High Performance Committee Minutes

9.30.2022

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

Agenda
Review of World Championships
Review of Comments and Finalization of PanAm Trials and Fall Speed Order
Discussion of Messaging for PanAms and Fall Speed Order
Review of General Comments Received

Review of World Championships

Chief High Performance Officer Josy Verdonkschot began the meeting with a recap of the Senior World Championships. For a year of rebuilding, it presented mixed results. Some results satisfied Josy like the women's lightweight double and the women's pair, but there is still an overall need for improvement, considering where we are in the quadrennial. Men's sweep performed near the top end of expectations with the M8+ performing well relative to its potential. The W4- and the M4x performed in line with where they were in selection camp. This points towards the team needing more depth than it currently has in Men's sculling, Women's sweep, and also Women's sculling. Josy shared the perspective that we have to continually develop as a national team squad from this moment and that we need to avoid simply preparing six months prior as selection begins to emerge.

With this in mind, the HPC discussed the need to find ways that the athletes spend more quality time training together, while maintaining their life balance.

One aspect of this is developing a two-way understanding between the athletes and the support staff. This led to the discussion that USRowing should require athletes receiving DAS to fill out the athlete review form for the World Championships so that the team can more productively build forward.

Josy shared some current challenges with moving the team forward. Presently, a concerted effort is required to directly fund athletes as well as possible. While there are no reservations about providing better financial support to athletes, it does not seem to provide a correlative allocation of time and dedication towards training availability. Through training camps and selection, there was a conscious effort to support many crews equally, but there is an observed need to support our top crews as well as possible. Josy expressed interest in the reintroduction of time standards, and the HPC agreed with the exploration of their use.

In conclusion, Josy noted that next year poses the interesting situation of making calculated judgments for qualification. This does not change the overall plan, but moves the approach from an open boating of all Olympic boat classes to a purposeful effort to put the right individuals in the events that make the most sense. The HPC understood and agreed with this sentiment.

Review of Comments and Finalization of PanAm Trials and Fall Speed Order

In response to feedback and the suggestion of the HPC, Josy was able to move PanAm Trials and Fall Speed Order to at least avoid election day. Unfortunately, this year there is not the flexibility at the necessary venue to move the event out of the weekdays. Mercer is a necessary location in order to be able to host both the event and the subsequent ID camp in an affordable way. Mercer hosts races on the 6th, 12th, and 13th that make it prohibitive to hosting the event on the weekend.

The HPC expressed the interest in moving the regatta to Carnegie in an effort to move it to the weekend. The ideal dates being the 10th, 11th, and 12th of November. It was discussed that access to Carnegie is more difficult during the school year, but Josy would inquire.

Discussion of Messaging for PanAms and Fall Speed Order

With regards to the speed order, Josy explained to the HPC that he hopes to identify all athletes aiming for 2024 as soon as possible. With regards to collegiate athletes available in June, there is a hope to identify them before June and possibly at the Fall Speed Order. The HPC agreed with this approach and discussed the challenges of timing with the collegiate calendar in the fall. Josy will speak to CRCA to gauge interest and spread the word.

The HPC discussed other ways of identifying and tracking U23 athletes. There was a review of previous attempts and a brainstorming of new ones.

In regards to PanAms, Josy made it clear that he would like it to be open to all athletes regardless of 2022 National Team participation. In his vision, while no one would be required to go to PanAms, he would like to use it as a more productive experience with a higher caliber of athlete. The HPC discussed the challenges of communication, considering the composition of previous PanAm teams, and also explored the logistical challenges with relation to Worlds qualification and the Olympics.

Review of General Comments Received

The HPC received some comments ahead of the 2023 selection procedures regarding the double. Since the selection procedures were yet to be written, Josy expressed that these comments would be considered along with the feedback from the current team.

Josy and the HPC had a general discussion about the creation of selection procedures. Josy would first collect feedback from current athletes on the team with specific consideration given to the needs and observations of the top performers. From that feedback, Josy would consider what selection procedures make sense in terms of international strategy, programmatic planning, and athlete feedback. These procedures would then go out for comment and undergo any necessary revisions.