Data/Digital Strategy

Despite our wishful thinking at the end of 2020, 2021 was anything but normal, so thank you to all those organisers who battled the odds to get a competition off the ground whether or not the attempt was successful - I lost count of the number of competitions that we set up on CanoeSlalomEntries, only to see them cancelled a few weeks later.

Also, as always, thank you to those who build and maintain the software that supports Canoe Slalom, 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).
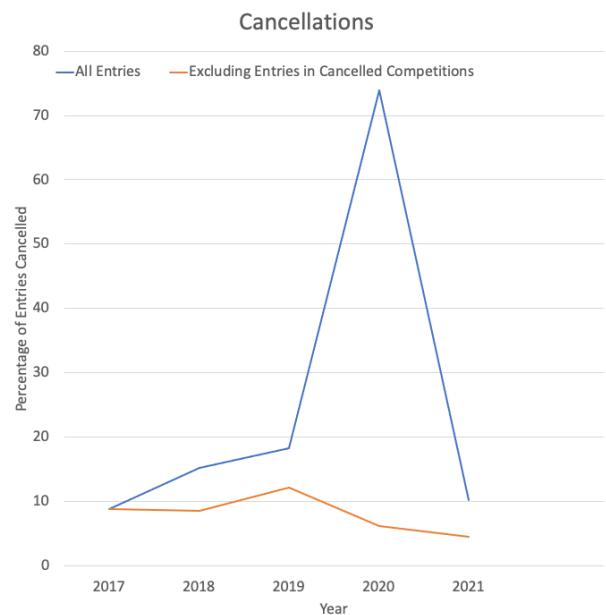
1 2021 Statistics - Cancellations

There was no rush to enter at the start of 2021 as competitions (and the country) were opened later, and comparing years is difficult. However, with a few years history in the system I thought it might be interesting (at least for the geeks amongst us) to look at cancellations of entries. (Note that I have only considered 2017 onwards as this is when the system started to become more widely used)

The blue line is based on all the entries on CanoeSlalomEntries and the percentage cancelled in any given year. It is clearly skewed in 2020 as a lot of entries were received early in the season before Covid lockdowns started and cancellations are largely driven by whole competitions being cancelled.

This orange line ignores all entries that were for competitions that were subsequently cancelled. Some of the remaining cancellations will be due to promotions, but a lot will just be personal circumstances. 2019 was the year when a huge number of paddlers entered in the early hours of the morning and is clearly seen in a higher rate of cancellations. In contrast this year, individual cancellations are significantly lower.

Even allowing for pandemic distortion, it appears that when competitions open for entry later the result is fewer cancellations. This may be something that organisers want to consider when choosing an open date, though obviously there are other factors to consider.

2 Going, Going, Gone

There have been a few changes to the various systems this year some of which will probably continue to be used and some of which are probably best forgotten. The latter mainly applies to a couple of CanoeSlalomEntries amendments:

- An attempt to get non-paddling attendees to register in advance so that organisers could gauge overall numbers; this clearly caused enough confusion that it negated its use, and it will be removed this year.
- Collection of telephone numbers "just in case" they were required for track and trace; in practice they have not been used and will be removed from the database at the end of the year.

Both the temporary changes above will be removed in December ready for the next season unless I hear otherwise.

3 Use of Personal Data

We always try to minimise personal data that we hold about competitors, but it is inevitable that we need to hold something, otherwise we would have a lot of blank start lists! I have received a couple of emails this year from clubs asking me to send out emails advertising their competitions. Whilst I appreciate the sentiment, I consider this to be a misuse of the data held on the entries system and have therefore refused ☹. I would just like to remind all organisers that:

- 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.