

Chair's Report to the 2017ACM

Another season has drawn to a close and all of us in Slalom have many reasons to feel proud. I will come onto our competition success in a moment but, firstly, I would like to talk about foundations.

Volunteers are the bedrock that supports the sport. The fact that we have such a diverse racing programme is to the credit of dedicated volunteers across that country who freely give their time and effort. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all volunteers for their efforts throughout the year. However, everyone experiences changing circumstances in their lives and we cannot rely on the same people being there forever and recruitment of new participants is critical in ensuring the sport thrives in the future.

I reported last year that we had seen a steady decline in numbers entering Division 4 competitions and that trend has continued. This is a concern as this is the major area where we recruit and introduce new paddlers into the sport. It may be that we are converting more paddlers into regular participant in the ranking system such that the impact further up the divisions is mitigated and this view may be supported by the healthy numbers further up the ranking system, however, it is an area that we need to focus on moving forward.

Procedures and processes are necessary for the administration and smooth running of our sport. The tasks that are required have increased over the years because of additional regulation and the changing nature of engagement with the slalom community. Using the Internet presents an opportunity for streamlining our processes, but systems need to be built to achieve this. We have been fortunate that volunteers have created online tools that are now seen as commonplace; results database, online entry and website. Thanks to Duncan Berriman, Nick Penfold, Dee Lindsay and Alan Adams for all their efforts.

On the world stage our GB athletes have again delivered outstanding results including Mallory Franklin being crowned World Champion in C1W. The excellent performances at Junior and U23 level with more boats getting to finals and coming away with medals demonstrates our strength in depth with the promise of more to come. The Home Nation development programmes continue to support aspiring paddlers and their success is evident in the rising standard of paddling amongst our junior competitors with many pushing towards GB squads; U23 and Senior as well as the Junior team. This success is supported by the strength and breadth of our domestic competition structure, delivered by individual canoe clubs, which continues to provide opportunities for competitive racing for all abilities and across all ages.

The role of Chair would be a thankless task without the support and dedication of the committee. Within the committee we have developed an excellent working relationship and even when we disagree (which is quite often) it is always in good spirits. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the members of the committee for all their efforts and dedication in supporting Canoe Slalom.

Finally, we couldn't be meeting at an ACM without thinking about Jim Croft. For many years Jim was the Slalom Administrator and was very much part of the fabric of the event. In his 40+ years in the sport he touched the lives of many people in very different ways and I'm sure he will live on in fond memories.

David Spencer
Chair, Slalom Committee