

NRC AGM – 5 December 2016

Masters Report

Carol Singleton

I have enjoyed my position as NRC's Rep on the Masters Committee but in addition to providing feedback from the last meeting I would also like to give some feedback on my experience of being a regional Rep on a British Rowing Committee.

Throughout my rowing career I have been aware that London and the south is believed to be the heart of British Rowing even though evidence shows that a great deal of activity takes place in the north too! I have been able to attend two meetings of the Masters Committee this year, both were held in Nottingham, lunch was provided and my train fare funded by British Rowing but because the meetings are always held on a week day and I still work full time, I had to take annual leave to be able to attend.

Discussions took place at the meetings regarding venues and timing of meetings but my suggestion to meet further north – in say York and possibly at a weekend were dismissed, and instead the next week will be held in Stourport! If BR Committees wish to attract new people onto their committees, a little more flexibility is required.

No guidance was originally provided on what is expected as a Masters Committee member but we were told off on several occasions for not attending Masters events and flying the flag for BR! For future Reps, please note that "Members should use every opportunity to raise the profile of Masters Committee within their own regions and provide feedback to the Committee where appropriate". The Committee recognises that it needs to review the length of time members serve and to encourage new members where appropriate.

The notes of the last meeting outlined the following:

- Role and Activities of Masters Committee What should we be doing? It was restated that according to the BR Almanac the role of the committee was as follows: * Pursuing all aspects of the sport of interests and concern to Masters Rowing * Increasing participation in Masters Rowing, both men and women in all age categories * Recommending changes to British Rowing Rules as they relate to Masters Rowing as and when appropriate * Seeking means of increasing opportunities for Masters competition in Open Regattas and encouraging the development of new Masters Regattas wherever possible * Recommending changes through the National Competition Committee to FISA Rules and Practices where change is considered advantageous to the development of Masters Rowing
- Are masters requirements very different from those participating in rowing in general? Need to secure financial support from British

Rowing, as there is a feeling that masters contribute a large proportion of subs but receive little back by way of support.

- Shortage of people to race – encourage people to be more flexible in terms of events they are prepared to enter. * Di Binley has set up a Facebook page to facilitate use of trailers. Could this be extended to “we want to row at xxx regatta, who else wants to come along? * Potential to widen age categories, e.g. under 50, over 50, novice and open events * Need to establish better communications within and between if we are going to try to organise on a regional basis.
- Coaching is a big issue, we are expected to coach but receive very little ourselves. We should be organising ourselves to coach each other.
- Any Other Business Concern over rules regarding handicaps. Recent example Crew entered at D. Subsequent to draw substituted with a member changing age category to E. Crew were awarded handicap on this basis. Agreed to recommend no change of status after the draw is published.

Retention proposals - encouraging people to row in Masters A & B categories
It was reported that there is some stigma associated with rowing in the early categories of masters. There are also other difficulties, in that, not all clubs have masters rowers in numbers enough There is a tendency for masters rowers to aggregate together in larger clubs/groups. Members were asked to seek out good practice in involving people in the 30 – 40 age group and share with the Committee. There were several discussions regarding the practice of Clubs joining together to field composite crews for Masters events, the larger clubs frown on this but it was pointed out that for some rowers this is the only way they can compete.

It is essential that we continue to attend national BR committee meetings so that we can add the feelings, thoughts and needs of the north and contribute to the ongoing discussions on the future of rowing, and I wish my colleagues all the best in their future endeavours.

Carol Singleton
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