

Performance Squad

Induction Pack

2025-2026

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Welcome to the Squad

Firstly we would like to congratulate you on your progress within the sport so far. We hope you have enjoyed the journey and will continue to do so with the Paddle Scotland Performance squad.

Within this document we will outline some of the background of the Squad, how it is set up, key contacts and how activity will be organised. We will also cover what to do around injury, illness and mental wellbeing, social media guidance, anti-bullying, anti-doping and safeguarding.

This is intended to work in conjunction with flexible communication so if you do have any questions then please get in touch with us.

Sincerely
Mike Chandler

Performance Squad setup

The Paddle Scotland Performance Squad is supported through direct funding from **sportscotland** to support the best paddlers within Scotland. Through this funding there is an expectation that athletes will progress through the Paddle Scotland squad and qualify for the “World Class Programme” squads which are UK Sport funded Squads, based in England. This requires a high level of international achievement and as such the expectation of performance standards within the Paddle Scotland squad also increases over time.

We do understand that progression often doesn't follow a straight line and we will always be considerate of illness and injury where it hinders athlete progression.

The Paddle Scotland programme currently employs the following coaches:

Stuart Gerrie - Performance programme Lead Coach - stuart.gerrie@paddlescotland.org.uk

Sandro Dias - Sprint Coach / Performance Scientist - sandro.dias@paddlescotland.org.uk

Rachel Schofield - Sprint Performance Coach - rachel.schofield@paddlescotland.org.uk

Maddy Jennings - Talent Transition Coach - maddy.jennings@canoescotland.org

Support staff

Mike Chandler - Head of Pathways and Performance - mike.chandler@paddlescotland.org.uk

Paddle Scotland Performance Activities

You will receive a planner of camps and competitions that the squad will provide in addition to weekly performance sessions delivered at training environments within Scotland.

Weekly training sessions

These sessions are available to all performance squad athletes and are primarily based around Pinkston White Water Centre and the Edinburgh International Climbing Arena in Ratho. We understand that participation in these sessions may depend on personal logistics and other commitments so please ensure you liaise with the Paddle Scotland coaches to find the programme that suits you best.

Camps and competitions

The planner for camps and competitions is different for each discipline but it represents a targeted approach to provide fantastic development and competition opportunities for athletes in both Sprint and Slalom.

Financial contributions

The contributions required for each activity go towards the overall cost of each squad member participating and enable us to provide more activity for more athletes across the year.

We do understand that the overall financial commitment is high for participation in all activities. **As such, from the outset we invite all athletes and/or parents/guardians to get in touch with us if they have financial concerns that will be a barrier to participation. We would always handle any communication regarding this with the utmost confidentiality and seek to find solutions where we can.**

Confirming attendance on trips

We will manage trip attendance confirmation through the SPOND app. If you are a new squad member then you will receive an invite to join SPOND after accepting your squad signup offer.

Booking deadlines:

- For national competitions or camps this is 1 month prior to the event
- For international camps this is 2 months prior to the event.

If you have not booked at this point we then cannot guarantee availability on the trip but will endeavour to do so.

If you wish to cancel the booking after this point the you will be be liable for the trip contribution cost unless:

1. The circumstances are genuinely exceptional and unavoidable
2. We can recover whole or part of the cost associated with the booking

We will always endeavour to find a way in these circumstances to avoid any cost being incurred but given the expenditure that the Paddle Scotland will already have made then it may be unavoidable. As always, if there is an issue then please inform us at the earliest opportunity.

Support

The Paddle Scotland coaches will provide performance planning for each athlete on the squad, where it is desired. We understand that athletes may have existing coaching setups or may wish to work in a certain way. We are not dogmatic about following a specific Paddle Scotland plan with disregard to anything else, though we do believe that collaboration and communication with our coaches represents the best way to get a holistic support structure for each athlete.

Support requirements will be discussed within 1:1 induction and review meetings.

Injury or illness

UK Sport research has shown that 67% of interruptions to training for British athletes from Olympic sports are due to injury, whilst 33% are related to illness.

Injury data has shown that 43% of athletes will get at least one injury per season, some suffering multiple injuries, with each injury causing on average 17 days lost to training and 1 competition to be missed. Illness data has shown that 35% of athletes will get at least one illness per season, with each illness resulting in 7 days of training lost.

It is important that athletes and coaches work together to understand any ailments to provide the quickest and most effective recovery times and support.

Illness

Athletes should report any illnesses to their coaches as soon as they can.

Isolation after vomiting

Athletes should not return to squad activities or competition until they have been symptom free for at least 48 hours. It is important for the athlete and the rest of the squad's wellbeing that this is upheld.

Return to training or competition

An athlete should only return to training when they feel well enough. Discuss with your coaches if you are uncertain of the best way to continue with your training.

Injury

Any injuries should be reported to your coach at your earliest possible opportunity so that any reasonable adjustments can be made ideally before the injury presents a barrier to training or competition.

Mental Wellbeing

The Paddle Scotland Performance Programme aims to foster an environment where people feel able to discuss issues in confidence and are aware of where they can go to get help, both within and outside paddlesport.

[SAMH](https://www.samh.org.uk) is Scotland's largest mental health charity representing the voice of people affected by mental health problems in Scotland. Every year 1 in 4 of us in Scotland will experience a mental health problem. SAMH has developed a series of advice, resources and online training courses that can be utilised by all, whether you suffer from mental health problems, know someone who is dealing with mental health problems or are just interested in finding out more. SAMH Helpline 0141 530 1000 or email enquire@samh.org.uk.

E-learning

SAMH offers two e-learning courses, accredited by CIMSPA, which are useful for coaches, parents, club leaders and athletes. You can [register](#) and undertake the Mental Health Awareness and Supporting Behaviour Change courses online.

Useful links:

- [Understanding Mental Health](#)
- [Understanding Depression](#)
- [Understanding Anxiety](#)
- [Challenging Stigma and Discrimination](#)
- [Five Ways to Better Wellbeing guide](#)
- [Wellbeing Assessment Tool](#)

Social Media guidance

Social Media continues to grow in popularity and can provide Paddle Scotland, clubs and athletes with a wide range of benefits. It allows people to connect to the world instantly, it can enable us to disseminate information widely at no cost and help celebrate success in paddlesports. We encourage sports organisations and athletes to use social media but to ensure that they do so responsibly.

These guidelines are designed to provide helpful, practical advice to individuals within paddlesport to help keep you safer online.

Set Yourself Up Securely

Before posting anything online all individuals should ensure that their social media accounts are set up as securely as possible. Each website, app or device will require slightly different configuration to set it up correctly. For guidance on how to set up specific apps, website or devices as safely as possible, visit www.internetmatters.org.

Key principles

These apply to all forms of social media.

Who can see your profiles?

Think carefully about who you connect with online – remember that once you connect, send a message or add someone as a friend or follower they can see everything you post. Would you really want this person to have full access to the details of your life?

Don't share your password or stay logged in

Never give out your password, pin or login details online or face to face. These things should be private to you and shared with nobody except your parents or guardian, if appropriate. You should also ensure that you log out after use and don't leave your social media accounts open on a shared device as other people could post in your name.

Connecting with coaches and volunteers

Coaches and volunteers should not be 'friends' with junior athletes online. Private chat functions are often unmoderated so can also leave individuals open to accusation of improper use. If you need to communicate with your coach outside of coaching sessions do so by group WhatsApp message or email, not via your personal social media profile.

Privacy settings

Check your privacy settings regularly, not just when you set up a new account. Some social media platforms default privacy settings to 'public' several times a year so you should check regularly to ensure that your accounts remain private.

Don't add friends online that you do not know or haven't met face to face. You would be unlikely to walk up to a stranger in the street and tell them about your life so don't

do it online.

Location and Bluetooth services

Turn off Bluetooth and location services on your devices when not in use as these can be used by others to view your private information or trace your movements. Similarly do not 'check in' on social media – by checking in regularly you are potentially telling the world your home is empty and ready to burgle, where your training venue is full of expensive training equipment or what your regular movements are so that people can target you when alone.

Tone and interpretation

Remember that what you post online can be easily misinterpreted. When things are typed instead of said face to face it is often difficult to know the true meaning of the words and people can easily take offence to a post that was shared without intending to upset. This is especially true when online abbreviations, hashtags or emoji's are used in place of words so before you post consider how someone else may read your post.

Is it illegal?

Never post or share messages, images or videos which are abusive, discriminatory or sexually explicit – all three of these things are illegal and you could find yourself in trouble with the police.

Your reputation

Think carefully about other people's posts you like or share online. Once you like or share a post you become associated with it even if you were not the original author so think first about whether this is something you would want to be connected with.

We would encourage all individuals to consider four key questions before posting anything online:

1. Would you say this in front of your parents or grandparents?
2. Would you say this in front of the youngest children in your club?
3. Would you say this to a journalist at a press conference, sitting next to your coach?
4. Would you say it to your sporting hero?

If the answer to any of these questions is no, think very carefully before posting. Just about everything you say online could eventually be read by anyone, including your grandmother, the children you coach or the editors of tomorrow morning's tabloids.

If you're used to using social media freely, it might seem silly that you now have to think a little more before you post, but this is one of the simplest ways of keeping yourself safe online. It's important to review your privacy settings regularly on any social network. But it's also important to remember that it's possible that everything you send or post could potentially become public.

Once that has happened, it could be seen by anyone and everyone, forever. Even if you are using Snapchat, or a private messaging service like WhatsApp or Viber, the people you are communicating with can take a screenshot of your message. Once that's done, the image/words/video you've sent are completely out of your control. It only takes your friend to

send it to a friend of theirs, and your private message is in the hands of a stranger, who can post it anywhere they like.

Once something starts to spread on the internet, it's impossible to control it, even once you've deleted the original. An ill-advised comment or photograph could still be popping up when someone searches for your name years from now – including potential sponsors, employers, etc.

So check your privacy settings regularly, but also bear in mind that you can never be completely sure that what you post online will remain private. You have worked incredibly hard for many years to become who you are – an up and coming high performance athlete in a public sphere. This means that people will form their opinions based on your sporting performances, but also on other aspects of you that they see portrayed publicly.

Be a role model

Used well, social media has the potential to give you greater control of this than ever before, and to build a reputation for being dedicated, interesting, positive and inspiring. So before posting anything online first ask yourself how do I wish to be portrayed? What messages do I want to get across? Will my post reflect negatively upon my "role model" status? What parts of my life do I want to keep private? Is what I am posting going to reflect negatively on my public profile? Is what I am posting going to affect future opportunities for my personal brand? You can still be humorous and have a personality online – just think before you post.

Respect Your Sport

In the same way that your actions while training, competing or coaching reflect on your sport in general, so do your actions online. As a role model within your sport you can use social media to build on their pride in yourself and in your sport. Celebrate success and hard work but don't comment negatively on others' professional performance, be they athletes, officials or coaches.

Remember to show gratitude whenever you get the opportunity. Think about all the support you have received to reach where you are. It could be any or all of the following:

Parents or carers	Other athletes
Family	Sportscotland
Friends	SIS
School	National Lottery
Teachers	Winning Students
Coaches	Paddle Scotland
Your club	Paddle UK

Consider the impact

When you post online, make sure your facts are accurate and don't swear or engage in insulting or prejudicial behaviour. Don't be afraid to be yourself, but do so respectfully. Before posting ask yourself how will the people who have helped me progress in my sport (such as my coach, my family, my club, my governing body) feel about me posting this? How will this post affect the way my sport is viewed in Scotland and further afield? If I am tempted to discuss a contentious issue within my sport, how important is it for me to have my say in public? Have I thought carefully about my opinion, rather than offering a knee-jerk reaction? Will this be a constructive contribution? Are there other

ways I could pursue the matter (face to face, in a private email, or on the phone, for example)? Will what I am about to say undermine the hard work of those who came before me, or make life harder for those who come after? Could my post upset a current or potential sponsor for me or for the sport? Would I expect my own sporting heroes to post in this manner?

Respect Your Audience

Social media can offer a great way to connect with friends and family but the reality is that much of what you say to them on social media you also say to strangers, including fans and the media. Remember that people who don't know you personally are less likely to pick up on the context of your comment, or to know when you're joking/being flippant. Never post anything that's rude, abusive or discriminatory. Before posting anything online ask yourself who are my audience? Are they just friends and family? Are they fans? Are they media? Would I make this comment to this person face-to-face (for example, would I say this to someone I don't know, who has approached me in public?) Could this comment be misunderstood by someone who doesn't know me, or know my sense of humour? Would I be happy to see this comment in the newspapers tomorrow? Will my post create a negative news angle?

Planned Career Events

Some of the most important events in your career could be of great interest to others in your sport including younger athletes, fans and the media. These might include competition selection; change of coach, etc. It is better for you and for your club or governing body if you plan the release of important information together, rather than have it trickle out informally on social media. When there are important changes afoot, you should talk to your club or governing body about the best way to break the news.

If Things Go Wrong

If you post something which you later regret, there are a few steps you can take to try to minimize any resulting issues. You can start by deleting your post and tightening your privacy settings as much as possible – bearing in mind that the damage may already be done if an image or text is already in the possession of others. You can then speak to your club or governing body to make them aware of the situation and ask for further advice.

If you are receiving upsetting messages or posts, the best response is often no response. Tempting as it is to reply, this can escalate the problem.. Instead you can step away from your phone or computer and make your club or governing body aware of the messages and ask for their advice.

Block and report anyone who sends abusive text messages to you, and if you receive indecent images or sexually explicit messages contact the [Paddle Scotland Safeguarding Officer, Andy Murray](#) and/or Police on 101.

Anti-bullying

Paddle Scotland has a continuing responsibility to maintain, as far as reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of all whilst engaged with Paddle Scotland. In accordance with this, the Paddle Scotland seeks to ensure that all are treated with dignity and respect during the course of their involvement in paddlesport. This includes providing an environment that is free from bullying and harassment.

Definitions of Bullying and Harassment

Bullying can be defined as:

Persistent, offensive, abusive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, which makes the recipient feel upset, threatened, humiliated or vulnerable, undermines their self-confidence and may cause them to suffer stress.

Examples of bullying behaviour, which the Paddle Scotland considers to be unacceptable, are listed below. However, please note that bullying has many forms and this list is not exhaustive.

- Shouting at an individual
- Persistent negative attacks on an individual's personal or sporting performance
- Belittling or disrespectful criticism of an individual in front of others
- Spreading malicious rumours or allegations
- Threatening behaviour or attack, both verbal and physical
- Isolating individuals by treating them as non-existent
- Undervaluing an individual's effort or withholding significant information to cause a colleague to fail
- Imposing unfair sanctions or unnecessarily intrusively monitoring of an individual's activities
- Deliberately blocking an individual's training or competitive opportunities

Harassment can be defined as a form of discrimination under the [Equality Act 2010](#):

Behaviour or conduct, which is inappropriate or unsolicited, unwanted and unacceptable to the recipient making them feel upset, embarrassed, offended, isolated, threatened or humiliated. It can occur on its own or alongside other forms of discrimination. It is important to note that it is not the intention of the perpetrator but the behaviour or actions and their impact upon the recipient that constitutes harassment.

Unwanted behaviour could be:

- spoken or written words or abuse
- offensive emails, tweets or comments on social networking sites
- images and graffiti
- physical gestures
- facial expressions
- Unwelcome physical contact, ranging from touching to serious assault
- Inappropriate jokes or gossip, offensive language or e-mails, slander or sectarian songs in verbal or written form
- Isolation or non-cooperation at work
- Exclusion from social activities otherwise open to all in a work group
- Coercion for sexual favours or pressure to participate in political/religious groups
- Intrusion by pestering, spying, stalking

You don't need to have previously objected to something for it to be unwanted.

The relevant protected characteristics under the [Equality Act 2010](#) are:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

Consequences of Bullying and Harassment

Anyone can be a victim of bullying or harassment and it can occur at any level within the organisational hierarchy. Although the bully or harasser may hold a position of power or authority, bullying or harassment can also happen at peer group level or be instigated by subordinates or external customers and partners. Bullying and harassment are not only unacceptable on moral grounds but may, if unchecked or badly handled, cause serious problems.

It is important that athletes, volunteers, staff, and parents or carers are vigilant of bullying or harassment and follow the Reporting a Concern procedure to ensure it is dealt with swiftly.

What to expect from your coaches

Paddle Scotland Performance coaches are there to make sure you learn techniques safely, improve and support you to reach your full potential.

It means respecting you as a person and an athlete by

- Having the right qualifications for the job
- Putting 'People before Podiums'
- Putting the athlete's welfare before winning or achieving goals
- Not pressuring athletes to make them do things
- Treating each athlete as an individual
- Never speaking to anyone which makes you feel uncomfortable
- Making sure equipment is safe for you to use
- Being a good role model

Reporting a concern

Athletes and parents or carers can report concerns to various people within the Paddle Scotland:

- Paddle Scotland Performance coaches
- Paddle Scotland Head of Performance and Pathways
- Paddle Scotland Safeguarding Officer
- Paddle Scotland Office

This can be done in person, [via email](#) or through the SPOND messaging App.

Safeguarding concerns

The Safeguarding Officer for the Paddle Scotland, Keith MacLeod, who can be contacted either [by email](#) or by phoning **0131 625 4434**.

Feedback to HoPP

The Head of Pathways and Performance maintains an overview and manages the coaching, support and delivery of the entire performance programme. The role of the HPP is to support athletes' performance and we encourage athletes, coaches, parents or carers to give feedback. Mike's contact details are below and he'd be happy to answer any questions regarding the programme.

Mike Chandler

mike.chandler@paddlescotland.org.uk

07743938708

Bank details

Fee information is included in your offer email.

For clarification, please contact the Head of Pathways and Performance

Paddle Scotland Bank details:

Scottish Canoe Association
Bank of Scotland
Sort code 80-02-27
Account number 00986182

Please ensure you include the athlete's initials and surname in the payment reference.

Trip procedures and details

Representing Paddle Scotland

When taking part in squad activities, training or competition, all athletes' actions, comments, behaviour and attitudes are expected to adhere with the code of conduct and other relevant policies. You should practise and participate fairly and be trustworthy, respecting other athletes at all times and not behave in a manner which could be detrimental to their preparation or performance in any way. Anyone representing Paddle Scotland is expected to respect the rights, dignity and worth of all participants regardless of age, gender, ability, race, cultural background or religious beliefs or sexual identity.

Itineraries

All itineraries will be communicated pre-trip.

If you are concerned that information is not available yet, get in touch with your coach.

Alternative arrangements

If an athlete intends to make alternative travel arrangements, please ensure the coach and Head of Performance and Pathways are informed at the earliest convenience.

Please note that the cost of alternative arrangements will not necessarily be covered by Paddle Scotland, so we encourage you to discuss this before booking anything.

Male/Female chaperone

Wherever possible the Paddle Scotland will endeavour to provide a male or female chaperone, depending on the coaches and athletes travelling.

If this is not possible for some or all of the trip or event, parents or carers, and athletes will be informed.

Changing or checking passport, emergency contact and medical details

You will be asked to add your emergency contact details upon signup to the squad. Please visit the same area of the membership portal to update these details if anything changes throughout the year.

Useful links

Athletes

[CEOP Online safety guidance](#)

[Clean Sport Guidance](#)

[Safeguarding in sport - athlete rights](#)

[Understanding Mental Health](#)

[Understanding Depression](#)

[Understanding Anxiety](#)

[Challenging Stigma and Discrimination](#)

[Five Ways to Better Wellbeing guide](#)

Parents and carers

[Social Media guidance for parents](#)

[Guide for sporting parents](#)

[sportscotland - Sports Nutrition Recipes](#)

[Parents Clean Sport guide](#)

[Parents guide to safe sport](#)

[Keeping children safe online](#)