High Performance Committee Minutes

4.3.2024

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

Agenda
Review of Olympic Selection Camp
Athlete Representative Feedback
Sidebar Regarding Role of the High Performance Committee
Trials Outlook

The meeting was called to order at 8:10 PM EST.

Review of Olympic Selection Camp

Although the High Performance Committee is not responsible for selection, Chief High Performance Officer Josy Verdonkschot wanted to run the HPC through a general synopsis of how selection went for each discipline.

In general, Josy noted that we are still trying to improve the efficiency, effectiveness, and the fairness of selection in the US system. By and large, things followed a plan this year across all disciplines, but there were still moments that did not go perfectly. Communication and athlete education are areas for continued future development as well as fostering a broader understanding of progress, growth, and achievement in our National Team members and hopefuls.

All athletes involved in selection camp were able to stay in Sarasota for the two weeks prior to camp. This allowed them to train with each other in the pertinent boats for camp.

Men's sweep selection was conducted by Casey Galvanek and Brian DeRegt. The men's four was selected first followed by the eight. The men's four lineup remained the same as last year's four, while the eight has several new members: Evan Olson, Christian Tabash, and Nick Rusher. Athletes not selected attended trials either in pairs or quads.

Women's sweep was run by Jesse Foglia. He selected 12 women and will utilize the second World Cup to help provide information on which lineups stand the best chance of winning a medal at the Olympics. Selection saw some notable departures from last year's roster, but the racing was clear and decisive. Several

new women were incorporated into the sweep group: Kate Knifton, Liv Coffey, Emily Kallfelz, and Megan Muscnicki.

Guenter Beutter ran women's quad selection. The initial selection was quite clear to reduce the pool of athletes from 6 to 4. The lineup underwent continued verification as athletes from the lightweight double selection got an opportunity to seat race into the lineup.

The women's double from last year was able to verify it's speed relative to the lightweight women's double selection and will remain the double for this year.

Josy ran the lightweight women's double selection. The results were clear and definitive.

HPC Chairman Steve Hap Whelpley was asked to run men's sculling selection for the quad. New athletes were introduced to the quad from last year's Worlds. In end, racing was close, but no alternative lineup provided a definitive improvement over last year's quad.

Both Josy and Hap noted that Kate Bertko operated as an exceptional selector. The HPC discussed the concept of a selector's manual to provide guidance to a selector and also an explanation of the role to athletes. Josy also noted that he would like to find a more suitable name for the position.

It was also noted the difference for various coaches involved in selection. Some were there simply to do selection while others were there to select a boat that he or she would then go on to coach.

Athlete Feedback on Selection

Gevvie Stone shared athlete feedback from selection camp.

It began with a clear note that Kate Bertko got exceptional reviews from athletes.

From the feedback, it was noted to avoid blanket statements and promises too early in selection. This goes towards a general discussion within the HPC on the difficulty of communication during selection and that wording must be improved.

Off of this, Josy discussed how all selections followed a more standardized path through selection compared to previous years. Nonetheless, there are still more best practices to pass onto coaches and selectors that should improve the clarity of selection. Determining when it is best to do side-by-side seat racing versus time trials versus comparisons to other boat classes will help standardize the process and effectiveness of that process.

Sidebar Regarding Role of the High Performance Committee

At this point in the meeting, Wyatt Allen needed to leave the phone call due to time constraints.

Josy took a moment to revisit the High Performance Committee's role in selection. He noted that while he appreciates having this conversation with the HPC, the HPC is not a required part of the actual selection. During the process of selection, Josy must keep his process as simple as possible with the HPC in order to focus on the task at hand. However, connecting with the HPC on the front and back ends is very helpful to build the process forward. He noted that members of the HPC are always free and welcome to visit and attend selection.

In this particular year, the Chairman of the High Performance Committee was part of a selection panel that would review and verify the selection completed by pertinent coaches. This panel met the requirements set forth by the United States Olympic Committee and consisted of the Chief High Performance Officer, the Chairman of the High Performance Committee, and the Chair of the Athlete Council.

Putting it more simply, Josy would like to involve us in making the plan, but not in executing the plan.

With that in mind, Josy mentioned that the HPC should arrange a meeting with Brett Gorman between now and May 12th to get an onboarding of USRowing's plan for Pathways.

Trials Outlook

Both men's and women's singles would have the incumbent athlete returning as well as challengers. Several men who did not make quad camp would compete in the single. Others from the men's quad camp were joined by athletes cut from sweep camp to form another men's quad for trials. Beyond that, athletes from both sweep camps had identified pair partners and would compete in pairs trials. The men's double only had one other entry outside of last year's combination. The lightweight men's double also had several challengers to the incumbent crew from last year.

There being no other business for discussion, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:42 PM EST.