



Scottish Rowing Annual Review 2019-20

Scottish Rowing
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President's Report

Martin Claxton



I would like you to cast your mind back in time. Back to a year BC. No not 'Before Coronavirus' but 5 BC. In 5 BC the Greeks were the acknowledged masters of oared galleys and their ships dominated the Mediterranean. With a rowing crew of 170 a Greek Trireme was a fast and fearsome warship. But one of the tricks that the Greeks had learned that gave them an edge in speed was what was referred to as a rowing cushion. This is believed to have been a fleece or hide strapped to the rowers' backside that allowed the rower to slide on the seat thus enabling them to bring the power of their legs to bear for longer during the stroke. Wind the clock forward to the mid-19th century and competitive crews in the UK, US and Canada re-invented the Greek's cushion and were using buckskin and butter or soap to achieve the same effect. This principle then evolved into the mechanical slide that we are now so familiar with.

So, what is the relevance of this to us today? Well to me it typifies the adaptability that sports people can show when overcoming a challenge such as gaining those decisive seconds of advantage in a race. And yes, rowing like all other sports has faced its challenges this year. Our ancestors knew a thing or two about this; The Roman philosopher Horace, who died in 8 BC said: "Adversity has the effect of eliciting talents which, in prosperous circumstances, would have lain dormant". Or as Gunnery Sergeant Highway aka Clint Eastwood put it slightly less eloquently: "You're Marines now, you adapt, you overcome, you improvise!"

And yes, rowing has adapted, it has improvised and it has in the main overcome the challenges of 2020. I have been so impressed by the adaptability that many rowing clubs have shown in seizing opportunities and exploring novel ways of keeping their members engaged and offering ways to continue with our sport. I have also been delighted by the wide variety of webinars and virtual competitions that the Scottish Rowing team have arranged in order to help entertain, encourage and educate clubs and their members.

Scottish Rowing is your Governing Body and we exist to help you, to promote and facilitate engagement in our sport and to enable everyone involved in rowing to achieve their ambitions be it for simple recreation through to high performance. I firmly believe that Scottish Rowing has continued to fulfil that remit and risen to the challenge. Led firmly and tirelessly by our Chief Operating Officer Amanda, the team has made sure that the spirit of rowing has been maintained and the Board is indebted to them all for all their efforts in steering us through the return to rowing.

The Board itself has welcomed two new members this year in the form of Matt Taylor as Commercial Director and Sam Winton as Ordinary Director leading on Youth Engagement. Their enthusiasm and engagement have been palpable right from the start and I have absolutely no doubt about the positive impact they will have. Regrettably Mark Barry the Finance Director has recently had to stand down for health reasons and I would like to record my sincere thanks to him for the professional support he provided during his relatively short time on the Board.

I do not wish to dwell on what could have been or what we did not do in 2020. Although the restrictions that affect us all to varying degrees will remain a feature of our lives into next year it is time to prepare to move on. It is time to ready ourselves for the brighter challenges that 2021 will bring. Back in 1927 Prince Edward, Prince of Wales made a speech aimed at re-invigorating industry after the economic stagnation of the 20's. With apologies for the gender bias of the time he said: "The young business and professional men of this country must get together round the table, adopt methods that have proved so sound in the past, adapt them to the changing needs of the times and wherever possible, improve them". So, no matter if you subscribe to Ancient Roman or 20th century philosophies, the message is the same, this is an opportunity to be seized!

The Board and staff of Scottish Rowing remain fully committed to ensuring that you the clubs are supported in re-establishing everything we enjoy about the sport, to continue to take the opportunities to look afresh at how we collectively manage our sport and to working with you to jointly improve what we do and how we do it.

Martin Claxton

President

Scottish Rowing

Chief Operating Officer's Report

Amanda Cobb



It is safe to say that the 2019-20 season has been a memorable one. Ten years ago this month, I started working at Scottish Rowing and I don't think anyone could have predicted then what our sport would be facing 10 years later. However, the development of Scottish Rowing as a governing body and an organisation means we are well placed to deal with the situation we now face. We have an engaged and active Board of Directors and a dedicated and experienced staff team.

The core team has grown to nine staff members, seven of whom have significant experience in the sport as rowers, coaches and club volunteers and understand the issues and challenges faced by member clubs. With decades of collective experience in rowing, the team has responded to the current crisis with enthusiasm and passion.

Steve O'Connor joined the team in June 2020 as the part-time lead for business development at the Scottish Rowing Centre. In this role Steve will be responsible for bringing to life the vision for the Scottish Rowing Centre, optimising its potential through building sustainable local partnerships, community outreach programmes and commercial opportunities as well as enabling access for club and performance rowers. Steve will combine this exciting new role with his existing role as Chief Executive Officer at Fulham Reach Boat Club, a position that he has held since 2014.

I am grateful to have such a capable team in place at what has been the most challenging year in my time at Scottish Rowing. 2020 started with significant disruption to competition caused by poor weather, including the cancellation of the newly launched Winter Challenge. The COVID-19 virus also emerged in the early months of 2020, culminating in an unprecedented shut down of the sport as part of a wider national "lockdown". Since then, the sport has responded with resilience and initiative, with clubs adapting to find ways of keeping members active and engaged. Delivering the "Return to Rowing" in line with published guidance has been a huge amount of work for club committees and volunteers and their commitment and diligence has been fantastic.

Scottish Rowing's focus throughout has been to ensure clubs were supported and members felt connected and part of the Scottish Rowing community. The importance of communication was recognised early on and we diverted time into more focused social media activity, club webinars and the launch of the Scottish Rowing newsletter. As well as rowing technical content we have covered important topics such as mental health, anti-doping and diversity and inclusion.

Over the course of the last six months, the Scottish Rowing team has produced advice for clubs, coaches and rowers; resources, workshops, ideas, activities like the "Lockdown League" and hopefully a bit of fun (Scottish Rowing bingo anyone?). Working closely with **sportscotland** and the Scottish Government, the "Return to Rowing" guidance has been a significant piece of work, which is still ongoing as restrictions change. We have also worked closely with colleagues from Welsh Rowing and British Rowing, to ensure guidance is aligned and, as far as possible, consistent.

Before COVID, the first half of the season saw the delivery of a number of performance development activities, including an Early ID Trial and Training Day at Strathclyde Park in October 2020, the popular residential J16 Land Camp at the National Sports Training Centre Inverclyde and a residential land camp in early January 2020. Unfortunately, the racing opportunities at the Women's Head of the River Race and the Head of the River Race, which are a focus for the programme at that point in the season, were cancelled. However, athletes on the Scottish Rowing performance programme have been supported throughout the period of lockdown.

The work on competition has continued, with significant progress being made on the development of the new Winter Series format. The competition strategy group is also considering how competition and events might be adapted or developed to provide opportunities to race as part of the Return to Rowing.

We continued to support our outreach projects at Firhill Basin and with the ASN schools in North Lanarkshire and although they have also experienced the same hiatus as club rowing the work to get these up and running again is now underway.

The impact of COVID-19 on Scottish Rowing membership has been significant and we are grateful to everyone who has renewed their membership since the start of lockdown. Scottish Rowing needs your support as much as ever. As case numbers show signs of increasing and we face the possibility of COVID restrictions being in place for some time to come, the need for us to pull together and to be flexible, adaptable and innovative has never been greater.

Scottish Rowing exists for its member clubs and to support you and the rowers, coaches and volunteers that make up our sport so that when the time comes and we can properly "Return to Rowing", we will be ready.

As always I would like to end my report with a few thanks. First, to our funding partners **sportscotland** for their support both financial and in terms of knowledge and expertise. Their work on the guidance for a Return to Sport has been immense. I would also like to thank the Scottish Rowing staff team for all their hard work, adaptability, and creativity over the last few months. Thanks also to the Scottish Rowing Board of Directors, a group of volunteers whose experience, knowledge and support adds huge value to Scottish Rowing. However, Scottish Rowing is its clubs and the people in them and huge thanks are due to the club committees, newly appointed COVID Officers, coaches and volunteers who have worked so hard to keep the sport we love going strong.

Amanda Cobb

Chief Operating Officer

Scottish Rowing

Performance Review

In what has been an unprecedented and hugely challenging year for competitive sport we reflect on some of the significant moments for our performance programme.

New faces

At the start of the season we welcomed six new athletes – Maia Hely and Laura McKenzie (GUBC), Katie Sugden and Abigail Topp (URA), Perri McCluskey and Mike Simpson (SPRC / Start) onto the Scottish Rowing Performance Programme. A first GB trials trip to Boston in November produced encouraging signs with 2000m personal bests recorded across the group.

At the same time, we said goodbye to Edinburgh University athletes Josh Armstrong, Gavin Horsburgh, Alex Rankin and India Somerside who stepped back from the GB trialling process, later to be joined by James Temple. Between them they amassed an incredible 19 GB vests and 7 world medals during their rowing careers, and we wish them all well for the future.

PR3 athlete Kate Jones (URA) joined the list of supported athletes later in the season and was subsequently selected onto the GB Rowing Team World Class Programme following her performances in the trialling system. In February, Kate won gold in the women's PR3 2000m at the World Rowing Indoor Championships in Paris.

New formats

The inaugural World Rowing Beach Sprint Championships took place in Shenzhen, China, from 25-27 October with Scottish rowers playing a lead role in Great Britain's two medal haul.



Image: Igor Meijer/World Rowing

Robyn Hart-Winks took a magnificent silver medal in the women's solo behind an experienced and talented Chinese coastal rower. Robyn also enjoyed success as part of the Great Britain mixed quadruple scull, which also featured fellow Scot, Kieran Brown. The GB quad won their bronze medal match against France.

Both Robyn and Kieran were previously supported through the Scottish Rowing Performance Programme when they were studying at Edinburgh University. Robyn took up rowing as a beginner at university.

The Beach Sprint format is being considered as a new Olympic discipline, potentially as early as Paris 2024, with a decision due to be made by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in December 2020.

New talent

Over 90 athletes from 11 Scottish clubs took part in junior development activities arranged by Scottish Rowing through the early part of the season. The weather certainly did its best to disrupt plans on more than one occasion however access to indoor training space at the Scottish Rowing Centre and the quick thinking of our volunteer coaches ensured that quality activity was delivered.

Dan Cooper from the GB Rowing Team and Eira Parry from High Performance Parenting were guest coaches at the Junior 16 Camp, held at the **sportscotland** National Sports Training Centre Inverclyde. The athletes also enjoyed an after-dinner presentation from junior, under 23 and senior world medallist Gavin Horsburgh who spoke about his exciting journey through the sport.

In early January, 12 of Scotland's leading junior athletes came together for four days in Edinburgh at the Junior Winter Training Camp, delivered in partnership with the University of Edinburgh and the **sportscotland** institute of sport. In addition to their core training programme in the gym, highlights included an early morning run up Arthur's Seat and educational workshops on performance nutrition and physiology.

We again used the Scottish Argonauts project as an athlete development opportunity targeting the Tideway races in March with two eights of both junior men and junior women identified following the Junior Development Camp at Strathclyde Park. Disappointingly a combination of weather conditions and COVID-19 meant that none of the athletes got to race over the course this year.

New opportunities

The coronavirus pandemic decimated the main regatta season and destroyed the hopes of those athletes who had been building towards international representation in summer 2020. However, a difficult situation meant that the performance programme had to adapt quickly and find new ways of working.

Anticipating lockdown measures our coaches distributed ergometers and weights equipment to all the performance athletes to enable them to train from home and provided virtual coaching. The athletes embraced the new challenge and supported each other during this difficult period through an online community.

The most difficult of situations has brought out the best in people and I would like to put on record my thanks to all those who have gone above and beyond to support our performance programme over the past year.

We look ahead to 2021 with hope and cautious optimism.

Lee Boucher

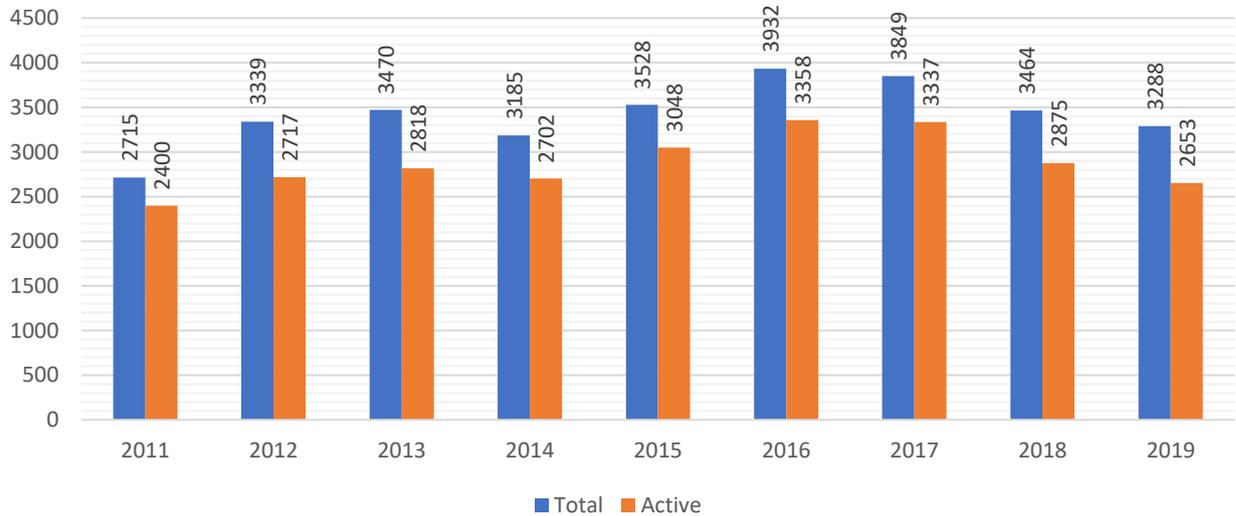
Head of Performance Pathway

Scottish Rowing

Membership

The table below shows the trend in reported membership over the last nine years. This is the combined membership reported through the club annual returns plus regular Scottish Rowing activity.

Membership Numbers 2011-2019



In previous years, the return captured as membership all activity carried out by clubs. In 2019 we refined the membership return to capture core membership (being those who pay a membership fee or subscription) and separate out all other activity such as learn to row courses, outreach and community activities whether on or off the water and come and try events.

As a result, the reported membership has decreased but we are now able to reflect the huge amount of additional activity that our clubs are involved in. A breakdown of this activity is set out in the table below. It also includes Scottish Rowing participation activity.

Other Activity (Clubs)

Learn to Row	549
Come and Try	631
Corporate Regatta or event participation	157
Schools or community participant (indoor)	555
Schools or community participant (on water)	409
Other participation	127
Total Activity (Clubs)	2,428

Other Activity (Scottish Rowing)

Schools League Participants (net of those doing 3 rounds)	1,491
North Lanarkshire ASN Schools	60
Total other Activity Scottish Rowing	1,551

Total Sport	3,979
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Participation and Development

Development Programmes

We continued to support the outreach project at Firhill Basin and the ASN Schools project with North Lanarkshire schools this year. Both projects were put on hold during the lockdown period but our work has started to get them up and running again. We are working on a number of other outreach projects and partnerships which are still at the early stages but which aim to take rowing into the heart of communities.

Lockdown support

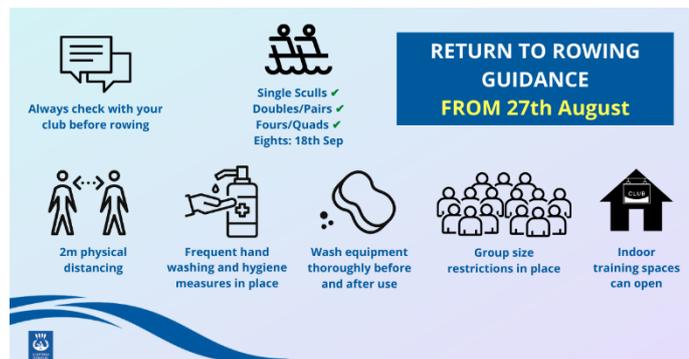
Support for Clubs

The Club Support toolkit, launched in 2019, contains an extensive bank of tools and resources to support good governance, club operations, financial management and planning and sustainability. However, we recognised the need to provide specific advice and resources for clubs to help manage the risks and challenges presented by the shutdown of rowing as a result of the national lockdown in March of this year.

The COVID hub provides information for clubs on short term financial planning, facility management (shutting down and reopening), funding and financial support and club governance.

With the easing of restrictions, the hub contains advice on reopening facilities and checklists and tools to support clubs prepare for a safe return to rowing. These tools are designed to be used alongside the formal Return to Rowing guidance which has been published and updated in line with 'COVID-19 Scottish Government's Routemap Through and Out of the Crisis' and associated guidance.

The preparation of the Return to Rowing guidance has been (and continues to be) a significant piece of work, in partnership with **sportscotland**, the Scottish Government, British and Welsh Rowing and other Scottish Sport Governing Bodies.



Throughout this period we have also provided a series of workshops and online forums for club leaders covering general advice, advice for reopening facilities and gyms, Return to Rowing guidance and return to competition. These have been a positive addition and we will continue offering these to supplement the normal club workshops/conferences.

Support for Individuals

Resources and advice

Recognising the need for rowers of all levels to be able to maintain their fitness and train safely and effectively throughout lockdown, we worked with our partners at the **sportscotland** institute of sport to develop guidance and advice. This covered a range of topics, from training intensity, nutrition and technical advice to fun activities and suggested workouts. These resources can all be found in the COVID-19 hub on the Scottish Rowing website.



We also recognised the need to provide opportunities for coaches while no one could get out on the water. Scottish Rowing secured a number of subscriptions to UK Coaching, unlocking hundreds of resources, webinars, podcasts and online learning for rowing coaches across Scotland. Over 50 coaches from 19 rowing clubs across Scotland took advantage of this offer to continue to develop and expand their coaching knowledge despite the challenges that lockdown presented.

Workshops and Webinars

Since the start of lockdown, we have developed a programme of online education and development opportunities for rowers, coaches and volunteers and have offered a range of rowing specific workshops including:

- two technical excellence webinars presented by Olympic rowing coach Robin Williams MBE;
- a Q&A series with our performance coaches, athletes in our performance programme and an excellent webinar with Dame Katherine Grainger and Heather Stanning OBE, led by Scottish Rowing Director of Performance Dorothy Roberts. [Watch here.](#)
- Scottish Rowing staff led sessions with junior coaches, club communications officers and student clubs to name but a few.

Keeping Active – The Lockdown League

The Scottish Rowing Lockdown League was a 58-day competition that allowed Scottish Rowing members to compete digitally during lockdown. Participants could choose to take part in different forms of physical activity – the indoor rowing machine, cycling and running – and upload their activity to be displayed on the weekly Lockdown League Table.



Twenty-six rowing clubs took part in the league, which accounts for over 85% of the Scottish Rowing member clubs. The league proved to be a success for the Scottish Rowing community, with over 3,500 submissions and over 102 million metres logged by the competitors.

Congratulations to St Andrew Boat Club taking the top spot with Stirling Rowing Club in second and Inverness Rowing Club coming third. Very honourable mentions to Tay Rowing Club and Heart of Scotland Boat Club for coming a clear first and second in metres per member.

Competition and Events

The head season got off to a good start with a new event run by Glasgow Academy/Glasgow Schools Rowing Club at Strathclyde Park. The rowing community later converged on the Caledonian Canal in November for the perennial favourite Inverness Head weekend. However, the New Year saw disruption to the racing calendar due to a run of bad weather with a number of events cancelled in February. This series of disappointments included the Winter Challenge, another new arrival in the Scottish Rowing calendar which was also cancelled due to bad weather. Trips to the Tideway also fell victim to the elements with the cancellation of the Women's Head of the River Race due to the weather and the Head of the River Race as a result of the introduction of controls to prevent the transmission of the emerging COVID-19.



As we turned our attention to the summer racing season and the Scottish Rowing Spring Regatta, it became apparent that COVID-19 was going to cause wider problems for event organisers. On March 13, we took the difficult decision to cancel the Spring Regatta and this heralded the beginning of the end for the summer racing season. As the country moved swiftly into lockdown, all events in the summer season, including the Scottish Rowing Championships were cancelled and no formal racing has taken place since.

Home International Regatta

The Home International Regatta was scheduled to take place on 25 July 2020 at Strathclyde Park for the third time in four years, with Wales hosting. Unfortunately the event had to be cancelled as a consequence of the COVID-19 restrictions in place.

Scottish Rowing Indoor Championships

The Scottish Rowing Indoor Championships have become an established part of the calendar. The event returned to Ravenscraig Regional Sports Centre in November 2019 with the Schools event taking place on the Friday and an open event on the Saturday. Both events were well supported with entries broadly in line with previous years.

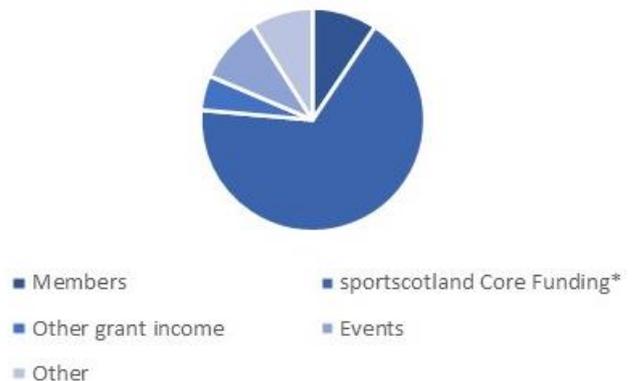
The Scottish Schools Indoors formed the final part of the Schools League. Over 2,000 pupils participated in the league in 2019 (2018: 2,300). The overall winner was George Watsons College, retaining their title from 2018. Hermitage Academy, who finished second overall once again took home the ergo awarded to the highest placed non-rowing school.

Financial Review

Income	£000
Members	54
sportscotland Core Funding*	387
Other grant income	29
Events	55
Other	52
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	577

Expenditure	
Performance	189
Governance	203
Sport Development	126
Member Services	79
	<hr/>
	597

2019-20 Income Breakdown



* Net of deferred income

In the financial year ended 31 March 2020, Scottish Rowing sustained a loss of £19,762 (2018-19: £4,538). This reflects the first full year of integrating the Scottish Rowing Centre into Scottish Rowing. Income generated was £577k (2018-19: £591k). In 2019-20, Scottish Rowing received £403.8k of core funding (2018-19: £396k) of which £273.8k related to staff posts and £16.6k was deferred. Other grant income was received from **sportscotland** (in the form of non-core funding), Winning Students and Glasgow Life.

Membership income, which is made up of club affiliation fees, individual memberships and regatta fees, represented 9.4% of Scottish Rowing's 2019-20 income. Event income was generated from the 2019 Scottish Rowing Spring Regatta, Scottish Rowing Championships and the Scottish Rowing Indoor Championships. The majority of "other" income is candidate fees for coaching courses and athlete contributions towards performance programme activities including competing at the Home International Regatta.

Scottish Rowing Awards 2018-19 Season

The annual awards always present a difficult task for both the Shortlisting and Selection Panel, with the 2018-19 season being no exception. With a huge variety of strong nominees in each category, Scottish Rowing were delighted to read about the fantastic commitment and passion within our clubs.

Unfortunately, we could not present the Awards in person at the Scottish Rowing Spring Regatta, however, we celebrated the successes and achievements of the nominees and winners on our social media channels in April and look forward to presenting the winners with their awards when circumstances allow. You can read more about the winners and their achievements and see the shortlisted candidates below.



Trini Duke image: Rob Eyton Jones

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