

2022 British Canoeing Slalom ACM report.

World Class Programme

World Class Programme ACM report 2022

The year began with Kayak Cross confirmed as an Olympic event, taking White Water events from 4 to 8 medal opportunities in Paris and beyond. This is an important decision for our sport as it gives more security for Slalom to remain in the Olympic programme and provides a huge opportunity to develop and grow the sport and engage new paddlers.

In March, WCP was successful in bidding for additional UK Sport funding to support our Kayak Cross strategy which has led to an increase in athlete places from 20 to 24 and additional resources to meet the demands of a fuller programme.

The overall strategic theme for year 2 of the Paris Cycle has been 'maximise'. This has meant utilising all of the start lines available across the squad to maximise learning to develop the athletes racing abilities ahead of crucial years ahead including Olympic Qualification in 2023. In particular we have exposed full teams in Kayak Cross events and grown our knowledge and skills in the event as the level progresses.

The programme was successful in meeting its milestone targets in 2022 achieving 1x medal, with 2 additional finalists in Canoe Slalom and 2x medals in Extreme Slalom at the Senior World Championship's in Augsburg (target was x2 top 16 finishes in Extreme Slalom and 1 medal, plus 2 additional finalists in canoe slalom). Joe Clarke won a fantastic Gold in Kayak Cross to become double World Champion. Kimberley Woods won Silver in the women's event and Mallory Franklin followed up her Silver in Tokyo taking Bronze in the C1W event. The senior team also won medals in team events (men's K1 and women's C1).

The senior team also achieved medal success in all 6 Olympic events across the season's other senior races, showing competitive depth toward our Paris targets. In Kayak Cross athletes won a total of 9 medals including 4 different athletes at senior level, again showing depth and progress in the event which will be important heading into the Olympic qualification process.

The Junior and U23 World Championships in Ivrea saw the team win five medals. There were two Bronze medals for the K1 men (Jonny Dickson at U23, Sam Lever at junior level), two U23 Extreme medals (Nikita Setchell retained the U23 Extreme title, Etienne Chappell won Silver) and a junior team medal.

The Junior and U23 European Championships were held in Ceske Budejovice and the team won two individual medals and four team medals (4 podium finishes for the U23 teams, a Silver in the men's C1 and a Bronze each for the women's C1, women's K1 and men's K1). GB paddlers also won two Bronze medals in Extreme (Edward McDonald and Arina Kontchakov).

Staffing changes

It has been a challenging year with considerable changes to coaching and support team roles. Much of this as a result of a natural post cycle turn over. It has been a huge effort to recruit the right people to roles and manage those changes whilst delivering a very busy calendar. The staffing changes below put us in a stronger position heading into 2023 with all roles now filled.

- Mark Ratcliffe- Performance Director (role change Dec '21)
- Greg Hitchen- Lead Coach- Kayak Cross F/T (Role change June'22)
- Campbell Walsh- Podium Technical Coach F/T (role replacement Nov'22)
- Ciaran Lee Edwards- Academy Technical Coach F/T (role change Aug '22)
- Dan Browman- Doctor P/T (replacement role Mar '22)
- Andrew Cornwell- Physical Preparation Coach F/T (new role Oct'21)
- Tay Albarck- Senior Physio Therapist F/T (role replacement June'22)
- Tom Hull- Performance Support Lead F/T (role enhancement Oct'21)
- Hannah Brooks- Senior Psychologist P/T (role replacement June'22)
- Benji Palmer- Performance analyst intern F/T (new role June'22)
- Marc Delaforge-Allen- Slalom Operations Lead F/T (role replacement Aug'22)

I would like to pay tribute to all of the long serving members of staff who have left the programme this year and thank them for the many years of commitment and dedication they have given in support of athletes and I wish them well as they move on to new challenges.

Looking ahead to 2023

Looking ahead into 2023 our primary focus will be on Olympic Qualification at our home worlds. 2023 is also likely to kick start our Olympic selection process as the competition for places in Paris starts to refine. Lee Valley will again be centre stage and we look forward to bringing the whole community together to maximise the amazing support to athletes and it promises to be a fantastic event.

England Talent Programme.

2022 Progress & Achievement

2022 has seen a near return to normal after two disrupted years of training and competition. As well as domestic training and racing, the programme was able to support international training camps this year too, which have been very well received.

England juniors continued to perform well at GB Junior team selection with a total of 10 boats selected to the 12 available spaces, with a further 5 qualifying as reserves. The team had mixed experiences of international exposure prior to racing at this level, but all performed well across the World and European Championship events. Notable performances were Ed Macdonald (HPPCC) achieving 5 out of a possible 6 finals, an individual European Bronze medal in Canoe Slalom Extreme and World Bronze K1 team medal. Arina Kontchakov was also rewarded for her hard work and commitment with a European Bronze medal in Canoe Slalom Extreme.

Four international race and training camps have been delivered. Programme coaches, athletes and their families have been to Ivera (Italy) to train ahead of the Junior/U23 World Championship, Prague

(Czech Republic) and Bratislava (Slovakia) to attend World Series and Junior Cup events and the L'argentiere (France) for the first Slalom School international camp. All the trips had great uptake and engagement, and covid restrictions over the last 2 years meant that for some junior athletes this was the first time paddling abroad, or even being abroad. There were some excellent performances with a total of 9 podium finishes and numerous other finals across various age-groups and classes at the World Series and Junior Cup events.

In addition to international camps, our first HPP Talent camp was hosted in the summer holidays, to maximise white water exposure in the warmer months. The camp included a Canoe Slalom Extreme simulation event, marking the beginning of a more direct approach to developing the Canoe Slalom Extreme discipline.

The Slalom School programme continues to do well and this year delivered 10 training days, and 9 days of camp activity. Five of the camp days were in the south of France and were ably supported by coaches from Stafford and Stone Canoe Club, and from Frome Canoe Club. Four club coaches are working their way through the Slalom Coach Award as part of the Slalom School Programme with a number of coaches/parents undertaking their Stadium Safety and Rescue Training.

Our partnerships have expanded with the University of Nottingham and Nottingham Trent University, with both agreeing to increase their support of the University Performance Coach contracted to work with their student athletes. The University of Nottingham won the overall Canoe British University College Sport (BUCS) championship.

We welcomed a new member to the England Talent Team in March this year, Ben Lewis has been appointed as Strength and Conditioning pathway coordinator, responsible for the development and education of programme coaches and club coaches across the English pathways in both Olympic and Paralympic disciplines.

In May this year, we began a partnership with London Youth Rowing (LYR) and Sport England to launch [Active Paddle](#). Securing £140,000 of investment, the partnership will recruit and train a full-time canoeing coach to deliver Active Paddle at the LYR boat clubs, and in schools across East London. It is hoped that this will enable the provision of a mix of rowing and paddlesport to children and young people. The programme currently partners with 60+ state secondary schools, regularly working with over 2,000 young people each year.

It has been a challenging year for the Talent Club Partnership (TCP) club network with regards to recruitment and retention. Overall figures have decreased from October 2021, with 147 (63% male, 37% female) active juniors within the 5 clubs now, compared with 210 (65% male 35% female) in 2021. Early reflections suggest that it is down to a couple of factors. Firstly, with the lifting of Covid restrictions there wasn't the same captive market to engage in as it was in 2021. Secondly, the focus of those clubs has been to develop the athletes who started in 2021 (of which they have done well), however this has left a gap in some club's capacity to recruit to the same level in 2022.

This focus on developing athletes who started in 2021 helped to increase the number of juniors now engaged in the competition system with 84% of junior members across the 5 clubs competing in

2022, this up by 30% from 2021 figures. Moreover, 30 juniors have now gained international race or training exposure (outside GB teams) over the summer, up from 8 in 2021.

A further positive development within the TCP has been the increased exposure clubs are offering to Canoe. We have seen an increase from 42% to 67% of the number of paddlers who are paddling both Canoe and Kayak.

Looking Ahead

This year we have developed a focused Canoe Development Strategy in order to tackle the decreasing numbers competing and participating in the canoe classes. A number of projects have been established to better support doubling up within the programme, canoe development in clubs along with a number of proposed rule changes to encourage the growth and development class.

Following on from the launch of the [What It Takes To Progress](#) athlete development framework in 2021 which since then has been downloaded over 700 times from our digital library, a large amount of time has been invested in creating a video library of technical resources. The library is broken into 4 sections and it is hoped that the first few stages will be released prior to Christmas 2022.

Slalom School dates have been [released](#) for 2022/23 with support broadening to those paddlers in Div 3. Further coach development opportunities to support club coaches at these events will be identified and advertised.

In 2022/23 we plan on reviewing the Slalom TCP programme in order to evolve and increase the support available to a greater number of clubs in England, whilst safeguarding the grassroots participation and access at our leading slalom facilities.

Conclusion

Overall, it has been a successful period for the England Talent Programme, and there is much to feel proud of, both on and off the water. It has been a relief to return to 'normal' following the impact of covid, but the disrupted two years have impacted negatively on some aspects of the programme, and consequently some added work in specific areas, such as girls canoe, is required.

Finally a huge thanks to all of you who have played a part in the programme this year, the athletes, their parents, volunteers, clubs coaches and programme coaches alike - we are incredibly fortunate to be able to work together as a community to support and drive the England Talent Programme.