



# British Canoeing Canoe Slalom Committee Strategic Outlook: 2018-2021



This document outlines key areas of focus to guide the Slalom Committee in the management of Canoe Slalom within Great Britain, and in doing so demonstrates the alignment with the British Canoeing Strategic Plan.

This plan is a tool to assist in and focus the work of the slalom committee. It provides clear statements of intent and direction to key stakeholders and forms the basis for discussion regarding future direction.

This plan should not be regarded as static, it will be the subject of regular reviews as situations change and new challenges and opportunities arise. It is intended that the plan will be reviewed and presented annually at the ACM, and objectives for the forthcoming year will be refined in line with feedback from the wider Slalom community. Tracking progress against the plan will become part of regular meetings and should result in a sharper focus to the work of the committee.

All activities have a financial impact in some shape or form and working within an agreed framework should assist the preparation of annual budgets and multi-year financial planning.

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## 1 Overview

The Canoe Slalom Committee is authorised by the Board of British Canoeing to oversee the sport of Canoe Slalom across the UK., and this encompasses both British Canoeing's role as the governing body for England as well as the wider UK responsibilities.

The committee comprises of elected officers and coordinators and includes representatives of the National Associations and British Canoeing. Slalom Committee elections take place at the Annual Consultative Meeting (ACM) with votes held by registered canoe clubs who organise ranking events and/or have ranked paddlers. The detailed arrangements are outlined in the Terms of Reference (ToR) that define the governance of the committee. Whilst it is not appropriate to simply reproduce the ToR in this document it is worthwhile restating the purpose of the Slalom Committee:

*"The British Canoeing Slalom Committee is an entirely volunteer led committee whose purpose is to interest itself in all matters relating to the management and development of Canoe Slalom in the UK with particular focus on:*

- a. Increasing participation through the provision of competition;*
- b. Administration of rules and regulations;*
- c. Development of athletes, coaches and officials;*

*The Slalom Committee has UK wide responsibility for those areas outlined within its Purpose and Responsibilities and will work closely with the National Associations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and the regions in England as agreed between the Parties."*

As a discipline committee of British Canoeing, the Slalom Committee is responsible to both the BC-affiliated slalom clubs, who elect its members to represent them and to British Canoeing more widely as its representative body for Canoe Slalom. It is committed to supporting British Canoeing's overall strategic plan, and this plan outlines how this is balance is to be achieved.

Furthermore, in line with British Canoeing's responsibilities, the committee has a dual role in representing Slalom canoeing nationally; as well as specific oversight of English matters. To provide a clear distinction, the committee have established an England Canoe Slalom Committee (ECSC) to manage English only affairs with the ECSC being a sub-committee of the Slalom Committee.

Competition levies ensure that the discipline is appropriately funded, and this results in a balanced budget with no current need for external funding. Income is used to support central activities administered by the Slalom Committee as well as providing funds to National Associations to support their programmes. The current level of reserves offers the opportunity to further invest in the development of Canoe Slalom across the country.

### 1.1 Canoe Slalom in Britain

Canoe Slalom achieves some 10,000 race entries per annum with a base of approximately 1,000 ranked competitors. Over 70 competitions were held in 2017 across the 5 slalom divisions. The competitor demographic is predominately Junior and under 23 with a 60/40 split between men and women.

Paddlers from 109 clubs entered Slalom competitions, 40 clubs organised one or more competitions and 32 clubs fielded more than 10 racing members during 2017.



In recent years, Slalom has seen significant growth in the number of entries to competitions, although the total number of ranked competitors has remained broadly static; suggesting paddlers are racing more frequently. This may be attributed to positive targeting through talent identification schemes and the improvements in performance of Juniors on the international stage supports this observation.

Great Britain continues to be successful in winning medals at Junior, U23 and Senior levels in European, World and Olympic competitions.

Recent years have also seen the development and availability of an online entry system, specific to Canoe Slalom, making the entry process faster and more transparent. Alongside an established results and ranking database this continues the efforts to move key processes online.

There is a significant “churn” of paddlers within the system across all division. Research has shown that approximate 25% of paddlers that take part in entry level competitions subsequently enter the ranking system, and these replace fallout further up the divisional structure with the net effect that total numbers are broadly flat. There is anecdotal evidence as to why paddlers stop Slalom however, further research is needed to determine how many of these can be retained

Running Slalom competitions is labour intensive with a high proportion of volunteers requiring specialist skills (judging, timing etc.). There is a heavy reliance on volunteers who have been in post for many years and recruitment of “new blood” presents a significant challenge which needs to be addressed with some urgency.

## 1.2 Strategic Aims

The overall strategy can be broadly described as *recruit*, *develop* and *retain*. This is applicable to everyone involved in the sport; organisers, competitors, coaches, officials and volunteers. The approach for different sectors of the sport may differ but, in all cases, we need to be clear whether any given activity helps to *recruit* new people into Slalom, *develop* those who wish to increase their skills or to *retain* the people currently active in Slalom.

## 1.3 Administrative Structure

The Slalom committee comprises the following positions:

- Officers
  - Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary & Treasurer
- National Association Representatives
  - Scotland, Wales, England & Northern Ireland
- 6 Coordinators
  - Coaching
  - Digital Strategy/Data
  - Divisional Development
  - Safety/Competition Management
  - Technical Officials
  - Volunteers/Safeguarding
- British Canoeing
  - GB Performance, Sports Development Manager

The structure allows flexibility to redirect coordinators to work on matters that become more critical in line with changing priorities. Following the ACM coordinator responsibilities are reviewed and agreed for the coming season.



1.4 Where will Slalom be by 2021?

- *Slalom participation numbers in the UK will have continued to grow through increased retention and new entrants.*
- *The numbers of discipline-specific coaches will have increased, ensuring the skills are available to clubs and paddlers to achieve whatever their aims may be in the sport.*
- *We will continue to support the ambitions of talented and committed slalom paddlers to achieve their goals in representing Great Britain internationally, and win more major championship medals.*
- *We will continue to enthusiastically support the hosting of major International Championships in the UK and continue to be an active partner to the ICF and ECA in developing the wider sport and supporting International competitions through the provision of ICF accredited officials.*
- *Effective and efficient administration of the discipline to meet the needs of all key stakeholders.*
- *Providing vibrant domestic events that satisfy the needs of paddlers at all levels of ability.*



## 2 Slalom Competitions

*Ambitions of the BC strategic plan supported: -*

- *Ambition Seven: Provide excellent competitions*

The national ranking system provides a level of competition for every ability, from absolute beginners to established international paddlers. The divisional system rewards progress with promotion, which further encourages regular participation to achieve new personal goals. It is through this processes that paddlers can move up or down the divisions to find a level appropriate to their abilities, regardless of age or gender. The Slalom Committee promotes ongoing development of the ranking system and ensures continuity with ICF competition rules.

There is an established process for developing the National Calendar, with approval at the ACM. The application process is currently a manual system however, it is desirable to develop and use an online system to improve the timeliness and quality of gathering the necessary information.

The Slalom Committee also promote and organise the British Open Slalom Championships, which attracts international participation and is designated an ICF ranking race. Recently the race has been run alongside other canoeing disciplines and as Slalom’s showpiece for British Canoeing’s “Super September” event series.

The Slalom Committee maintains a collection of perpetual trophies awarded to winners of at the Ranking system (by event, and in age groupings), and the British Open.

Objectives and timetable for 2018-21

	Objective	Timescale
2.1	Coordinate the production of an annual competition calendar and solicit final agreement at the ACM	Annual
2.2	Assist competition organisers in developing new Slalom sites and provide financial assistance where necessary	Annual
2.3	Publish an annual yearbook to assist all those in the sport.	Annual (Jan)
2.4	Continue to produce and develop an “Organiser Pack” to assist new and established race organisers.	Annual
2.5	Review changes to the ICF rules for inclusion in the UK competition rules, proposing local rule amendments and publishing the complete rules	Bi Annual
2.6	Oversight and collation of competition risk assessments in accordance with National Association requirements	Ongoing
2.7	Collect feedback from race participants and organisers, provide clarification on rules and publish guidance as needed	Ongoing
2.8	Acts as authority when disputes or disciplinary matters arising from competitions cannot be resolved by the Chief Judge	Ongoing



### 3 Coaching

*Ambitions of the BC strategic plan supported: -*

- *Ambition One: Increase regular participation in paddlesport*
- *Ambition Nine: Develop our coaches and volunteers*
- *Ambition Eight: Improve pathways to performance and international success*

A critical element for any Slalom paddler is the acquisition of skills and techniques to enable them to compete with increasing ability and confidence. Coaching is vital in promoting appropriate development at the right time in an individuals' journey through the sport of Canoe Slalom. Coaches tend to be based in clubs, centres or directly employed through various performance programmes run by the governing bodies. It is recognised that there is a direct relationship between the growth and retention of participants in competitive sport and the availability of qualified coaches.

For the individual who is trying Slalom for the first time their initial contact with coaching sets the scene for whether they commit to the sport. In many respects this initial contact is the most important as it can provide the motivation for an individual to take up the sport of Canoe Slalom.

Retaining individuals who have already committed considerable time and effort to a sport that they clearly enjoyed is highly desirable. Upskilling young paddlers to become coaches and engaging them to pass on their skills and knowledge is highly desirable and is an area that would warrant further investigation and development.

The creation and roll-out of a modular coaching framework enables one avenue for targeted support to help in the development of Slalom specific coaches. The initial requirement is build the numbers of individuals to assess and approve aspiring coaches and then assist canoe clubs in developing their coach development programmes. Whilst the initial focus is on recruiting additional coaches, there is an ongoing requirement which is two-fold:

- To understand where there are skills gaps amongst the existing coaches
- To identify shortfalls in coaching capability either by the levels of coaches or geographical areas

In the draft Terms of Reference, the responsibilities in this area are assumed by the National Association Slalom Committees. Development of the national structures and supporting their role-out is nevertheless of such importance, that the Slalom Committee is devoting time and effort to lend its support.

Objectives and timetable for 2018-21

	Objective	Timescale
3.1	Maintain a coordinator role on the Slalom committee with specific responsibility for coaching	Annual
3.2	Provide grants to clubs to support coaches working towards Slalom specific qualifications	Annual (Nov)
3.3	Promote the development of club-based, qualified slalom coaches which meet the needs of all participants from beginners to elite athletes.	Ongoing
3.4	In concert with BC Coaching Team and the slalom technical coaching group develop a plan to support the development of new and existing coaches	2018/2019



## 4 Entry Pathways

*Ambitions of the BC strategic plan supported by this objective: -*

- *Ambition One: Increase regular participation in paddlesport*
- *Ambition Eight: Improve pathways to performance and international success*

Slalom, in keeping with other sports, is reliant on being able to attract new participants to ensure the health of the sport moving forward. New entrants not only directly support competition numbers but also bring family and friends who become the keen volunteers that ensures the viability of the sport in the future.

Ensuring that there are competitions suitable for beginners is reliant on:

- Provision of suitable sites with a good geographical spread across the country;
- Clubs and volunteers willing to host entry level competitions;
- Ease of entry and administration;
- Affordable and offering a rewarding experience;
- Effective and smooth pathways into the next level of the ranking system.

Objectives and timetable for 2018-21

	Objective	Timescale
4.1	Simplify the organisation and administration of entry level and early development competitions and remove barriers to competing	Ongoing
4.2	Simplify the processes and procedures for new participants to enter the ranking system	Ongoing
4.3	Promote and encourage the establishment of new entry level competitions in partnership with National Association Slalom Committees	Ongoing
4.4	Ensure that the competition calendar suitably caters for entry level competitions both in geographic spread and overall numbers of competitions throughout the season	Ongoing



## 5 Competition Pathways

*Ambitions of the BC strategic plan supported by this objective: -*

- *Ambition Eight: Improve pathways to performance and international success*

Performance development is a responsibility of the National Associations (BC, SCA, CW & CANI) for national squads with British Canoeing having the responsibility for GB squads. The Slalom Committee does not take direct responsibility for performance development; however, the national competition structure plays a vital role in presenting racing opportunities and is regarded as key component of athlete development.

The provision and support of the Ranking system, alongside a Calendar of events of increasing competitive level and difficulty, provide a framework against which an athlete's progress can be measured. This allows athletes and coaches to develop pathways aiming to link to National Association and British Canoeing performance international pathways

Canoe Slalom events are developed and introduced through the ICF, some of which are adopted as Olympic events and are well supported through UK Sport programmes. Development events (such as C2MX and Extreme Slalom) do not attract national funding, although there is a strong desire to support these given their prominence in international competitions. Providing domestic racing opportunities to support emerging non-Olympic events is an objective for the Slalom Committee during the file of this plan.

Not all athletes benefit from funding, especially when they successfully qualify for a GB squad early in their paddling career and are not part of a GB programme. Support of non-programme athletes is the responsibility of National Associations and their respective Slalom Committees and no direct grant is available from the Slalom Committee

Objectives and timetable for 2018-21

	Objective	Timescale
5.1	Continue to co-ordinate the annual calendar of events	Annual (Nov)
5.2	Monitor promotion and demotion criteria to ensure the ranking system provides a mechanism to allow athletes to measure their progress at all levels	Annual (Nov)
5.3	Monitor support provided to non-programme athletes through National Association Slalom Committees	Annual
5.4	Review changes to international events and assess the feasibility of including racing opportunities within the domestic competition calendar	Ongoing



## 6 Officials and Volunteers

In common with many sports, Canoe Slalom cannot operate without dedicated volunteers willing to organise and support competitions at all levels –collectively, they are the lifeblood of the sport. Volunteers engage with the sport for many reasons but mainly through personal contact, by competing at some point in their lives or through supporting other family members and friends who compete. As with all social activities a sense of belonging and community are strong motivators to participation and Slalom has, traditionally, been seen as welcoming to all comers

However, also in common with many sports, finding new volunteers willing to dedicate significant time and effort is difficult. The reliance has tended to be towards “organic” growth without the establishment of a clear strategy defining what skills are needed and how those skills are to be developed. Individuals feel that they do not have the confidence to take on what seems to be a complicated or technical role, but once “shown the ropes” confidence grows. Given the strong Junior participation within Canoe Slalom, maybe it is to parents & carers that we need to look to encourage deeper participation in the running of the sport.

A concern at this moment in time is recruiting sufficient judges to meet the demand of the competition calendar. Traditionally paddlers who volunteered to judge were rewarded with timed runs on the race course, but with the advent of “Paddle Up” individuals choose to pay for an entry. The current shortage of gate judges may be an unintended consequence of that decision.

Objectives and timetable for 2018-21

	Objective	Timescale
6.1	Review all volunteer roles and develop clear role descriptions and development pathways	Q1 2019
6.2	Continue to support suitably qualified individuals to develop their skills as International Technical Officials at ICF and ECA competitions	Ongoing
6.3	Identify individuals capable of becoming International Technical Officials and assist them in developing their skills then recommend them for examination	Ongoing
6.4	Reinvigorate the Judging qualification pathway to provide a route to develop the next generation of judges.	2020
6.5	Develop a programme to allow current volunteers the opportunity to develop their skill	2019
6.6	Actively participate in British Canoeing’s ‘Future Volunteers Leadership Programme’.	Ongoing
6.7	Actively promote the opportunity for volunteers to step into key roles a part of a managed succession plan.	



## 7 Communication

*Ambitions of the BC strategic plan supported by this objective: -*

- *Ambition Eleven: Improve the profile of paddlesport and communications throughout the sport*

The current communications are not well coordinated but make use of:

- A privately-run website (canoeslalom.co.uk) that is acknowledged as one of the best in breed for canoe slalom sites. The owner is active in canoe slalom administration and supportive of postings for the committee.
- A Canoe Slalom bulletin board has been set up by an ex paddler, this is monitored to identify issues and trends raised by the community. There is no official posting on this board by the Committee, although several Committee members have personal accounts.
- Facebook and twitter accounts have been set up for British Canoe Slalom. These are administered by a small group of individuals (some of whom are committee members). Posting to these accounts is ad hoc, with no clear strategy.
- Committee minutes are distributed to a mailing list held using mail chimp. This list is confirmed annually when clubs register an interest in slalom and allows opt out at any time.
- A mailing list has been set up to provide a conduit to competition organisers. To be refreshed annually as part of confirming competitions.
- Development of a communications plan – what do we want to communicate and to whom?
- Look to leverage the communications functions within the National Association Governing Bodies and British Canoeing for UK wide matters.

Objectives and timetable for 2018-21

	Objective	Timescale
7.1	Continue to use Canoe Slalom.co.uk to link with the community	Regularly
7.2	Monitor the Bulletin board to identify issues within the community	Weekly
7.3	Review and update mailing lists for clubs and organisers	Annual (Nov)
7.4	Develop a plan to co-ordinate the various communication streams	Mid 2019
7.5	Continue to post to Facebook and twitter, in line with the communications plan when developed	Ongoing



## 8 Governance

*Ambitions of the BC strategic plan supported by this objective: -*

- *Ambition Ten: Strengthen governance and financial sustainability within the sport*

The committee organises an Annual Consultative Meeting to discuss major issues requiring the slalom community's support, to elect the Committee in line with the Slalom Committee's Terms of Reference and to approve resolutions proposed.

The committee is elected to govern the sport of Canoe Slalom in line with the Terms of Reference.

It is important that Canoe Slalom is represented on key British Canoeing committees and actively participates alongside other disciplines in addressing areas of common interest. With that in mind there is direct participation in both the Discipline Chairs group and the English Council.

The established funding model for Canoe Slalom is based on a scale of levies applied to each competitive entry to a ranking competition (excluding Division 3 and 4 races). Levies are shared between the Slalom Committee and the National Association hosting the competition, which provides funding for central administration as well as National Association income for developing the sport locally. The aim is to run a balanced Budget in line with managing sufficient reserves. There is close cooperation with the British Canoeing finance team to continuously review and refine financial management controls and manage risk.

The Committee appoints committee members to other standing committees in order to ensure that the interests of slalom are understood, and the strategic plans for those committees are not at odds with slaloms Terms of reference or strategic plan.

The committee is currently revising its Terms of Reference as part of the wider exercise to clarify governance within British Canoeing.

Objectives and timetable for 2018-21

	Objective	Timescale
8.1	Organise an Annual Consultative Meeting to allow the Slalom Committee to be elected and held to account by clubs with a registered interest in Slalom.	Annual (Nov)
8.2	Review and update the Terms of Reference for approval at the Annual Meeting and subsequent BC Board meeting	End 2018
8.3	Provide annual budgets and statements of account to Annual Meetings, and BC Board as required	Annual (Nov)
8.4	Meet regularly to administer the discipline and review the progress of this Strategic Plan	Annual



## 9 International Matters

The Slalom Community supports International Competitions in a number of ways

- Athletes attend many International Competitions at all levels, from ECA / ICF Level 1 and 2 for the performance department, through level 3 (Ranking Competitions) and Level 4 competitions.
- The British Open Slalom Championships has been reinstated as a Level 3 ICF competition allowing domestic paddler to get experience of International races and to earn ICF Rankings.
- There is a good record of volunteer support for International competitions held in this country, from the World Cups from 2011 to 2014, through the Olympics, the 2015 World Championships. This is expected to continue with the 2019 World Cup and 2020 European Championships. This is reflected in the confidence that ICF / ECA have in the organisation.
- Development of ITOs as above
- Ensure that any ICF / ECA proposed rule changes are sensitively and promptly reviewed, providing BC with advice on a suitable response
- Proposing officials for International duties and supporting them financially when required.
- Propose and support individuals for membership of ICF Committees (including slalom, medical, athlete). Co-ordinating with BC as required.

Objectives and timetable for 2018-21

	Objective	Timescale
9.1	Support the recruitment of volunteers and organization for the forthcoming Internationals at Lee Valley	Mid 2020
9.2	Develop a wider skills base for organisation skills to ensure succession planning for future competitions	Ongoing
9.3	Review the funding of ITOs internationally, ensuring this is financially viable	Annual
9.4	Publish criteria for eligibility for ITO nomination to ensure transparency	November 2018
9.5	Assist British Canoeing in identifying suitable individuals to serve on ICF / ECA committees, supporting their nomination as required.	Congress 2020



## 10 Information Technology

The world is moving online and, whether we like it or not, we must be prepared to offer an online route for most of our activities.

Significant progress has been made in services that allow online entry and allow any competitor to track their progress in near real-time through the ranking database. These initiatives have come about through willing volunteers seeing the need and devoting many hours of their skilled time in devising solutions and building systems that are widely used and appreciated.

However, within the ever-changing world of electronic information, new challenges arise. The implementation of the new General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) imposes much stricter onus on how personal data is used and stored. The practical solution for Canoe Slalom as a volunteer led organisation is to devise solutions where the storing and control of personal data resides with the memberships systems of the National Associations. This will mean changes to some of our administrative activities however, we would look to create bridges and links electronically with the aim to reduce, rather than increase the administrative burden.

Objectives and timetable for 2018-21

	Objective	Timescale
10.1	Establish an electronic interface to National Association membership systems to allow online entry and ranking databases to conform valid membership.	Q3 2018
10.2	Audit Slalom administrative processes to document where personal data is stored	2018
10.3	Review administrative systems to determine how National Association systems can be leveraged to reduce the need to store personal information (e.g. bib management)	2018