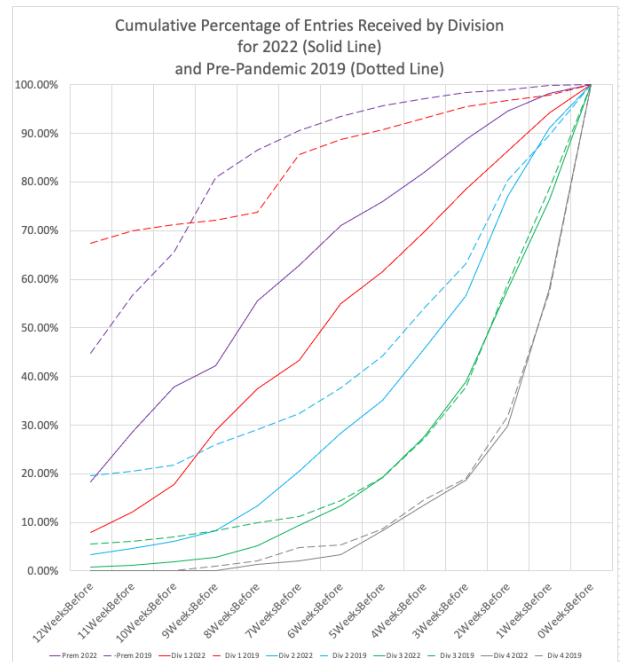## Data/Digital Strategy

1   Statistics – Pre and Post Pandemic

It was wonderful to see a full year of racing this year as the impacts of the pandemic fade for most of us, but sadly the entries statistics are painting a rather gloomy picture of participation in our sport.

This year many Prem and Div 1 organisers were becoming concerned, in the run up to their races, that low numbers would result in financial losses. This led to me looking at the numbers and drawing graphs

Are Competitors Entering Later?

The graph shows a cumulative percentage of entries for 2022 (solid line) and for 2019, ie pre-pandemic, (dotted lines) in the twelve weeks before the each race. Only host paddlers (not paddle-ups) and online entries are counted. Cancelled entries (and races) are ignored.
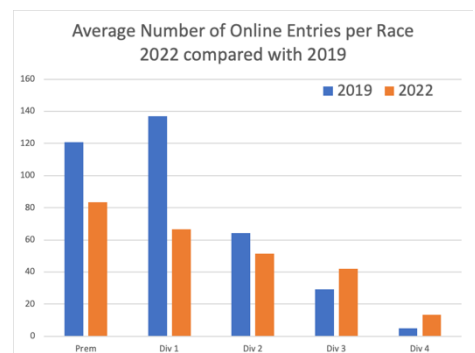

The use of percentages is because this graph is about *when* competitors enter rather than actual numbers. The "cumulative" element means that there is a clear increase in entry numbers to the 100% where all the comparisons meet.

Divisions 3 and 4 show no real difference with the rush of entries always having been in the last few weeks.

Prem and Div 1, however do show a significant delay as to when entries are received. As an example, consider Div 1 (the red lines). In 2019 just under 90% of the final entries tally were already in by 6 weeks before the competition. In 2022, only 55% of the entries had been received.

Have the Numbers of Entries Gone Down?

This second graph looks at the average number of online entries per race (a double competition counts as two races). As for the graph above this only considers host paddlers and online entries, the final numbers racing may be different. Cancelled entries (and races) are ignored.

These figures will not necessarily show the whole story as, particularly at the lower divisions, there will be some on-the-day entries unaccounted for. However, in the higher divisions, particularly Division 1, there has been a significant drop in entry levels.

Reduction in entries has been partially masked at races by acceptance of more paddle-ups enabling organisers to balance the books. However, with fewer competitors overall and competitors entering nearer to the competition, it's not surprising that organisers were becoming concerned about viability.

2   Software Development and Maintenance

We now have an extensive set of software systems supporting our sport, most of them entirely bespoke and maintained by volunteers. Even systems that have been around a while need ongoing maintenance and when the inevitable errors occur the impacts are often not confined to one area. Many thanks to some of our key maintainers who often "drop everything" to respond to any problems encountered, in particular: Duncan Berriman (Ranking Database & Bib Administration); Dave Spencer (Simply Slalom); Nick Penfold (Website); Matt Stephens (Bib Applications & Floating Ducks); and Ben Collins (Website Calendar).

There is never a year that goes by without some form of background maintenance, for example this year www.canoeslalom.co.uk website was moved to a new server to provide https security.

However, the huge change this year was the roll out of the Bib Application System – with very few exceptions all applications went through the system. Many bibs were issued on the same day of application but even ignoring those, the turn-around time by Bib Officers was incredibly quick. At the time of writing this there are still a lot of bibs out there which are waiting to be returned, so please help them to help you by returning and applying for your bib promptly!

Division	Issued	Issued on Same Day as Applied For	Median Time to Issue after Application (excluding same day)
P	183	33	1.69
1	146	29	2.61
2	257	85	2.23
3	402	88	1.51
V	84	24	1.07

A massive thank you to Matt and Duncan for making the Bib Application System happen and to the Bib Officers for their support.

3   Some Gentle Reminders

I would just like to remind all those using CanoeSlalomEntries, including the Calendar Application process that:

- If you find a bug, please tell me – don't assume I know about it!
- Please don't leave changes to your calendar application to the last minute
- If you find yourself wishing the system did "something", then let me know (preferably by email). I might say no, but it may be something I can add or even something that's already available.
- Whilst organisers have access to email addresses for those that have entered their competitions those emails should *only* be used in direct relation to the specific competition. When sending emails to competitors you must use back copy (bcc); this hides other competitors' email addresses from recipients.