



Canoe Slalom Committee

British Canoeing Report 2018

Competition

Senior Team

The European Championships in Prague in early June marked the commencement of year two of the Tokyo Olympic cycle. The team started with strong intent making multiple finals in every class. There was an array of strong performances on display not least from Bethan Farrow who marked her Senior Championship debut with a final in C1W at the tender age of 16.

Individual medals were achieved by Fiona Pennie and Mallory Franklin with Bronze in K1W and C1W respectively. In the C1M Adam Burgess won Silver beaten only by his teammate Ryan Westley who was crowned European Champion. Our C1W Team of Woods, Franklin and Farrow topped off a fine weekend by retaining their European title.

The 2018 World Cup circuit toured Liptovsky, Krakow, Augsburg, Tacen and La Seu with selected team releasing World Cup 4 in Tacen.

In Liptovsky there were Bronze medal winning performances from Joe Clarke (K1M), Ryan Westley (C1M) and Mallory Franklin (C1W). Krakow saw the British anthem played twice through exemplary performances from Joe Clarke (K1M) and David Florence (C1M) who stormed to Gold. At World Cup three in Augsburg the team strived to go into the mid-season break in good shape. Once again a strong spread of finals were achieved outlining our strength in depth. These finals were well converted by Mallory Franklin who won Silver medals in both K1W and C1W.

At World Cup 4 in Tacen a blend of youth and experience took to the start whilst the team prepared for the World Championships in Rio. A weather affected schedule provided challenging conditions and race formats for many competitors. The stand out result of the weekend came from Junior Ellis Millar who finished 7th in C1W in Heat 1 which went on to be the standing result of the weekend due to cancellation of finals.

The World Cup final in La Seu marked the final preparation race before the team travelled to Rio for the World Championships. With overall World Cup rankings being fought for by a number of our athletes it made for some exciting paddling. Mallory Franklin backed up her strong form in both boats taking Bronze in K1W and Silver in C1W and in the process pulling herself up to 2nd in the overall C1W rankings for 2018. Great Britain finished with a further five top ten rankings from Clarke and Forbes-Cryans in K1M, Franklin in K1W, Westley in C1M and Woods in C1W.

The World Championships in Rio de Janeiro saw Great Britain return to the site of their successful 2016 Olympic Games looking once again to return with fond memories. The event started superbly

with a medal in each team event and the crowning of our C1W team of Woods, Franklin, Forrow and our K1M team of Forbes-Cryans, Clarke and Bowers being crowned World Champions.

In the individual classes six finals were delivered with Bethan Forrow once again excelling in Championship delivery to win the C1W Semi Final and finish 8th in her final. Fiona Pennie once again showed her consistency in racing World Championship finals finishing 10th. Joe Clarke was in fine form on the river where he won Olympic Gold in 2016. Winning the Semi Final Joe produced the fastest time in the final but unfortunately incurred 2 penalties to finish 5th. Ryan Westley outlined his excellent season by producing a fine run in the Final which could only be beaten by one paddler and hence Ryan became World Silver Medallist. In the Women's classes Mallory Franklin continued her medal rush posting a high bar early in K1W Final that only Jess Fox could beat to give Mall Silver. In C1W Mallory was solid throughout the rounds in the defence of her title and backed up her 2017 win with a strong performance to finish in Silver. With a double medal Mallory became the first British athlete to win two individual medals at a World Championship and the first female athlete in history to win four medals at a World Championship. With three Silver Medals and four team medals Great Britain finished top of the medal table in Brazil.

In summary 2018 was one of the finest seasons for performance in the history of the Great Britain Canoe Slalom Team and certainly showed great signs of significant strength in depth across all classes.

Reviews for all three Olympic programmes have taken place throughout October and November and they will culminate with our UKS Mission Review session on the 16th November.

Key areas of strategic focus over the autumn period will be finalising the Olympic selection policy. The key challenge here is gaining clarity from the ICF Slalom Qualification system before we can fully finalise.

U23 & Junior Team

Preparations for the U23 and Junior Worlds in Ivrea were heavily compromised due to high water levels damaging the start of the river. As a result the team had to cancel their preparation camp prior to the race. Never the less the team approached the race with a positive mind-set taking advantage of every opportunity that they did have to best prepare. With the Worlds international race schedule changing to previous years there was a real energy amongst the team to hit the ground running with some positive team run performances. The team runs saw some exceptional racing with the K1W U23 team picking up 3rd spot, C1m U23 team 3rd and the C1W Junior team finishing second. This energy was very much carried in to the individual racing where the team showed a strong strength in depth and very much built on performances from the previous year. The junior athletes picked up 5 individual finals across the Olympic classes alongside several other athletes narrowly missing out in 12th place. As ever the standard of racing in the U23 competition was high. Again the team picked up 5 individual finals across the Olympic classes but this saw a number of the finals converted into medals with Kimberly Woods picking up a Bronze in the K1 women's events and a silver in the C1 women's race. Bradley Forbes Cryans (K1M) backed up his early season form by finishing second narrowly missing out on gold by 0.04 of a second.

Overall the team showed a strong level of racing across all the Olympic classes with an extremely high level of personal best's being achieved.

The European Championship in Bratislava in August soon approached with us sending out a slightly different team to that which raced the World Championships with a number of the senior athletes prioritising their preparations for the senior World Championships. The strong junior performances that were shown at the Junior Worlds were also backed up at the European Championships with the team securing a boat in each Olympic Class final making 6 junior finals in all. There were several notable performances with Nikita Setchell being crowned European Champion claiming the first GB junior medal since 2013 and Etienne Chappell narrowly missing out on the medals finishing 4th. In the U23 category Tom Abbott backed up his final from the Worlds by reaching his 4th C1 men's international final in 2 years showing his ability to consistently deliver final standard performance on the international stage. Gabi Ridge also delivered strongly achieving a personal best in the K1 women's final finishing 5th overall. In the team event the U23 K1 women's team backed up their bronze medal performance from the Worlds by going one better to finish second. The last team medal came from the K1W junior team finishing in 3rd spot.

Throughout end of season reviews, all learning from racing within the new competition schedule will be captured and applied with actions to enhance the performance environment for 2019. The focus for 2019 is on preparing the athletes in the best way possible to contest Olympic selection with the target of selecting the strongest possible Olympic team to compete in Tokyo 2020.

Slalom Talent

The Slalom Talent team have completed a packed summer schedule of summer international training and racing events. 24 days of international support have facilitated 100 athletes (along with their families) attending a varied mix of training and racing exposure at sites in Austria, Germany, Slovakia, France and Slovenia. These trips have been inclusive of non-programme athletes and the France trip allowed for some club coach development support.

Athletes have performed well throughout the race events earning valuable international start line experience, meaning athletes are more at ease and can call upon a great depth of experience when they come to race major events later in their careers.

The England Talent Slalom programme was represented by athletes and coaches within the Great Britain team competing at both the Junior and U23 World and European championships. England Talent athletes delivered 2 individual finals and a team silver at the World Junior Championship and 4 individual finals and a team bronze at the European Championship. The highlight of the event being Nikita Setchell becoming the European K1W Junior Champion! The first junior championship medal since 2013 and the first championship title since 1997.

People

Coach Development

Externally, we have engaged with UK Sport, supporting both the content development and the application of their new programmes; Athlete to Coach 2018-2020 and the newly written Coach Leader Programme 2018-2020. Following consultation with PLT, Mark Proctor has been accepted onto the Athlete to Coach Programme and Craig Morris onto the Coach Leader programme. In our own desire to bring better support into our support teams, we have researched the value of Mindflick which is a newly created tool to help people better understand themselves, their leadership style and how they change when under pressure.

Athlete Representative Group

Mallory Franklin and Kimberley Woods have now embedded themselves in roles as British Canoeing Athlete reps. Both have now attended a training day hosted at the British Canoeing offices by UK Sport in conjunction with the British Athletes Commission (BAC) and the EIS Performance Lifestyle Advisor team. The day provided an opportunity for Reps to learn from the professional staff and some experienced Athlete Reps, and to consider their own professional development in their roles and for future careers after sport. Reps from other local NGBs also attended the event, allowing the athletes to discuss the various cases that have come to them and the ways they've handled different challenges within each sport.

UK Sport Culture Health Check

The World Class Programme athletes, staff and stakeholders have recently completed the annual UK Sport Culture Health Check Survey (CHC) which is sent to all of our programme athletes, key staff and stakeholders who engage with our programme. The aim of the survey is to ascertain important insights into the culture, environment and behaviours and allow UK Sport to perform an annual check on the sports they fund. The results from the survey are used by us to evaluate how we run our programmes with key thoughts and experiences from the athletes, staff and stakeholders extracted from the data. This information has been shared with the athletes and staff at recent workshops and actions devised as a result. As well as this being a key tool for UK Sport to gain learnings from Canoeing, the survey also proves an important mechanism for PLT, coaches and athletes to make improvements to the programme in regards to the day to day training and competition environments, coaching and performance support and to continually develop the athlete centred culture of the world class programme.

In terms of the response rates, there has been an increase across all of the groups from 2017. It is extremely pleasing to see the levels of engagement with such an important piece of work, demonstrating a willingness for all to input their own feelings and thoughts and a group effort in terms of promoting the survey and gaining such high response rates.

Recognition

On behalf of everyone within British Canoeing and the wider UK Canoe Slalom community we would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to both those employed within the Home Nations and in particular the countless volunteers working day in day out in their spare time to ensure our sport continues to grow and that paddlers have a positive experience from it at whatever level they participate. The success of our athletes on the International stage would not be possible without a core of volunteers and for that we are extremely thankful.

Craig Morris/Greg Hitchen

November 2018