

Notes from Working Group meeting on 9 March 2006 at the Royal George Hotel, Perth

Present: Steven Gray, Craig McKillop, Lewis Grant, Kay Bates, Eddie Guest, Maggi Gardner, Stuart Macintyre, Bruce Crawford
Apologies: Roy Smart, Sam Montgomery

We agreed that the purpose of the meeting was to review and rate the SWOT analysis as provided to the group by the Directors with portfolios. The group decided to rate each item listed in the SWOT on a scale of 1-5, as described below.

- 1 Best done by a Scottish body
- 2 slight preference to be done by Scottish body
- 3 neutral could be equal either way
- 4 slight preference to be done by a UK-wide body
- 5 Best done by a UK-wide body

The notes from this meeting would be published on our website and mailed directly to the club contacts. This report does not make conclusions about the future governance of snowsports in Scotland but is designed to establish facts rather than emotions and the report is intended to stimulate constructive discussions.

Following the Open Meeting on 18 March the working group will meet on 27 March to review the feedback, assess the various ways of moving this forward and create recommendations to be presented to members at the next Open Meeting on 7 May at Braehead. The final recommendation will be presented to the federation members at the SnowsportGB Congress on 21 May.

Assumptions

In order to achieve the task during the meeting a number of assumptions on "Bob" were made to help us score each item.

1. There would continue to be a manned office in Scotland
2. The Scottish group would have budgetary responsibility
3. There would continue to be Snowsport Development Officers in regions of Scotland
4. Membership fees will not increase significantly
5. There will continue to be Scottish Teams
6. Coach/Instructor/Leader Education across the UK would be run by Bob, further clarification required on the role of the association of professional instructors in this process.

Additional notes:

1. A strength of the Scottish body is the ability for committees to meet on a weekday evening in Perth, make decisions and implement quickly.
2. A number of issues raised the fact that we could be more effective in our operations by working more closely with other members of the federation this could happen immediately and is not intrinsically linked to the proposal for Bob.

Feedback

We are keen to hear from anyone who would like to contribute to the discussions, there are 3 ways to do this:

- Come to one of the open meetings as detailed below on 18 March or 7 May
- Email your comments to manager@snowsportsotland.org
- Complete the last page of this document and post/fax it to our office

Date of Next Meeting:

18 March at 4.30pm in Glenmore Lodge, Aviemore OPEN MEETING all club & coach members welcome

27 March Working Group meeting in Perth

7 May NEW date for second OPEN MEETING again ALL welcome

MEMBERSHIP

Strengths

3	Number of clubs receiving grants.
3	Network of development Officers.
4	Insurance for members.
4,2	Information of all our activities on our website.
3	Club committees have a great mix of professional skills together with their members.
3	Club members tend to be loyal term members.
4	Spreading the funding (e.g. running costs) across all parties.
3	Wider public access to dry ski slopes.
3	Part of a wider Snowsport community with office support to member clubs.
1	Around 7,000 members.
3	Handbook/diary to all members
4	Affinity card & Discounts from ski lift operators/ retailers etc.

Weaknesses

3	Communicating benefits to members.
4	Lack of tangible benefits.
3	Cost of membership is too high (though reduction this year).
3	Lack of University/College members.
3	Continuity of juniors - graduates - adult members.
3	Persuading skiers to join a ski club.
3	Ageing members in clubs (e.g. self and my friends).
3	Not all clubs apply for grants available.
3	No individual membership.
3	General trend away from club membership.
1	Lack of volunteers to join and to be active on committees.
3	Car ownership/ road improvements allowing skiers to go to the ski areas quickly.
2	Sense of community spirit.
3	Lack of young members joining clubs.
5	Child protection policy.
3	Secretary doesn't know name & address of all club members in case of insurance claim.
4	Communicating safety advice and equipment.

Opportunities

3	Dry ski slopes.
3	Braehead (Excape) indoor facilities (club rooms?).
3	To send the Snowsport news to all members.
3	Raising funds for clubs through lottery funding.
3	Olympic effect.
3	New facilities at Gartlee, Newmilns, Bearsden.
3	Government policy on obesity to encourage the public to be active.
3	Running of large group holidays.
3	To teach snowboarders the FIS rules on slope etiquette.

Threats

3	Snowboarders not being members of clubs
3	Skiing on snow in Scotland.
3	Global warming raise freezing level in Alps to 1800m, perhaps lower temps in Scotland.
3	Competition from the Ski Club of Great Britain.
2	National body taking away the Scottish identity.
3	Reduction of members in clubs.
1	Reduction in number of affiliated clubs.
1	Reduction in volunteers.
3	Loss of awards for all.

FINANCE

Strengths

1	Professional skills in financial matters
1	Financial strength
1	Reviews of Investment policy
3	Expertise in obtaining grants
3	Good relationship with grant providers
1	Excellent coaching activity
1	Good youth development Section
4	Insurance scheme for club members
1	Good controls over financial systems

Weaknesses

3	Non-payment of bills - Alpine Team
3	Lack of lottery funding - Alpine Team
4	Lack of Sponsorship
3	Member Clubs' apathy toward grant opportunities

Opportunities

3	Promote the Affinity Card more
3	Encourage Clubs to recruit more members - student, juniors, adult skiers not already members of Ski Clubs.
4	Attract more sponsorship.
3	Build up activities in Freestyle and Snowboarding
1	Enlarge the already successful coaching activity
3	Promote grants available to Member Clubs

Threats

2	Lack of volunteers to run races - can increase costs
3	Lack of snow in Scotland - can result in fewer skiers in the future & drop in club Membership
1	Clubs leave Memberships
1	Key staff leave
1	Other organisations take share of coaching market
1	Key volunteers leave

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Strengths

3	Good access to training slopes both dry mats and snow resorts. 5 Snow and 23 Dry slopes across Scotland
3	Close proximity of all the ski areas to each other and 5 varied centres
3	Availability of accurate, regularly updated access and snow condition reports.
3	Network of 3 Development Officers
3	Clubs and groups working together (LSRA, FAST, Glenshee)
2	Historically strong clubs with wealth of experience.
2	Good support networks through sportscotland (formerly the Scottish Sports Council).

Weaknesses

3	Ageing club members
3	Lack of interest in engaging more youngsters
3	Competitions are too serious/expensive
3	Lack of structure for snowboarding initiatives
3	Patchwork cover of grass roots activities
3	2002/ 2003/2004 season's poor conditions.
3	Quantity and quality of snow.
3	Variable weather.
3	Variable length of season and misconception of timing of season.
3	General perception of poor conditions from recent winters.
3	Snowsports perceived as expensive.

Opportunities

3	New users at Xscape, Braehead, Garthdee
3	Development Officer in Aberdeen
3	Closer links with SSSA
3	Awards for All funded programmes and equipment
2	Nationwide grass roots programme
3	Competition network at fun level
3	Snowlife awards could be better promoted and less radical
3	Encourage clubs to links with active schools networks.
3	Winter Olympic year - raises profile of snowsports
3	Joint promotions with other industry bodies - ski slopes/ activity providers.
3	Cheap flights to Scandinavia/Europe etc which opens up training opportunities

Threats

3	Lack of snow in Scotland
4	Increasing bureaucracy for child protection
4	Fear of litigation among programme organisers
3	Trend of lapsed snowsports participation in Scotland (1-1.5 million people in UK participate in snowsports!)
3	General trend of participation in non-active interests and increased competition for other activities.
3	Cheap flights abroad.
3	Negative and bad news stories.
3	Climate change.

PERFORMANCE

Strengths

2	SSS has successfully lobbied to receive funds for a full time coach and has increased our support for our elite athletes. (Fiscal & Performance Strength)
3	SSS is still the largest contributor to the British National Teams in terms of athlete numbers making selection. (Performance Strength)
1	SSS has the only integrated coaching system in the UK that offers an instruction and coaching system that can offer training for tutors to deliver training to clients from artificial slopes through to national team. (Performance Strength)

Weaknesses

2	Almost 30% of SSS turnover comes from a single grant source. Sport Scotland. (Fiscal Weakness)
3	50% of these funds -circa £100k is performance linked to how our elite athletes perform at Olympics, World Champs and World Cup - they don't perform, the funding is in jeopardy. (Fiscal Weakness)
3	In all practical terms SSS does not run any of the programs for our elite Scottish athletes - the athletes which count towards funding criteria. (Fiscal & Performance Weakness)
3	When SSS had to lobby for Snowsports to be recognised as a band two sport, the performance of our elite athletes was our single biggest selling point across a matrix of a dozen or so KPI's. Whilst Scottish - none of the athletes who gave the ranking to benefit SSS were training on SSS programmes. (Political Weakness)
3	If our elite athletes do not perform, or retire, etc. One of our strongest plus points to remain a band two sport will be jeopardised. Loss of band two status will definitely have very significant funding implications to SSS. (Fiscal & Political Weakness)
2	<i>Performance Pathways are too narrow too early</i>

Opportunities

3	The creation of BOB would create a far more appealing organisation for the private sector to become involved in through sponsorship. (Fiscal Opportunity)
3	The crux of my argument is that I believe that BOB is better placed to attract the financial resources required from UK plc in the form of sponsorship.
2	Through this it will be possible to fund structures that provide pathways from local facilities through to National Teams or to recreational pursuit of Snowsports.
3	BOB would pull all performance under the remit of the employed Performance Director and finish the anomaly where the funding for Scottish elite athletes is largely determined by a programme that is set and run by an individual who is not answerable to the board of SSS.

Threats

1	I am writing this on the day of the Olympic downhill where Finlay Mickel finished 25 th . There is a real threat at the moment that UK sport may reduce their funding for Snowsports and at the same time British Land is changing its management. If both left completely this would leave a £500k hole in the finances of Snowsports GB.
3	London 2012.

COACHING

Strengths

1	Income through coaching scheme membership and courses, since 1967
3	Currently delivering 11 awards across 3 disciplines.
1	Widely available delivery of ASSI and ASBI.
3	Recognition of our ASSI and ASBI by BASI allowing award holders to apply for exemption from the BASI trainee instructor (foundation) award.
3	Coaching scheme membership of approx 2000 individuals.
3	Number of individuals progressing their awards in both their chosen discipline and across disciplines.
1	Depth of knowledge and expertise in our staff, tutors and volunteers
1	Training the "workforce" for schools, clubs, facilities and voluntary groups

Weaknesses

4	We are not the only body licensed to train and grade people in the UK
4	Throughout the UK the coaching scheme is a complex and fragmented structure we are only one of 5 bodies offering instructor/leader/coaching qualifications
3	The current SPC course does not appear to include material appealing to a number of instructors (unproven?) leaving the market open for BASI to create a freestyle module.
1	Lack of recognition and confusion from BASI over the teaching elements of the ASL award.
3	Lack of snow is decreasing delivery of all of our snow based courses in Scotland, particularly Nordic ski leader.

Opportunities

1	Development of ASSI / ASBI courses specific to 16/17 year olds to encourage those of school-leaving age to remain involved on the sport. This could also create opportunities for 'senior' instructors to develop skills through mentoring.
4	Develop better resource materials for our courses.
3	Possible course development on indoor snow at Braehead
3	Develop more partnerships and links with operators in the Alps for hosting courses
4	The formation of one UK coaching scheme would provide a fluid pathway for individual coaches, meet market needs, and provide a greater clarity of roles and expectations. This scheme would also benefit from resources and experience from all NGB's and awarding bodies and provide a greater scope for development and investment in quality control.

Threats

3	Lack of snow in Scotland may have further impact upon Scottish courses in terms of availability and demand
3	BASI may continue to develop courses such as their freestyle module that could affect the number of individuals taking up the APC course.
3	Demand for the APC may to reduce in the coming years as BASI offer alternative training modules - The Alpine Performance Module and the Freestyle Module.

COMPETITIONS

Strengths

3	Expertise in competition organisation at club or national level.
3	Opportunity to attend training courses for new volunteers.
3	Grants available for competition equipment.
3	Good cooperation from snow sport centres.
3	Currently eight snow sport technical delegates in Alpine and 2 in Freestyle.
3	Two aspirant technical delegates.

Weaknesses

3	Poor recent season snowfalls have devastated competition programmes.
3	Failure to maintain top class coaching for our athletes but obtain funding to hire of to GB for Austrian coaching
3	This has been a clever ploy by GB resulting in drop-outs and a poor delivery
3	This reduces encouragement across snowsports in Scotland
5	Poor cooperation from GB office re. info from FIS

Opportunities

2	Relocate some competitions to the Alps or Norway
3	Increase and fund competition on artificial or indoor arenas
3	This is working in other lowland countries
3	Introduce a new summer competition programme at our artificial or indoor arena for all levels of competitor

Feedback on this consultation

It is really important that our members have the opportunity to have their views heard. Please add any comments that you have on this sheet and send them to:

Feedback, SNSC, Hillend, Biggar Road, Edinburgh, EH10 7EF or fax to: 0131 445 4949

or email your comments to: manager@snowsportscotland.org