

BCU FLATWATER RACING NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2003

Well, here we are again with the latest issue of the Flatwater Newsletter.

Having just returned from the Marathon Worlds we have been re enthused for our sport. The quality of the racing was breathtaking and it was heartening to see the performance of our team, especially the Juniors. You will see elsewhere the report from the event, which had its highs and lows. The highs included the tremendous win for Ben Brown and medals for Hayleigh Mason and Jenny Spencer. All the team put in maximum effort even though some were very unlucky and may not have gained the results they would want. It was very encouraging to see an increase in our medals this year compared to the distinct lack of success last year. Real hope for the future.

The season of AGM's is upon us with both the Sprint and Marathon meetings taking place at Holme Pierrepont on Saturday 8th November 2003 starting with Marathon at 11.00am and Sprint at 1.00pm. We hope that the attendance will be greater than the half year Marathon meeting at Worcester this year with only 19 people attending. Of this 19 almost half were executive committee members. Are the committee so good they do not need ideas and comments? We cannot believe this is the case and know that the executive committee members are unhappy at so little apparent interest. The meetings are always arranged to coincide with other things, at Worcester it was the Marathon National Championships at the AGM it is the Sprint officials weekend. Even if you and your club are not involved in this weekend please try to attend and make your thoughts known. The whole intention of the committee structure is to give everyone concerned the chance to help the committee improve the running of our sport.

With the coming of the AGM also comes an end of another chapter in the remarkable canoeing career of one of our executive members. Dave Green took over the Chairman's job two years ago indicating at the time he would only be available for a restricted period. That has now come to an end and accordingly he is intending to step down.

David's Marathon & Sprint activities spread back all the way to the 1950's and encompass such a wide range of successes that we do not have the space to mention them all here. Suffice to say in the 1960's David was effectively running the marathon committee of the BCU having been one of the instruments that negotiated the separation of the Marathon from Sprint. Since that time he has been through a whole gamut of canoeing experiences

including British Team Member, Team Manager, International race winner, canoe manufacturer, canoe designer, sponsor and International judge being regarded currently as the leading boat scrutineer for marathon. In addition in his business life David has designed various craft including for the military.

In short he has covered all aspects of flatwater canoeing. What these bare facts do not say however is the way David has carried them all through. His quiet good nature always comes through as appreciation is made of his common sense. Always supported strongly by his wife Molly, they have given a great deal to canoeing over the years. We all owe them a great deal and the time is appropriate to say thank you.

David has indicated that in his current state of semi retirement he would like to continue to serve on the Marathon executive but not as Chairman.

We know you will join us in saying thank you and wishing both David & Molly continued satisfaction in their canoeing and life in general.

We hope you enjoy the contents of this issue and look forward to seeing you at the AGM. There is still very little response to the newsletters and we would wish for more. There will be a prize for the best letter, which will be published in the next issue. There will also be a prize for the best article submitted.

Alan and Christine Laws

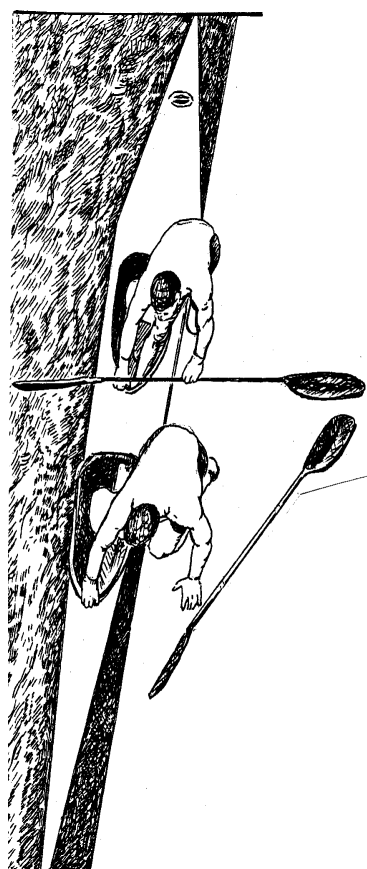
Alanlaws@nalon.org

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DATES FOR YOUR CALENDAR

12 th October	Richmond Marathon
19 th October	Leighton Buzzard ½ Marathon
	Windsor Marathon
	Griffon Marathon (<u>New Date</u>)
	Wolfreton Marathon
24 th October	End of Season Dinner Dance (see details below)
25 th October	Royal K2
26 th October	Banbury Marathon
	Worcester K4
1 st November	Great Ouse Race – 6.25 mile handicap race - details Chris Wilson, 01727 851773 or chriswil42@supanet.com
2 nd November	Trent K2
8 th November	Marathon & Sprint AGM's – Holme Pierrepont
9 th November	Avon Descent
16 th November	Scottish K2 10K Championships
23 rd November	Exe Descent
30 th November	Ross Warland Memorial Canal Challenge

Further details of these races and their Organisers are in the Year Book



End of Season Dinner Dance 2003.

This year at the Richmond Hill Hotel
Richmond Hill
Richmond
On **Friday October 24th**

Please arrive from 7.30pm for a three course meal at 8.00pm

All food is included in the price of your ticket and there will be a bar throughout the evening. A disco will follow the meal.

This year's theme is **James Bond**, so Black tie, ball gowns and sparkly tops are essential, however more creative ideas are more than welcome!!!

**Tickets cost £35.00 each
and can be bought from Sam Wetherall, Kim Wetherall or
Nettie Kelly**

Please send cheques made payable to
**S. Wetherall or K. Wetherall to
10 Waverley Avenue, Twickenham, Middx, TW2 6DW**

JUNIOR WORLD SPRINT CHAMPIONSHIPS. KOMATSU, JAPAN. 28-31 AUGUST 2003.

Last months newsletter congratulated the paddlers selected for this event. As a full report appears in present issue of Canoe Focus we shall not repeat it just add our congratulations to the paddlers particularly Ed Cox, Hayleigh Mason & Shuna Braitwaite on a successful event.

SENIOR SPRINT WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS 2003 ALAN WILLIAMS – SPRINT TEAM MANAGER

The world championships were held in America at Gainesville on the same course that was used for the 1996 Olympic Games. The weather in Atlanta can be very hot and humid. There is also a five-hour time difference. This required the team to travel out 10 days prior to the competition in order to recover from jet lag and be fully acclimatised for the conditions.

15 athletes were selected for 12 of the 27 events at the World Championships. Most teams restrict entries either because of costs or to improve the chance of their best athletes in other events. Of the 73 Nations present only 3 teams entered all events. Most teams entered fewer than 10 events.

Our flights to Atlanta went very smoothly, we left the UK just before lunch and landed in Atlanta at 3pm local time. The security and additional checks facing people arriving in America led to long delays. The transport that was organised also had to wait for other teams who were struggling to clear immigration. This led to a further 5 hours delay before we managed to get to the hotel.

The weather when we arrived was very hot and humid but after a few days it became a little cooler. Lake Lanier is really lots of small lakes set in beautiful countryside. The scenery is breathtaking and the water temperature generally reminds people of a warm bath. The organisers worked hard to control boat traffic before and during the competition so conditions on the lake were always good and often exceptional.

With Olympic qualification high on most people's agenda some of the non-Olympic events had a slightly smaller entry than last years world championships. The Olympic events were all strongly contested and most people were amazed at just how close the competition was. To give people an idea of just how hard the competition was, the times needed to progress to the finals were all faster than the open course records at Nottingham.

Our accommodation was close to the town centre in a medium sized motel. The rooms were quite large and the accommodation although not brilliant was generally OK. Each room had a TV, fridge and a microwave. The hotel was about 3/4 mile from the Mountain Centre, which was used as the admin centre for the competition. All meals during our stay would be at this centre. The food was always in plentiful supply but the content never varied. It would appear that chicken is the only meat available. Pressed chicken for breakfast, Fried chicken for every other meal. I don't think any of the team will be ordering chicken as choice for the next few months.

The heats for the 1000m and 500m events were all held on the first day's competition. The ICF currently runs a system that is completely unfair to athletes. In the heats almost all of the boats go through to the semi finals then some are eliminated on time in the semi finals. This system cannot operate fairly because race conditions rarely remain constant for the semi finals. The sooner the ICF realise this and revert to semi finals with 3 boats or more going to the finals the better.

Men's K1 1000 - Tim Brabants was one our best hopes for success and the most likely paddler to qualify a spot for the Olympic Games in 2004. Tim had an excellent race in the heats coming second to last years World Champion Eric Larsons from Norway. Tim won his semi final in a staggering time of 3.27.68 seconds. That's a massive 5.5 seconds faster than the open course record at Nottingham. In the final times were a little slower as the wind had turned to a slight head wind. Tim had another excellent race but was just pushed out of the medals in the final 250m.

Ladies K1 1000 - Tricia Davey has been racing this event for several years. The LK1 1000 is not an Olympic event so no chance to qualify a spot for next years Olympic Games. Tricia has made the World championships finals twice before each time finishing 7th. This year Tricia finish in 5th place in the A final closing the gap on time between her self and the gold medal.

Men's K2 1000 - The men's K2 is one of the blue ribbon events of the Olympic Games and qualification here was never going to be easy. Ian Wynne and Paul Darby-Dowman were the British entry. They had a good race in the heats finishing second behind the Hungarians. From the times it was obvious that they needed to go faster to qualify for the finals. In the semi final Ian and Paul raised their game and delivered a personal best time of 3.13.11. Sadly this was still a fraction too slow for the A final. They did qualify for the B final which they raced well and won. This gives them an

overall world ranking of 10th. Although we will have to wait until the second round of qualification next year this should be good enough to qualify a spot for the Olympic Games.

Men's K4 1000 - Our original entry for this event was changed ten days before we departed for the Worlds due to injury. This crew was originally selected to race in the K4 500m and 200m events. The crew raced well in the heats and then went on to record a personal best of 2.58.01 in the semi final. This was not quite good enough to take them to the B final but considering their preparation for the last three months was focused on the shorter event this was still a very good result.

Men's K1 500 - Our Entry in this event was Paul Darby -Dowman. Paul had already raced in the K2 1000 so it was a tall order to produce his best. Paul qualified easily through the heats but could not find the speed needed to progress on to the finals. Paul's semi final in this event came after his K2 1000 semi. Again emphasising how hard it is to double up events at this level of competition.

Ladies K2 500 - Rachel Train has raced this event for us all year. Rachel has improved her times to the point where we hoped she might make the final. After a solid race in her heat Rachel produced her best ever race at the Olympic distance and recorded a personal best time of 1.52.45. I think this may be the fastest ever time for a GB lady in the K1 500. The time was good enough to get to the B final where Rachel again raced well finishing in 5th place. This give Great Britain a world ranking of 14th place which may be good enough to qualify another Olympic place.

Men's K2 500 - Ross Sabberton and Peter Almasi were entered for this Olympic event. Although Peter will not be eligible to race in the 2004 Olympics they were still our strongest crew. No other crew could realistically qualify for the Olympic Games. After a brilliant season of constantly good result this proved to be a disappointing event for Ross and Peter. They qualified through the heats and came 5th in the semi finals in 1.31.18. Although this was not good enough to progress to the finals the time was still faster than any crew has ever recorded at Nottingham.

Men's K4 500 - Dan Aulert, Mally Johnson, Glen Elderidge and Ed McKeever were all thrilled to be selected for this event and have trained hard with their coach since selection in July. Although not an Olympic event many of the Olympic crews also race this event so the standards are high. The crew finished in 4th place in the heats, which secured them a place in the semi final. In the semi's they recorded a personal best time of 1.25.48, putting them in the B final where they had an excellent race finishing in 2nd place behind the Norwegian crew who had made K4 1000 final.

LK4 500 - Our top four GB ladies were entered in this event. If we could qualify this event for the Olympic Games then the majority of our senior international ladies would be competing at next years Olympics Games. In training the boat sometimes showed exceptional promise but sadly this did not happen during the competition. The boat did a reasonable time in the semi final but many people including myself believe that it could go a lot faster.

MK1 200 - Although Ben Farrell had some good K1 200 races this year he was originally selected to race in the K4 1000. Following this selection it was decided to also enter him in the K1 200 for experience as the K1 200 would come after he had completed his K4 1000. The K4 1000 crew could not race due to Nick Fowlers injury so this left Ben with just his K1 200 to race. He was unfortunately drawn in the hardest heat and did not progress to the semi finals. His time would have qualified for the semi in every other heat. I'm sure that Ben did gain from his overall World championship experience, particularly from the time spent in training and preparation and also from watching the world best competitors in action.

LK1 200 - Rachel Train has clearly stamped her mark on this event. She has won all of the LK1 200 at home and has had excellent international results this season. Her best race at Zagreb where she beat Katlin Kovkacs from Hungary to win the gold Medal. Rachel produced a good race in the heats finishing in 2nd place. In the semi finals Rachel's start was not her best but she still came through to win easily. Although ranked 5th on time with a better start we hoped that Rachel could produce a medal performance in the final. In the final Rachel did get a better start and raced extremely well. Unfortunately for us Caroline Brunet of Canada also produced her best race for some time which pushed Rachel down to fourth place. This is always the worst possible place to finish but Rachel's 200 metre races are solid and the future looks very good.

We have now qualified one competitor for the Olympic Games in Athens. With a further three places looking quite likely. The second round of Olympic qualification will take place at the European Championships in Poznan at the end of May 2004. I am sure that several more paddlers will qualify for Athens but the task has never been harder.



SOBEKA REGATTA: ZWEVEGEM BELGIUM - SEPTEMBER 13TH/14TH 2003

A World Class Start team was sent to this regatta in Belgium, which is an international age group regatta.

The team consisted of 6 U14 girls, 4 U14 boys, 4 U16 boys and 1 U17 boy paddling in kayak events.

In Canoe there were 1 U18, 3 U17 and 2 U16 paddlers.

The Coaches were Dyson Pendle and Chris Jones with the male kayaks, Steve Train with the Canoes and Beth Campbell with the female kayaks. Graham Campbell was team manager.

The event was well supported and competitive as ever, with several strong teams from Germany, Estonia, Belarus, Hungary, France, Belgium Ukraine and Holland.

Weather conditions were excellent all weekend with a light tail cross wind of between 2 and 3 m/second making conditions good.

The event was very smoothly organised with an excellent results service and on time racing throughout.

Accommodation and meal arrangements were excellent.

The focus on younger paddlers paid off well, with all the U14 paddlers rising to the occasion and producing excellent performances.

Jessica Walker won the U14 100m and with Polly Farrington was second in K2 500m. Teaming up with Kathy Leach and Emma Dougall they won the U14 girls K4 500 emphatically. Jessica also was second in the 2k Long Distance race, with Kathryn Hall 5th and Emma Dougall 6th.

At U14 Boys level, Ashley Owen took bronze in the 100m with Pipe Ede 4th and Tom Lowe 6th. Ashley and Pip were 1st in the K2 1000 with Ben Holmes and Tom just behind in second place. Ashley took 1st place in the 2k K1. The 4 boys were excellent winners in the K4 500m

Andrew Daniels produced three excellent K1 performances in a busy weekend to take bronze in the 5K and 4th places in K1 500 and 1000, even though he has another year in this age group. Allan Spencer teamed up with him for a silver in the K2 500, Hemming and Negus took 3rd in the 1000m K2 while the 4 boys produced an excellent run for gold in the K4 500m.

Chris Sears fought hard to make his 500m K1 final finishing 6th and made 2 K2 finals and K4 gold with a privately entered Leander Ede.

Gareth Hunt and Ed Poulter found U16 canoe competition tough but acquitted themselves well, in U18's Simon Avery had the edge over his brother Dan in C1, but the U18's were disappointed not to have more competition.

The Kayak paddlers notched up 6 golds, 6 silvers and 3 bronze medals, while the canoeists took 12 medals between them.

This regatta produced very challenging competition for all but the U18 Canoes, who will need to look elsewhere in future years to ensure good racing. It is an excellent end of season regatta, and though a couple of the paddlers looked to have had a tough season and in need of a rest, it provided rewarding racing for those who have made good progress during the summer.

It is good that our performances showed an improvement on previous years and the BCU was second in the team competition – our best ever at this event.

Graham Campbell September 2003

TRASONA TRAINING CAMP AUGUST 2003

On one of the hottest days of the year, a team of World Class Start Athletes set off to Spain. The destination was Embalse de Trasona, the Asturian equivalent of Holme Pierrepont, to train in the warm weather and compete in four of the local internationally acclaimed races: Sella descent, Sella K4 race, the Nalon (descent/ascent) and Villaviciosa.

Tuesday 5th August a minibus and trailer made the journey to Caen, France via ferry from Portsmouth. After spending a night in Caen, on to Bayonne, near the Spanish/French border. Wednesday's journey across France was hot and uncomfortable and the beach at Cap Breton provided the perfect opportunity for a training session. Two teams of seven and a relay race was held, ten short runs up a sand dune and back, followed by a swim in the sea to cool off. The first training session had gone well, much to the bemusement of the local French surfers.

From Bayonne, along the new autoroute across Northern Spain to Llovio Bridge. This was the first chance to see the river Sella, and to practise the course before the race on Saturday. Though not the most technical or challenging of rivers, the Sella presented most people with a steep learning curve. After a few interesting routes down the river, and

the realisation that boats would inevitably get scratched, we all got the hang of it. Then the boats were reloaded onto the trailer, and we continued onto our accommodation and base for the week.

Trasona is an hour away between Avilles and Gijon. After a long day of travelling and training, it was decided that a lie in was in order for the Friday morning. A late breakfast then sort out race boats for the Sella. The K4 crews were also tested out, ready for the harbour race in Ribadesella on Monday then a gentle run in the evening ready for the big race the next day.

Saturday 9th - RACE DAY. 7.30am we left for the race, sorted out kit to be left at the finish car park at Llovio, we changed and went on to Arriondas for the start. The Sella race is a descent race 18K to Ribadesella for everyone except the Cadets (U15) and veteran classes who finish at Llovio at 12K. With over 1200 boats entered, the road to Arriondas was congested, so we had to walk 2-3k into the town with boats. We were assigned a bib/gate number, the lower the number the better. The atmosphere before the race is unbelievable, as there are numerous drunken Spaniards wandering around singing and shouting (and they are all there to watch the race!). Keeping out of the sun as much as possible, to avoid dehydration we had nearly 2 hours to wait. The race began at 11am, there is one mass 'Le Mans' style start, with everybody's paddle being held in a gate, the commentator announces the race, the national anthem plays, the traffic lights go from red to green, then go! A mad sprint across the rocky beach, jump into the boat, and sprint to the first bend & rapid. A good river reading eye is essential and plenty of luck. By the time I got to the first bend, the head bangers had got there, and all politeness, grace and goodwill had been thrown out of the window. Logjams, cracking boats, flying paddles and fists are the best way to explain the frantic first parts of the race. Escaping the first bend I sprinted down the straight into the next rapid, spotting a pile up, I jumped out of my boat, and ran past the trouble and got back on to the water. Getting rammed, from all directions, trying my best to stay in the boat and maintain a straight course proved all too much for my rudder. Pulling over to the side I realised all chances of serious racing were over, and made the decision to finish the race 11½ miles from the finish 'sin rudder'. The world-class start athletes proved themselves, and finished the race without such complications, but with many stories and experience to take home. One thing we learned if you pay money to get to the race, why destroy chances of a good race by bringing inferior kit.

Sunday was a new day of training. The session was 10x500m efforts with 2 minutes rest at sub race pace. The session aimed to increase cruising speed, and consistency, no lactic is to be reached. We utilised the regatta facilities, using the lanes, the majority of the efforts were consistent, with a few erratic efforts. The average time was about 2.07, afterwards we did chins as a strength test.

In the afternoon, the group was split in two, 2 K4 crews on the water and the rest on the land. The land group concentrated on rotation exercises with medicine balls and fellow athletes, followed by a run. The rotation exercises can be practised in the clubs at home to improve overall rotation in the boat. The other group paddled in the two K4's, after a 2k warm up, they practised starts of 20 strokes, increasing in intensity. An observing Spanish coach from the local club, told us to start on the non power side for a better start. The K4's ran well suggesting a good prospect for next the days race.

Monday morning saw the preparations for the evenings K4 race, a 4k warm up, then 250m on 250off x 2 to get the boats running followed by a gentle run. The K4 race saw a change in paddlers, Emma was sick in the night and withdrew from the boat, Kim stepped in. The Sella harbour race is a 6K-lapped race of 1½ laps in seawater. The race started at 5pm with the junior men. After a fast start, the boat of Spencer, Dougall, Guy and Hastings finished second. The second boat of Hickman, Pendle, Williams and Slight were 6th. The women's/junior girls race was next. The two British boats outclassed the rest of the field and had a clear lead from the start. The junior girls of Moran, Dawson, Brown & Moran won the race and their class, the women's boat of Mcgee, Beven, Daniels & Taylor were 2nd. Both crews should be congratulated for winning their respective races, as it is virtually unheard of. I raced in the senior race and admit it was the hardest 6k I have ever done (I regret using Brasca II's!) but was done in a time of 23minutes. The winning German boat completing the course in 21minutes which demonstrates the quality of the field. In a tussle at the final turn, Mark Slight suffered a paddle to his chest which triggered his asthma problem, but all respect to Mark he finished the race, and trained as best he could for the rest of the week.

Tuesday saw preparation for the Nalon Race. All paddled their respective boats for the morning session, which was a 4k cruise, followed by 4x1000m sub race pace efforts.

We were four athletes down on the entry for the Nalon. Marks asthma, Gavin suffered a stomach upset, Emma was still recovering from illness and Claire had damaged her foot. Everyone else was able to compete in the 18k descent/ascent. The ladies and cadet's 12k race started ten minutes earlier than the men. A 'Le Mans' style start again into flowing shallow water, with a compulsory rocky portage about a mile downstream. The river is shallow and twisty for 2/3miles, before opening out and deepening. The turn is around an island below a massive road bridge, before the six-mile ascent to the finish. The athletes were advised to get on a wash and cruise down to the turn, keeping fresh for the energy sapping return back upstream on the shallow river. The race had the Sella mentality of crashing into each other, the return leg upstream favoured my air ball training sessions, what a refreshing sight to see the sprightly paddler who dropped you on the way downstream, gasping for breath as you drop them paddling up the shallows! The Nalon race saw the team collect more trophies. Tim Pendle and Stuart Hastings 4th in the cadet race, Wikki Daniels and Ali Beven 3rd/4th in the women's K2, Kim Dawson 3rd in junior girls K1 and Alan Spencer 3rd junior men's K1.

Wednesday was another day for 10x500m session. The boys group changed slightly some guys going in K2. The course was faster with 2.03/04 being the average time for 500m. Stuart Hastings got a bit carried away and equalled his PB on effort number 2, which meant he suffered later in the session. After dinner the team visited the Los Gorillas paddling tanks, and gym facilities, very impressive! The town of Candas is on the coast, so we visited the beach, to play volleyball and swim. Returning to the centre we did 3x2K efforts, the first effort in a group at a steady pace, the second as an individual time trial, and the third as a group effort.

Thursday was meant to be the day of the Villaviciosa race, but that was cancelled. Instead the athletes did a short effort session, 30on90offx5x4 to increase acceleration and top speed. In the afternoon they paddled for 6k practising wash hanging and swapping leads.

Friday was the last day of paddling, and an opportunity to paddle with the Los Gorillas club, a steady paddle, working on technique around the lake. Afterwards we played basketball (again to increase coordination) and warm up with the medicine ball. The evening saw Dyson return to paddling, and determined to make everyone suffer (me included!) a 10k race-5x2k laps, 8k for the girls. The principle of laps being that if you drop off the lead wash you turn early, and catch up. Dyson was out sprinted by Alan Spencer. This was a hard end to a successful week of training, which went very well and hopefully will be repeated in years to come.

The centre at Trasona was very accommodating, the Asturian Federation is very keen to have athletes train there and use their fantastic facilities, which includes a paddle tank and a fleet of Nelo Vanquish's!

The athletes who attended the camp were:- Claire Moran, Laura Moran, Emma Dougall, Leanne Brown, Kim Dawson, James Dougall, Matt Guy, Mark Slight, Gavin Hickman, Gareth Williams, Alan Spencer, Stuart Hastings, Tim Pendle
STAFF - Dyson Pendle, Ali Beven., Wiki Daniels, Ed Dean
Report by Ed Dean.

LADIES COACHING SUPPLEMENT - Dyson Pendle/Ali Beven – Ladies Coaches

1. Realistic and relevant levels of training and goals.

In sprint training, times should always be compared with women's sprint standards. In marathon it is more difficult to assess levels and goals, but it is a good guide to consider that as Div 3 is an international standard for women, then Div 5 for a lady would be equivalent to a good male club athlete of Div 3 standard. Therefore, it is important to remember the comparative strength differences in women to men and realise that for a woman to get to Div 5 level is on a par with a man getting to Div3 level and praise and encouragement should be given accordingly. Also because of strength (muscle building) differences a woman will generally take more time to reach this level.

2. Avoid intimidation with male athletes in some club training sessions. When setting handicaps in club time trials, adequate time gaps are essential to give confidence to young girls/women.

3. Girls will develop strength at a slower pace than boys will. Boys will gain strength more rapidly than girls following puberty so therefore coaches should be aware that when doing strength training (either in the gym or on the water) groups should be balanced in the girls favour and constantly reviewed so that the differences in strength increases are accounted for.

4. Women/girls generally have less confidence on the water than men, though their ability may be as good, their confidence may not be. Coaches should give plenty of encouragement in this area.

5. Important to divide some club training so that women/girls have some of their own training sessions. It is useful for female athletes to make their own comparisons with each other without any influence from male athletes.

6. When arranging mixed crew boats, be sure that the women/girls are not always put in the back.

7. Coaches should be aware that it is inevitable that there will be times that due to a girls monthly menstrual cycle that they will not be at their best for a particular event despite the best preparation for that event.

8. Girls in particular should be given the option to have an alternative training session in bad weather, (windy, cold & dark). Some young girls will struggle to effectively train in bad weather conditions. Indoor sessions should offer a serious alternative to an "on the water" session and supply the same training value and importance as the outdoor session. Training indoors shouldn't be made to feel like the cop-out!

XI MARATHON WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS, SPAIN

BRITAIN'S FIRST JUNIOR WORLD CHAMPION + JUNIOR AND SENIOR MEDALS

GB HAS BEST JUNIOR MARATHON TEAM IN THE WORLD

A superb performance by 17 year old Ben Brown in the junior K1 race in Spain brought him the world title as Britain's first Junior World Champion. Always near the front, he headed the lead group of three as the finish came into sight and then delighted the massed British supporters by sprinting away to win in style by over 10 seconds.

Only minutes later, the leaders in the junior women's race came into sight. The Hungarian European Champion together with Hayleigh Mason and an Australian had been well clear for most of the race. The Hungarian proved too strong for the Australian with Hayleigh finishing in 3rd to add a world bronze to her European bronze and World Cup silver medals.

Tara Nutt had been in the lead group early on but following a clash of blades, took a swim. James Train finished in a steady 6th place in Junior C1 to complete a fantastic first morning for the GB team.

Saturday afternoon was senior singles racing with Manuel Busto of Spain trying for a fourth consecutive Men's K1 title but with the Women's K1 champion, Introini of Italy, not starting because of illness.

The finish to the men's K1 race was the most controversial of the weekend. Busto lead a group of four towards the finish but was so concerned with pushing the South African, Hank McGregor, away from the finish line that he failed to cross between the finish buoys. McGregor kept his head, dropped round the back of Busto and crossed the line to finish ahead of the Hungarian and his African team mate. The ICF officials upheld Busto's disqualification and confirmation of McGregor as the new champion – a brave move to deny the three times Spanish World Champion and local hero on his home ground.

Steve Baker paddled as well as could be expected, finishing in the top 10 but disappointed to be piped on the line by Gary Mawer of Ireland. Keith Moule had his moment of glory with a magnificent start taking him from one side of the start line to the other and slotting into the lead vee. However he found the relentless pace of three hours of world class marathon racing just too much to stay with the leaders.

Britain's good day was completed by Jenny Spencer winning a well deserved bronze medal in the Ladies K1. The Hungarian, Csay, dominated the race as she has done all year, winning by over 6 minutes. With a few of the other favourites falling by the wayside, the second group was down to four at the last portage with Jenny among them. The Portuguese was dropped and as the finish approached Jenny split the two Spanish to take the bronze and bring the GB medal tally to three.

Sunday started with the Junior Men's K2 race. Paul Wycherley and Ed Cox established themselves in the very competitive lead group of eight boats despite having to do one or two catch-ups. At the last portage they were still there but just unable to stay with the leading German boat. At the finish they had a desperate, long sprint against the Portuguese who just beat them to the bronze medal. A fine performance from Paul & Ed although nothing takes away the pain of that worst position of all – 4th.

Sunday afternoon and the senior K2 races was the low point for the GB team. Paul Prestwood & Paul Slater were in the back of the large leading group at the first portage but then steadily dropped back to finish a disappointing 16th. Meanwhile Matt & Paul Enoch had broken their steering system off the start and raced for the first twenty minutes with no rudder before a support crew could get to them to repair it. Despite losing 15 minutes they decided to carry on and spent the next three hours on a solo run catching and passing all but two of the C2s and WK2s and overtaking one MK2.

The Women's K2 crew of Joe Bates and Claire Hynds fared even worse. They were having the race of their lives in about 7th place at the third point when they snapped their rudder clean off on an underwater obstacle and had to retire.

So, a good day on Saturday and not so good on Sunday.

At the final medal ceremony Ben collected his gold medal, Hayleigh and Jenny their bronzes and then the icing on the cake – GB won the Junior Team competition. With 7 of the 11 team members still juniors in 2004, next year could be even better.

David Enoch
03.10.03