

Long Distance Sculling Series 2019

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 (Hylton); Mark Bell (Durham).

Summary: 6 races, 5 ran with 1 cancelled due to water levels. 774 crews, 1745 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	
South Hylton	116	116	104 (70 in '18)	247
Tees	205	205	178 (n/a in '18)	463
Tyne	161	161	142 (134 in '18)	348
Berwick	39	39	34 (46 in '18)	79
Wansbeck	103	103	96 (n/a in '18)	239
Durham	150	150	n/a (87 in '18)	369

Whilst competitions did fill up prior to the official closing date we were able to accept all wait list entries this year. This was in part due to withdrawals prior to the draw and also down to negotiations with local teams to tweak procedures to allow us to accept more competitors in a couple of cases. There is undoubtedly additional latent demand but for all except Durham we were able to keep entries open for at least 24 hours to give clubs a chance to begin to enter their crews without an opening minute stampede being required.

For the first time in a number of years we did not advertise series victor ludorum prizes. It had been clear for a number of years that the old system did not recognise the performance of competitors in boat classes with smaller numbers of entries along with other factors. Throughout the year we have been developing a new system based on percentage “gold medal time” speed. This was not sufficiently advanced when the series poster was published but we have continued developing the system throughout the series and now have a basic system that can be further developed in future years. We have calculated victor ludorum winners based on this and will present these to the AGM in a companion document to this.

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). Colin Percy, Mark Bell, Sue Sanderson & local club volunteers.
- Race-day crew numbers, Cox weighing, Marshalling, Safety, Boating Areas, Cakes – host club volunteers.

Notes

- The host clubs continued to take a more active role in race-day admin activities (crew numbers, weighing, subs) and race timekeeping. This worked well – thanks!
- Whilst timekeeping has worked well we need more volunteers to join our region-wide team. It greatly helps to have a couple of well practised volunteers at the start and end of the race course. For the most part timekeeping is not complex but as with many things it helps to have experienced the times where it gets busy to know the best ways to cope.
- We need to consider further how the overall series is put together. There are a few races where we can potentially increase the number of competing crews but do need to consider the ramifications of that. Both Berwick and South Hylton did not reach their entry limits. What can we do to encourage more crews to race there instead of the busier races?
- 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!
- The lds@nerowing.com email address seems to be blocked by at least one major email provider (outlook.com). Whilst we communicate via a number of different mechanisms (email, web, social media) we do need to investigate why the nerowing.com domain is getting blocked.

Discussion points

- Entry limits continues to be a problem. Whilst this problem is preferable to low entry numbers we do need to consider how we can meet the expectations of the maximum numbers of clubs/competitors.
- We did not commit to victor ludorum prizes in 2019 we have now developed what gives us the bare bones of a system that we can develop. It is not easy to provide a system that rewards good performance without being overly biased by club size and different boat types. Feedback is actively welcomed.

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 2020 series via lds@nerowing.com. The results of the wash-up process will be reported to the NRC executive as appropriate.