

Pathway Review: Actions & Areas of Focus

The following areas of focus have been shaped by the findings of the independent Talent Pathway Review and the community conversations that followed. They represent a direction of travel, not a finalised plan. We will share progress openly, learn as we go and refine our approach based on what works.

Sprint and Slalom are at different stages in their reset and evolution. Some of what follows will move faster in one discipline than the other, and that is to be expected. What applies across both is the commitment to do this properly rather than quickly.

It is also recognised that any future pathway must sit within, and be connected to, the wider recreational ecosystem of paddlesport - supporting participation, enjoyment, progression, and long-term sustainability across the sport as a whole.

Stronger Clubs, Better Environments

1. Support Stronger and More Sustainable Clubs

Supporting clubs to grow sustainably for the long term - not just as environments for performance, but as the foundation of Scottish paddlesport.

- Share learning and good practice around governance, sustainability and long-term planning
- Help create stronger and more resilient environments for paddlers, volunteers and coaches
- Support clubs to grow their membership and broaden their reach

2. Bring More Coaching Into Clubs

Paddle Scotland coaches will be more regularly present within targeted club environments, supported by the new sportscotland club investment.

- Develop more consistent, high-quality training opportunities week in, week out
- Build genuine working relationships with club coaches over time, not just occasional visits

3. Build Stronger Local Training Environments

Create regular, reliable opportunities to paddle closer to home, reducing the burden of travel on paddlers and families.

- Focus on key cluster locations to build consistent weekly training opportunities
- Better use of evenings, weekends and school holiday periods

Developing Coaches and Coaching

4. Support and Develop Coaches

Work alongside club coaches within their own environments, not just delivering sessions independently.

- Share ideas, session design and good practice across clubs
- Create opportunities for coaches to learn and develop together
- Invest in coach confidence as well as qualifications
- Develop collaborative working between staff, funded club coaches and volunteers

5. Introduce Off-Water Training and Education

Build better habits and physical preparation for paddlers at all levels, and support everyone involved to understand the principles behind good development.

- Provide guidance on strength and conditioning
- Support paddlers to train productively outside of water sessions

- Explore education opportunities for paddlers, coaches and parents linked to the Paddler Guidance frameworks

6. Introduce Development Camps and Learning Opportunities

Explore opportunities to deliver a minimum of three development camps per year during weekends and holiday periods. These camps would aim to:

- Increase quality training time and shared learning experiences
- Support coach development and cross-club collaboration
- Provide education opportunities for paddlers and parents
- Reinforce expected standards, behaviours and team culture

Better Experiences for Paddlers

7. Increase Time on the Water

Create more frequent, accessible opportunities to paddle across the week.

- Better use of pre-education, post-education and post-work windows
- Encourage regular participation and build positive training habits over time

8. Create Clearer Progression for Paddlers

Every paddler deserves to understand where they are, what 'good' looks like at their stage and what they need to do to progress. We will make that clear.

- Develop and share Sprint and Slalom Paddler Guidance Frameworks
- Ensure progression expectations are transparent and fairly communicated to paddlers, parents and coaches
- Support those who aspire to move further within the pathway as well as those who simply want to enjoy and improve

9. Stay Open and Inclusive

Sessions and opportunities will remain open to all ages and stages. The pathway exists to develop paddlers at every level, not just those heading toward the top.

- Focus on building participation, energy and consistency within clubs
- Particular emphasis on supporting young paddlers for the future
- Ensure that pathway development does not come at the expense of broader participation

A More Aligned and Connected System

10. Improve Alignment Across Paddle Scotland

Development, Performance and Operations working as one organisation - better communication, better planning and better decisions.

- Use the sportscotland mission-based approach and reflective tools to support monitoring, learning and improvement
- Ensure that what happens in clubs, on the water and at the performance end of the pathway is genuinely joined up

11. Establish a Pathway Action Group

Paddle Scotland will establish a Pathway Action Group to guide, challenge and support the implementation of the review recommendations. The group will:

- Help ensure the system remains connected to community needs
- Monitor progress and emerging challenges
- Provide honest reflection on delivery and direction

The group will include members who will add genuine challenge, not just support. We will be transparent about who is involved and how they are selected.

12. Strengthen Alignment with Paddle UK and the Wider Performance System

Build strong, cohesive links with Paddle UK and the wider pathway to maximise shared understanding and support Scottish paddlers to succeed at every level.

- Paddle Scotland should be ambitious and proud of supporting Scottish paddlers into the wider World Class system - with the right habits, behaviours and foundations to succeed in high-performance environments
- Scottish paddlers returning home should feel genuinely connected and welcomed within the Scottish paddlesport community - the same principle applies to Scots contributing in coaching, volunteering, officiating, leadership and support roles across the system

How We Will Work

13. Make Better Use of Data

Use tools such as Spond to better understand who is attending, how often and where opportunities and gaps exist.

14. Pilot, Review and Learn

We will start with a small number of environments and initiatives, learn honestly from what works and refine our approach before expanding.

15. Align with sportscotland Club Funding Opportunities

Utilise the new sportscotland club funding to create a more connected and sustainable system across development and performance.

- Work alongside new funded club coaching roles within targeted environments
- Reprofile the Paddle Scotland coaching workforce to better align with club infrastructure and long-term pathway needs
- Establish clear shared agreements to support accountability and long-term sustainability

These are the emerging areas of focus. They will develop as we learn and as the community shapes them with us. Our goal is to build stronger club environments where paddlers can train more often, improve consistently, access high-quality learning opportunities and enjoy the sport. We are in this together.