

Long Distance Sculling Series 2017

Report to NRC AGM

Core team: Mark Bell, Charly Curtis, Julie McIntyre, Richard Mortimer, Colin Percy, Sue Sanderson.

Summary: 6 races, 4 ran with 2 cancelled due to high winds. 644 crews, 1885 competitors.

Entry numbers were healthy with most events filling up prior to the official closing date. This means that it is difficult to gauge the actual demand but there is certainly no slow down in hunger for racing in the LDS series.

Event	Crews				Competitors
	Entries	Accepted	Racing		
Berwick	89 ¹	65	n/a	(58 in '16)	215
South Hylton	85 ¹	81	77	(86 in '16) ²	212
Wansbeck LDS	108	100	98	(117 in '16) ²	254
SBH	75	75	65	(94 in '16)	193
Tyne	155 ¹	140	n/a	(139 in '16)	355
Durham	131 ¹	103	97	(124 in '16) ²	266
Tees	155	155	140	(168 in '16)	390

¹ Entries closed early so actual number is likely to be higher.

² Lower number racing in 2017 due to changes in the maximum number of crews allowed.

It is difficult to compare entry numbers year on year both because of reaching the limits and also due to a number of events having smaller capacities following feedback from last years events. It should be noted that Tees was down on last year but that is no doubt due in part to being on the same day as the Tideways Fours Head.

Team

Operationally the new team has settled into an efficient working regime as follows:

- Entries, Draw, British Rowing Results upload – Richard Mortimer working with local club reps on boating locations/times.
- Publicity/Draw & results Communications – Colin Percy
- Race Committee Chair, Prizes – Charly Curtis
- Pre-race crew numbers & equipment preparation – Mark Bell & Durham ARC staff.
- Race day crew numbers, weighing, and results – Julie McIntyre, Sue Sanderson with Mark Bell assisting when available.
- Timing – Julie, Sue, Mark, Paul McCarron, Colin Percy & local club volunteers.
- Marshalling, Safety, Boating Areas, Cakes – host club volunteers.

Notes

- The new cox weighing regime worked very well. The use of wristbands definitely seemed to be effective. A spot check at the finish of Durham LDS revealed that the system was working well. However the team needs to ensure that the weighing regime is included in the Competitors' Instructions for each Competition to ensure there is no confusion as to when/where to weigh.
- Good progress was made on improving race monitoring (umpiring). Further improvements will be fed into the planning of the next series and other Northern Region head races.
- Having custom printed race numbers made preparation of the club number packs simpler and it seemed to all but eliminate confusion over which crew should have a particular number. At an additional cost of £6 per competition the team considers this a good labour saving investment.
- Entries, timing and results proceeded with very few notified errors or changes required. Over the whole series only 2 errors needed correcting after the provisional results were published.
- Upload to British Rowing was particularly painless. The software produces the results in the required format and reflects exactly what was published in the results. The first two races did have some upload issues due to BROE2 bugs but these were rectified once reported to the BROE team.
- We need to recruit more people to join the pool for operating race control, weighing etc. Not everyone can make every race so it helps to share the load!

Discussion points

- The draw/start order production regime needs some thought before the 2018 series. It is desirable to set crews off in broadly speed order but this is complicated by: changes in crew composition each week; differing boat types; and also the different course lengths. We intend to crunch the numbers a little to investigate different regimes to see how: the new RI points system; previous week(s) results and general knowledge about boat times/speed can be used to produce a start order that broadly reflects crew speeds whilst requiring minimal user intervention/judgement calls.
- Assuming the entry numbers continue to exceed the limits in future years we should consider how the series should evolve:
 - Should we place a restriction on the number of entries per-club to allow all clubs to get entries?
 - Should we restrict the series to the Northern Region? That said with the exception of Tees (which doesn't have an entry limit anyway) we have not received a significant number of non-Northern region entries.
 - Should the series favour particular boat types, e.g. singles over larger crew boats? In 1995 (a year we happen to have results handy for) we had an average of 5 quads, 9 doubles and 40 singles in each race.
We now have a SBH attached to every event with the exception of Berwick and Hylton so the other event could focus on the boats that are not the focus of the Sculling Series.
- It would be desirable to continue developing a regional timing team. Whilst it is relatively easy to time individual crews there is a knack to getting consistent times recorded. Inconsistency is picked up by the software but this takes time for investigation which delays the results publication.