freestyle paddlers' have taken place during 2020. The business model of Pinkston Watersports continues to present a substantial obstacle to such activities. With

developments occurring on the short course and future developments planned for the long course at Pinkston it is expected that such events may become feasible in the coming year.

The annual university freestyle competition hosted by the University of Strathclyde Canoe Club ran successfully mid-February attracting approximately 50 participants from seven universities throughout Scotland.

Unfortunately, no progress in setting up of a Scottish Freestyle Club has been made since the last report and would seem unlikely to occur in the near future. The Development Manager of the Scottish Canoe Association has provided great assistance in efforts to establish such a club and continues to offer support.

In summary, despite the obstacles created by the COVID-19 epidemic effectively prohibiting the running of events from the second quarter onwards, significant steps have been taken towards developing a suitable and reliable feature for training, which should stand the community in good stead when events resume.

**Garry O'Donnell - GB FS Scottish Officer**

### **3. Youth Freestyle Report - Matt Chadder**

#### **Younguns Freestyle Tour 2021**

So, 2020 was a write off for everyone, however we need to make sure that 2021 provides grass roots opportunity for young paddlers to enjoy our sport. We know that kayaking equipment sales have gone through the roof and BC membership as near doubled – so the plan is to make sure that the Younguns Freestyle Tour is up and running next summer.

To allow for us to remain safe during COVID, perhaps only two events will be scheduled mid – late summer (Tryweryn & Boulter) to allow easy entry to our sport with the same fun attitude and atmosphere. It would be great if some of the past / current team can come along to provide some help and support and make sure they post on their social media pages to encourage new paddlers into the competition.

**Matt Chadder - GB FS YGFS Series Lead Organiser**

#### **4. Team Managers Report - Tim Ward**

Sadly, due to the devastating effects of COVID 19 very little has happened team wise since my last report. The European Championships were eventually postponed but we still await advice from the ECA as to their intentions for the event.

Selection for the 2021 Worlds team was scheduled for 24/25th October this year but the decision was made to postpone due to raised levels of COVID 19 in the Nottingham area and hence the health risk to athletes and volunteers. Selection is now on hold until the ICF Freestyle Committee meet in April 2021 to decide whether the Worlds will go ahead. If the decision is yes selection will follow during April. Backup will be selection by the Selection Panel. We are greatly looking forward to a positive outcome as the Worlds will be held in Nottingham with a new team uniform cycle starting for the event.

On a personal front my intention was to retire as TM after the Paris Euros so with this in mind we recruited for an Asst TM to learn the ropes and hopefully take over fully for 2021 team selection. Tanya Neilson has been appointed as Asst TM, is taking on the role enthusiastically and did a first-class job on setting up a COVID aware event for selection, so everything is in place whilst we await the go ahead from the ICF. However, as the Euros was postponed I will be staying on as TM for a further year in order to guide her through the cut and thrust of a full championships cycle.

I would like to record my thanks to Tanya for all her hard work on the selection event COVID protocols and risk assessment (for which she was praised by BC) and to Jacko, Gav and the committee for all their support through dealing with selection policy and COVID problems.

**Tim Ward - GB FS Team Manager**

#### **5. Selection Panel Report - Ben West**

The selection panel has to work on a few different things this year and is still working on arrangements for the delay of the selection event for the 2021 World Championships in Nottingham. Right back towards the beginning of 2020 when looking at the selection event that was originally scheduled for October 2020 there was a lot of deliberation over the features that would be used for the event, as well as when we would have to make our cut off decision by. With all the lockdown restrictions in place the likelihood of having the worlds feature ready in time being slim it meant we had to look at the bigger picture when making our decisions for selecting the right features for the two events to select the best team for the worlds, as well as decide on the suitability of the leaving 4 weeks before the event to announce the features. In the end the difficult decision was made to cancel the event, as well as the backup event, and postpone until

further notice. The selection panel is now looking at arrangements for if the 2021 World Championships do go ahead and the worst case scenario that the postponed selection event can't go ahead.

A lot of work has gone into the selection policy and updating it so that all aspects of it are incredibly clear and detailed in all aspects of it. This should allow for the selection process to continue to be a fair process that can be implemented accurately by the selection panel and the event organisers. The application of performance measures is clearly explained, along with the rationale for having these. Changes to mitigating circumstances were made to make it a more transparent aspect of the policy for anyone that would need to use it. Updates to this have had to be made to reflect the ever changing circumstances that COVID-19 has put upon us.

**Ben West - GB FS Selection Panel Chairman**

## **6. Development Pathway Report - Dennis Newton, Bruce Jolliffe**

### **Development Pathway Governance and Structure**

It's been a challenging year with many externally imposed limitations. As a result, the complete Pathway programme implementation will be realistically delayed by 12 months. In support of this future delivery, we have used the time in 2020 to review how best to deliver the Pathway, and have as a result made some structural changes; including the addition of new voluntary roles to better support the programmes.

A draft Terms of Reference (TOR) was generated for the Selection Panel, that is broadly aligned to those of the British Canoeing International Panels (given the voluntary nature of the Freestyle Selection Panel). This TOR is with the GB Freestyle Committee for approval, and once approved will be published on the GB Freestyle webpage. Ben West (previous Vice Chair) replaced Dennis Newton as Chair, who stepped down from the Selection Panel.

A Terms of Reference was defined for the Pathway Strategic Group (previously known as the Development Advisory Group). This sub-committee will oversee all aspects of the development/performance pathway. The new TOR is currently being reviewed by the GBF committee and once agreed will be available on the GB Freestyle website. It has also been discussed with the Committee Chairman that the constitution be amended to better encompass subcommittee roles and lead roles within the performance/development pathway. This is seen as key to formalising the progress made, and drive long term consistency.

### **British Canoeing Non-Olympic Pathway Support**

We continue to work with British Canoeing (BC) to improve support for non-Olympic disciplines and their Performance Pathway programmes. This has been increasingly

important in 2020, with Covid-19 related issues resulting in a number of programmes (both performance and community) being put on hold, despite the best efforts of volunteers. Among topics currently under discussion is the development of a clear British Canoeing Performance Leadership Structure to support non-Olympic disciplines.

BC recently announced the intention of appointing a Director of Paddlesport, providing strategic oversight and support to the talent and performance policies and programmes of the non-Olympic competition disciplines. We hope this will be a clear point of contact and support for GBF and other Non-Olympic performance leads.

Although our pathway programmes and initiative strategies are based on voluntary staff, we feel there is significant benefit to the overall programme if we could use a targeted approach to pay for coaching to accelerate key areas of the performance programmes within the pathway. Proposals for this targeted approach were rejected by BC and coaching provision remains on a voluntary basis. We will continue to work with BC to develop meaningful support provision for non-Olympic performance pathways.

#### **GB FS PARTNERSHIPS STRATEGY**

Our strategy continues to focus on both the mutual benefits of volunteering (ensuring the experience is rewarding) and complimenting the volunteers lifestyle. Given our available resources, a significant multiplier effect is needed to achieve our Development Pathway goals. Aligned with this we have adopted a clear strategy towards building a wider range of partners, in a collaborative relationship, using our expertise and resources to build a robust and sustainable development pathway.

#### **University of Lincoln partnership**

This year we formalised a partnership with the University of Lincoln for Sport Science support.

We had our first visit to the Human Performance Centre, providing the opportunity for athletes to meet the staff and postgraduates supporting the programme; and allowing the Sports Science personnel to gain a deeper understanding of the needs of freestyle athletes. The visit was successful and the staff and athletes are looking forward to further visits (post Covid-19 restrictions) to test their fitness, anaerobic capacity, speed and power.

This is seen as a major step for the GB Freestyle Team. Although we have been somewhat limited by Covid-19, due to the university facilities being closed at various points in the year, the University has been working with athletes on a remote basis. Otilie Robinson-Shaw (2 x Junior World Champion) had this to say: "I have recently begun working with the University of Lincoln and Sandro Dias, as part of a GB Freestyle pilot programme focusing on strength and conditioning. The impact on my fitness and paddling has been genuinely massive and I am excited for further development and progression going forward."

Although the visits and team camps are still currently on hold; both the University of Lincoln and GBF are keen to deepen this partnership. This really is an opportunity to further explore our interdisciplinary work, and gain a deeper understanding to support our amazing athletes and coaches in their training and competition environments.

I would like to thank Sandro Dias (support programme lead, Human Performance Centre) and Sandy Willmott (Associate Professor, School of Sport & Exercise Science) for their contributions to driving this partnership forwards.

Sandy Willmott (School of Sport & Exercise Science) said; “We are delighted and excited to be partnering with GB Freestyle Kayaking in supporting their athletes' development. Working with a sport that is new to most of our students and staff provides fantastic opportunities for acquiring new knowledge and skills, and we look forward to exploring the science behind the sport with the paddlers and coaches. Building on the support that Sandro Dias has already been providing offsite, the athletes can now take advantage of the specialist strength and conditioning and sports therapy facilities in the University's Human Performance Centre as well as support from Masters and undergraduate students (with mentorship from Sandro and other staff members). We are very appreciative of the opportunity to work with world-class athletes that GB Freestyle Kayaking are providing to our students, in a collaboration whose benefits to both partners should only get greater as the programme expands”.

### **Nottingham Leisure Trust partnership**

We have been working through the year towards an athlete support package for GB Freestyle programmes and we would like to form a partnership with Nottingham Leisure Trust. This is seen as a hugely positive development and supports the strategy of HPP becoming a centre of excellence for GB Freestyle.

The negotiations have centre around white-water course membership, access to NWSC gym facility, enhanced access to the white-water course for athletes, and support for our voluntary staff.

Another key area has been gaining athlete/team access to the Whitewater course during times of non-public use (such as during times of high-water levels). We have been in discussions with Serco and British Canoeing and are making progress towards gaining more frequent access to HPPWC during Covid-19 restrictions.

We are grateful to the Serco management (and especially Jack Garner) for working with us towards supporting the GB Freestyle during these difficult times.

### **HPPWC Access during Covid-19 restrictions:**

In addition, GBF have been actively engaging with Serco to establish a range of access options including day rates (for both GBF and broader community programmes) and packages for international freestyle athletes (multi-day activities).



## **GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT OF FREESTYLE DEVELOPMENT**

GB FS continue to work openly with international federations to promote global development of freestyle in key strategic areas, taking a proactive approach to engaging with the European Canoeing Association (ECA) and International Canoeing Federation (ICF) to best represent the view of the freestyle community. Early 2020, GBF provided feedback to the ICFFC on a multi-year plan covering topics such as growing freestyle participation, supporting freestyle development in emerging communities, and enhancing the depth of competition at international events. We will continue, as appropriate, to use the mechanisms available through GBF and British Canoeing for the international development of freestyle paddlesport.

GBF are currently at a point where we would like to further consult from athletes and broader UK community as to what our strategic direction should be moving forward. This will be used to inform the messaging from both GBF and British Canoeing regarding GBF strategic interests within the ECA/ICF frameworks. We hope to start this consultation in early 2021.

## **DEVELOPMENT PATHWAY PROGRAMMES**

### **GB Freestyle Academy**

The Academy programme was launched this year. We had an amazing response from the community, and selected 25 candidates from a broad range of clubs across England and Wales to attend the Academy programmes. Those who applied received a letter acknowledging their commitment to personal growth and contribution to their clubs; centre or social group. Unfortunately, due to the pandemic, and associated difficulties in arranging small group sessions, the Academy weekends have been postponed until 2021. We would like to thank all the Academy candidates for their understanding at this time and remain hopeful of delivering the programme in 2021.

In consultation with the Pathway Manager, we are planning to appoint four new voluntary positions (Innovators) to regionally assist the Pathway Manager, specifically related to our community centred GBF Academy, Inspirers and related areas. These new roles will fulfil our Innovators strategy and help co-ordinate these key pathway programmes. Two positions have been filled, with two more positions to be advertised in the new year.

### **Squad / Team Training Programmes**

Due to white water course access, there was a limited window for meaningful contributions to athlete development. Once open, the system of public slots at HPP, created logistical issues which strained voluntary resources. That said athletes & coaches rose to the challenge and made great performance gains through the summer period.

Due to the limited time to prepare for next year's World Championships, our approach has been to prioritise team athletes and those with podium potential for one-to-one coaching. In addition, we have provided individual support on request to all squad and team members; with the vast majority regularly engaging with voluntary staff to support their training requirements.

### **Sports Psychology Foundation/Excel - Actionable Conversation Platform**

The second cohort of athletes participated in the remote sports psychology programme. This really showed benefits through the Covid-19 lockdown period; with positive feedback for the programme. With the lessons learnt, we are now working on a proposal to expand the performance programme content on the active conversation platform to encompass all areas of athlete development (for example strength and conditioning) to better support our athlete's development and track their progress. The budget for this is to be determined, but dependent upon funding we would also like to extend this to Squad athletes.

Bruce Jolliffe was also undergoing CPD with this year's athlete cohort using the opportunity to orientate with the platform; working with Jonathan Males (Sport Psychology Lead) in preparation to deliver future modules.

I would like thank Jonathan Males (Mezzana) for supporting the athletes and for his assistance in developing a meaningful cost-effective remote programme.

### **Finding Freestyle Events**

We delivered a highly successful Finding Freestyle event at Hurley prior to the lockdown. The event was aimed at increasing ladies' participation in freestyle and further progressing our strategy towards gender equality in freestyle paddlesport both recreationally and competitively. We had to cancel further events; but plan to schedule a number of events in 2021 if Covid-19 restrictions allow.

### **Inspirers**

The plan for the Pathway Manager to conduct regional visits of Inspirers this Spring had to be put on hold due to the national lockdown, and following pandemic related travel complications this never happened. It's unfortunate that this resulted in a loss of momentum, however, many of the Inspirers did appear to stay visibly active.

2020 highlighted a need for greater regional oversight of Inspirers to help steer / motivate activities. This was not solely borne from the pandemic, but also from a less resilient organisational structure and slightly limited strategy. The Pathway Manager, cannot alone manage a field of volunteers this large across such a broad geographical area. Remote engagement with a diverse community like the Inspirers, in this stage of development is ineffective. The 'Innovator' role (as intended in original pathway document) is now seen as essential for driving this. Motivated individuals with time to

work with smaller more manageable numbers of Inspirers will be a key shift in strategy moving forwards.

### Inspirer Cohort 2

Planned recruitment and training of Inspirer cohort 2 for this summer also had to be paused. It is hoped that this can be re-instigated later in 2021.

### Inspirer & Academy Partnership

Proposals earlier in the year to use Inspirers in development of the Academy are seen as mutually beneficial. This provides good experience for the Inspirers, good role models for the Academy and an opportunity to build rapport and connections throughout the freestyle community.

### REPORT SUMMARY

Although 2020 offered limited opportunities to deliver our performance and recreational programmes, we have been able to further strengthen our governance strategy and work towards delivering an effective Development Pathway and sustainable voluntary workforce. Those programmes delivered have been highly successful with valuable lessons learned to shape programmes moving forward.





GBF athletes and team volunteers rose to the challenge and made great performance gains through the summer period. Our community outreach programmes although severely restricted by the pandemic have been greatly welcomed and supported; and there's a real buzz amongst those fortunate to attend these programmes or who are waiting for the opportunity to join us. In this unprecedented situation we have found new ways to grow without restricting our sports aspirations. We would like to thank all of our volunteers and partners and look forward to the future.

### Appendix 1 - DEVELOPMENT PATHWAY

Although many pathway programmes are on pause, the items listed below represent the key outstanding areas to be completed within the Development Pathway Strategy.

#### Development Pathway Priorities, Time Frames and Objectives

OPERATIONAL PLAN	PRIORITY L = Low M = Medium H = High	TIME FRAME	RESPONSIBILITIES	STATUS	COMMENTS
<b>Strategy: Creation of a young freestylers' development programme and academy.</b>					
Objective: Nurture talent paddlers and create young ambassadors for freestyle to inspire others.					

Establish annual Academy Camps designed to increase energy and enthusiasm in Club and Hub activities.	H	2021	PD, PM, ARM		The GB Academy programme had a successful launch with a large level of engagement from clubs and community groups. Through a nomination and selection process 25 candidates (representing 16 Clubs) from England and Wales were chosen. Due to Covid restriction the programme has now been pushed back to spring 2021. Successful Applicants received a GBF Certificate.
<p>Create Club/Community Group freestyle sessions that lead to regional series sessions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Phase 1, 2 and 3 (FUN, FLIP, FLY)</li> <li>All ages (modified activities and challenges)</li> <li>Create a guidance document and e-brochure for programme goals and activities.</li> </ul> <p>Include review process for all programmes.</p>	H	2021	PD, PM, ARM		<p>The Fun, Flip, Fly framework is now finalised, and the content will be completed by July 2021. The content includes a fun flatwater competition series that will serve as an inter-club/community group competition.</p> <p>Aiming to launch by August 2021.</p>
<b>Strategy: Creation of an extended competition pathway to Clubs and Community Groups</b>					
Objective: Strengthen inter competition, including talent identification (TID) aspects.					
Linking Club Championships and other appropriate competitions to club/community group development environments.	H	2022	PD, PM, ARM		The extended competition pathway is currently under development and will be completed before September 2022. The aim is to launch this after the role out of the Fun, Flip, Fly programme as this forms the foundation of the inter-club/community programme.
Development of a inter club/community competition that will also be used for the GB Academy programme.	H	2022	PD, PM, ARM		

## Appendix 2 - GBF PATHWAY MANAGEMENT/PROGRAMME ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

GBF EXECUTIVE LEADS		
Performance Director	PD	Dennis Newton
Pathway Manager	PM	Bruce Jolliffe
Team Manager	TM	Tim Ward
Assistant Team Manager	ATM	Tanya Nelson*

\*Non-Executive Lead (to be appointed Team Manager in 2021)

### GBF Sub Committee

GBF SUB COMMITTEE CHAIRS		
Pathway Strategy Group	PSG	Dennis Newton
Freestyle Selection Panel	FSP	Ben West

## GBF Pathway Programme Innovators

REGIONAL HUB CO-ORDINATORS (New Appointments*)		
David Rogers	INN	England - South
Michael Shaw	INN	England - Midlands

\*New appointments to be advertised in 2021

## GBF Sports Science Team

GBF SPORTS SCIENCE TEAM		
Dias Sandro	SST	Strength & Conditioning
Males Jonathan	SST	Sports Psychology
Shute Alice	SST	Sport Physiotherapy
Spicer Sully	SST	Sport Physiotherapy

## GBF Performance Coaches

TEAM, SQUAD, ACADEMY COACHES		
Andrew Jackson	PPTC	National Coach, Podium & Podium Potential
Bruce Jolliffe	PPTC	National Coach, Podium & Podium Potential*
Chris Brain	PPTC	National Coach, Podium & Podium Potential*
Dan Daley	PPTC	Podium & Podium Potential**
David Rogers	PPTC	Podium & Podium Potential**
Dennis Newton	PPTC	National Coach, Podium & Podium Potential*
Jamie Austen	PPTC	National Coach, Podium & Podium Potential*
Maya-ray Cross	PTC	Podium Potential**
Michael Shaw	PPTC	Podium & Podium Potential**
Ottilie Robinson-Shaw	PPTC	Junior Ladies Podium & Podium Potential**

\* World/European Championship Event Coaches 2021

\*\* Trainee National Coach, High-Performance Coach CPD

## GBF Squad/Academy Lead Coaches

GBF ACADEMY LEAD COACHES		
Chris Brain	ASLC	Squad & Academy Lead
Dan Daley	ALC	Academy Lead.

## GBF Development Pathway Inspirer Coaches

INSPIRERS COACHES		
Adam Biggs	INS	
Charlie Brackpool	INS	
Dan Daley*	INS	
David Bym	INS	
David Rogers*	INS	
Emma Witherford	INS	
Heidi Walsh	INS	
Jake Boswell	INS	
John Russell	INS	

Matt Stephenson	INS	
Maya-Ray Cross*	INS	
Michael Shaw*	INS	
Nirvana Kurger	INS	
Sam Roberts	INS	
Sam Wilson	INS	
Stewart Wintergill	INS	

\*Also participating on the HPC-CPD programme.

**Dennis Newton - GB FS Performance Director**

**Bruce Jolliffe - GB FS Pathway Manager**

## 7. Treasurer's Report - Lisa Carter

### Freestyle Committee Accounts – Year Ending 31 October 2020

#### Income and Expenditure Statement

British Canoeing Grant	£8000	
National Association Contributions		
Levies and Entrance Fees	826	
	(664)	Please note £162 was inadvertently not refunded
		£8162.00
Cost of Attendance, Int. Events		
Cost of Attendance, Domestic Events		
Hire of Facilities	£40	ACM November 2019
Other Competitions / Events		
Consultants		
SMR Dias		
Performance 1	£2040	Sports Psychology programme
Andrew Jackson	£200	Finding Freestyle
Otilie Robinson Shaw	£150	Finding Freestyle
Committee expenses and admin	£50.73	
		£2480.73
Total Surplus / (Deficit)		£5681.27
<b>Balance Sheet</b>		
Opening funds	£17023.46	
Surplus / (Deficit)	£5681.27	
Closing funds		£22704.73

Please note the numbers above reflect the actual account status as of 31 October 2020. However, it is noted that a further £162 is due to be recredited to individuals following the cancelling of selections; leaving £22542.73 remaining in the account.

**Lisa Carter - GB FS Treasurer**

## 8. Judging and Sporting Rules Report - Josh Wedgewood

2020 has been a slow year for judging and rule changes with local and international events cancelled. 2020 was supposed to be the first year the latest appendices were live. These introduce a number of new exciting changes such as the introduction of linking from entry moves and the “at least” clause on a number of cartwheel based moves. These will first be used in GB Selections during 2021 and then the World Championships. The ICF submitted the proposed rule changes at the start of the year however due to the cancelling of the ICF congress, these rules will not become active until 2022. One of the biggest changes these introduce is a new class, Womens C1. The first time we will see this class is now likely to be at the World Cups in 2022.

If there is anyone who thinks they can support the judging at the world championships, please get in touch to get certified... the more ICF judges we have in the UK the easier it will be to mitigate some of our COVID risks. Equally, for those who are wanting to support but supporting other events (Masters Worlds, Flatwater Freestyle etc), there are a number of opportunities.

**Josh Wedgewood - GB FS ICF Judging REP**

## 9. GB Freestyle 2020 ACM Vice Chairman Report - Gavin Barker

My work on the committee this year has been varied, some of my main tasks for this year are highlighted below:

**Selection event** - This year I’ve worked closely with the Selection panel chair, Team manager, and Assistant Team Manager to plan 2020 selection. As with everything this year, since the appearance of covid-19 in March, this has been a constantly changing situation that has needed to be reviewed on a regular basis. The good news is the organising team is stronger than ever and was able to pull together all the necessary documents to make a socially distanced event possible...unfortunately, with the Covid situation rapidly changing in the weeks running up to selection, the event was cancelled. I believe the freestyle community appreciated the transparency in the process and am confident, if appropriate, the final back-up date will be organised with the same level of professionalism.

**Selection policy** - Covid-19 provided many challenges for this years Selection Policy, with the likelihood of mitigation being greatly increased. Keeping the policy as transparent and fair for as many competitors as possible was challenging and, as ever, situations occur which expose further improvements needed within the policy. I believe the policy is as robust as it’s ever been and with its continued evolution it will only get stronger.



**Volunteers** - 2020 saw the development of the Volunteer & Wellbeing policy as well as our online volunteer form. Through completing this form volunteer information is kept on a database and creates GB Freestyle's Volunteer List, a goal from Outcome 8 of our four-year plan.

We also saw more volunteers recognised by British Canoeing; after Tim Ward our previous Chairman and current Team Manager was recognised for his contributions to Freestyle Kayaking, our previous and long-standing Treasurer, Bev Chrimes, gained an 'Outstanding Contribution Award' from British Canoeing for over 15 years of service to the GBFS committee. We look forward to her presentation in 2021, and plan to continue to 'blow the trumpet' for our committed volunteers.

**Budget** - The effects of lockdown's and limited sporting activity saw budgets across all the British Canoeing disciplines cut drastically. This meant the whole of the budget needed to be re-forecast for the year and unfortunately saw some activities postponed. Working with all the GBFS budget holders we managed to successfully plan for a very difficult year as well as put some reserves aside to ensure future development.

**Worlds Feature Development** - Although not strictly a role as part of the committee, many hours this year have been put towards the development of the worlds feature at HPP. A task that on paper seems much easier than the reality...with a great deal of trial and error, some pressure, and a lot of fun evenings, we settled on a feature that has received some good feedback from paddlers and are not ignoring the fact that further minor development could still make it better!

Successfully navigating a year like 2020 can only make us stronger, both as a committee and a community. Providing us with resolve, confidence, and a desire to reconnect with all the things we've missed...for me this makes the coming years very exciting!

**Gavin Barker - GB FS Vice Chairman**

## **10. Chairman's Report - Andrew Jackson**

Thank you to the officers of the committee for producing and reporting back on the progress GB Freestyle has made this year. Our annual report has grown over these last four years and now has become an important vehicle allowing us to shout out loud the Freestyle message.

Like all reports of 2020 the headline is Covid. With lots of work put on hold and certainty creating challenge around planning it's easy to write the year off as a loss. Well hopefully you will have already read that, that is not the case and that we have continued to make progress.

This is my last report as I have served two, two years terms and completed the four years' work I set out back in 2016. I finish knowing that much I promised in my

inauguration pledge has been achieved. I have asked my team to time and time again stretch themselves and produce a new future for freestyle.

So, before I get into my report, comments on the then, now, and soon to be, let me start by saying thank you. I know singling people out is a risky business but for the crazy volume of work and continued motivation, never slacking, Dennis Newton a true hero of sport. Next, my mentor Tim Ward whose constant support and lifelong commitment to doing good through a sport he loves is a lesson to us all. Gav Barker is a competing world class athlete and a committee Vice Chairman. In Gav I know the future of our sport is very bright, he takes my utmost respect in both those roles.

The structures around Great Britain's freestyle has never been stronger and in my 30 odd years in the sport I have never seen it progressing as much as it is right now. That is down not to just the few I have mentioned but also to every person who has got involved and driven our projects forwards. I am proud of what we have achieved, and I am incredibly thankful for all the efforts the many have put in.

During the Four Years of my chairmanship British Canoeing (BC) have stood by GB Freestyle and supported us. Now though we have reached a time when Freestyle in Britain is ready for its next step, we must ask more of British Canoeing and they will need to step up to deliver. We are ready! Key areas where next stage development should happen are listed below: -

- Feature development both in terms of creating new features and optimising opportunities with existing. We have some great sites in the UK, but many are underutilised or subject to prohibitive operating regimes.
- Event Funding is a difficult area as often we are running events in places where infrastructure options are costly. Despite events gaining significant growth entry fees do not offset operational costs. Help needs to be provided to secure both commercial opportunity and adequate promotion.
- Volunteering levels are higher in freestyle than ever before and as we march towards the 2021 World Championships the draw on time will become more and more significant. We can cope and everyone is fired up yet there is often a disparity between the volunteer time demands and availability. It is time to recognise that some tasks need professional paid for input.

The other area which is incredibly significant that BC will need to work hard on is equity across sport. There is a significant feeling through all Non-Olympic disciplines that there is a real unfairness in the distribution of resource between them and their Olympic counterparts. In Freestyle this comes up time and time again and much more effort needs to be made to be fair. Our discipline has driven hard to provide the same kinds of frameworks as Slalom and Sprint, but all delivered through a voluntary workforce.

Somehow BC need to juggle this difficult yet hugely important task so that everyone has the feeling of inclusion and fairness.

The area where I have not made enough progress through my chairmanship has been in the development of a more robust working relationship with both the European and International Canoe Federations. These organisations control the top tier of competitive Freestyle. This is an important area and one in which GB FS need to have influence. The normal routes of being able to represent through structured channels does not exist and despite efforts I have not stimulated any change there. GB Freestyle is one of the stronger and more structured nations of these organisations and we must keep up pressure so that a proper communication pathway that influences direction develops and grows.

As the committee go into the next Four-Year Plan (FYP) development I would not see huge amounts of change from our previous FYP. However, the areas I mention above do need addressing and hopefully the new committee Chairman will agree and bring these points into the plan. This plan development is hopefully an area I can be involved with. I am mindful though to clear the way and leave space for the new Chairman, so that they can bring their own vision to the role.

2021 promises to be a huge year for freestyle. With a vaccine for Covid around the corner we are optimistic that our own world championships right here in Nottingham will happen. Plans are afoot with options for both a Socially Distanced and full event. I cannot really express how exciting it will be to have the biggest competition in our sport at our home.

Things have been building with the team and our support to those paddlers who reach this fantastic achievement. With the University of Lincoln now providing world leading support and Sport Psychologist and Physiotherapist engaged there has never been a time when we have provided more. That coupled with the team having the most successful Freestyle coaches available to them make me immensely proud of how much we are doing. Team and Performance Management are aiming higher still, and I am hopeful that soon we will have more exciting announcements.

When I started this job back in 2016, I realised how ambitious a plan we were laying out. Freestyle was ready for change and we have certainly driven through a huge amount of that and this can be shown in the summary goals report below.

### **Summary Goals Report:**

- 1. Recognise, support, and increase participation levels in Freestyle Canoeing**
  - a. Recognise
    - i. Data controller – appointed and in place since 2019/ 90% of events now operating through GBFS systems.
    - ii. GDPR – in a safe place.

- iii. Participation type and needs survey needs to be undertaken. Covid hampered all participation through 2020 - survey not undertaken
  - iv. Year on year reporting structure in place but not yet automatic
  - v. No work yet undertaken to understand membership relationships with freestyle – 2021 Goal
  - b. Support and Increase
    - i. Development pathway launched and active from December 2018
      - 1. Ladies Day held on Hurley with huge demand and full course run.
    - ii. Events based on needs analysis not done – 2021 Goal
    - iii. Facility id not started see venues report below.
    - iv. Emphasise on Flatwater Freestyle not started – 2021 goal
  - c. KPI
    - i. Correlation of growth over 4-year cycle Now rescheduled to 2021 ACM
    - ii. Increased number of people undertaking FS coaching and performance awards - 2020 no event/ COVID
- 2. Recognise, support and develop freestyle venues across the UK**
- a. Recognise
    - i. No work has currently been done to create a national register of freestyle venues. 2021 goal
    - ii. No work has been done to analyse freestyle sites against the demographic distribution of BC membership. Subsequently no work has been done on the venue needs. 2021 goal
  - b. Support
    - i. We do now have much documentation of freestyle and Whitewater developments that have either happened or been proposed across the UK. It is planned to digitalise this documentation and make it openly available.
    - ii. No work has been done on developing a how to guide for freestyle feature creation in the UK.
    - iii. New feature development at Cardiff WW course. GB FS involved with work to improve features at this site (Justin Bunn and Craig Ayres from FS)
    - iv. New feature development at Holme Pierrepont WW course completed.
    - v. GB Freestyle working with HPP to develop better operating opportunities
    - vi. GB Freestyle working with British Canoeing to established robust paddling arrangements on Thames Weirs
  - c. Develop

- i. Project on the Mersey (Liverpool) brought to GB Freestyle and progressed with support provided – update due. (Jacko and Gareth Harvey from FS)
  - ii. Project on Sheaf / Don confluence (Sheffield). This will come into the design stage early 2020 and GB FS need to remain in contact with project liaison. (Jacko and Gav from FS) – Project now in third and final consultation phase.
  - iii. Project on Linton Falls (Yorkshire) – project in place and awaiting FS to visit and suggest development
  - iv. Project on Tryweryn (North Wales). Project in place and awaiting FS to visit and suggest development. No updates
- d. KPI
- i. Add to number of FS sites in register – Not Achieved as register not yet created.
  - ii. Weighted venue need list as yet not created but very positive on number of venues in pipeline – Not Achieved

### **3. Support & develop excellent events locally, nationally and internationally**

- a. Support
- i. Publicity Plan for Each Event – 2021 goal
  - ii. Events strategy identifying outcomes for each event – no update
  - iii. Guidance and support for event organisers on Child Protection and Welfare. Supporting documents created and distributed to event's organiser. Committee Welfare officer Alice Shute active and engaging with event organisers.
  - iv. Entry system including payment with scoring system – entry system active with payment process in place. This payment process is not direct on booking and no resolution of a cost-effective online payment portal has been found. British Canoeing are working on a parallel system which may be an option although early indications are that this will not be a solution.
  - v. No Work has been done to develop quality marker KPI's for events -2021 goal
- b. Develop
- i. Training and accreditation programs for tech officers – ongoing support program with ICF led by Josh Wedgewood and Charlie Brackpool
  - ii. No work done on 'Event How to Guide' 2021 Goal
  - iii. Delivery Program for the 2021 worlds – ongoing. Stakeholder Board and LOC now engaged. Report to ICF made in February 2021. Ongoing progress to amended Covid schedule as expected
- c. KPI
- i. Yearly event calendar published

- ii. Outcome reporting for events – No/ limited events 2021
- iii. Random satisfaction surveys – No/ limited events 2021
- iv. Log of Tech officers maintained
- v. Publicity plan – No/ limited events 2021

#### **4. Strengthen governance and establish method to finance GB Freestyle**

- a. Strengthen Governance
  - i. TOR – TOR Approved in March 2019
  - ii. Selection policy – continued evolution
  - iii. Operating system for home nations – Wales and Scotland currently have officers on the Freestyle Committee
- b. Establish method to finance GB Freestyle
  - i. BC, CW, SCA grants not yet accessed.
  - ii. SCA and CW invested financially in Inspirers scheme (2019 with some investment still live)
  - iii. Event financial neutrality. Many events now running at near neutral. Hurley our biggest event has not achieved this.
  - iv. Establish annual revenue streams – there was some interest in independent sponsorship of freestyle in 2019 however this did not move forwards. Guidance from BC will be needed on this goal. Project lead needed for this.
  - v. Work with BC to ensure they meet their commitments to government led funding bodies – our FYP and Development Pathway are linked to BC's FYP and we are achieving our obligations here.
- c. KPI
  - i. Annually increase the percentage of income into GB FS from non-public grant sources – KPI needs review – 2021 Goal

#### **5. Develop and implement a Freestyle Development Pathway**

- a. Develop & Implement
  - i. Development Pathway went live December 2018
  - ii. Pathway Report due as part of ACM
- b. KPI
  - i. All met – within Covid capabilities

#### **6. Support and advance the possibilities in elite performance**

- a. Support and Advance
  - i. Development Pathway identified tiered structural framework where levels of athletes can be supported. Review forms part of ACM
  - ii. Canoe Wales and Scottish Canoe Association Invested in Inspirers programme (2019)
  - iii. Jonathan Males and Sandro now engaged to provide top tier sports Psychology and Sport science support

- iv. University of Lincoln now an official partner supporting team sport science needs.
- v. Advanced coaching skill set - Performance Coach pathway launched
- vi. ID funding sources for athletes, coaches – not yet undertaken – 2019 / 20 /21
- vii. Strengthen team involvement with performance management – ongoing

- b. KPI
  - i. Tiered Framework created and implemented – Achieved
  - ii. Annual reviews submitted to performance management and Committee – Due 2020 ACM – Achieved
  - iii. Improved International Medal success – Not Achieved in 2020 - Covid. This KPI needs to evolve and take account of a whole team picture.

**7. Communicate what we do and how people can be involved exceptionally**

- a. Establishment of communication and marketing team within GB FS – not yet achieved – 2019/20 / 21
- b. KPI
  - i. Participation growth – Achieved

**8. Value Volunteers and Provide opportunities for growth through volunteering**

- a. Volunteer Charter live and operating
- b. Volunteer list live 2020
- c. Annual Commendation Awards for Volunteers – go live late 2019 / postponed until 2021
- d. ADDED understanding where volunteering stops and placing finance in place to support that
  - i. Agreement of FS com that project development work will be costed, approved and paid for.
  - ii. Agreement to develop policy to support this and provide safe system of work.

**Andrew F Jackson (Jacko) - GB FS Chairman**

**11. Committee 2020 and Terms**

1	Chairperson	Andrew Jackson	2019-2021	Standing Down
2	Vice Chairperson	Gav Barker and Jon Best	2019-2021	Standing
3	Secretary	Jonathan McElhinney	2018-2020	Standing
4	Treasurer	Lisa Carter	2019-2020	Standing Down
5	Safety & Welfare	Alice Shute	2018-2020	Standing

6	Judging	Joshua Wedgwood	2018-2020	Standing
7	Events Officer	Lee Parry	2018-2020	Standing
8	Welsh Officer	Justin Bunn	2018-2020	Standing
9	Scottish Officer	Garry O'Donnell	2019 - 2021	Standing
10	Member	Craig Ayres	2018-2020	Standing

### Appointed Officers

These are appointed by the committee for various periods of time.

1	Performance Director	Dennis Newton	2018-2022	Standing
4	Pathway Manager	Bruce Jolliffe	2018-2020	Standing
2	Team Manager	Tim Ward	2018-2022	Standing Down
3	Assistant Team Manager	Tanya Nielson	2020-2022	Standing*

\*Team Manager following the 2021 World Championships

**End**