

Long Distance Sculling Series 2018

Report to NRC AGM

Richard Mortimer

Core team: Charly Curtis, Richard Mortimer, Colin Percy, Paul McCarron, Mark Bell.

Local co-ordinators: Colin Percy/Alex Shiel (Tyne); Alan Puddick (Tees); Ian Black (Berwick); Helen Carr (Wansbeck); Sarah Hodge/Chris Webb (Hylton); Linda Forwood/Mark Bell (Durham).

Summary: 6 races, 4 ran with 2 cancelled due to high winds. 692 crews, 1546 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	
Tyne	158 ¹	140	134 (n/a in '17)	332
Tees	199	199	n/a (140 in '17)	438
Berwick	54	54	46 (n/a in '17)	83
Wansbeck ²	118 ¹	118	n/a (98 in '17)	258
South Hylton	80	80	70 (77 in '17)	200
Durham	118 ¹	101	87 (97 in '17)	235

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

² Wansbeck SBH has now been fully transitioned to Cambois ARC and hence is no longer included in the LDS numbers.

It is difficult to compare entry demand year on year both because of reaching the limits and also due to different events clashing with the Tideway Fours Head and British Rowing Senior Championships.

Team

Operationally the team continues with an efficient working regime as follows:

- Planning/Preparation – Richard Mortimer, Charly Curtis, Colin Percy & a rep from each club.
- 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.
- Timing – Paul McCarron (chief timekeeper/results). Julie McIntyre, Connor Foxall, Colin Percy, Mark Bell & local club volunteers.
- Race-day crew numbers, Cox weighing, Marshalling, Safety, Boating Areas, Cakes – host club volunteers.

Notes

- The host clubs took a more active role in race-day admin activities (crew numbers, weighing, subs) and race timekeeping. This worked well – thanks!
- We have begun to assemble a region-wide team of timekeepers who are experienced in the operation of the timekeeping and the standards required for accurate results. The intention is to continue to develop this to ensure that any head race can draw on the combined experience for consistent timing operations.
- All race documentation has undergone another round of intense review/revision. Thanks to the local teams for leading this. In the next year we plan to start to standardise documentation where appropriate to minimise ongoing workload.
- Custom printed race numbers once again worked very well. It vastly reduces the time taken to prepare the per-club number packs and all but eliminates errors with crews racing with the wrong race number.
- Entries, results & BR returns were mostly straightforward although cancellations and exceeding entry limits does place extra demands on the team to try to get a good balance of entries. We likely did not satisfy everyone but did try!

Discussion points

- 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 is hoped that some of this can be discussed in the events session at the Regional Development Conference in January.

- In 2018 we used a rolling model for opening BROE for entries. Each competition opened for entries on the Saturday 4 weeks before race day. This reduced entries workload and anecdotally had an effect on spreading the “fastest keyboard first” entries out across different clubs at each competition.

However at one point we did have 5 competitions live at one point all requiring significant attention due to processing refunds for one, results/race day for two and handling rapidly filling entry lists. If we still have a brainpower intensive method of handling over-subscription then maybe we should consider opening 3 weeks before race day to limit worst case to 4 competitions.

Wash-Up

The series wash-up/review process has not completed yet. This document is a starting point for that process. The team actively solicit feedback from any interested party and will take that into account for planning the 2019 series via lds@nerowing.com. The results of the wash-up process will be reported to the NRC executive as appropriate.