High Performance Committee Minutes

3.20.2023

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

Agenda
Discussion of Feedback around Selection Procedures & 6-Lane Progression
Review of Athlete Code of Conduct & Possible Repercussions
DAS Discussion
Overview of Winter Camps
Sharing of NSR Schedule

The meeting was called to order at 1:00PM EST.

Discussion of Feedback around Selection Procedures & 6-Lane Progression

The High Performance Committee (HPC) received some feedback regarding the most recent changes to both the 6-Lane Progression format as well as the Selection Procedures. While USRowing openly disclosed both changes on its website with updated documents, the feedback suggested that the changes were done quickly and without enough communication.

Josy and the HPC discussed this feedback. In regards to the Selection Procedures, while they are rarely edited once underway, they were altered in an effort to make things more inclusive for all individuals. The only adjustments revolved around a wider window to submit 6,000m erg scores on the U23 and senior levels. While this change came after the initial town hall and review of the 2023 Selection Procedures, it was felt important to be as inclusive as possible considering possible injuries or scheduling challenges that might prohibit testing during the months of December and January when scores were originally asked to be submitted.

In terms of the 6-Lane progression, the HPC discussed how this change was implemented in the interest of the athletes. After receiving community feedback for years, USRowing and the HPC would like to present 6-Lane racing that emulates the World Rowing progressions as often as possible in order to allow for more races for all athletes. That being said, this 6-Lane progression avoids repechages where possible in an effort to both maintain fairness across all competitors while limiting the challenges that can come from rescheduling due to weather or unforeseen circumstances. In the event of canceled racing, this format ensures that all competitors will have raced as recently as possible to the relevant competition. Additionally, this 6-Lane format efficiently follows the template of a World Cup schedule where athletes race twice on the first day, once on the second day, and once on the final day of racing. This is important for both the fairness and efficiency of holding a regatta.

Josy and the HPC do acknowledge that these changes should be communicated as widely and as early as possible.

Review of Athlete Code of Conduct & Possible Enforcement

Under the guidance of the HPC athlete reps, Liam Corrigan and Genevra Stone, the HPC and Josy reviewed the Athlete Code of Conduct, which was developed at the request of athletes and their representatives to safeguard the expectations and ambitions of all National Team athletes.

The HPC supported the establishment of an Athlete Code of Conduct and discussed its role. The HPC's main involvement would arise if an athlete was punished with a removal from Direct Athlete Support (DAS). In this case, Josy would discuss the decision with the HPC. The HPC did agree that this could be an appropriate punishment for a violation of the Code, but recognized that it would be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

DAS Discussion

Josy updated the HPC that two athletes were removed from DAS. One athlete did not meet the participatory criteria for the year, and the other retired from the pursuit of the National Team.

The next quarter for DAS ends on May 31st. This provides the next natural point in time to adjust those who are currently receiving DAS. Before then, further erg scores will be submitted and the National Selection Regatta will take place. By April 30th, the majority of invitations for the second Selection Camp will be issued. As such, it will be clear prior to May 31st if an athlete receiving DAS is still in contention to make the team this year or not. The decisions will be made in accordance with this information.

In general, Josy reiterated that he hopes DAS will represent a balance of support and motivation for athletes as they pursue the National Team. The HPC agreed that the supporting documents setting forth DAS requirements for the 2024 season should be carefully written and reviewed as soon as possible.

Overview of Winter Camps

Since not all members of the HPC had active involvement with both the winter altitude camp in Colorado Springs, CO, as well as the winter camp prior to speed orders in Sarasota, FL, the HPC took a moment to review both camps.

The altitude camp was held at the USOPC's facilities in Colorado Springs, CO. All eligible and invited athletes elected to attend with the exception of two athletes. Athletes were housed and fed on the same campus where they conducted their training. The USOPC's staff conducted physiological testing and guided strength and conditioning. Athletes trained by erging, other means of indoor cross-training, and outdoor hiking and trail running. In general, the camp was seen as a success with good physiological improvement and positive athlete feedback.

The training camp directly before speed order included all the athletes from the altitude camp as well as others interested in or invited to the camp. By and large, all athletes followed the same National Team training program and were coached by coaches on site from both clubs and the National Team. The largest hurdle faced at this camp was the lack of available housing, which should not be an issue for future camps in Sarasota. There were some logistical challenges due to the body of water, weather, and size of the camp, but the attending staff worked through these issues.

In general, it appears that a broader group of athletes trained together and overall speed order results did not suffer as a result of the camp's timing.

Sharing of NSR Schedule

Josy let the HPC know that the race schedule in Chula Vista would have to be Tuesday, Thursday, Friday due to the local schedule at the venue. This would be posted on the website as soon as possible and shared with constituents.

There being no other business for discussion, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 2:10PM EST.