



Veterans competition in the UK

History

For the past 25 years, separate ranking lists have been established and run for veterans in division 2/3 and for veterans in Premier and division 1. Premier and division 1 veterans competitions were held as ranking events alongside premier events for many years before this with the paddlers being ranked according to their performance against fellow veterans. Division 2/3 veterans points being calculated by a comparison to the substantive division. The rules for the division have not changed substantially in that period.

Over the years, the number of veterans has grown and shrunk for example in the 1993 yearbook in division 2/3 there were 40 veteran Mk1, 3K1L, 1 C1 and 2 C2s who recorded a ranking score, the 2010 year book will list only 11 Mk1 as having competed. The Premier/division 1 numbers are similar with 11 Mk1 in 1993 and 6 in 2010.

Current position

At the 2009 ACM, proposals were accepted to provide a national ranking list for those over 35 still competing in the main divisions (the masters competition). Thanks to Peter Parker for the work he put in to those proposals.

This review is only concerned with the veterans division. At the same meeting, a proposal to restructure the veterans division, for those opting out of the main ranking system, was withdrawn. This was originally aimed at revitalising, or at least providing competition, for those competing in the division 1/Premier veterans. This paper tries to set out my understanding of the current situation, and to discover if any changes are desired by those paddling in the divisions, and those eligible to join the veterans.

From an outsiders position (I have been old enough to paddle as a vet for many years but have not) the current position has a number of potential issues. Note these observations are based on my own prejudices and impressions, not on any quantitative analysis, or committee view.

- The small number of paddlers in the divisions can result in very small events. In divisions 2/3 this isn't a great issue as comparable ranking can still be achieved. In premier/1 this can result in iniquate events, indeed in 2008 there were several instances of just a single paddler.
- Division 2/3 veterans split into two groups, a small group who race against each other across the season to win the division, and a larger number who paddle just a few events, typically local ones.
- There are only three division 3 veterans; veteran's events at division 3 are sparsely attended.

So what is this about?

Bearing in mind the oft repeated "Putting Paddlers First and Valuing Volunteers", I am trying to find out what paddlers might want, so I am keen to hear from the 'more mature paddler' whether currently paddling in the veterans division, or in the main divisions as a 'master'.

So please let me know if my impressions above are wrong, or what could be improved for you. The sort of thing I have been thinking of are:

- Should we introduce a similar ranking system for premier/division one to that used for division 2/3, that is points against the men's kayak?
- Should we consider ranking 2/3 (and/or Prem/1) in the same way that we do C2s (but without a multiplier), that is allow half points at division 3 (and/or 1)?
- Do we need to separate Prem/1 and 2/3 or should we try to produce a single ranking system/list?



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- “If it ain’t broke don’t fix it.”

Feel free to talk to me, email me (see SlalomUK homepage), or write to me – my address is in the yearbook.

Thanks

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