

Consultation Comments and Committee responses.

Thank you for all the responses to the selection consultation, we take on board your all comments which have been discussed by the WWRC and adopted or rejected as below.

Consultation Comment 1

There is no explanation in any of the documents how the level of expected performance is calculated. The process is currently totally opaque, with no explanations given. Given the fact that this year very few of the selected boats met the designated performance criteria it would suggest a rethink is needed. Other disciplines make it very clear how the performance cut offs are calculated whereas this documentation is just vague ambiguity.

It is also unclear what the fundamental aims of the policies are? why is the team size limited? what are you trying to achieve by that?

It is laughable that the policy includes caveats to allow random teams to be put together (e.g. Mens kayak paddlers racing C1 team) when requested by organisers. The question is why is that deemed acceptable? It does nothing to support development of the sport, nor does it provide anything for british paddlers, so again the question is what are you trying to achieve? It is also totally hypocritical to have performance expectations such that you don't select individuals and then let any random person race

Committee Response 1

The assessment document does explain that we use historical data and results to estimate performance criteria. We will expand the description of how the performance criteria are calculated to the assessment document. The documents do however say they the performance criteria is to be used as a guide by the selection committee and not an absolute cut off. Sometimes the committee will select athletes just outside the criteria, to allow 3 boats to attend a championship and enter a team race, this flexibility has resulted in the GB team winning medals. There is also wording to allow more leniency for developing paddlers and for Junior and U23 athletes

The main policy document gives very clear aims.

Key objectives are:

1. To win medals at European and World Championships.
2. To qualify for finals in sprint events at the European and World Championships
3. To propose credible, safe and competitive GB teams in as many categories as possible at World and European Championships
4. To ensure the long-term athlete development required for future international success

Team sizes are dictated by the ICF rules. There is a cap that we can apply if we cannot manage the logistics for a particular event, however this has never been used.

We have the caveat in the policy as we are often asked by the ICF or ECA enabling events to be quorate. Having the caveat is formalising what already happens, and to allow us to enter more teams when applicable. For example, we had 2 junior C1 men's athletes at the junior worlds and we allowed another junior boy (Already entered in an individual event) to make up the 3rd boat allowing us to enter a Juniors men's C1 team and validating the event category. Which we think is good for the paddlers involved, they all enjoyed it as we don't do any team C1 races and it being good for the sport. It promotes Canadian paddling and shows kayak paddlers that paddling a C1 can be something they can do, and we encourage this. The ICF is already talking about getting rid of team events if we do not support team events, they disappear. Team racing is a good and safe way to race, and we want to encourage and support this internationally if and when we are able.

After this year's international events we now have 5 individual paddlers buying C boats, 2 of whom were at our recent training camp in C1's on the Wye and the Usk. Thus encouraging more paddling in the class making it competitive which benefits British paddlers.

Consultation Comment 2

3 points to consider....

1. Can the wording for the 2nd round selection be more delicate! Instead of spare spots, call them "unfulfilled"

2. Based on the tightness of some categories I don't want a selection to come down to an individual having an equipment failure or an uncharacteristically bad race. I'd like all selections to come from best 3 from 4 races.

3. I can't remember the 3rd point! I've thought quite a lot about someone competing in 2 individual classes, or even just one but could double up in teams. But can we put someone in a c1 or c2 team who isn't racing in the individual event in order to chase medals.... But think it's better for the sport.

I am interested in whether course length is decided with an aim of targeting a priority event...

Response 2

We have changed the wording for the second selection event as requested

We have made the selection process best 3 of 4 races

With regards to teams ICF rules dictate that you must have started an individual class in order to compete in a team event.

Consultation Comment 3

To represent GB at an event, it should be earned and not just given to you.

I would suggest 8.2 be removed and a couple extra requirements added to Section 7 to ensure any development athlete has raced at that year's selection events and has been given an adequate competence rating at that time. It already says, 'They will not be entered for the official race'

Response 3

We have amended section 7 and 8.2 to state development paddler must have completed at the selection event and have the required competency for the target event.

Consultation Comment 4

I agree with the comments made regarding development opportunities at international events. Rather than make a mess with my own words I'll just copy and paste his.

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Consultation Comment 5

I like and support the changes in section 7 for development opportunities, particularly with respect to advertising places and stating the priority going to those with selection results. I do think previous policies have been broken in this area in the recent past and whilst I had concerns about the fairness of distribution of places I felt that the right people had probably been given the places so never made an issue of it, but I am glad it is now properly addressed.

I am however opposed to the new section 8. I think the mention of post-covid in 8.1 is a red herring, I ended up in team leader meetings in 2018 and 2019 where there were calls from the organisers for nations to enter scratch teams in inquorate classes, and certain other nations threatened to withdraw athletes if the events were not made quorate. I do not feel that GB WWR should be supporting ICF in bending its own rules like this, and I do not feel GB WWR should be caving in to black mail from other nations in this regard. The easiest way to avoid this is simply to grow the sport enough that we always have full teams across all classes and age categories, but in the mean time, I think section 8 should be re-worded to acknowledge that requests are likely to be made, but stipulating that GB WWR will not enter any athlete not properly selected in advance to the championship races, only to fore runners if available and the management feel it is appropriate.

At the end of the day athletes medalling or gaining championship titles in a race that was made artificially inquorate will always know that their achievement was somewhat less than the title or medal suggests, and for some that may not feel as good as honestly recording the same placing that was ineligible for a title or medal.

Competency assessments - I remain opposed to these following terrible implementation by previous administrations, and because I feel that choosing proper selection venues is a much better gauge of paddler risk, confidence and commitment than the relevant parts of the competency documents. Performance targets are fine and can easily be separated and the target deltas published directly in each target race policy instead of hiding them behind the vague terms given in the document. I would suggest that in order to select a full team that some kind of statistical deviation be permitted, or a clause that allows assessors to lower

the requirement if it will result in a better team. A full team will most likely train and push each other to perform better even if the odd member is clearly not as fast as the others, than a single paddler in a class with no-one to properly benchmark against will push themselves.

In respect of the target race specific requirements, I would agree with the performance requirements, we simply don't have enough paddlers competing regularly to be able to select a team with high performance at present and it will do the sport more good to have a moderate team attending and improving than no team at all. I especially approve of further downrating the performance requirements for canoe classes because there is so much work to be done building them up from virtually nothing as a result of previous mis-management.

Whilst I don't know the venues to be able to comment on the suitability of the risk levels applied and risk competency required, from what I have seen or heard of Mezzana I suspect these are probably correct.

This does however bring me to my biggest concern, and that is the selection races that have been scheduled. We have 2 target races on venues assessed as moderate risk requiring moderate risk competency and 2 venues assessed as high risk requiring high risk competency, yet selections for all 4 target races are to be held on the same home venues, with the same reserve selection venue. How can those races be suitable for all target events?

I am not sure how the committee have assessed Grandtully for risk, presumably moderate because it would be downright dangerous to hold a selection race on a venue assessed to pose a higher risk than the risk competency paddlers need to prove, and whilst I am very familiar with the venue so tend to under assess it myself, it does have some significant challenges at all levels and in the right conditions can provide enough volume to be similar to some of the continental race courses. So how is Tully suitable to select for the world cups? In respect of HPP, as a sprint venue, I do consider it quite suitable for a moderate risk race, it is technically challenging without being particularly dangerous, but for a classic selection it is a joke. A long flat water paddle which will suit non technical, even sprint paddlers, and then just as you start to get fatigued towards the end a sudden violent technical splash with no real consequences and insufficient duration to simulate whether the more technical paddlers are or are not able to go quicker in rough water over distance than flat water specialists. It may well be difficult to get a good line down the course arriving fatigued, but time lost to a spin out could well be less than time gained on the flat. It is woefully inadequate for selection for high risk target races. As for the reserve venue, its like HPP but much less, even as a sprint it doesn't pose a moderate challenge, I would say wholly inadequate for all of the 2024 target races, based on the published risk levels.

I'm afraid I don't have a solution to this, having tried to add or even re-establish races for the Scottish calendar has proven tricky enough without looking for anything suitable for high risk, high risk competency selection. But I think it is important for the future.

Response 5

In recent years all development places have been advertised on the website and this has not changed in this version of the policy.

The committee understands your comment relating to entering additional paddlers to make international events quorate. We believe it is a national problem rather than an ICF problem and unless nations send larger teams to international events the situation will not change. In normal circumstances we would only help from the current pool of selected athletes and not development paddlers. The 2023 season was exceptional in that we had zero junior girls enter selection, we advertised development spaces and in the end we took 3, because there were 3 spaces available in the buses with resources available to manage them. They are now attending training camps and motivated for the 2024 season.

We have amended section 7 and 8.2 to state development paddler must have competed at the selection event and have the required competency for the target event. The ICF are trying to remove team races from WWR and Slalom internationally, so unless we support and enter teams races they will cease to exist.

Courses, we would love to hold races on suitable courses but we are short on venues, water and organisers are limited so we must work with what we have and make the best of it. We need clubs to adopt races for juniors and the committee can and are supporting to do this.