High Performance Committee Minutes
7.26.2023

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

Agenda
Selection Camp 2 Feedback & Review
U23 World Championships Review and Time Standards Discussion
U23 & U19 Selection Suggestions
Discussion about 2024 Selection Procedures

The meeting was called to order at 12:00PM EST.

Selection Camp 2 Feedback & Review
Both the High Performance Committee (HPC) and the Chief High Performance Officer (CHPO) Josy Verdonkschot received and/or witnessed some valuable feedback from Selection Camp 2. The CHPO was the only member of the HPC to be present at the selection camp. However, several members of the HPC received feedback from athletes involved.

In general, it is believed that competitive and appropriate crews were selected. However, both the CHPO and the HPC agree that some of the selection needed better execution in order to safeguard clarity and transparency for athletes. This is critical in order to properly develop, retain, and respect athletes. Aside from informal conversations, the CHPO did receive one informal written explanation of issues from an athlete. This letter was shared with the HPC as well as the pertinent coach. The CHPO and selector for the camp, Dan Roock, handled the situation in person by addressing the coach and working with the athlete to find a way forward.

Off of this feedback, the CHPO and HPC discussed establishing criteria for future selection in terms of the practical execution.

Another area discussed was the challenge of consecutive selection. The men's eight selection leading into the men's quad selection was complicated for both objectives. In the future, a consecutive selection would likely need more time, more deadlines, and more communication.

Lastly, the notion of pre-selected athletes to the team is still relatively new in the United States. This refers to athletes that are selected to the team at an initial selection camp, but do not have seats or boats assigned to

them. The HPC recognized the importance of identifying and supporting athletes. However, the CHPO conceded that there is some inherent risk to this process with limited data points earlier in a season. The goal is to support more athletes rather than limit seats for others. It remains an important aspect to development in pertinent years, but must be executed with clarity, communication, and care.

U23 World Championships Review and Time Standards Discussion

The CHPO wanted to engage in a discussion about the U23 results as part of an ongoing conversation and understanding around time standards.

For the U23 trials, the committee assembled to determine the time standards chose to set them at 94% of the Competitive Standard Time (CST). Once adjusted for slower conditions, this became 93% of CST. Looking at the results of the U23 World Championships, four crews finished in the bottom quarter of their respective competition. Those four crews were the only four trial winning crews to finish between 93% and 94% of CST at trials. This demonstrates how clearly time standards at trials can generally indicate potential performance at Worlds depending on the timeframe for preparation and other factors. The CHPO and the HPC will continue to evaluate where the standard should be drawn for competition at the World Championships.

As this discussion continued, members of the HPC discussed whether or not camp boats should also be held to the same time standard. For now, the understanding is that athletes had to meet a standard to get into selection camp. The assumption is that the standard to qualify for camp is an equivalent standard to the time standards selected at trials.

There also remains some discussion on whether time standards should be prospective or retrospective. The CHPO and the HPC received initial feedback that retrospective time standards were unfair since it did not disclose the time necessary to qualify. However, the advantage to retrospective time standards is that they can more accurately make adjustments for conditions. All adjustments to the time standard would only become more generous if adjusted for conditions. The time standard would never get harder than the neutral condition target of the CST. This point requires further communication and public outreach.

U23 & U19 Selection Suggestions

To start the U23 & U19 Selection Camp discussion, the CHPO went back to the HPC's prior discussion regarding the senior team selection. The U23 & U19 selection process could also benefit from a selection criteria to help ensure an efficient, effective, and fair process for the athletes.

While the U19 camp had informal feedback delivered through an athlete rep, the U23 selection camp had a formal grievance filed. This grievance was resolved by a panel consisting of the CHPO, the pertinent coach, the selector, and an additional member of the HPC. After hearing the athlete's grievance, it was decided to provide one more additional racing opportunity to test the speed of the athlete. Following this additional and final selection piece, the result did not overturn the prior decision. The final selection was communicated with the athlete, and the selection was finalized.

On a higher level, the HPC discussed the need to have more talent identification on the U23 and U19 levels in order to ensure a more seamless selection. Unlike senior athletes, there are fewer common data points across all athletes, so gathering more information outside of the selection camp is critical to its success. On top of that, it is necessary in order to field three competitive boat classes at each camp (8+, 4+, 4x). Otherwise, by the end of selection, some boats will be selected for competency more than performance.

Discussion about 2024 Selection Procedures

To conclude the meeting, the CHPO engaged the HPC in a broad discussion about selection, timing, and logistics for next year.

For the Olympic boat classes, the initial selection will happen between the months of February and April. All qualified selection camp boats will undergo final selection in March (roughly 3/3-3/24) after a Winter Speed Order in February. Any boats that are not qualified for the Olympics at the 2023 World Championships will go to trials along with the 1x and the 2-. These trials will likely happen in the beginning of April around 4/2-4/7. All unqualified selection camp boats going to trials will help to establish funding for the FOQR and the athletes. USRowing will still host selection camps for non-qualified camp boats going to trials in an effort to gather resources and build the fastest lineups possible.

Some members of the HPC expressed concerns that, while the trials would provide a good racing experience and relevant input on funding, it could also lead to a dilution of the crews as athletes and clubs favor independent lineups to collaborative ones.

For the Olympic selection, the HPC discussed that either athletes need to be slotted into sweep or scull earlier in the process or more time is needed for a consecutive selection. Members of the HPC expressed that more time for selection might be helpful regardless of consecutive selection. The CHPO pointed out that finding a balance between an efficiently short selection and effectively thorough selection is key to successful execution.

For U19, U23, and Non-Olympic selection, the World Championships will happen late enough that trials could happen later in the summer and still occur prior to selection camps. With more collegiate and scholastic crews heading to Henley than ever before, there was a consideration to plan trials and the selection camps in relation to this regatta. In 2024, Henley will conclude on 7/7/2024. Trials could happen either concurrently or immediately after Henley, while the selection camps could begin around 7/12. With selection camps happening around 7/12, U23 crews would still have the same amount of time to prepare for Worlds as they did in 2023 with more athletes available to attend the camps.

There being no other business for discussion, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 12:50PM EST.