High Performance Committee Minutes

12.27.2023

Attendance
Wyatt Allen
Liam Corrigan
Yaz Farooq
Catherine Starr
Genevra Stone
Josy Verdonkschot (CHPO)
Stephen Hap Whelpley (Chair)

Agenda
Coxswain Selection
Coaches & Selector for Selection Camp
Guidelines for Selection Camp
Format for Winter Speed Order
Debrief on Vision for Pathways

The meeting was called to order at 3:21 PM EST.

Coxswain Selection

A panel of athlete representatives interviewed 11 coxswains. During these interviews, the coxswains answered questions that were generated by both staff and current athletes. The High Performance Committee received positive feedback from the interviewers on both the process and the candidates. After the interviews, athletes involved in the sweep team over this quadrennial were provided copies of: the recorded interviews, resumes, and answers to questions. 16 men and 16 women voted on coxswains based on the recorded interviews, resumes, and answers to questions.

It was reported that voting was clear and decisive with the exception of one late submission. By the official votes received from athletes, the invited coxswains are:

Nina Castagna, Rachael Rane, & Caroline Ricksen
Rielly Milne, Tommy Brittingham, & Jimmy Catalano

The top 2 were invited regardless, and a third was invited if the difference between 2 and 3 was less than 8 votes. In the cases of both genders, three coxswains were invited.

Coaches & Selector for Selection Camp

As noted by the selection procedures, the M8+, W8+, M4-, W4-, M4x, W4x, LW2x, W2x will all have a selection camp in Sarasota, FL. CHPO Josy Verdonkschot expressed that the W2x and M4- would likely be a short process due to the success of the boat classes last year, the continued training of the athletes within those

boats, and the limited number of qualified athletes outside of those involved. Meanwhile, Josy noted that the LW2x would be a unique and separate process relative to the other boat classes.

Casey will serve as lead coach for men's sweep and would have another coach assist him in that process. Jesse would operate as the lead coach for women's sweep. Guenter Beutter will return as the women's sculling selection coach for the quad, while Josy will focus on the LW2x and W2x selection. At this point, the HPC and Josy need to assess the needs and availability for a men's sculling selection coach.

The HPC discussed the role and concept of a selector during this Olympic year. Josy began by stating that the selector needed to be present for the duration of selection camp. While Dan Roock worked well in 2023, he was not present for enough of camp. This lead to a lack of familiarity among athletes. The HPC agreed the process required a selector to be present for the entirety of camp. Additionally, the HPC noted the continued need to find someone with an understanding of both domestic and international rowing. The following names were put forth during this meeting: Chris Clark, Gregg Stone, and Kate Bertko.

Josy concluded the conversation by noting that there would be one selector for both men and women to ensure that the selector stays magnanimous across all boat classes.

Guidelines for Selection Camp

Looking at the invitations for selection camp, the 35 athletes at altitude in Colorado Springs will all receive invites.

In regards to women's sculling, Josy knows firsthand that Kara Kohler still wants to pursue the single. Women's sculling invitations will revolve around what is required to build a quad as there is not a lot of reasons to rework the W2x. The 2023 W2x has shown increased fitness and posted a good result at 2023 Worlds.

The LW2x camp will likely involve four athletes who will do a complete matrix as part of selection. It was discussed that the timing and weigh-in weight of this matrix were important details to consider.

For both the W4x and the M4x, erg tests and speed order results would hold the majority of weight. Ben Davison and Soren Koszyk were encouraged to come to speed orders for their own training benefit, but would also serve as a benchmark for the male scullers.

Josy anticipated having preliminary talks with the men's and women's sweep groups to describe the process of selection.

Format for Winter Speed Order

The HPC noted that since Winter Speed Orders is part of selection, it needs to have complete racing and incorporate semi-finals. While the Fall Speed Order was quick and efficient, the Winter Speed Order must happen over at least 3 days. This would look like typical 6-lane progression with: time trials, quarters/semis, finals. You can find the 6-lane progression here.

Debrief on Vision for Pathways

To conclude the meeting, Josy presented the concept of Pathways to the HPC. The goal is to create more points of contact between USRowing and athletes. This would involve more talent ID camp and a database through Regatta Central that will track athletes. At all ages and levels, we would begin to utilize the same battery of tests, lactate testing, and functional movement screening. This way athletes begin their understanding of high performance in our sport at an earlier point in their journey.

The vision is that we should have a united plan that builds both a team and athletes to longer term goals. Pathways will helpfully encourage the progression and development of an athlete rather than just harvesting talent.

There being no other business for discussion, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 10:05 PM EST.