

Paddle UK Marathon Racing Committee
Minutes of the Committee Meeting held at 19:30pm
on Monday 9th Sept 2024 Online

Present:

Stan Missen (SM) (Chair)	Holly Mobbs (HM)
Evan Shephard (ES)	Kat Wilson (KW)
Joe Fitzpatrick (JF)	Dan Seaford (DMS)
Graham Warland (GW)	Brian Chapman (BC)
David Sackman (DS)	Bryn Price (BP)
Mick Nadal (MN)	Anoushka Freeman (AF)
James Hinvies (JH)	Lee Bennett (LB)
Sally Hartland (SH)	

These people are referred to by their initial's hereafter in the Minutes.

If your initials are down for action, please ensure that you follow up the matter concerned and report the outcome back to the Secretary well before our next meeting.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Roland Lawler (RL).

2. Approval of minutes April MRC Meeting

The minutes of the meeting of 8th April were approved by the committee.

3. Matters arising from MRC meeting of 8.04.24

a. Appointment of National Team Coach

HM & DMS have had positive conversations with a possible candidate who is happy to lead and provide ideas/plans but would like support with the administration. DMS would be happy to provide administrative support. DMS will check in with this candidate in a couple weeks and put forward a proposal in November.

Action: HM & DMS

b. Trailer loading video

DS has made a written guide instead, to be shared with trailer loaders. The guide must be added to the folder in which all other documentation for trailer drivers is stored.

Action: DS & GW

c. Update on whether Racman has been configured to allow a specific column in the finishers sheet for time allowances & penalties

ES confirmed that this is complete and was tested at Reading Long Course

Nationals.

- d. New solutions to increase participation at the Hasler Final and ensure qualifying clubs do send reasonable team sizes will need to be considered for the following season*

Discussed (& summarised) later in the meeting.

- e. Welfare plan*

HM is putting together a welfare plan and seeking guidance on specific items of note for under 16s and vulnerable adults. A proposal will be made to the committee at the November meeting. The aim is to publish a formal written welfare plan, reviewed by Paddle UK, in Spring.

Action: HM

- f. Liaison with DW committee to share ideas for the event for 2025 onwards.*

Ongoing discussions with DW committee are taking place with Paddle UK later in September.

Action: KW

- g. Regulations and Administration document updated and rebranded to Paddle UK*

The document has been updated and is awaiting publication on the website.

Action: MN & HM

- h. How to work with clubs to qualify more coaches in light of the Standards of Deployment paper*

JH confirmed that nearly all clubs in England have engaged in a webinar with PaddleUK about the Standards of Deployment paper and the reception has been good – clubs do not feel the implementation is an issue. PaddleUK about to release more grant money to clubs to help with the implementation. JH is always happy to support clubs through the process if there are any issues.

JH to chat to MN & HM to run through requirements from an MRC and a safety/welfare perspective.

Action: HM & MN & JH

4.. Matters arising from ACM

- a. New solutions to increase participation at the Hasler Final (2025 and beyond)*

Ways to increase participation were discussed. Initial ideas included:

- i. Whether a system could be introduced whereby if a qualify club didn't send a 'reasonable sized team' then they may lose their qualification status to the next club down in the points order. The general consensus was that rather than losing their qualifying status altogether, the next club in line should instead be invited to fill the remaining spots. A suggestion was submitted that each region could have a number of places filled from the qualifying clubs first with unused seats taken up by clubs in that region that did not qualify.

- ii. Whether paddlers from non-qualifying clubs could qualify as individuals by achieving much higher qualification standards (e.g. individuals could attend by completing 6 or 7 Hasler races).
- iii. Whether paddlers in top divisions could enter regardless of their club qualifying. While data would suggest this will make relatively little difference it would be a relatively easy thing to implement so perhaps little harm in doing so.
- iv. Whether DW schools should be given permission to take part in the event. It was decided that few schools would have paddlers at a standard to race at a Hasler Final and the committee should therefore instead be encouraging schools to take place in regional Haslers.

The committee agreed that there is a bigger question surrounding *why* many people who qualify are choosing not to attend the Hasler Final.

Action – JF & LB to look into this and the other proposals

b. Ways to increase participation/revenue at the Short Course Nationals in 2025.

Ways to increase participation were discussed. Initial ideas included:

- i. Include crew boat racing? Note concerns about the portage feasibility, timetable constraints and the need to then build it into a 2-day event.
- ii. Ensure that all categories have heats and finals.
- iii. Introduce more events of this type regionally to build momentum.
- iv. Introduce B races for those who feel intimidated by the high level.
- v. Removing portages for the highest age masters & advertising that we could remove them for younger masters who ask too.
- vi. Changing the location of the venue yearly so that people living further away are more likely to participate.
- vii. Linking points through to long course nationals. Note that we must be mindful that this does favour larger clubs, potentially becoming counterproductive for mid-sized club attendance.
- viii. Investigating how some of the financial success of LCN could overspill into SCN budget. Note that this is already partly implemented through the increased major event levy. Of course, the financial reward is a big draw for host clubs and pushing this levy any further may negatively impact how easy it is to find new hosts. We should make sure the major event levy tracks proportionally to any increase in race entry fees.
- ix. Make sure we don't clash on dates in 2025 and beyond. May Bank Holiday?
- x. Review the entry fee, especially in light of some categories having straight finals. Note that we have actually received very few comments/complaints on this!
- xi. Running classes for younger paddlers

- xii. Publicising a minimum criterion so that people understand that the criteria is low/more accessible than people might think! (e.g. 27 minutes for the 3.2km course).
- xiii. Adding a fun evening element to make it more social.

The committee were informed of DMS & ES progress in securing a potential venue at Manvers from 2026. This may be less expensive.

ES & HM will put together a sub-committee to help take this forward and consider the points above making recommendation for the November meeting.

Action: ES, HM, JF

c. Removing the boat length restriction for GSC

ES discussed enabling Racman to add a column to include participants' ages on the results so that young paddlers racing in GSB due to racing a full sized K1 (or ski!) are able to still see their ranking in their age category. Speed comparisons of Mini K1s/skis vs Lightnings will also be carried out.

Action: ES

d. Adding a SUP ranking in Racman

The committee was in support of this idea in order to support a paddler who may choose to race SUP, Canoe, and/or kayak on different days/events and be relatively different speeds in all three disciplines. Doing so would also provide data on SUP participation at Hasler races.

Action: ES

e. Adding a school's category to Long Course Nationals

KW explained that DW schools have expressed interest in a school's category at Long Course Nationals. This will need to be discussed with future national's hosts.

Action: KW & DMS

5. Allocation of new committee roles

Allocation of (most) new committee roles were agreed.

Changes to Appendix D included:

- i) Gemma Wiggs who is no longer at PUK, to be replaced by Richard Ramsdale as non-voting member on selection policy.
- ii) Sally Hartland to take over trophies' role.
- iii) Rachel Lovell to retire from junior development Role.

Outgoing roles to be discussed at November meeting:

- i) Lee Bennett to support with major events & international logistics.
- ii) HM to find someone to support with the junior development role.

- iii) HM & DMS to continue discussions regarding coaching role.

6. Finance

- a. *Provision to ensure that athletes landing in the UK late at night are supported with the costs of overnight accommodation in the UK before the drive home the following morning.*

The committee agreed that a provision should be added to the budget for next year that would allow athletes that need to drive home late at night to stay overnight in a hotel OR offer a reclaimable set amount of money (e.g. £80?) for overnight accommodation (on proof of receipt) if arrival back to the UK is after a set time (e.g. 8pm?).

Action: JF & GW & DS

- b. *Reminder that any budget requests for next year must be submitted to Joe ASAP.*

We need to compile the budget and approve it at the November meeting for submission to PUK. JH and others from PUK to have finance/budget meeting with JF in September.

Action: All – submissions to JF please

7. Domestic Racing

- a. *Short course nationals organisation sub-committee.*

HM & ES to pull together a sub-committee. LB already volunteered.

JH pointed out that there is a national Paddle UK Volunteer bank from the Slalom and freestyle worlds that may be able to support.

Action: HM & ES

- b. *Review of short course nationals minimum size of 16 for a class*

ES to ask around and circle back in November. Depending upon the success of our encouraging more entries in 2025 this may lead to a bigger review of classes anyway.

Action: ES

- c. *New rule to prevent people using assessment races to qualify for Hasler Final*

The committee concluded that at the moment no intervention needs to be taken but that racing an assessment race solely for the purpose of qualification for the Hasler Finals when not at assessment race standard, should be discouraged. An assessment race is not, on its own, classified as a Hasler event.

- d. *New medals for Long Course Nationals, Short Course Nationals & Hasler Final*

The committee agreed that quality is of the utmost importance and that standard medals on ribbon (as currently provided by PUK) feel inferior to the medals in boxes that the MRC have previously used.

AF & BC to get quotes for a wooden medal alternative and re-discuss in November.

Action: AF & BC

e. Need to set a date for 2025 Long Course Nationals

The committee is waiting for 2025 International Race Dates to be confirmed. It is hoped that Long Course Nationals would be an assessment race for World Championships and would therefore take place in early August. Norwich have confirmed that they will host the event. Worcester is likely to host the 2025 Hasler finals.

Action: KW & DMS

f. Looking at a new rule to motivate large clubs to host Nationals, enhancing the concept of rotating around the region.

A proposal to penalise large clubs who didn't host Nationals for no good reason, was put forward. The proposal outlined that the largest club at nationals was obliged to host the event two years after or find a club who would be happy to fulfil the commitment – failure to do so would result in exclusion from the event. This proposal was decided against due to concerns that it ultimately would reduce participation.

It was concluded that the MRC would continue, but perhaps more formally, approach clubs to ask for support in hosting Nationals, emphasizing the financial beneficial in doing so and asking what barriers they see to them doing so. Where big clubs aren't hosting, the MRC should ask *why*, and help with their perceived problems (e.g. by providing volunteers or helping source a nearby venue that would be suitable).

Action: DMS

8. International

a. Picking team managers for international trips early on in 2025

Team managers will be selected as early as possible in 2025 so that they can assist in putting together the rest of the volunteer/staffing to bring a team together that complement each other. Once team managers are chosen they will be added to the ICF WhatsApp group chat as soon as possible so that they don't miss any critical information.

Action: Required following November meeting

b. Athlete, Parent and Staff questionnaire after all international tips

Athletes, parents, and staff will be sent a questionnaire after all international trips.

Data from this should be collated and acted upon.

Action: HM & LB

c. Collate a guide for team managers/ leaders

A guide for team managers/leaders will be put together to help support new people into the role.

Action: DS & HM

9. Any other business

a. Consider MRC collaboration with Thames Ultra, as well as DW.

The MRC will approach Thames Ultra to discuss if the MRC can support the event.

PUK is currently meeting with DW Directors and will reaffirm that the MRC will also provide what help it can, once the Directors requirements and event review have been completed.

Action: JF & AF

b. Increase participation at ACM

Consider why we want people to come & what we want to get out of it.

This item has been moved to the November meeting.

Action: DMS

c. Making sure important documents are saved in Google Drives (e.g. guides for team leaders etc).

Action: AF

d. Chat with Betsy Ray regarding media coverage for marathon events in 2025 and beyond already in process.

Action: HM

10. Future Meeting Dates 2024:

- a. 'All day' meeting 16th November 2024. 9.00am start. Sandwiches will be provided. Finish 3pm latest. Cropedy Village Hall.