

# Talent and Performance Steering Group Minutes

Monday 10<sup>th</sup> September 2018

## Attendees

Bob Dredge, Nev Myers, Mark Saunders, Graham Gristwood, Ed Nicholas, Paul Murgatroyd

Via Skype Kris Jones, Alistair Thomas

## Apologies

NIOA

## Notes from Last Meeting

Additional funding meeting was initially scheduled but did not take place

Noted that action to put proposal to board for additional funding has been superseded by new CEO who is reviewing talent and performance support

## Talent Review

Report tabled by Paul Murgatroyd with questions from the group. The highlights of the year-two medals and other podium placings at both EYOC and JWOC were noted with satisfaction.

Nev and Paul stated that the relationship between JROS and talent squad continues to come closer and that shared calendars and approach are bearing fruit. Paul noted there are still concerns about the amount of athlete workload over the summer months. It was noted this is not just JROS and Talent opportunities but other opportunities as well and that there is a need to continue both athlete and coach education in this area.

**ACTION: Paul and Craig to look at opportunities to continue this.**

Wider discussion regarding the role of talent pathway in retaining young people in the sport.

**ACTION: BO representative to be invited to JROS AGM**

Question was raised as to whether the fact that Edinburgh University is acting as a de facto centre of excellence may be leading to those not attending the university not receiving the same level of ongoing support. It was noted that those at Edinburgh were receiving additional support but that this was outside of British Orienteering programme and was not discriminatory in anyway. All athletes attending university are aware of the situation at Edinburgh and take advantage of the obvious coaching and mentoring opportunities this offers.

It is however clear that all squad support is offered unconditional of circumstance and place of study and is for squad members to take advantage of.

Alistair Thomas joined the group via Skype and articulated the feedback submitted to the group from athletes.

After some discussion about the feedback it was agreed that Paul would address the many comments made by the athletes with the squad when next they met, and that the feedback would be addressed in a public document as well in order to communicate the response to the wider orienteering community.

The Group wished to put on the record their thanks to Paul, Mark Nixon and the many volunteer coaches who has given up several weekends and other time to deliver the 2018 programme.

**ACTION: Paul to address feedback with the Talent Squad**

**ACTION: Paul and Craig to draft public response to feedback**

## Performance Review

Kris Jones joined the meeting by Skype for this and further items.

Report tabled by Craig Anthony with questions from the group. It was noted that several of the squad athletes had taken the opportunity to send comments on both the 2018 programme and thoughts for future years. These were invaluable in shaping the discussion.

There was a concern that the new arrangements were placing too heavy a burden on the Senior Squad Manager. He felt that there was insufficient time available to give adequate support to the athletes. Kris and Graham supported Ed's comments in wanting to see more support for athletes especially in terms of creating a squad/team atmosphere. Specific request will be made for additional volunteer support to provide three camps.

1. Start of Season Kick Off
2. Pre-WOC Camp
3. Training Camp for those not going to WOC i.e. specialists

There was a wider discussion about the need to set a sustainable strategic direction and to move away from expectation that all coaching and mentoring for athletes is provided by British Orienteering. That agreed there was a clear view that if possible more formal support would be made available to the squad.

**ACTION: Ed and Craig to discuss further a work up proposal for additional volunteer support for coordination**

## Selection

2019 selection documents tabled

1. Selection Overview – agreed
2. Selection Panel – agreed – question regarding succession planning for panel members, has been addressed successfully in 2018 and the same approach will continue as necessary.
3. Junior Selection - agreed
4. Senior Selection – agreed with change that the phrase “documented evidence” be removed from additional considerations
5. Selection Appeals Procedure – supported with change to 48-hour notice period, to be confirmed by Board
6. Northern Ireland International Representation Pathway - agreed

In regard to the selection of relay teams, the group confirmed its' support for the current practice which sees the Selection Panel select the initial team but delegate any final decision in the light of

changed circumstances to the Team Manager at each competition in order that the best team on the day is put forward. That decision should be mindful of any discussion or direction given at the selection panel meeting.

It was noted that an event is scheduled in the near future on an area that is now nominated for a junior selection race in 2019. An embargo statement will be made on the BOF website following that race but any junior who competed there will not be excluded from the 2019 test races.

**ACTION: Embargoes in place for junior selection races – need to be announced and added to the list on BOF website**

**ACTION: Selection race dates to be published with selection details and squad announcements**

## Discussion on Future Direction of the Programme and Funding

There was a long discussion regarding the impact of athlete awards and other alternatives for the available funds. Athlete feedback is not unanimous in any direction and not related to whether they were in receipt of awards or not. The potential to align additional budget to 2019 WOC medal chances, with a proposal to be developed by Ed will be considered by the Group when it is available. Longer term proposals are to be developed in a piece of work led by Peter Hart in the coming months.

The group made a clear point that the move to biannual forest/sprint WOCs must be thought through in such a way that our elite athletes who may major in only one of these variants be kept close to and involved with the squad over the 2-year cycle.

## Issues from Home Nations and JROS

None

## AOB

The structure of the national event calendar and the various leagues and major competitions was raised. The CEO is about to undertake a review of the whole competitions structure. The Group were of the view that the role and purpose of the UK Elite league and the importance of the JK and BOC events be properly considered, in particular the desire to raise their profile and make them attractive to elite athletes

WOC 2022 embargoes – issues and challenges acknowledged by IOF and discussion with event advisor and hopeful of a practical solution. Will need discussion with squad athletes both senior and junior when any further guidance is available.