

PADDLE
SCOTLAND



Paddle Scotland Annual Report 2023-2024



sport
scotland

LOTTERY FUNDED

PADDLE^{UK}

Contents

- 3 CEO's Report
- 4 COO's Report
- 6 Financial Report
- 8 Head of Pathways & Performance
- 10 Rebrand
- 11 Membership & Events
- 13 Grandtully Development
- 15 Equality, Diversity & Inclusion
- 21 Environment & Access
- 23 Discipline Groups
- 34 Recognition Award Winners



PADDLE
SCOTLAND

CEO's Report

This year marked the midpoint in the delivery of our long term strategy 'Paddlesport For All'. The work includes trying to attract and retain new members and getting important safety messages out to everyone, as well as continuing to support our members and the volunteers that contribute so much to the sport. We continue to strive to make paddlesport as accessible and inclusive as possible, and further pilot projects and initiatives have been undertaken towards this aim.

We have continued to form new partnerships as well as strengthen the existing relationships that we already have in place with many external organisations. As a small organisation we rely on working with others to realise the benefits of our activities and to further our reach and influence, particularly in our advocacy work on behalf of the sport and its participants.

It has been really encouraging to see the further development and growth of the Club Volunteer Conference and Scottish Women's Paddle Symposium which have bounced back after the pandemic. Also to note the increasing number of recreational events, run by their respective event organising committees, attracting new participants, in addition to the continuing competition discipline annual calendars of events.

The Board has seen its largest number of changes over the period with several new directors having joined. The planned review and changes regarding volunteer structures resulted in the formation of new Development Groups and Groups to replace the former committees.

Paddle Scotland continues to benefit from substantial **sportscotland** investment which enables us to deliver far more than we would be able to on our own. Investment into our team of Development Managers, working with Clubs, Delivery Partners and the Discipline Development Groups as well as financial scholarships to support coaches progressing through qualifications assist Paddle Scotland to deliver its Paddlesport For All strategy. Further **sportscotland** support towards effective governance and into the Slalom, Sprint and Paracanoe programmes, increases activity and outcomes.

Thanks to everyone for their immense contribution, whether in clubs, as volunteers or coaches or in employed roles.

Stuart Smith,
Chief Executive Officer



COO's Report

Over the year, our membership has increased, with a 3% overall growth. Additionally, the diversity of our membership has improved for example with a 5% increase in female representation. Club membership has also experienced healthy growth, with an 8% increase overall and a 13% growth among individuals under the age of 18. This growth is not a mere coincidence but is a testament to the dedication and hard work of our staff and volunteers across the community.

Coaching and leadership remain vital elements of our membership, with 61% of members holding qualifications. Notably, the number of coaches and leaders within our membership has increased by 7% during the year, further strengthening our capacity to support and develop our sport.

Our events and competition programmes have remained exceptionally busy throughout the year, and we express our heartfelt gratitude to the numerous volunteers in clubs, discipline groups, and event teams who make these events possible. Their dedication and efforts ensure the continued success and enjoyment of our members.

During the year, we undertook a comprehensive review of our volunteer committees, incorporating feedback and learnings from both our own organisation and other sports. This resulted in a restructuring in early 2024 to establish new Discipline Development Groups with standardised operating procedures and enhanced support mechanisms. We extend our sincere appreciation to all the volunteers across the discipline and functional groups who continuously contribute to the development and growth of our sport.

Our journey towards Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion continues as we transition to the 'Moving to Inclusion' framework. Our Equality groups consist of dedicated volunteers who bring a wealth of experience, innovative ideas, and unwavering enthusiasm. Their efforts are instrumental in making paddlesports accessible and inclusive for all individuals.

Andy Murray,
Chief Operating Officer



3%

*Increase in overall
membership 2023-2024*

5%

*Increase in female
members 2023-2024*

8%

*Increase in overall club
membership 2023-2024*

13%

*Increase in club
members under 18*

61%

*of members hold
coaching & leadership
qualifications*

7%

*Increase in members
who are leaders or
coaches*

Finance Report

The annual report is published ahead of the finalisation of the Statutory Accounts for the year FY 2023-2024 therefore for more specific details in individual areas please refer to the Statutory Annual Accounts.

In FY 2023-2024 income and expenditure were finely balanced resulting in a surplus of £8,780 on a turnover of £1,025,626. The number of members again reached its maximum ever level, contributing to membership income increasing strongly during the year. There was strong attendance at events including the Scottish Women's Paddle Symposium and the Club Volunteer Conference.

One of the focus areas of 'Paddlesport for All' involves developing new, accessible and increased facilities at Grandtully Station Park, both for day use, for the training rooms, as well as for the campsite. During this financial year most of the construction occurred with the benefit of several external grants. Read more about the project on page 13.

We are extremely grateful to investors and funders including **sportscotland** which invests in our staffing and programmes, contributing to the outcomes in governance, development and performance.



£1,025,626

Turnover in 2023-2024

£8,780

Surplus in 2023-2024



Pathways & Performance

They say tide and time wait for no-one and it often feels this way with performance sport. We kicked off the year with the normal selection events which test all that take part. These are rarely easy events and we should congratulate all those who put themselves on the startline. With so much at stake it is great to see how the Scottish athletes handle the pressure and continue to deliver World Class Performances and further develop the transferable skills that will allow them further successes in the future. I'd like to **recognise the great work that Jon Schofield has previously led** in supporting our Scottish athletes in the early part of this performance year.



With athletes travelling all over the world to train and compete over the summer, it was great to see their continued success. This was not only with the top level athletes but it would be wrong not to mention the **work of the slalom clubs in ensuring their athletes were afforded the opportunities to also travel abroad** and enter many of the slalom ECA races. Thank you, a great effort by all, and thank you particularly for the continued support from both club coaches and **sportscotland** for everything you do to help our athletes achieve their goals.

Not to be outdone, we should also recognise the **fantastic work of Glasgow Kayak Club** in continually delivering athletes into the Performance Squad across all distances and across all different boats. This doesn't happen overnight and only with hard work, passion and commitment, so a big thank you.

At the end of every season comes the review, where we lose athletes from the programme and bring new ones onto the programme. We appreciate this can be a tough time for all involved but whatever the outcome, it never ceases to amaze me the hard work the athletes commit to throughout the cold, dark winter months, both on daily basis and on the extended camps the squads travel to and get invited to by the World Class Programme or Paddle England.

As well as the clubs, we must also thank the volunteers who give up many hours of their own time to officiate at the many different events across both the Squads. Lastly, we must thank the parents who travel around the UK and World supporting the athletes, this really is appreciated.

Mike Chandler, Head of Pathways and Performance





Rebrand

In March 2024, we officially started operating under our new name: Paddle Scotland.

This decision to rebrand was made in conjunction with British Canoeing and the other National Associations, working together to jointly rebrand to a consistent "Paddle" set of identities and branding. This follows a two year consultation process with members, the paddling community, partners and stakeholders.

We are aware that over the last few years, the rapid growth in recreational paddling by a broader and more diverse audience has resulted in a change in the interests of our members. The new name intends to better reflect the demographics of our evolving membership and captures more fully the breadth of paddling activity that falls under our responsibility, including kayaking, canoeing, stand up paddleboarding and more.

The rebrand is an ongoing process and further progress will be made in the upcoming financial year with the launch of a new Paddle Scotland website.

The rebrand has been well accepted and feedback generally positive.

New social media handles:



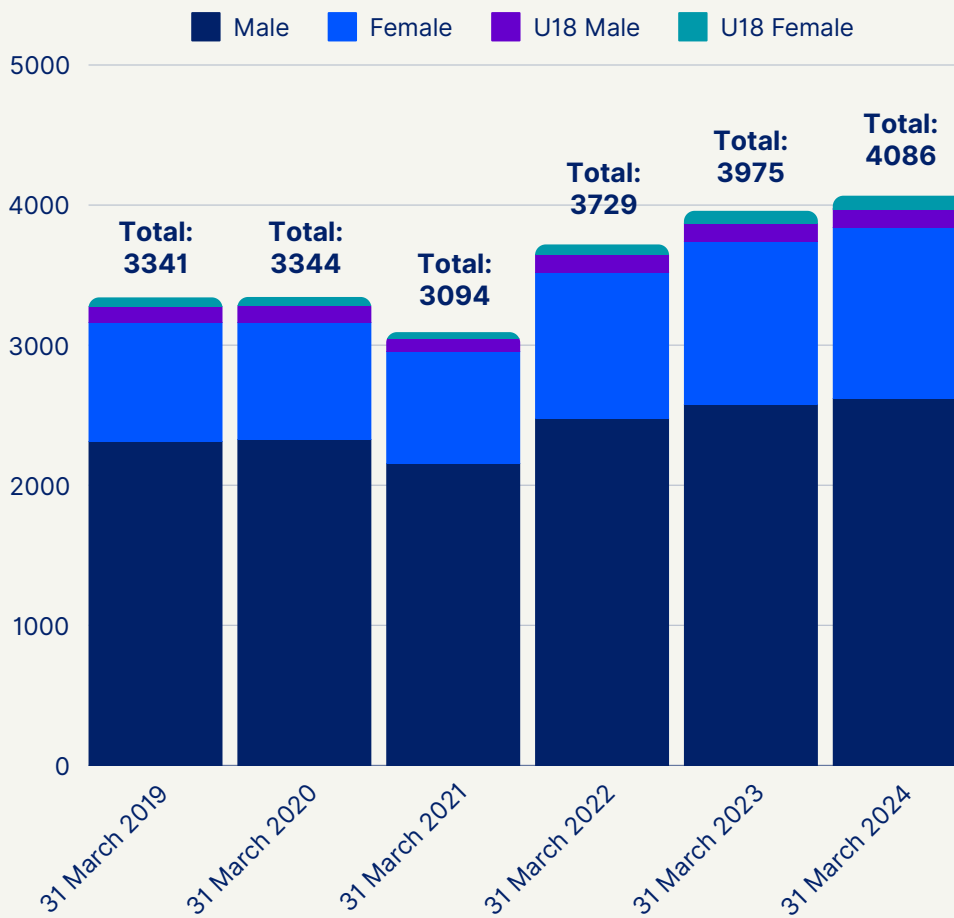
@paddlescot



Membership, Courses & Events

TOTAL MEMBERSHIP YOY

Paddle Scotland membership reached its highest ever in 2024.



22%

Increase in total membership in last 5 years

43%

Increase in female members in last 5 years

27%

Increase in U18 members in last 5 years



MEMBERS & CLUB ASSOCIATES 2023-2024



COURSES & QUALIFICATIONS

1,081	Candidates completed Safety Training
29%	Increase in Safety Training completed YOY
630	Registrations for Coaching & Leadership courses
2,458	Total Coaching, Leadership, Safety and PPA attendances
5%	Increase in Total Coaching, Leadership, Safety and PPA attendances YOY
61	Competition events
1,263	Participation in competition events
31%	Increase in competition event participation
2,771	Total event attendance including recreational events

WINTER WEBINARS

	Bookings
Paddling on the Sea	325
Better Group Paddles	110
SUP	69
Leadership Award Preparation	71
Environment	28
TOTAL	603

Grandtully Redevelopment Project




GRANDTULLY
STATION PARK



The £1.5million project to redevelop Grandtully Station Park, Paddle Scotland's campsite, training and day use centre adjacent to the River Tay, got underway in June 2023 and significant progress was made over the winter and into the spring despite various setbacks.

The new site boasts fully accessible facilities for people in tents and campervans served by its own brand new building at the far end of the campsite. This is separate to the dedicated day use Green Building available for paddlers and other outdoor enthusiasts. This contains 6 new changing rooms, 5 toilets and 5 showers including 2 accessible toilet/shower rooms with 1 baby changing room.

Last but not least the meeting rooms/classrooms in the brand new Training Building make Grandtully the perfect venue for courses, club gatherings and events. There are also EV charging points in the revamped car park.

Carol Anderson was hired as the site's General Manager in spring 2024 and promises to be a fantastic addition to the team to lead the final stages of building works and reopening.



Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

Paddle Scotland is committed to creating a safe, welcoming and inclusive environment for all members, staff, volunteers and participants. This commitment is to all, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation ("Protected Characteristics"). In addition the commitment extends to ensure everyone has the same opportunities regardless of their socio-economic background.

In September 2023, with support from the Paddle Scotland Equality Groups, we refreshed and revised our **Equality Policy**, so it better reflects our ambitions to create a culture that promotes inclusivity, diversity, and respect; where everyone has the opportunity to participate in and enjoy the benefits of paddlesport and feel a sense of belonging - core elements of our Paddlesport Strategic Plan.



A key part of this are the Paddle Scotland Equality Groups. The **main Equality Group** reports to the Board via the Paddle Scotland Board Equality Champion, and is supported by designated staff members.

The Equality Group is involved in:

- Reviewing Paddle Scotland's progress towards equality objectives
- Providing advice to the Paddle Scotland Board, committees, clubs and staff regarding improvements and changes
- Supporting, steering and connecting the work of the various Equality sub-groups



There are seven equality sub-groups, formed during 2020 and 2021:

- **Accessible Paddling Equality Group**
- **Ethnicity Equality Group** (currently inactive)
- **Female Equality Group**
- **LGBTQ+ Equality Group**
- **Lifelong Equality Group**
- **Mental Health and Wellbeing Equality Group**
- **Young Persons Equality Group**

Each group supports Paddle Scotland to encourage more people from their specific focused population into paddling and delivering/steering interventions that will enable more people to find the enjoyment and progression in paddlesport that they desire. A representative from each of the sub-groups sits on, and reports to, the main Equality Group, with updates from each group occurring as a standing agenda item in the main group. Each sub-group has on average 6-8 active members.



Accessible Paddling Equality Group

The Accessible Paddling Equality Group continues to work towards increasing opportunities for paddlers with differences to take part in paddlesport. The group held their first sharing practice day at Willowgate Activity Centre which was deemed a great success and plan to offer similar events in the future. The group also organised a training day at Glenmore Lodge with Equal Adventure to demonstrate the use of their adaptive equipment.

Parasport festivals across the country, often supported by local clubs or other paddlesport providers. These festivals allow young people with a disability to try a wide range of sports including paddlesport often for the first time. By working with local clubs and paddlesport providers it allows the possibility of ongoing opportunities as well as building the confidence of those helping and supporting at the events.

The group continues to work on actioning and further developing its four point action plan.

The group also continues to be part of Scottish Disability Sport's (SDS)

Female Equality Group

The Female Equality Group have supported the design and development of a **Women's Coach and Leader development programme**, where 29 aspirant coaches or leaders were supported with mentoring and training days to help them work towards qualifications. The programme finished in May 2023, with the group then focusing on the evaluation of the programme and future options for continuing to support more female paddlers getting qualified.

On the whole the feedback was very positive and the programme was

considered worth repeating. This area of work continues exploring how to reach those who could not afford to participate with a potential focus on those from lower SIMD, alongside a potential tiered pricing structure to make the programme sustainable and open to those who can afford to pay.

The group continues to support the **Scottish Women's Paddle Symposium** organising committee and coaching team, with the 2023 event being the largest to date with over 160 people involved in the event.

LGBTQ+ Equality Group

The group ran its 3rd **Paddling with Pride event**, this time at Glenmore Lodge which again was open to individuals from the LGBTQ+ community and their allies. Being at Glenmore Lodge allowed those without their own equipment to try paddlesport or try a different discipline. This event was the best attended yet with 23 paddlers attending.

The Group continues to support Stonewall's Rainbow Laces Campaign and increase awareness through articles, podcasts and social media including the group's Paddling with Pride Facebook Group.

The Cairngorms Pride Paddlers continue to go from strength to strength with the LGBTQ+ Equality Group keen to see if they can replicate something similar in the central belt.



Lifelong Equality Group

The Lifelong Equality group, formed towards the end of 2021, focuses on increasing media content that champions older people's stories and encouraging clubs to support the participation of older members. The group has initiated several articles published both within paddlesport communication channels and externally to promote the benefits of paddling for the older population, sharing stories of older paddlers and their experiences in the sport, and ideas of how to create a welcoming and supportive club atmosphere where older people can enjoy taking part.



Mental Health & Wellbeing Equality Group

In 2023-2024 the Mental Health & Wellbeing Equality Group focused on the themes of Club Culture and Mental Health First Aid Training.

During April 2023 the group initiated a Club Culture survey to better understand the culture within clubs and to inform the group's focus. Positive results of the survey were celebrated.

However it was noted that there was evidence that cultures exist that are not aligned with our organisation. Over the rest of the year several articles and a podcast have been published celebrating and sharing excellent practice and providing support for clubs in this area.

The group are also strong advocates for Mental Health Awareness Training and have been exploring the role of formal Mental Health First Aid Training for people involved in delivering paddlesport activity, raising awareness of this training and laying the foundations for more delivery of this via Paddle Scotland networks. This links to the group's longer term strategy of doing more to support paddling within the blue/green/nature/social prescribing space.



Young Person Equality Group

The Young Person Equality Group is focused on delivering the Paddle Scotland Young Ambassador Programme. This is currently in its second year with 16 Young Ambassadors. This cohort is due to finish with an expedition through the Great Glen in October 2024.

The Young Ambassador programme is supported by Paddle Scotland Development Managers, who facilitate the group activities. In April 2023 the Young Ambassadors joined our Club Volunteer Conference at Glenmore Lodge, with funding from Cairngorm Youth Trust to enable them to attend free of charge. During the event the

young people delivered an inspiring, and well received, short piece to the attendees to help raise awareness of the value of having young people in clubs.

In August 2023 the Young Ambassadors embarked on a two day Sea Kayak trip exploring Loch Ailort, with the more experienced paddlers taking the lead and supporting those newer to sea kayaking. Thanks to UHI West Highland College School of Adventure Studies, Fort William for the loan of kayaks and equipment. Without this generous support the expedition would not have been possible. Thanks also goes to Ken McIlroy for volunteering his expertise to join the trip and support its smooth running.

"I had an amazing weekend on the sea with some fantastic people getting to paddle, socialise and have fun on and off the water. It was great getting to spend time in a craft I love with many young people in an environment that is often not seen as a place for young people to paddle. I loved getting to go with people my own age and take some into an environment that many hadn't paddled in before."

-Ava Barton

"I really enjoyed the weekend, despite the tick infestation in the camping spot. It was so much fun to get out paddling and see everyone again! The best parts were our campfire and Ava's chocolate brownies because there's no point going paddling without cake!"

-Hannah Moore





Some of our Young Ambassadors are working towards Coaching and Leadership qualifications, but have experienced barriers with access to courses limited to those over 18. In response to this, we have supported them to organise a White Water Safety Training course at Glenmore Lodge, specifically for young people to attend and learn key safety skills. In addition, we continue to commit to supporting the provision of Core Coach Training courses specifically for Young People, with one delivered in partnership with Glenmore Lodge in the summer of 2023, and another in March 2024 through Willowgate Activity Centre. These specific courses help get young people started on the qualification pathway.

One of our featured Podcasts last year was with two of our Young Ambassadors who are both working towards qualifications, sharing their experiences and aiming to inspire other young people to do the same.

Through the Paddle Scotland Satisfaction Survey, it was apparent that the cost of living crisis is having a great impact on young people, highlighting the need for us to deliver accessible courses for the young people. Scholarship funding, now targeted at under-represented groups (including young people) is helping in this area.

Fit for Girls: 11 girls aged 12-18 were selected to be part of our Fit for Girls programme. The aim of the 2-year programme is for them to increase the participation of other girls their age within their club or centre. The team have attended two development sessions delivered by **sportscotland**, and are being supported by allocated mentors within their own clubs or centres.

 **fit for girls**



Environment Report

The **Environment Committee** has had another busy year working to raise awareness of the importance of protecting our environment with members of Paddle Scotland.

We have continued to liaise with a four nations group to exchange information relating to environment concerns. This has also resulted in an invitation for one of our committee members with an appropriate scientific background beginning a review of the factsheets produced by Paddle UK on environmental matters, and offering comments for improvement.

We are all in agreement that more emphasis on environmental concerns is required in coaching and leadership training and assessments, but this is the responsibility of BCAB and in the meantime our representatives continue to put forward our views.

We continue to be involved in consultations with Cairngorms National Park Authority and the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park Authority to ensure that paddlers'

needs are represented in planning for the future.

The Committee has continued to source articles for Scottish Paddler on issues as diverse as the 4Rs (reduce, reuse, repair, recycle) of equipment and a table of commercial companies that support the 4Rs, Badgers, rescue and rehabilitation of Cetaceans and Invasive Non-Native Species.

Webinars were arranged and offered to members earlier this year: for the winter of 2024 these will be advertised in advance to provide better opportunities for attendance. The Power Point presentation on Environmental issues was shared at the Club Volunteer Conference and the Scottish Women's Paddle Symposium.

At the end of March 2024 Rachel Hannan (Environment Committee) and Grant Dolier (Access Committee) stepped down from their roles of chairing the individual committees and handed over to Andy Dorin who is now the Chair of the newly formed Access and Environment Group.



Access Report

For the Access Committee, the year was marked by the sad passing of Jonathan Kitching. Jonathan was the long-standing secretary of the committee and a champion for access rights, both on the Dee, where he was a local access advisor, and also across Scotland, where he developed an encyclopaedic knowledge of access issues. The Andy Jackson Award for Contributions to Access and Environment was posthumously presented by Paddle Scotland as fitting recognition of his dedicated work.

The work of the group continued over the year, and despite diminished numbers dealt with a number of access cases. Sometimes these weren't very relevant to paddlesport and easily dismissed for example, off-shore wind developments, but

others had the potential to be intrusive or undesirable.

Gavin Millar continued to lead work to ensure access to water on the Etive following a new hydroelectric development. The committee also commented on a planning application limiting access to the Spey at Aviemore at a popular put in/get out. Most challenging for the committee was how to tackle the increasing legal restriction of access through the closure of car parking and waterside launch points in the aftermath of covid.

Our thanks to Grant Dolier who has expertly chaired the committee again for a further year and represented Paddle Scotland at the National Access Forum.





Discipline Development Groups

Canoe Polo

by James McNeish

This year we have continued to push polo forward. We have been able to run two divisions that completed in May with Titan A winning division 1 and Aboyne winning Division 2. The annual Scottish Open returned in September and was won by Forth A.

We have had an increase in participation this year and continued to grow. Running two divisions has been great and the start of a club playing polo for the first time is always good to see. We have also managed to increase the equipment available to help clubs start out in polo safely.

We have set out our development plan. This is an ambitious plan to deliver but if successful will grow the sport in Scotland. In order to do this we meet regularly as a development group to discuss bite sized chunks of this. We will be looking for volunteers to help in all parts of the plan going forward in smaller sub groups.

On top of this we are running more development days as well as the leagues again this year. The Scottish Open is also to run with interest in this far and wide. We are looking into getting the park and play polo sessions up and running where possible.



Freestyle

by Calum McNicol

Over the past year, the Paddle Scotland Freestyle Development Group has had a challenging time increasing the number of volunteers onto the group and as such has relied on sole individuals to keep momentum within the group. Steps were taken to link closer with GB Freestyle and their offer of support in administration, coach development and social media has alleviated some of the pressure on the development group and individuals involved. Efforts have centred on two main areas over the course of the last year, namely: community engagement & coach development.

Community Engagement: Our focus on broadening participation has led us to continue with regular Freestyle “park and play” events at Pinkston Watersports. Whilst a financial challenge at times, the freestyle community have engaged with these sessions throughout the year. Support and collaboration with GB Freestyle has meant we are reaching a wider audience and the vision is for this to continue and develop the supportive network that is needed to progress the discipline.

Coach Development: Some work has gone into identifying aspirant Freestyle Coaches within Scotland with the view to train and direct their talents and enthusiasm, widening the pool of Freestyle Coaches in Scotland. This is a work in progress which is again supported by GB Freestyle.

The Paddle Scotland Freestyle Development Group remains dedicated to advancing the discipline of freestyle kayaking, nurturing talent, developing coaches and building a vibrant paddling community.



Marathon

This year saw another really good year of marathon racing with lots of new competitors, familiar faces and some people returning to this discipline after a break.

Having a full calendar of races throughout the season means a lot of work for those organising and we are extremely grateful to everyone who has helped in any way to make these events a success as well as great opportunities to meet up with and race against others. Thanks in particular to our wonderful race organisers, meticulously planning and delivering all the events for us to enjoy.

The Linlithgow Winter Time Trials continue to run during the winter and we are grateful to LKR for organising them.

The annual Glasgow to Edinburgh Challenge took place with a large field of competitors completing the challenge across the weekend. Some paddled the whole distance themselves and some took part in relay teams.

At the time of writing we are halfway through the 2024 racing season and it's been great to see good numbers participating across the divisions. Our Marathon Discipline Development Group continues to meet to plan marathon racing in Scotland and are already looking forward to what we have to come next season.



Ocean Racing

by Gilbert Speirs and Michael Surmon

Paddlesport Ocean Racing in Scotland ranges from experienced athletes training for peak performance to people who paddle for fitness and the camaraderie of the post-paddle chat on the beach. The craft they use are equally diverse, ranging from plastic sea kayaks to the long, skinny racing surfskis and paddleboards designed for ultimate speed on the waves. The one thing every ocean paddler shares is the thrill of getting out on the sea and riding the waves.

The Development Group attempts to provide structure and guidance to develop the discipline of racing on the sea, particularly in downwind conditions. The Development Group recognises that some racing paddlers commence their paddling career somewhere else, and seek to create easier access to ocean racing. The most recent year has seen consistent membership in the Development Group but more time is needed to publish a realistic strategy and to create real Group momentum in the implementation of the actions planned.

Summer 2023 was free of the pandemic of the previous years but some momentum had been lost.

- Nairn Kayak Club hosted the Scottish Championship with entries of 53 paddlers and good representation from English and Welsh paddlers.
- The Oban Sea Kayak race attracted a significant number of surfski entries.
- Scottish paddlers again attended the 2023 Eurochallenge in Spain with a strong showing in the Masters class.
- 7 Scottish surfski paddlers took part in 'Monster The Loch' among the 100 crew entries.
- Coastworks Cumbrae Challenge attracted a good entry again.



The Ocean Racing Development Group seeks to find various ways to identify targets for surfski paddlers, to enhance motivation to train effectively and to race well. Those mechanisms encourage those who have a recreational focus.

There remains limited access to ocean racing craft. The DG is still trying to identify a means of short-term provision of a number of suitable ocean skis to enhance accessibility to downwind paddling and sea racing.

Structural developments continue such as improved communication with active surfski paddlers, reliable/accessible sources of information, work towards Ocean Racing components within the Coaching Scheme, coordination of regional/area training opportunities/clinics, and rationalisation of safety standards across events.

There remains a number of ideas submitted to the previous committee by paddlers who attended previous ACMs. All this continues under the banner of “Adventure, Fitness, Competition”. The challenge remains of communication with active racing paddlers.

Ocean Racing paddlers continue to be grateful that Paddle Scotland supports the sport of Ocean racing in Scotland which is essential to the long term development of the sport.



Rafting

by Jim Miller

This year the still relatively newly-formed Rafting Development Group delivered two events to support guides developing from entry level through to TL 3.

The highlight of the past year in truth has been just seeing more people on the water enjoying rafting.

We continue to offer developmental days for guides and we are in the process of ascertaining if we can get more support from other trainers willing to volunteer for this.



Slalom

Over the year of 2023 we continued to see some amazing athlete performances at all levels in the slalom discipline.

In January 2024 the Paddle Scotland Board made the decision to disband the Slalom Committee. This was due to significant governance and operational concerns which remained unresolved.

Despite there being many conversations, this has rolled forward and has continued to be at the forefront of Paddle Scotland Board work. It is hoped this will be resolved in the very near future.



Sprint

by Margaret Chapman

In 2023 the committee continued to provide support and guidance to clubs helping them to run local sprint events which provide a friendly but competitive introduction to sprint racing for newcomers to the sport. These club events also give more established paddlers a regular opportunity to race closer to home over a variety of distances. In addition to the club events the committee once again ran two very successful regattas at Strathclyde Park enabling paddlers to compete in a much more formal setting of an 8-lane regatta course. The number of paddlers attending races was back to, and in some cases, exceeding pre-covid levels which is very pleasing.

Both club and Performance squad paddlers travelled to the four National regattas at Nottingham with many returning home with British Championship medals. Scottish paddlers were selected to represent Great Britain at International events in all age groups (U15, U16, U17, Junior, U23 and senior).

The committee also organised the British 5000m Championships to be held at the "Hooley" in October unfortunately severe weather meant the event had to be cancelled.

The International highlight was Kristina Armstrong winning bronze in K1 200m at both the Junior European and Junior World Championships as well as a further bronze medal in the mixed K2 500m at the Junior Worlds.

The committee will continue to work cooperatively with both Performance and the Marathon Development Group to organise and run events which will support the development of both paddlers and coaches. We will look to encourage local racing in a variety of formats to help facilitate participation by as many paddlers as possible from a wide range of abilities and experiences.



SUP

by Adam Burns

The highlight of 2023-2024 was managing to move forward with getting a Race SUP Coach running in Scotland. The step towards making this more accessible for the community up here is a big one and will see us able to support the racing scene a lot more.

Another year of webinars also saw us reach some more people and see people attend most of these to increase and develop stand up paddleboarding knowledge.

The plan for 2024-2025 is to continue on this theme around Race to develop it with six new aspirant race coaches going through training and at least three being assessed. We also aim to rejig the winter webinar series and bring it more inline with how people are Stand Up Paddleboarding currently. There is an aim to run Scotland's first SUP Symposium in 2025 also.



Surf

by Ian Sherrington

The focus of the Surf Development Group is to support the three areas of Development, Technical & Awards, and Competition for surf kayaking and waveski. Many thanks to all the Surf Committee members, event organisers & workers and competitors & supporters for the work done to make this happen. Activity is varied and included representation at UK technical groups, development of Safety Awards and competing successfully in the British Championships.

Scottish paddlers competed at the British Championships at Whitesands in Pembrokeshire, making it through to 7 finals and picking up 2 Bronze medals, 2 Silver and 1 Gold going to Ian Sherrington in the Grand Master Long Boat category.

This year Scotland has put more weight towards Development activity with Chris Heaney, John Inglis and Tracy Sherrington heading up an ambitious programme of coaching and development days. We have also kept in conversation with the new Lost Shore artificial wave development at Ratho. There is hope that this might allow us to have access to an amazing training facility and also support inclusive development.

The increased enthusiasm that development activity has brought feeds right through to what we anticipate will be a great turn out for the Scottish Championships in September 2024 on the north coast.

We have also been part of a new group to support the running of our British Championships. The group will run the event, rotating around the Home Nations and Ireland, supported by locals and the home nation. This year we will run the event in Scarborough in October, and plan to take a strong Scottish contingent.



Wild Water Racing

by Paul Anderson

An active and very eventful year for the Wild Water Racing (WWR) Development Group both nationally and on the international stage, with the resurgent Scottish WWR scene going from strength to strength.

Below are some key updates:

- November 2023 – BUCS Championships. Very well attended event (500 boats).
- March 2024 (Grandtully Training Camp) attended by wider athletes from British Canoeing.

There are currently plans for the following:

- April 2024 – Grandtully National Race and Scottish Champs, being used towards GB selection.
- June 2024 – Alva Development event run by CR Cats/WWR DDG aimed as a taster for grass roots paddlers.
- August 2024 – Summer Grandtully Race for some warmer weather competition.
- Possible Teith race.
- November 9/10 BUCS Championships 2024 run by WWR Committee.

International selection success in both juniors and seniors for the British team; seems Paddle Scotland contribute heavily to GB team. Laura Milne achieved a medal in Ladies C2 with Jacob Holmes narrowly missing a medal in C2 to come 4th.



2023 Recognition Award Winners





★ Community Engagement Award ★

WINNER: Nick Ray

This recognition celebrates those individuals, groups or clubs who have gone above and beyond in making a positive impact in the wider community.

The winner of this award is **Nick Ray**, who spent the last year paddling around Scotland and documenting his journey. He's a real champion of mental health awareness and suicide prevention, and has been influential in bringing paddlesport into the public eye with some significant media coverage of his paddling achievements.

Follow Nick Ray and read about his journey around Scotland on his website, [Life Afloat](#).



Committee Volunteer Award



WINNER: Sinclair Molloy

This award recognises a member of a committee - whether that's a club committee or SCA committee - who deserves to be recognised for their commitment to the 'job'! There are many people on committees, who volunteer their time and effort, and it can often be a thankless task. Perhaps this person is the driving force for getting things done, is the club 'organiser' or perhaps they do all the jobs no one else wants to do all the while holding down their day job.

This year's winner is **Sinclair Molloy**, someone who does all of the above, and has been hugely influential in his club for the last 20 plus years.

Thanks so much Sinclair for all your hard work.



Willing Hands Quaich

WINNER: Chris Redmond

This award recognises outstanding service to our sport, celebrating a paddler who acts in a voluntary capacity and makes a significant contribution to the sport.

Our winner is **Chris Redmond**, who has chaired Aboyne Canoe Club for the past 10 years with great enthusiasm, and is responsible for the establishment of the 'Canoe Cathedral' on the River Dee.

Congratulations to Chris and all the best with your future endeavours!



Young Volunteer Award



WINNER: Kate Laing

This award recognises a young person who commits time and effort to their club, centre or community throughout the year in one or more unpaid roles. The nominee could be a young person who volunteers behind the scenes or maybe they have made a successful step on a coaching/leadership pathway.

Congratulations to our winner **Kate Laing**, who volunteers at Willowgate Activity Centre. She has volunteered for the last two years and helps with everything from washing wetsuits to helping paddlers with a disability or other young people learn to paddle.

Congratulations Kate, we expect to hear many more great things about you as you continue your paddlesport journey!



★ Andy Jackson Award for Contribution to Access and Environment ★

WINNER: Jonathan Kitching
(posthumous)

This award is open to those who have achieved great things working to improve or preserve access, and/or conserve the paddling environment.

This is being posthumously awarded to **Jonathan Kitching**, who sadly passed away in July. Johnathan was well known to many in the paddling community for his dedicated work on the SCA Access and Environment Committees and as advisor for the River Dee - "his river". He was also the founder of Aboyne Canoe Club.

A huge thank you to Jonathan for instigating so much positive change in his lifetime. He is greatly missed by all who knew him.



Impact on Equality & Diversity



JOINT WINNER: Julie Partridge

This award is for an individual or a group who have made a difference to make paddlesport more accessible to all, increasing opportunities for under-represented groups to participate. We are honoured this year to have joint winners! The panel debated the nominees for this award for a long time and in the end decided to recognise two very deserving winners.

One of our joint winners is **Julie Partridge**, founding member of Cairngorms Pride Paddlers. In the words of one of her nominators Lara, Julie “sees something that could make a difference and gets on with making it happen.”

Congratulations to Julie! Julie is also one of our 2024 #shepaddles ambassadors.



Impact on Equality & Diversity



JOINT WINNER: White Water Women

This award is for an individual or a group who have made a difference to make paddlesport more accessible to all, increasing opportunities for under-represented groups to participate. We are honoured this year to have joint winners!

The **White Water Women** group are our other joint winner. This group was also formed last year by a group of women who met and bonded at the Scottish Women's Paddle Symposium. They have created and fostered a positive and supportive community of female white water paddlers.

Congratulations to Cara, Sarah, Christina, Betty, Anna, Jules & everyone else involved in this fantastic group!



Coach of the Year



WINNER: Andy McLaughlin

This award celebrates a coach that has gone above and beyond their usual role. Perhaps they've come up with ingenious ways of coaching, or perhaps they've been extra supportive to their paddlers.

Our winner this year is **Andy McLaughlin** of Glasgow Kayak Club. Andy received numerous nominations from many club members who wanted to recognise his influence and support over the years. He's done some great work within his club - congratulations Andy!

Andy was subsequently awarded the UK-wide Geoff Good Award 2023.



Club of the Year



WINNER: Drumchapel & Clydebank KC

This year our club of the year is **Drumchapel and Clydebank Kayak Club**, who are carrying out some fantastic work. The club provides free dedicated on-the-water sessions to local groups including asylum-seeking children, young people with learning disabilities and youth from the local community.

Big congratulations to Bev and everyone involved in the Drumchapel and Clydebank Kayak Club - keep up the great work!



THANK YOU!

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