

BCU FLATWATER RACING NEWSLETTER

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2004

Here we are with the latest issue with many of us just back from the World Marathon Championship in Bergen, Norway. Heralded by many as the benefit for umbrella and waterproof clothing manufacturers it turned out to be one for the ice cream vendors!

260 days of rain on average but for us there was 5 glorious days of sun. Dave Enoch has penned a fuller report for this issue but Paul Wycherleys's gold in the junior K1 was certainly a highlight.

In the masters GB was well to the fore with excellent results from Melvin Swallow, Simon Dark, Duncan Blyth, John Talbot to mention just a few. Apologies to those not included but the full set of results belonging to the writer seems to have gone walkabout.

Although it seems a long way away at the moment the Marathon Executive is already turning its attention to the 2005 Worlds on the 15/16th October 2005 in Perth Australia. The cost of sending a team there is considerable and so there will be efforts made to raise money for this. Please watch out on the BCU web site and items/enclosures in 'Focus' soon.

The Hasler final is 3rd October at National Water Sports Centre, Nottingham and this year will be run by the Marathon Executive. Any offers of help to officiate would be very welcome. Could Team Leaders please ensure their entries are in as soon as possible with full details of paddlers qualifying events and proof of BCU Membership. Time is needed to check these by the regional advisors to ensure work on the day is kept to a minimum. Your help with this would be appreciated.

The half-year general meeting saw a slightly improved attendance but relative to the numbers of clubs attending the Nationals and therefore 'on site' was still very low. As ever the executive do need your support, advice and comments.

Meetings for both Sprint (4th September) and Marathon (6th November) are to be held at the National Water Sports Centre. Again these are important meetings as they can shape the racing and events for the coming year.

Items for the agendas should be sent to the Chairman or Secretaries at least three weeks before the meetings as the committees are required to give clubs two weeks notice of the agenda. The marathon executive meets on the 2nd October and would therefore appreciate any items for their agenda to be with Brian Gandy or Dave Enoch before that date.

Club leaders will soon be receiving 2005 calendar forms. Please return them to Graham Simpkin as soon as possible. If you need special attention I am sure he will try to accommodate.

Agenda, calendar, annual updating of club marathon paddlers and the newsletter all crucially need the Team Leaders addresses to be up to date. If your Marathon or Sprint team leader has changed or has moved over the last year please inform Christine Laws for Marathon or Ken Darby Dowman for Sprint. If you receive this newsletter by normal mail but there is a suitable email address that can be used please let us know it is a cheaper option and makes printing and passing on copies much easier.

SUPPORT FOR THE BRITISH OLYMPIC ASSOCIATION (BOA)

The British Olympic Association (BOA) meets the cost of sending the British team to the Olympics. As you can imagine this is a huge sum of money and it has traditionally been the case that the individual Olympic sports make a financial donation, especially in Olympic year.

As a result of Olympic qualifications at last year's World Championships and at this year's European Championships, Great Britain has qualified 3 sprint boats for Athens: Tim Brabants will race the K1 1000m, Ian Wynne will race the K1 500m and Ian, together with Paul Darby-Dowman will race the K2 1000m. In addition we have a chance of qualifying a Ladies K1 500m boat.

This year the Sprint Racing Committee will make a donation to the BOA but also would like to ask individuals and clubs to consider making a donation to support the BOA. This will help the BOA give our athletes the best backup support possible in their quest for Olympic success in Athens in August.

As a guide, if 40 clubs each contribute £50 to our appeal then we will be clearly demonstrating our support for the work of the BOA.

Please send cheques (made payable to the BCU Racing Committee) to the Sprint Racing Treasurer: Mrs Mo Moule, 30 Hill View Road, Springfield, Chelmsford, CM1 5RX.

Thank you for your help.

Ken Darby-Dowman – Secretary to the Sprint Racing Committee.

EUROPEAN CLUB CHAMPIONSHIPS 2005

The European Club Championships is a sprint racing competition with each member nation of the European Canoe Association represented by two clubs. The 2005 competition will be organised by our Regatta Committee and take place in September 2005 at Nottingham. It will be run in conjunction with our regular (national) inter-club regatta and will possibly include racing on the Friday as well as the weekend.

The Sprint Racing Committee has decided that the two clubs selected to represent Great Britain will be the winner and runner-up at this year's Inter-Club regatta (4-5 September 2004).

At this year's September regatta, all sprint racing clubs will not only be competing for the McGregor Paddle but also qualification to represent Great Britain – even more incentive for clubs to pull out all the stops!

Further details will emerge over the coming months.

**Ken Darby-Dowman (kendd@btinternet.com) 17 July 2004
Secretary of the BCU Sprint Racing Committee**

No Rain on Paul's Big Parade But Double Disappointment For Ben

World Marathon Championships, Bergen, Norway

The tales from the 2003 World Cup in Bergen were all the same – “It never stops raining”, “The rain capital of Europe”, “Take your waterproofs” - - - And it's all true. Bergen is the only city I have been to where you can buy umbrellas from street corner slot machines.

But this year was different – brilliant blue skies and temperatures of 23F amazed everyone including the locals and showed off the spectacular setting in the King's summer palace gardens to it's best.

For Paul Wycherley it was all a fairytale come true. The wide, open lake course with calm, flat water and just the one narrow gap, suited his talents and he was always in the lead group along with the current World Champion, Ben Brown, and local Norwegian hero, Oyvind Solberg.

On the final lap, with just 2km to go, the group split at the narrows and Paul was away with three others. Leading all the way to the finish he became Britain's second ever Junior World Marathon Champion with the Frenchman, Lecrubier, just piping Solberg for the silver medal.

Ben fought hard to bridge the gap back to the front group but at the finish was still 20 seconds adrift in 5th place.

Sunday morning – junior K2s with both Ben Brown and Oyvind Solberg out to make amends for Saturday's K1 race. Ben and partner, Tom Daniels, had won the World Cup in France when Solberg & Antonsen had taken a swim whilst leading. Today the cruel hand of fate played it the other way with Ben & Tom capsizing whilst manoeuvring in the lead group. The Norwegians took the gold medal to the delight of a large and noisy home crowd with Lecrubier taking his second silver for France. The second loudest round of applause went to Ben & Tom, who after a long, long swim, got back in their boat and finished the race some 10 minutes behind the leaders.

So, a fantastic gold medal for Paul, disappointment at the front end of the other races but encouraging performances by youngsters Louisa Sawers and Andy Daniels, who with K2 partners Caroline Rutherford and Michael Owen both finished just 2 minutes down in their first World Championships.

RESULTS

JMK1

1. Paul Wycherley	GBR	1.31.33
2. V Lecrubier	FRA	1.31.34
3. O Solberg	NOR	1.31.34
5. Ben Brown	GBR	1.31.54

JWK1

1. S Cicali	ITA	1.38.39
2. E Medveczky	HUN	1.40.34
3. T Fraser	AUS	1.40.36
8. Tara Nutt	GBR	1.43.47
11. Hayleigh Mason	GBR	1.45.28

JC1

1. F Busto	ESP	1.40.20
2. M Kover	HUN	1.41.53
3. L Barreiro	ESP	1.42.49
6. James Train	GBR	1.48.53

SMK1

1. M Busto	ESP	2.42.03
2. M Kongsgaard	DEN	2.42.04
3. S Rubenstein	RSA	2.43.30
12. Steve Baker	GBR	2.50.58
14. Paul Slater	GBR	2.51.19

SWK1

1. E Introini	ITA	3.03.36
2. B Gomes	POR	3.03.39
3. B Przybyiska	POL	3.03.39
14. Jo Bates	GBR	3.27.05

JMK2

1. O Solberg/K Antonsen	NOR	1.24.38
2. V Lecrubier/S Boulanger	FRA	1.24.39
3. J Ramero/D DACosta	ESP	1.24.40
8. A Daniels/M Owen	GBR	1.26.41
20 B Brown/T Daniels	GBR	1.34.12

JWK2

1. A Moldvai/Z Gaspar	HUN	1.34.02
2. T Fraser/A Baker	AUS	1.34.06
3. A Lothe/Jraeckelboon	FRA	1.34.07
5. L Sawers/C Rutherford	GBR	1.36.08
H Mason/Tara Nutt	GBR	DNF

SMK2

1. M Busto/O Aronzadi	ESP	2.32.14
2. I Salga/A Jambor	HUN	2.32.19
3. V Szakaly/K Szigeti	HUN	2.32.27
15. M Enoch/P Enoch	GBR	2.45.50
P Slater/P Prestwood	GBR	DNF

SWK2

1. B Faldum/L Benedek	HUN	2.50.16
2. A Loick/M Barfood	DEN	2.50.17
3. A Olaberri/N Rodriguez	ESP	2.50.36
15. N Taylor/Ros Bates	GBR	3.03.17

WHAT IS GOING ON?

I have been watching the Marathon Worlds since it began in 1988. Over the years our team has always been up among the top teams and in 1998 we managed to win medals in 5 out of 6 senior categories. Last weekend in Bergen, things were not looking so rosy. Not only were there no medals for the seniors, but we did not even manage a top ten finish. So what is going wrong?

We currently have plenty of athletes around considered good enough to receive funding from the Performance and Potential programmes, yet none of the seniors competing in marathon fall into this bracket. Why are none of our paid athletes competing for our national team? Is that not a waste of funds? I understand that the funding is for the Olympic race programme and that doesn't include marathon. Neither though does it include 200m or women's 1000m. or Men's K4 500m . Yet funded athletes still compete in those events.

You could argue that these athletes are trying to specialise in sprinting. All very well, but any event requires an amount of base training. Any paddler needs to reach the required level of fitness and ability to provide the platform from which to specialise. The majority of our funded athletes are not even close to a level from which specialisation will help, and if we were honest, many of them are not good enough, nor will ever be good enough, to make the grade. Yet we still restrict them to a life of second rate sprinting. I am not sure how many funded athletes we have, or the amount of money is spent, but I do know only four of them are good enough to go to the Games and 3 of those have now been the mainstay of the team for the last six years.

What value do we get from the remainder of our spending? How about we start to encourage our second rate sprinters to diversify a little and make themselves useful?

The training required for marathon racing is virtually no different from sprint training and many people have combined both very successfully. (If you look at the men's 1000m favourites for this years games, from the top five you have three who have competed in Marathon Worlds or World cup events and my prediction would be that one of these is going to win the 1000m gold.)

All our previous medal winners at world sprint championships have marathon backgrounds. So let's stop pretending that we are building a group of sprint specialists and face reality. Most of them need the training and the competition experience that marathon racing would bring. It would give us value for the money we spend on them and would provide them with a break from the disappointment of not making sprint teams, or not getting through the early rounds of sprint competitions.

If the people in positions to implement this change of mindset are too blinkered or too insecure to make the changes then perhaps we need to think about changing them also. Certainly the situation we have at present is unacceptable. Paying so many people to pretend to be sprint specialists, when we could have picked the Olympic team members four years ago, is wasteful and non productive.

One area where we are still producing some good results in is the junior section. Although we had some bad luck in this year's competition we did return with one medal which considering the team had just got back from its major sprint event of the year and all the stress that goes with that is quite encouraging.

I would like to see the people who pay the athletes using that leverage to encourage them to consider the marathon programme as a constructive back up to their sprint aspirations. That way the athletes get some reward for their training, the sport gets some reward for its input into those athletes, and we all get the reward of seeing our guys and girls succeeding on the international stage. There is nothing to lose except some poor results and a bunch of paid athletes who never get the chance to race, let alone succeed, and who knows they may even start to enjoy their canoeing. Let's face it if this were a business and 90% of our paid workforce was not working, things would be looking pretty shaky!

I T Diamond

BRITISH CANOE UNION
RACING COMMITTEE



**JUNIOR & UNDER 23 EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIPS, POZNAN, POLAND,
19TH - 26TH JULY 2004.**

<u>Events</u>	500m	1000m
<u>Junior Men</u>		
K1	P Wycherley	P Wycherley
K2	B Brown/T Daniels	B Brown/T Daniels
C1	J Train	J Train
<u>Junior Women</u>		
K1	S Braithwaite	
K2	H Mason /T Nutt	S Braithwaite/T Nutt
<u>Under 23 Men</u>		
K1	E McKeever	B Farrell
K2	L Heath/J Sawers	
K4	E Cox/R Darby-Dowman/ B Farrell/E McKeever	E Cox/R Darby-Dowman/ B Farrell/E McKeever
C1	M Lawrence	M Lawrence
<u>Under 23 Women</u>		
K1	A Cattle	A Cattle
K2	R Hunter/F Negus	

Performances.

There were 34 nations and 725 competitors taking part. In the Junior Points Table GBR came 7th in the women's kayak, 11th in the men's kayak and were 11th overall. In the U23s GBR were 7th in the women's kayak, 16th in the men's kayak and were 16th overall. It is a considerable achievement to reach a final at this level of competition.

The Junior team reached 5 finals (1 at the last European Championships in 2002) and the U23s reached 3 (2 in 2002).

Our best results came from Shuna Braithwaite/Tara Nutt and Abigail Cattle. They all performed exceedingly well. Shuna and Tara won the *silver medal* in the JWK2 1000m and Abi the *bronze medal* in the U23WK1 1000m.

Abi also reached the 500m final where she finished 7th. Shuna also raced in the JWK1 500 metres where she came 6th. Our other finalists were Paul Wycherley (7th JMK1 1000m), Ben Brown/Tom Daniels (7th JMK2 1000m), Hayleigh Mason/Tara Nutt (9th JWK2 500m) and the U23 K4 crew of Edward Cox, Richard Darby-Dowman, Ben Farrell and Edward McKeever (7th U23MK4 500m).

Laurence Oliver - Event Manager

Sprint Racing Annual Report Meeting

Saturday 4 September 2004 at 7pm

National Water Sports Centre, Nottingham

This meeting is open to all who have an interest in Sprint Racing.

Come along and hear about activities and developments in:

Our Senior and Junior International teams.

Initiatives on the development of racing.

Sprint Racing Committee and 2004 elections.

And, most importantly:

Your opportunity to voice your opinions and influence the future of Sprint Racing.

***For further details, contact the Secretary of the Sprint Racing Committee:
Ken Darby-Dowman (kendd@btinternet.com,
01932 223912)***

A reply to the article in the JUNE/JULY edition of the FLAT WATER NEWSLETTER

Reading the article in the June/July newsletter about declining numbers in Marathon racing a few points arise. The first is that the persons proposing all these reasons would be more than welcome to run any kind of race over any kind of course that they choose. Volunteers have run canoe racing forever and it was through their efforts that the race calendar exists in the first place. If people genuinely want a certain type of race back on the calendar than start one up and stop waiting for someone else to do something!

Though all the reasons stated in the article are true in their own right the fundamental change has been time. The past is gone. Several of the ideas presented hark back to 30+ years ago. Everything has changed since then not just the points arising.

We have seen the introduction of the divisional system. Marathon getting World Championship status and a rise in the cost and quality of equipment, (how many parents would like to watch their kid shoot the weir at Worcester in their £2000.00 Nelo?). Cheaper

boats may be an idea but try telling a child these days that they can't have the best! Funding for top level athletes and coaches, busier roads on weekends, competition from other entertainment, and more recently a general undermining of the club system in favour of the World Class system have all taken their toll.

It was and is the club system which provides the enthusiasm and manpower to get people to races, in order to boost numbers the clubs must be encouraged, some of the biggest clubs in the country consistently fail to get their own members organised to support events, even local ones!

The drive in a club comes typically from one or two people, these people will work hard for their club but only while they feel they are getting something back from it in terms of satisfaction or reward. At the moment as soon as they produce anyone half-decent they are led off with the false hope into the World-Class system. Eventually they work out they are not as good as they were led to believe and the club coaches are left with a load of dejected unmotivated athletes and where is the fun in that? Perhaps the athletes should be higher priority than the system that they are being used (abused) to support!

Perhaps the club competition system needs changing. If there are any clubs out there who genuinely believe they can take on the bigger clubs in the Hasler Competition, maybe a change would be beneficial. If some of the other clubs felt more competitive maybe they would encourage their members to compete more regularly.

Maybe people could start to look at how successful clubs operate and see if certain aspects can be reproduced. Some clubs are clearly producing more paddlers than others, rather than slating them for it how about we see what they are doing right. Why are they successful?

Perhaps there should be rewards for clubs attending the most events through the year.

Maybe clubs close together could hold their marathons on consecutive days in a single weekend so that travel time is well spent and clubs can have more of a weekend away to create some club spirit. It may be worth Nottingham travelling 2 hours to Reading if they get the Wokingham race the next day, but for one race it may not be worth the journey. There are plenty of things you can do to generate interest in your own clubs, if you are sitting back moaning about the problem then you are part of that problem.

I T Diamond

Contributions to this newsletter should be sent to either Alan Laws or Christine Laws preferably by email. Dead line for the next one will be 24th September 2004.

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