

British Canoeing Marathon Racing Committee

Minutes of the Committee Meeting held at 8.45am on 16th November 2019

Held at: Village Hall, Cropredy

1. Present

Stan Missen (SM) (Chair) James Smythe (JS) Jim Rossiter (JR)
Dave Sackman (DSa) Dan Seaford (DSe) Roland Lawler (RL) Scott Hynds (SH)
Nanette North (NN) David Enoch (DE) Siobhan Urquhart (SU) Kat Wilson (KW)
Mick Nadal (MN) Tom Sharpe (TS)

These people are referred to by their initials hereafter in the Minutes.

British Canoeing head office is referred to as BC.

Apologies for absence were received from:
Brian Chapman, Dyson Pendle, Richard Ward.

1) Committee elections and co-options

The Committee welcomed Nettie North of Cambridge CC to her first meeting since being elected at the ACM.

The Chairman reminded Committee members, as he does every year, of the need to be clear when speaking to the paddling community as to whether they are speaking for the Committee as a whole, or not. The community may mistake personal opinions of members as the “official Committee line” when this is not the case.

2) Approval of Minutes

- a) The minutes of the meeting of 29th September were approved by the Committee and signed by the Chair. They will now be published as final.
- b) The minutes of the ACM were provisionally approved, and will be formally approved by the next ACM

Action: JS

3) Matters Arising

- a) Trailer: DE reported that CANI are interested in trailer, but they must sell their own trailer first. There has been no progress on the potential sale to

Southampton CC. BC have clarified that we do not need to charge VAT on sale. **Actions DP to pursue with CANI; and SU to discuss with Cokethorpe School**

- b) Hasler Points: The September meeting approved an immediate increase from 20 to 50 points (40 to 100 for doubles) for a Hasler win, which has not yet been implemented. The purpose of this change was to incentivise paddlers finishing below 20th in a competitive race. The change will not affect cut-off times after which only one point is scored.
Actions: JS to Publish on website. TS to add to RACMAN and backdate all current season results.

4) Governance

- a) Committee roles

The Committee reviewed and discussed current members' roles. Current members were happy to continue in roles that they currently fulfil. An outline of current roles can be found in the Appendix to this document.

NN expressed a desire to create a new role with the aim of stimulating participation. This would focus on opportunities such as Schools and DW liaison, and supporting smaller clubs.

Action: NN to propose a plan

The communications role will be split, with JS taking a lead on the website, and SU taking on other communications. NN volunteered to take on a quarterly MRC newsletter. The importance of international team managers communicating back results from events was also highlighted, as this is good for explaining to clubs where they live money is being spent.

Actions: JS to remove Scott McEleny's co-opted role of C-class promotion, and to highlight those roles that depend on co-opted members.

- b) Wey KC paper on the organisation of Racing

JR presented a paper from Wey KC created in response to the sprint clubs' meeting held recently. This is outlined a plan to create an umbrella racing committee reporting to the BC board and into which the Performance Department, the MRC and the SRC would all report. The primary aim of this group would be to support clubs to grow participation.

The committee agreed with the broad aims of the White Paper, on condition that any re-structure equally balanced the needs of both disciplines. It was also clear that there would be a number of potential barriers. These included doubts that the Performance Department would

be able to report into this committee, and also clubs' dependency on their annual marathon race, which largely dictates the level of congestion in the racing calendar.

The next step will be to await the outcome of the next SRC meeting where this paper will be discussed. The MRC suggested that the best next step would be to organise a workshop bringing together a representative number of racing clubs, in order to gauge the wider appetite for change and if so, how it might be implemented. JR offered to host this meeting at WKC, although others thought that Nottingham be a more totemic venue. NN raised concern that smaller clubs may not attend, and that it would be important for clubs of all sizes to be fully represented in this debate.

Action: JS to feed back to SRC, and await outcome of their own discussion

c) Participation

JS presented a paper on participation over the last season, which showed that racing numbers were largely static year-on-year. It was identified that participation in races can decline towards the end of season in regions where the competition for Hasler Final is already sewn up.

It was pointed out that there are a number of local organisational issues which dictate when a club can organise a race, so the opportunities to reorganise the calendar on a regional basis are limited.

SU requested that we try to track the number of new people joining the sport and staying in it. Other comments pointed out the need to keep races fun and varied. NN highlighted the example of Spain which has a series of competition events alongside a series of participation events. The success of the various winter series and class B and C and events around the country highlights the value of *low-key, low pressure competition*.

The committee agreed to that the issue of the participation in competition is not one that can be resolved easily and needs to be debated by clubs.

Action: JS to put this up for debate at the proposed clubs consultation.

d) Conflict of interest forms remain outstanding from NN and DS.

Action: JS to email a copy to KW.

e) SM reported that BC have shelved their future leaders program, possibly because of low uptake. It was suggested that this maybe because the program was targeted at potential new committee members rather than people who already expressed enough of an interest in Committee volunteering.

Action: KW offered to send feedback to Anna at BC.

- f) SM expressed concern that only 16 *clubs* were represented at the ACM in Norwich. The committee again debated the question whether the change in format, or move away from major events would improve representation at this consultative meeting.

DE pointed out that when we had previously organised the ACM away from major events, attendance had been considerably worse. It was asked how we could make attending the meeting something added benefit to clubs that send a delegate.

Reading CC are considering whether to organise an evening event with food at the national championships, which could encourage clubs to stay for the meeting. TS proposed that we put the meeting *before Saturday prize-giving*, JR suggested a social event similar to that held by the SRC. A future in flat water coaching conference may also be an appropriate opportunity.

Action: KW to ask Reading CC about the evening idea or scheduling before prizegiving.

- g) Racing Handbook

The MRC did not contribute to the Handbook in 2019, preferring to publish rules and another documents online. Reviewing the impact of this decision, the Committee decided to restore some of the printed marathon content in the handbook, but only including content which is very unlikely to change.

The ranking list in particular would not be included. Content in the handbook should refer the reader to our website for further information, and there should be a prominent warning that content could be subject to change during the season. It must also be made clear that the definitive set of rules are those found on the website. It was also suggested that a guide to RACMAN would be a valuable addition to the Handbook.

Action: JS to collect content with the support of relevant committee members.

6. Finance

- a) DE presented the final 2018-19 accounts, which shows a slight surplus for the year, with reserves at £56k. Ivan's arrangements for GB team boats at the World Championships in China helped considerably, as it had avoided us spending money on transport of personal boats.

Action SM - The committee resolved to send a letter thanks to Ivan.

b) The final 2019-20 budget was presented, with spend at a level to maintain reserves of £55k. The Committee were reminded of the need to submit any new budget requests by September of each year, as final budgets for the year ahead must be approved with BC in October, ahead of our annual planning meeting.

c) Looking ahead to the four-year spending plan, DE pointed out that the only non-European major event on the horizon was the World Cup in China in 2021. As previously discussed, the MRC will retain its current minibus until day 2022, somewhat longer than previously.

SM reported back from the Discipline Chairs meeting that the MRC had been commended for its excellent accounts and financial management.
The committee thanked DE for his excellent work.

7. Domestic Racing

a) Race Management

GW the Race Records Officer reported back on the first year of RACMAN. It has been a great success considering the need for a rushed introduction. Some differences in the way it works compared to the HRM, have been slowing down the admin workflow between races.

DS pointed out that there remains a long list of developments in the pipeline for RACMAN, including many to make admin between races simpler, and that a vast amount of development was achieved in a few months compared to many years for the HRM.

It was agreed that communication of any changes will make those changes far easier to introduce, so any changes to the system needed a well thought through Communications plan.

SM asked TS if he is able to keep up with the demands on RACMAN development. Additional volunteer developers have been recruited by DS and TS, but without long-term success.

Action: TS to work with Comms team to ensure changes are well communicated; and to let the Committee know if he requires more support.

TS presented a proposal to roll out the online entry system used for this year's Hasler final, to all races. The system in question has been evolved over several seasons by Will Abson at Richmond CC, and has been used for the classic, Hasler and Championship races organised by them. It exports entries in the correct format for RACMAN, from where changes could be made on the day.

The aim of the online entry system would be to make the process of entering races simpler, removing much prerace admin, with the ultimate aim of reducing the tasks of race organisers down to simply entering start and finish times. It will also aim to take the ranking list out of Excel, which creates problems of proliferation and version control.

Introduction of such a system could also be an incentive for clubs to collect levy payments on entries, as it would only be available to those races who did so.

The online entry system has an option to take online payments. These need to pass through a third-party payment system i.e. PayPal or Stripe. The Committee agreed that there should not be an option of a third party or MRC bank account to be used in handling this money, clubs must either organise their own Paypal or Stripe account, or simply take bookings through the system and payment by other means (cheque or cash on day)

SM raised the question of who would own the software, as the HRM experience has taught us the risks of dependency on a developer who owns the IP of their code. TS reported that Will wants to retain IP of the code he writes (this is normal practice), but recognises the MRC's need for guarantees.

The additional points raised were:

- The need for a period of grace when juniors are promoted into Div 6 and they need full BC membership
- The need to automatically check BC membership status, as well finding a way to validate SCA, Canoe Wales and CANI memberships
- Event tickets would not be covered?
- International paddlers

The Committee decided in principle to invest in this system, release to selected races for their use and seek feedback. SM will contact Will to discuss our requirements and timescales.

Actions: SM/JS to discuss with Will Abson

TS/DS to propose timescales and races for testing, and to ensure that

GW, RL and DE are kept informed

SU to support with comms

b) Southampton complaint

Southampton CC wrote to DE to complain that they were not consulted sufficiently in the decision to use only online entries for the Hasler Final. To make their point, they withheld 20% of the levy payments collected from entrants.

TS told the Committee that he had informed SCC of the online entry system in July. SCC did not respond until the end of August, and when they did so did not mention the online system. So this was clearly a problem of communication, and the race organiser has taken offence.

The Committee agreed that SM would write to SCC again, to apologise for how things were done and explain how it will be done better in future. Nevertheless, payment of the outstanding levy money will be required: SCC will have made a very healthy profit from being awarded the event, and the levy is not part of the race organisers' income. We will explain to SCC how the money is used for the benefit of all clubs, especially athlete development and international teams competing abroad.

The Committee also decided that if SCC refused to send the outstanding levy money after this discussion has reached its conclusion, then in order to protect the levy system we would be obliged to prevent them from hosting future Class A and Hasler qualifying races until they do so.

Action: SM to write to SCC

c) SM reported that as "Day Tickets" which do *not* include water licences (although many think they do) , are being reviewed by BC. Youth section membership structures are also being reviewed. Feedback has been given.

d) There is a diminishing number of British qualified International Technical Officials (ITOs) in Marathon as the current generation start to retire. However, ICF have plenty of officials to run events and do not always choose British candidates when they volunteer. TS and DS both volunteered to start the qualification process. There is budget set aside for ITOs, so this can include sending candidates for training or exams at internationals.

Action: TS/DS to discuss process with Brian Chapman

The need for MRC-approved officials at major domestic events was also discussed. The rules only state the need for an *approved starter* at major events, but the approved starters list has long fallen into disuse.

Action: If this is an issue it needs someone to take it on!

e) Div 10 / Under 12s

KW presented a new proposal from the working group of herself, MN, Di Lawler and Evan Shepherd. This would change under 12s racing to three mixed-gender, ability-based divisions. The C class would be raced in Lightnings only at this stage, leading to promotion to B and then A, where paddlers could use any racing boat (e.g. mini K1 or full size K1) Promotion between these classes and into Div 9 would be based on time.

It was also proposed to take Lightnings out of the Spanish Galleon points at the National Championships, and replace these with new U10, and U12 Male, Female, K1 and K2 classes in full racing boats. These classes would also count towards the National Championships club trophy. Organisers of the National Championships would be encouraged but not obliged, to organise a non-Championship Lightning only race.

Promotion and Demotion times would be worked out over the next season while planning for the new system. The proposed approach would be discussed over the next season for a final debate at the ACM, and roll-out for the 2020-21 season.

Comments included a request from NN to consider an introductory division for 12 and 13 year olds who start a bit later, such as Div 9 U14 class. RL preferred that we drop Lightning racing classes entirely and immediately.

Action: KW to consider feedback with working group. Any Committee member with further comments to address to KW.

f) DSA had raised the question of rewarding international team volunteers who are unavailable to compete in qualifying Hasler races, by counting their volunteering towards their Hasler qualifying. The Committee preferred not to set up a formal system, paddlers can already appeal using mitigating circumstances if they have not reached the minimum number of races.

Action: MN to circulate a note to RMAs reminding them of this.

g) Regional Allocation of Clubs

Recent applications from clubs to change region have prompted a review of club numbers by region, and their distribution. A request by Poole Harbour to leave the SW region and join Southern was accepted by both regions, while Cardiff have also requested to join an English region while there is not active regional competition in Wales.

MN presented a paper reviewing the current amalgamation of East and West Midlands into one. The growth of clubs in the East Midlands now means that the 'super'- region no longer needs to be combined.

Splitting the super-region into two, would put 10 active clubs in the East Midlands and 9 in the West. Cardiff and Gloucester would move and race in the East. Each region would have 4 Hasler Final qualifying places (up from the current 7 combined). Splitting the region may also allow the possibility of reinstating lapsed races such as Rutland, and offer a race to Leicester.

Action: MN to implement from start of 2020-21 season

h) GW reported that the 2020 calendar was almost complete, with one race date outstanding.

i) Promotions & Demotions

RL again expressed a desire to delegate promotions and demotions to clubs and their coaches; as this should be an optimal way to ensure that athletes race in the appropriate division, and would increase awareness of national standards and how to improve them. However, the majority of the Committee is concerned that this would undermine the fairness of Hasler divisional competition as bias could result.

8. International

a) Selection Policy

JS presented the draft 2020 international Selection Policy, created by the Selection Committee with input from TS and SH. The draft Policy had also been released for public consultation, which resulted in constructive feedback.

The Policy will follow the broad approach from 2019, keeping the new Assessment race format (except the time trial, replaced by adding distance to the long race element). The focus of each international event will stay the same, with a much larger Europeans team than Worlds team. The 'minimum standards' table would be removed as it is more useful as a guideline to athletes than to selectors. National and Junior Development Squad descriptions would also be removed and published separately.

The Committee approved the Policy. The whole document will be published online, with the assessment race dates in the Handbook.

The Selection Committee for 2020 was approved with JS as Chair, and KW, RL, DP and DE as voting members. The Committee also agreed to co-opt Mark Wilkes as a non-voting member, and invite Gemma Wiggs from BC in the same capacity.

Action: JS to publish; KW to plan assessment race venues

b) BC are hosting a Team Managers' Workshop in Nottingham. GW, DE, and DP and had expressed a desire to attend. It was proposed that we ask Hayleigh Mason and Jo Bates to attend if interested.

c) SM reported that no major internationals can be hosted in the UK without BC underwriting, and the earliest this would be allowed to happen is 2025 due to their extensive commitments in other disciplines. Brian Chapman had sent photos and a report on Strathclyde Park as a suitable venue. JR is helping TS with discussion with Virginia Water in Surrey, meeting the management next week. SM pointed out that whilst

distant Strathclyde Park could attract north of the border funding for its use.

Action: TS to report back.

d) BC have ended their arrangement for international kit from Errea, having been let down by them. There is a plan to move to a new supplier, as yet unnamed, from 2021. All kit will be available on and off water but we need to tell Anna at BC exactly what items the MRC require. As the MRC spent a lot of money on Errea kit stock last season, we cannot envisage a change in the next couple of seasons unless we find buyers for the current stock. (Further to the meeting, Bryn Price has requested the MRC help Masters to find an international kit supplier – JS and DP are discussing)

e) BC are seeking ITO nominations for the coming season for ICF events. Submissions have already gone in for the European Championships. Sarah Swallow, Ali Pendle, Brian Chapman, DS and TS are all keen, and Ivan Lawler is likely to be invited as commentator. Brian Chapman reported that it was unlikely that anyone would be selected by the ICF if they also had duties to perform for their National Team.

Action: JS to pass names to Gemma at BC

f) JS reported that he had given feedback to Gemma at BC about the ICF's proposed switch from U23 to U21 classes. The ICF will do as they wish but we requested that BC press for a slow introduction so that this will not affect any athletes currently between U18 and U23.

9. Coaching & Development

a) SH reported back on the success of the MRC/SRC joint bursary for candidates seeking the new Race Coach qualification. 132 people have taken a supported course in the last two years. As the main bottleneck to qualifying more coaches is currently the **assessment**, it was agreed to extend the bursary to cover this.

Bursaries for clubs on the BC Talent Club system are currently routed via SRC money to ensure that the MRC's wish to ensure enough money goes to smaller, unfunded clubs is supported. In 2019, the MRC spent £2,600 out of a budgeted £3k.

SH requested Committee support to lobby BC about a proposed requirement to conduct 5 separate rescues in racing courses, as many were impractical to run in all possible water conditions, in the off-season, in racing kit. Note: prior to the meeting this was raised by SM, and the requirements clarified appropriately.

SH also reported difficulties with the proposed Performance Coach award programme, in that the content was only about advanced coaching skills,

not performance race kayak skills. No assessors for this course have yet been chosen from among the racing community. Applicants will be informed in February.

Finally, the coach self-assessment tool published by BC, following feedback from SH and Ivan Lawler, ended up containing no marathon-specific content at all and was a straight copy of the sprint racing assessment list. The Committee agreed that this could not allow an effective assessment of marathon race coaching skills, and would be rejected by the marathon racing community.

Action: SM to raise concerns with BC and ask for the self-assessment tool for Marathon to be taken offline until it can be corrected; SH to inform Committee of any progress.

b) SH reported that at the BC Coaching Conference of 23-24 November there would have no racing-specific content, however he would report back on any findings relevant to the MRC.

c) KW reported that there are no active plans to put in place either a senior marathon squad or ladies' training days as in previous years. Other volunteers will be required to help if this is to change in 2020. KW will discuss any emerging plans with SU, to avoid any disruption to the Junior Development Squad.

Action: KW to seek more Committee and external support

d) SU reported back on a very successful JDS programme in 2019. Around 120 athletes from 26 different clubs took part in a programme focussed on skills, not competing. The Committee has been delighted with the success of this programme which has been greatly appreciated by clubs and paddlers. Plans for 2020 are to follow the same pattern and will be published in due course.

Action: SU to publish plans online

10. Major Events

a) BC have asked the Committee if we require more support, and in what form, for major events. This offer will be passed on to the Reading and Richmond organising committees.

Action: DS

b) Reading CC are planning an evening event for the ACM at the Nationals as mentioned above. They also plan to strengthen communication and enforcement around the "no wash-hanging other classes" rule for *assessment classes*, as there is confusion about this applying to other classes (currently, it does not). KW proposed to bring forward a new rule prohibiting wash-riding of other classes in *all National Championship races as well*.

Action: KW

Finally Reading will be making plans for seeded start lines for large classes such as the Mixed K2.

The Selection Committee must proof-read the organisers' documentation on assessment races this year before its publication as last year's caused some confusion.

Action: JS/KW

c) Richmond CC will run the Hasler Final at either Richmond or at Virginia Water, subject to discussions with the latter. A potential clash with the "London Regatta", a commercial event on the Thames supported by BC, combined with tide times has made finding a definitive date difficult.

Subsequent to the meeting, BC informed us that the London Regatta had changed dates to again clash with the Hasler Final plans. This event was cancelled at late notice in 2019, so the MRC must make a decision soon on whether to move the date again or stick to our guns.

Action: SM to liaise with BC, TS and Richmond CC

Discussions took place post meeting - London Regatta have moved to 4th October and finalised - as far as is possible - their date as 4th October which will potentially mean that moving our Hasler Final date to a near alternative is necessary. **Action TS and GW to look at alternatives but this may require other events to have to be moved.**

d) Neil Urquhart, who has volunteered to keep the MRC's trophy collection, made some suggestions with a paper submitted to the meeting. The Committee agreed to standardise the naming of female classes and their trophies to "Women", irrespective of age, and to do the same for "Men", meaning that classes will no longer be referred to as Boys, Girls or Ladies.

There is also a need for an U12 Women's trophy.

Action: JS to post a request on the website to see if anyone has or will donate a suitable trophy.

Finally, it was agreed to retire the National Championships' Regions Cup, which has not been claimed for some years.

11. Communications

a) SU was asked to write the Marathon section for the annual BC Annual Report again, which she kindly agreed to do.

Action: SU

b) JS asked for help on the website and newsletter, as it is often difficult

for him to find enough time or publish things in a timely manner. NN volunteered to take over the newsletter and publish on a quarterly basis. **Action: NN to request content and news from the Committee; all to assist.**

10. Any other business

MN asked if the Committee should release risk assessments for races on request. These are normally only provided to the MRC to ensure they are of sufficient quality, not as a means of distributing them. It was agreed that the race organisers' sign-up form, required to be listed in the Calendar, should have *an agreement that risk assessments must be made available on request to anyone asking for them*, and that the MRC may distribute the risk assessment as it sees fit.

Action: GW

Alexandra Lane of Reading CC has put herself forward for election to the BC Board via the English Forum. The MRC agreed to support this nomination. Following the meeting, JS informed Dave Spencer, who is co-ordinating Committee nominations, that we supported Alex wholeheartedly. We also discussed how to lobby support from other English Forum members; Alex will be able to contact them once the nominations are in. If any MRC members know EF members please support Alex's application.

Action: All

Following the meeting and at the very last minute, Keith Moule also submitted an application to the English Forum. This will also go forward into the English Forum process.

12. Meeting Dates 2020

- a) 29th February 2020, 1.30pm, Cropredy Village hall. Finish 5.00pm
- b) Other 2020 dates will be proposed by SM and JS, with meetings likely to be in June, September, and November.
- c) The ACM will be on Saturday 11th July at the National Championships in Reading.

The meeting closed at 3.15pm.

APPENDIX: COMMITTEE ROLES 2020

		Elected											Co-opted			
		Stan	Mick	David E	James	Graham	Kat	Nettie	Siobhan	Tom	Dyson	Roland	Scott H	Richard	Dan	David S
ADMIN	Chair	■														
	Vice-Chair		■													
	Secretary				■											
	Treasurer			■												
	Website & Comms				■				■							
	Newsletter							■								
	Safeguarding						■									
	Rules		■													
	Coaching												■	■		
DOMESTIC	Major Events														■	
	RO liaison					■										
	RMA liaison		■													
	Club development							■								
	Race Records					■										
	Race Management									■					■	
	Calendar					■										
	Rankings											■				
	Event Safety		■													
	Trophies									■						
INTL	Athlete Dev (snr)						■			■						
	Athlete Dev (jnr)					■			■							
	Intl Logistics			■		■					■					■
	Intl kit										■					
	Event planning									■						
	Selection Cttee			■	■		■				■	■				