High Performance Committee Minutes

9.1.2022

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

Agenda
Purpose of Pan American Games for USRowing
Review of Selection Procedures for Pan American Games
Discussion of Pan American Trials Logistics
Closing Discussion on Future Topics

Purpose of Pan American Games for USRowing

Chief High Performance Officer Josy Verdonkschot identified through previous results, anecdotal accounts, and conversations with the USOPC that USRowing has not always maximized its use of the Pan American Games (PanAms) as a tool for National Team development. By and large, the HPC agreed with this observation and discussed the last few quadrennials.

The HPC discussed the typical barriers to entry that prohibit more productive use of the event. These revolve around both funding and timing. For the second time ever, the PanAms requires a qualification regatta roughly 6 months ahead of time. This qualification event is not supported by the USOPC. It happened for the first time last quadrennial, and the funding for the qualification regatta fell exclusively on the shoulders of the participants. This quadrennial it will still be the responsibility of the participants to fund the qualification regatta, but better notice, clearer communication, and some support may make the funding less prohibitive.

Also in contrast to PanAms before 2019, the timing is less of a direct conflict with Olympic qualification at Worlds. In the past, PanAms would often happen before or right around the World Championship making it an either/or situation.

Out of this, the CHPO and HPC agreed to try and broaden the pool of athletes that are both interested and capable of attending the Pan American Games.

Review of Selection Procedures for the Pan American Games

Josy shared his proposal for the PanAm Selection Procedures with the HPC that would then be presented to the USOPC for final ratification.

In essence, the trials for PanAms are structured to identify individuals through racing in singles and pairs. From the top performers, team boats will be assembled for the qualification regatta.

Key consideration was given to the two-step process for PanAms that requires crews to first travel to Chile for qualification in March and then again for PanAms in the following October. This spans a considerable amount of time, travel, and resources, so the selection procedures reflect the potential complications that could result by having clear guidelines for replacements and substitutions.

As soon as the USOPC has ratified the procedures, they will be shared with the broader USRowing audience and promoted as much as possible to increase participation.

Discussion of Pan American Trials Logistics

PanAm Trials will happen this fall in November. Josy explained that with the qualification regatta being in March, the most reasonable time for a PanAms trials would be in the fall. This is required because a mid-winter trials in time for the March PanAm qualifier would necessitate an exceptional amount of resources for crews based in the northern half of the US. Additionally, the FISA World Championships being at the end of September significantly affects the domestic timing of the trials.

Senior team selection would not directly interfere with qualification since the Winter Speed Order would be at the end of February and the NSR would be in the second half of April. Therefore, the qualification regatta would fall between the two selection events, and the actual PanAms would happen after the 2023 World Championships.

While PanAm Trials will happen around the same time as a typical Fall Speed Order, USRowing will work to support both events concurrently in order to identify as many athletes as possible for potential development with the National Team. This means a 2,000 meter, 6-lane progression would be utilized for PanAm Trials, while other participants unable to compete in PanAms would be able to enter a Fall Speed Order composed of both on-water and ergometer components. The Fall Speed Order might be of service to a collegiate athlete who could not travel to Chile in March or to a prospective senior athlete with a schedule that is not conducive to the PanAm timing.

Closing Discussion on Future Topics

In the HPC's closing remarks, members expressed interest in exploring U23 retention plans in our next conversation and the ability to share the CHPO's High Performance Plan with athletes and coaches.

Josy developed the High Performance Plan (HPP) in conjunction with the USOPC to map out the rest of the 2024 quadrennial and set things in the right direction for 2028. It provides a high-level view of what the next 2 years could look like. This plan will be shared with athletes and coaches