

Report on Scottish Canoe Slalom for the 2017 BC ACM

A full calendar of slaloms, from premier to division 4, has run in Scotland this year and many thanks to all the clubs and individuals who have put immense effort into running these events. The Adventure Show returned to film the Premier at Grandtully and both the production company and the BBC are very pleased with the result. A non-slalom club, Leithen Water Paddlers, ran a highly successful race at Fairnilee and have applied to run another in 2018.

There has been lots of good racing from Scottish paddlers, at home and internationally, in the last twelve months. In terms of British teams we have been well represented Bradley Forbes Cryans (K1M) David Florence (C1M), Eilidh Gibson (C1W) and Fiona Pennie (K1W) regulars in the senior team this year, Rachel Houston (C1W) Alice Haining (K1W) paddled at one Senior World Cup, Jonny Dickson (K1M), Sophie Ogilvie (C1W) and Rachel Houston (C1W) have represented GB at U23 and Peter Linksted paddled in the GB J18 team. Notable results include Eilidh winning team golds at both the U23 Worlds and the Senior Worlds as well as 4th place in the senior Worlds. David took a team Silver in C1M in the Worlds and Fiona Pennie took individual 10th place there. Peter Linksted was 9th in the individual C1M at the Junior Worlds and Bradley 5th in the U23 Worlds.

Nearly 40 Scottish club paddlers participated in the summer training camps in Europe, coached by volunteer coaches. This highly beneficial summer activity not only is hugely enjoyed by paddlers and parents, but results in significant improvement in the skill level of all the paddlers participating. A small performance trip involving 4 paddlers and a coach also took place.

Alice Haining became K1W British Open Champion in September with some excellent performances from other Scottish paddlers right across the ages and classes. In the end of season rankings Duncan Edwards K1M, Peter Linksted C1M and Sophie Ogilvie C1W were the highest ranked juniors. The highest ranked div 1 in K1W was Natasha Pottinger K1W, who is now in Premier, and Aaron Holmes C1M was highest junior in div 1.

The SCA squad for 2017-2018 has been announced. There are two, part time, technical coaches, Stuart Gerrie and Ben MacDonald. Additional expertise from a senior coach will be deployed on training camps and key races such as selection.

Apart from David Florence and Fiona Pennie on GB Podium, and Eilidh Gibson, Bradley Forbes Cryans, Angus Gibson and Sophie Ogilvie on GB Podium Potential, there are 11 slalom paddlers in the SCA Performance group.

A new process for committee nomination forms was introduced by SCA this year. The nomination forms were to be completed and returned to SCA for approval by the SCA Board before the closing date in September. Elaine Forbes has stood down and there is now no chairperson or secretary. The ACM was well attended, and Tony Leaver appealed for others to volunteer for the committee, but no one came forward. At the SCA AGM it was announced that the slalom committee will be Craig Douglas, Tony Leaver, Gary Gibson, Bill Gerrie and Calum MacDiarmid

George Florence has offered to take over from Elaine Forbes as Scottish Pan Celtic team manager for 2018.

The Hydro Electric scheme at Grandtully is operational and no problems have been experienced during the running of the slaloms this year. The ground works on the south bank are complete with a hard-core path all the way from the hut to the bridge.

Many thanks are due to Elaine Forbes who has stood down after 10 years as secretary and Pan Celtic Team Manager for Scotland. Determined, hardworking, meticulous and diligent in making sure things are moving along whether dealing with minutes and correspondence or trying to get paddlers to register and submit entries for the Pan Celtic races. What is more she carries it all out with a cheerful smile and infectious laugh.

In closing, I'd like to thank all volunteers working in Scottish slalom at club and national level, at grass roots and performance. Many thanks to you all.

Chris Baillie
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