

British Ski and Snowboarding - Chairman's Newsletter – March 2010

During the month which has elapsed since the end of the Olympic Winter Games and the crisis which engulfed the British world of skiing on the eve of Vancouver, the new Governing Body for skiing and snowboarding in the United Kingdom, British Ski & Snowboarding (BSS) has made considerable progress on a number of issues. I thought it would be helpful to bring you up-to-date with an abbreviated summary of these. First, I would like to congratulate the skiers and snowboarders who, as members of the British Olympic Team, delivered some remarkable performances in circumstances of financial uncertainty for many competitors, their coaches and support staff. To be direct with you, they performed outstandingly in very difficult circumstances. As Chemmy Alcott wrote at the time: "one day before the Giant Slalom when I should be focusing on my race I am just panicking hugely about the future". The uncertainty and fall-out from the administration of SSGB had far reaching implications not only for the FIS sports but for all British winter sports as they face under-funding from Government and the Lottery. As a nation, in the four year run-up to London 2012, we are investing nearly £400 million of lottery and government money into the summer sports; it is clearly wrong that over the four year period before Vancouver only £6.4 million was invested to support the winter sports. The BOA is undertaking a wide-ranging review into the requirements for the winter sports in the build-up to Sochi 2014 and has invited UK Sport to participate. We will ensure that the new Government has a copy of our findings and we hope that future support for the winter sports will be substantially increased.

The British Olympic Association

In the run-up to Vancouver the BOA was closely in touch with developments concerning Snowsport GB. Government was approached for funding support shortly before the Games. However, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport determined that no additional funding would be made available to the athletes and their coaches in the FIS disciplines covered by SSGB. The BOA Board, at their meeting in January, considered what would happen in the event of SSGB being placed in administration; what effect this would have on the Olympic athletes selected for Vancouver and the level of support which the BOA could extend to support them. Everyone at the British Olympic Association recognised that the British Team faced a potential crisis if the selected snow athletes were stranded before the Games.

A threefold plan was agreed for implementation in the event of SSGB going into administration:

- (i) the first priority for the BOA was to ensure the athletes went to the Games with coaches and technicians.
- (ii) The second priority required us to ensure all FIS registered athletes continued to be entered for FIS races.
- (iii) The third priority was to transition the short term arrangements for a new Governing Body into a representative Governing Body supporting the pathway athletes of all elite programmes by raising the bar to a level of support unprecedented in the past.

This third priority is the goal of a consultation exercise which will begin during the summer. The outcome must be a strong, secure and lasting financial platform to support the athletes together with a new constitution and strong governance and removal of the conflicts of interest which have hampered a number of our sports in the past. It is thirty years since I came back from the Olympic Games in Moscow and joined the Sports Council. In different capacities over those thirty years I have seen sports administration transformed. No more so than with athletics and hockey where new strong athlete-centric governing bodies have emerged from the dark days of insolvency. I am firmly of the view the same can happen with skiing and snowboarding.

With strong support from FIS and particularly their President, Gianfranco Kasper and Secretary General, Sarah Lewis, BSS has been recognised as the sole Governing Body for all FIS sports and disciplines. The BOA has recognised BSS and the IOC also offered consistent backing to us.

British Ski & Snowboarding (BSS) - Organisation

BSS was set up with three Directors. Dave Edwards, who I identified as a highly qualified CEO. Dave has an impressive business background combined with a proven track record as a strong sports administrator. Most recently, he was Chief Executive of Llanelli Scarlets where he turned round the Club and worked on commercial arrangements that are similar to the financial support required for skiing and snowboarding. The second Director is Andy Hunt, who as Chief Executive of the British Olympic Association knows all our Olympic athletes

well and brings a wealth of experience to the sport. During this transition phase I have agreed to chair the BSS; expecting to hand on to an elected Chair when all three priorities outlined above are achieved.

This three man Board has met on four occasions and minutes of these meetings will be posted on the BOA and Britski websites in the near future. Our own website will be launched in the summer.

The Board will now be expanded from its current composition of three to twelve. The following new Directors have agreed to serve. Dr. Jenny Shute, (Alpine); Ed Drake, (Olympic skier - Alpine); Konrad Bartelski, (Alpine); Stuart Brass, (British Snowboarding Association with Dave Edwards also to be appointed to the BSA Board), Zoe Gillings, (Olympic - Snowboard Athlete); Roy Young, (Cross Country Coach); Simon Platt (Cross Country Athlete); Simon Ashton (Freestyle) and Robin Kellen, representing the Home Nations and the excellent work they do across the disciplines. The composition creates strong athlete representation and full recognition of the wide range of sports and disciplines for which BSS is responsible. I am grateful to them for offering to work with me during this interim phase until a new Board is elected at the first Annual Meeting following the introduction of a new constitution. Time-wise, this is likely to be at the end of the 2010 - 2011 season when potential sponsors have been able to judge the effectiveness of BSS as a Governing Body; at which point I will be focusing all my attention on London 2012 in the final run-up to the Games. A wide range of additional specialist committees reporting to the Board will be announced soon.

The mandate of the Board includes the following:

- Develop 'Performance Pathways' by establishing, funding and supporting British Teams - For Alpine Skiing this will be a Senior Team working towards Sochi 2014; a Junior Team focused on the goal of outstanding performances at the Junior World Championships and a Children's Team producing consistent results on the international circuit and particularly at the Topolino races.
- Secure funding support for the Performance Pathways and thereafter ensure that sponsorship packages benefit the Athletes, Clubs, Home Nations and Academies in membership of the BSS.
- Launch a membership scheme during the summer.
- Work with the BOA to ensure the selection, management and leadership of the British athletes selected for the Olympic Winter Games, the European Youth Olympic Winter Festival, the Youth Olympic Games, the World Junior Championships including transparent selection criteria based on merit for all such events.
- Determine the scope and terms of reference for this summer's consultation process with all the athletes, clubs, academies and stakeholders in the sports governed by FIS; thereafter launching a major exercise to ensure clear recommendations are made for the future vision, mission, structure and funding of BSS as the Governing Body transitions through to adopting a new constitution; such a constitution first and foremost to serve the interests of the athletes, be independent, avoiding commercial conflicts of interest and focused on 'Raising The Bar' for all involved in the three proposed Performance Pathway Teams for Alpine skiing.
- Work closely with all stakeholders to ensure BSS focuses on developing the outstanding athletes representing the United Kingdom and is closely engaged with the excellent development work undertaken by the Home Nations, BARSC, clubs, training groups, academies and coaches who build the performance pyramid from participation to excellence.

Dave Edwards will assume full responsibility for the administration of FIS licences, athlete declarations, FIS race entries and all and any other related matters to ensure that FIS registered athletes can race. FIS licences will be processed by BSS. BSS already has the necessary insurance policies in place. Selection criteria for the three teams are being posted with this Newsletter. Our best skiers below the British Senior Team level will be given strong support with race entries whilst recognising the importance of Home Nation squads preparing for their training and competition schedules.

A Child Safeguarding Policy has been published, and a Lead Child Welfare Officer (Mrs. Bridget Owen) has been appointed.

Performance Pathways

As outlined above, the main priority for the 2010 / 2011 Season which will begin on May 1st is to establish **Performance Pathways** for the best British athletes amongst all age groups in all FIS disciplines. Whilst we currently have no significant funding in our account - all ideas and contribution are strongly welcomed! – I have

launched a major fund-raising initiative and Dave and I are looking to raise the funding to support these Pathway Teams during the current quadrennial as we focus on Sochi 2014. These Pathway Teams will be supported for strength / conditioning and land training by Sir Clive Woodward (President of BASI and Director of Olympic Performance at the BOA) and his team at the BOA under a Memorandum of Understanding between BSS and the BOA. The MOU will confirm that the BSS will be based at the BOA's HQ in 60 Charlotte Street with use of meeting rooms and support for a maximum of three staff during the next twelve months at no overhead charge during this period. BOA functional services will be provided to BSS according to an agreed project plan - to include internal legal counsel, finance, commercial, operations, communication policy, technology and HR support. The BOA will not incur any external expenditure or liabilities on behalf of BSS. Requests for any service support outside the agreed project plan will require the approval of the BOA and the BOA will determine the priority of services to BSS via the BOA. Dave Edwards, as Chief Executive, will report to myself as Chairman of BSS. Andy Hunt as the BOA's Chief Executive will remain on the BSS Board until the new Constitution and elected Board are in place. These measures will ensure the BSS transitions from a sport in crisis to a model Governing Body for an Olympic sport. The objective of the Board is to ensure that the 'Best of British' skiers training around the world are on the British Senior, Junior and Children's teams and will seek, over time, to fund these pathways so once selected, skiers will not have to pay for their Performance Programmes. Additionally, we will establish a talent ID programme that will readily identify outstanding skiers who do not come through the traditional route for progression.

British Senior Team

World and Europa Cup Teams

One-to-one meetings will take place with skiers and coaches involved with the 2009/ 2010 programme in Meribel with the intention of providing maximum support possible for our leading skiers. When this consultation exercise is completed further announcements will be made shortly after the Championships so all skiers and coaches involved with the 2010 / 2011 team can start their season with confidence and appropriate resource on May 1st.

British Junior Team

The British Alpine Junior Team will be selected from the first five years of FIS with a focus on sending the strongest possible team entries into the World Alpine Junior Championships. Additionally, we will be sending teams to the European Youth Olympic Festival in 2011 and the first Youth Olympic Games in Innsbruck 2012. There will be a men's squad and a women's squad - likely to total some 10 - 15 skiers in each. It is intended that there will be a summer training and funded race camps in the southern hemisphere; a December training and race camp in the United States; a speed training camp at the Inter Service Snow Sports Championship in Meribel. Work is being undertaken to provide dedicated coaching and performance direction support for athletes in all British teams. Facilitation of education / higher education study time and close work between the BSS with schools to create flexibility for athletes to compete and secure educational support will be provided. The selection of this team will be announced within 48 hours of the end of the British Championships and posted on the BOA and Britski websites.

British Children's Team

Our objective is to strengthen the support structure to the British Children's Team. There is no doubt that it is well run by Jenny Shute and Gar Trayner. The team currently competing on the international circuit has been formally approved by the Board of BSS and a meeting with all interested parents, skiers, coaches and stakeholders will take place in Meribel during the Championships.

Landmark Deal between the United States and the United Kingdom for collaboration in support of our skiers and snowboarders

As a first step towards delivering the plans outlined in this Newsletter, the British Olympic Association has joined forces with their American counterparts in a groundbreaking agreement to cooperate ahead of the London 2012 Games and the Sochi 2014 Winter Games. Finalised between Larry Probst, the President of the US Olympic Committee and myself in San Francisco immediately after the Olympic Winter Games the **'Technical and Sport Cooperation Agreement between the United States Olympic Committee and the British Olympic**

Association provides an invaluable opportunity to provide an additional pathway of critical support for our winter sports athletes and, in particular, those athletes affected by the recent collapse of the former national governing body for ski and snowboarding in the UK. Specific agreements relating to skiing were covered in the following clauses:

"Explore areas of cooperation in winter sports for the Sochi Quad; particularly in the sports governed by the Federation International de Ski (FIS). Explore further partnership opportunities between British Ski & Snowboarding and the United States Ski & Snowboard Association; to include, but not limited to coaching, technical and performance exchanges; winter training camps and training opportunities. In addition, knowledge sharing to assist in the establishment of British Ski & Snowboarding as a model Federation to represent the British winter athletes governed by FIS".

"Jointly establish a Congress to take place in 2011 in London to share and establish best practice in National Sports Federation leadership strategies, governance and partnering with private sector / commercial enterprises."

I have held the first meeting with the President / Chief Executive of United States Ski & Snowboard Association, Bill Marolt, and Dave and I will lead a delegation to hold further meetings in Park City during the first ten days of May to take this key initiative forward. Subjects to be covered will include running British FIS races; governance; knowledge sharing; coaching, technical and performance exchanges; winter training camps; training opportunities and scholarships.

FIS 2010 Congress

FIS is holding its annual conference in Antalya, Turkey at the end of May. The Board of BSS has agreed to send a strong BSS delegation to this event and we should be grateful to the Volunteers who have helped to organise attendance and give their own time to represent our views on the international stage. A full list of delegates approved by the Board are contained in the Board minutes

Summary

The focus of the BSS will be on the top level Performance Pathway and for that we need to raise funds and bring sponsors into skiing and snowboarding. We will also support the excellent work undertaken by The Home Nations at grass roots level. In this context, I am conscious that there are many issues which skiers, parents, coaches and support staff may like to raise with Dave and myself. Dave will be in Meribel from Tuesday 30th (email EdwardsD@teamgb.com) through April 5th and I will be coming out after the National Olympic Committee meeting on Tuesday (email cbm1@easynet.co.uk) to watch the racing in Meribel and Courchevel as well as the British Children competing in Val d'Isere. Our absolute priority now is to raise the funding necessary to support the objectives I have set out. We have a long way to go to secure sponsorship deals and find Patrons willing to back our athletes. That will remain our top priority for the next few months.

In the meantime, a great deal of outstanding work has been undertaken by Dave, the Home Nations, BARSC, the volunteers and all our stakeholders to ensure the Championship in Meribel could be held as anticipated this year. We will be reviewing future plans during the next few weeks. All of us with an interest in skiing are grateful to John Ritblat, British Land, the sponsors, the ski resort of Meribel and the volunteers who have provided continuity during these difficult days.

I hope you will all enjoy some outstanding performances.

Have a great Championships,

Colin Moynihan