

Bob? – What’s that?

From “Proposed Modernisation of the ‘Federation’” on Snowsport GB website

In the spring of 2004, in response to a UK Sports Council initiative and with the support of BSSF Congress, a Modernisation Working Group (MWG) was set up. Its membership consists of one nominee from each of the nine Member Groups with Fiona McNeilly as Chairman, funded by Snowsport GB. The remit was to review the current activity and scope of all Member Groups and the Federation, assess their effectiveness and efficiency and identify broad areas of work where these could be improved. Alternatively to report back with sound reasons why modernisation is not appropriate at this time. It was implied that future Sports Council funding would be dependent upon this exercise being carried out efficiently.....

.....If you have any particular ideas or opinions on the subject, the MWG would be happy to receive them. Please make contact only via your own Member Group representative who is:

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Historical notes: Some 15-20 years ago Derek Casey, formerly of Scottish Sports Council and at that time CEO of what was then The Sports Council launched a virtually identical exercise. Amidst much acrimony the initiative failed.

Now, just as two, or even four, decades ago SCGB and BARSC still regard the home nations as working class upstarts who have upset their pre-war hegemony over elite British skiing – see opening paragraph of “Proposed Modernisation of the ‘Federation’” on Snowsport GB website.

Significantly the document continues in the very next paragraph:

“It became clear almost immediately that the MWG felt the future of British snowsport would be best served by a British organisation that operates from the top down, serves the needs of the members”

Would it be unreasonable to conclude that the pace is being forced?

In order to give some indication of the process that is being conducted and the point at which we are, the following are extracts from other documents which appear on the Snowsport GB web site:

from minutes of Congress held at 11am on Sunday 22nd May 2005 in Cardiff

see Snowsport GB website

It was explained that ‘Bob’ should ideally be one organisation working to a national strategy, with an operational management team fulfilling centrally directed functions, reporting into a strategy and policy unit / board which in turn reports to members at the AGM.....

two comparable case studies: the National Ice Skating Association (NISA) and the Royal Yachting Association (RYA). These were chosen due to the similarities in membership scope and organisational challenges when compared with SnowsportGB.....

A proposed timescale was then presented to Congress which targeted the Autumn Congress in November 2005 as the date to have a completed and detailed proposal for change, with subsequent implementation planned for Summer 2006.....

Jason Cockburn C also stressed the developing athletes’ perspective in that the new organisation should benefit performance greatly with an easier to implement and manage performance pathway.

Congress provided unanimous support and agreement to all the principles proposed in.....presentation, and provided unanimous agreement to the targeted timescales proposed although it was agreed by all that these were very tight.....

It was agreed that the funding of the next stages of Modernisation would most appropriately be addressed at the first sitting of the new Chair's Steering Group and this group would also approve the role of the Project Manager and the required output which would initially be developed by the continuing core Modernisation Working Group.....
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from the Presentation: *springcongressv2.pdf* on the Snowsport GB website

Detailed Planning and Consultation

- Set up 3 targeted steering groups
 - Membership Issues
 - Coaching & Instruction
 - Constitution & Governance
- Develop Email Consultation Forum From Membership
 - Consult forum regularly on ongoing work of steering groups
 - The Forum should reflect the activities of “Bob”& the modern membership
- Presentation of Final Proposal to the Membership
- At each stage the financial implications and wider implementation issues will be considered by the project management

Timescale

- Steering Group Discussion -May -Sep 05
- Email Forum Consultation -Jun -Sep 05
- Financial Detail and Implementation Issues -Jun -Oct 05
- Completed Modernisation Proposal in place by Autumn Congress -Nov 05
- Member Group Proposals to AGM/EGM
- Implementation Summer 2006

Timescale and Process

Stage 1 Series of meetings of MWG to discuss options for change	Completed October 2004
Stage 2 Seek the mandate of Congress to continue in the modernisation process	Mandate given November 21 st 2004
Stage 3 – Investigation of case studies and examples of best practice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Detailed analysis of potential cost savings and reinvestment opportunities - Consultation with the wider membership and partner organisations - Identification of realistic timescales & project leadership 	Findings presented to Spring Congress 2005 Proposals presented to Spring Congress 2005
Stage 4 Presentation of completed modernisation plan to membership for ratification	Expected Autumn Congress 2005
Stage 5 Seek a formal mandate via member group AGM to implement modernisation plan	Expected November 2005 – May 2006

It would seem that precious little of the foregoing, none of which appears or is alluded to on the SnSc website or in Snowsport News, has been brought by the Board to the attention of members.

There must be any number of matters which require considerable clarification, not least in the light of the constitutional status of sport in Scotland as a devolved matter. Huge question marks seem to loom over the very future of SnSc and it would seem extraordinarily dangerous to mandate the Board to agree to any further development until the implications have been fully digested by the membership.

John Clayton
 Honorary President SnSc
 Crail 28.ix.05