

The Strategic Plan for 2019-2022

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INTRODUCTION TO DEVELOPMENT PATHWAY



The Development Pathway aims to present a clear purpose and vision for the future direction of both recreational and competitive freestyle. It outlines a bold set of objectives working towards the goals of the GB Freestyle 4 Year Plan.

Our goal is to grow a culture of living excellence, providing an environment that supports freestylers and coaches to develop and perform at their best. It is our vision to create a sustainable development environment both in recreational and competitive

freestyle paddlesport. This will be evidenced by increased participation at a grass roots level and greater success at a higher level; supported by improved freestyle coaching capability at all levels.

The GB Freestyle Development Pathway provides the blueprint for us all to work better together, with each of us being much clearer about the direction of travel and our respective responsibilities.

The pathway seeks to better harness the skills and enthusiasm

of the freestyle community; respecting those who laid the foundations, whilst reaching out to those who are willing to join our invaluable team of volunteers and play an integral part in building an ever brighter future for the sport throughout the UK.

The community is integral to our sport's success and we welcome those can help us deliver these objectives to create a sustainable, successful future for this amazing sport.

"Coming through the ranks in any sport is tricky. But with a clear pathway to follow this becomes easy. The way up in freestyle is an incredibly fun one, from regional events to major internationals. This pathway is a clear guide on how to progress and what is involved"

- James Ibbotson

(GB Athlete, and European Open Director)

Strategic Alignment

The GB Freestyle Committee is accountable to British Canoeing for developing and delivering the strategic direction of Freestyle. The Development Pathway is an integral part of the GB Freestyle 4 Year Plan, which supports the British Canoeing strategic plan.

Today GB Freestyle is synonymous with great coaching and athletes. With such an impressive track record, the key is to not just maintain, but continue to grow the level of performance and encourage future generations of freestyle paddlers.

The Development Pathway will provide structure, alignment and accountability across the freestyle

arena. By providing clarity and harmonisation, the pathway will enable delivery of the vision, focusing resources on achieving the overarching goals. The pathway will embody the principles of continuous improvement, and progress will be tracked to enable continuous review and refinement of the programme.

GB Freestyle is reliant on volunteers, and the pathway aims to enhance their experience by providing development opportunities and a clear path for growth. Clubs, Community Groups, Centres, Committees, Coaches, Support Staff, and Officials can all benefit from the pathway and the additional structure and support it provides. By aligning on a common strategic direction, available resources can be optimised to

better support performance development.

The Development Pathway is about continuing to lead the development of Freestyle – to raise and evolve our aspirations, especially ahead of the 2021 Nottingham World Championships, and leave a legacy for the next generation of freestylers.

In these pages you'll see clear ambition that reflects and builds upon Freestyle's past heritage. There are clear messages of engagement at all levels, from grass-roots to elite. A future of development is also emphasised with structures set up to allow our sport to not just grow, but to thrive and flourish.

SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS OF FREESTYLE ENVIRONMENT

A SWOT (Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities Threats) analysis was conducted, based on a qualitative review of feedback from athletes, coaches, clubs and centres, to frame the identification of both good practices and performance barriers to better inform the Development Pathway.

STRENGTHS

- Growing recreational participation supported by clubs and community groups.
- Several clubs that support young freestyle athlete development and nurture talented freestylers.
- The level of volunteers across the clubs and community groups willing to give their time and support.
- The success of GB junior and senior athletes at an elite level.
- World Class coaching providers working with athletes to produce world class athletes capable of reaching the highest podium.
- The establishment of voluntary sports science services to assist athletes.
- Providing university Sport and Exercise Science Graduate/Post Graduate Scholarships within the GB Squad/Team programme.
- Two World Class training facilities (HPP and Hurley), with many UK whitewater facilities working towards accommodating freestyle activities.
- National series of competitions caters for participant's mastery/performance orientated goals.

WEAKNESS

- Lack of formal structure within the current recreational and competitive pathways.
- No GB freestyle regional training environment for those looking to move along the Development Pathway.
- Lack of clear sign posting for all ages and levels of ability to access the Development Pathway.
- No clear terms of reference for GB Freestyle programme leadership and governance.
- Elite performance relies heavily on self-funding and self-motivation.
- Further opportunities needed for coaches to become professional.
- Limited performance resources and software capable of managing athlete training and progression.

- The current coaching environment does not adequately encourage all freestyle disciplines.
- The distance and cost for athletes travelling to national and International level events.
- GB Team performance levels at international competitions very difficult to sustain due to current selection processes which restrict the capacity of athletes moving into a training framework.
- Whitewater freestyle venues around the country not evenly distributed meaning there are areas where only flatwater freestyle opportunity exists.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Create a combined pathway for recreation and competitive freestyle.
- Create a recreational development programme to assist club and community group coaches deliver freestyle activities.
- Assist in the generation of regional hubs for freestyle and better support the organisers and coaches delivering these activities.
- Work towards financially assisting Team & Squad athletes with accessing important international competition and/or international training camps.
- Coaching environment can be further up-skilled and professionalised, capitalising on voluntary/non-voluntary services of professional coaches and sports science services.
- Further development of high performance resource services for all disciplines. Networking with other disciplines will result in potentially less budgetary constraints.
- Closer collaboration with whitewater courses to support the development of their course configurations to meet freestyle recreational/competitive needs.
- Further develop programmes and resources for athletes and

coaches, with software tools to track performance.

- Development Pathway programmes designed to link in with Squirt and/or C1/OC1 to encourage transfer between disciplines.
- Setup of a talent programme to integrate into local clubs, community groups through establishment of a GB Freestyle Academy for under 15s that positively benefits clubs, community groups and Team GB.
- Drive sustainability by 2021, leaving a World Championships Legacy.
- Improve the competition strategy by creating a Competition Pathway.

THREATS

- Lack of appropriate training features at whitewater facilities extends the learning curve, slowing down optimum recreational participation, and negatively impacting athletes preparations for major competitions.
- Loss of athletes to other sports due to the lack of a defined UK based training environment and financial assistance.
- Coach development and retention of coaches within the high performance environment is currently very low.
- Fragile funding sources may prevent us from maintaining an optimum development environment.
- A lack of direction and cohesion between British Canoeing and other National Associations within the Recreation, Talent ID and High Performance environment.
- Unhealthy decline in Squirt and OC1 disciplines due to the current coaching environment.

RECREATIONAL & HIGH PERFORMANCE BARRIERS

GRASS-ROOTS DEVELOPMENT

There are a number of clubs and community groups introducing participants (generally aged 12+) to whitewater freestyle. However, a small number of clubs have provided successful coaching from age 9, with individuals successfully progressing to the National Squad.

Although many clubs seem to introduce fundamental pool skills (e.g. water confidence and rolling skills etc.) this is often a later age than optimum for youth freestyle development - partly due to the lack of a quality skill development curriculum to support coaches. This naturally limits the growth of participation for the 9-14 year age group within a whitewater environment.

Historically the focus has been development of juniors. However, it is realised that there is a need for a balanced approach across all ages and ability levels; thus providing participants with, not only opportunities for high performance competition, but also an active lifestyle. The current age range of grass-roots freestyle participation is age 9-50 plus. It was noted that coaches working at grass-roots level, who have first contact with prospective participants, may not have the level of experience to modify coaching sessions, and ensure that activities are inclusive to all age groups. Generation of lesson plans and guidance on modification of activities (to suit a range of ages / abilities) may assist in this area.

HIGH PERFORMANCE BARRIERS

Although there is currently a high performance environment in place, there is no clear development pathway to this point. Further support is required to sustain development of the talent pool from grass roots, by fostering the relationships with clubs and community groups and defining a clear development pathway. With the emergence of semi-professional athletes, the athlete's

understanding and implementation of a high performance environment is improving. This includes daily training, training load, technical elements, physical conditioning, dietary requirements, coaching philosophies and tactics, engagement and integration of support services and the overall accountability and responsibility for performance and preparation.

There is however a lack of coaching support for regular athlete training; currently there are two UK professional coaching companies who are filling this gap to the best of their abilities with limited resources.

It is important that the Development Pathway provides a clear progressive structure, with objectives for both coaches and athletes to attain high performance. The coaching should be structured around an ongoing programme targeting podium potential utilising the 'what it takes to win' (WITTW) model.

Currently there is no centralised tracking of training programmes to manage individual performance against clear benchmarks, or holistically identify deficiencies in the wider development pathway. Tracking is a key element of enhancing high performance coaching and allows monitoring of skill progression and benchmarking against other athletes. Software development and application is a key element of improving coaching efficiency and targeted development.

AVAILABILITY OF COACHES

The limited number of grass-root and high performance coaches, and the lack of a clear coaching development pathway is an area of concern.

The BC coach pathway provides freestyle specific qualifications at a grass-roots level, although it does not currently provide freestyle discipline specific performance coaching qualifications for performance coach / coach diploma. Development of these

freestyle coaching qualifications is key to long term provision of high quality professional freestyle coaches. In the interim, provision of Mentoring / Continuous Personal Development (CPD) elements is key to demonstrating freestyle specific capability. Longer term (following provision of BC freestyle specific qualifications), this CPD could provide opportunities for practical skill application and further development in a high performance structured environment.

In general there is a need to increase coaching participation at all levels, by encouraging new coaches and cross training of existing coaches from other disciplines.

TRANSFER/RETENTION OF ATHLETES

There is significant evidence, in the form of past and current World Champions, showing the benefits of transferable skills between disciplines. For example there are several podium athletes who demonstrate capability in both K1 and either C1 and/or Squirt. Currently there are no initiatives or programmes in place to encourage athletes to experience other freestyle disciplines (e.g. K1, C1, SQRT, OC1). Key to the transfer between freestyle disciplines is coach knowledge / awareness and athlete access to try alternative disciplines.

The lack of a current training environment, as well as an inadequate development pathway has resulted in a lack of retention within freestyle; with athletes moving to other sports / disciplines. Retention of athletes is a major concern for Squirt and C1/OC1 in the UK. Again, this could benefit from programmes that support athlete skills transfer.

Despite a history of athletes performing successfully at the International level, GB athletes are not adequately supported by the current performance structure.

The current development pathway fails to deliver sufficient momentum to sustain the athlete pipeline at all levels. An increasing number of athletes allows more opportunities for engagement and engenders a feeling of belonging to a freestyle community, which assists in athlete retention.

Although K1 is hugely popular in the UK, key to continued development is implementation of a structure for talent identification and allocation of resources.

COMPETITIONS

There is a series of national events; however these programmes are mostly outside of the strategic guidance of GB Freestyle and lack integration within club programmes. Many of these events do not link into any formal competition pathway. This makes it difficult to strategically plan and support core events within the annual calendar. Similarly there is no central point for clubs and community groups to see how they can integrate these events into their annual programmes.

Key to maximising benefit from the existing series of events is development of a competition pathway to increase competition participation / accessibility and provide opportunities for progressive development. This will provide continued momentum throughout the competitive season and provide developmentally appropriate challenges in the technical, physical and psychological areas; helping to assist in the development of diverse physical and technical skills.

Broader alignment with the GB Freestyle Development Pathway will allow strategic integration with clubs and development programmes, which benefit the paddling community.

LACK OF A QUALITY WHITEWATER FEATURES

Whitewater facilities play an integral role in freestyle development activities. The quality of the training feature is a key success factor for both recreational and competitive paddlers.

However, many artificial white water courses do not provide adequate training environments that cater for all levels of ability; this can be due to design limitations, but also a lack of understanding of freestyle requirements.

Central to enhancing freestyle training environments is improved whitewater course configuration. This can be better achieved through; increased communication with the centre's management and trustees (to better understand freestyle needs), and improved alignment with other disciplines (such as slalom / rafting).

GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION

The geographic distances to competition / whitewater training venues (both nationally and internationally) and also coaching resources creates a barrier for many UK Freestylers. This can result in a lack of experience / exposure to high performance level competition; thereby creating a greater requirement on the local national competition circuit to provide adequately varied environments.

Key to minimising the constraints of geographical location is developing suitable foundation freestyle coaching programmes (e.g. talent development) at a club/community level and alignment of the national competition series.

International training camps as part of the Team GB offering will be considered ahead of competitions. Although it is recognised that funding remains a concern for many athletes.

WW VENUES & HUBS FOR FREESTYLE

A number of clubs / community groups feed into commercial whitewater centres (e.g. Lee Valley, Cardiff, Pinkston and Holme Pierre Point). These serve as an important hub for freestyle activities. The full potential of this relationship is largely untapped and currently relies on a small number of key club / community group members to generate the required participation levels for these whitewater centres

to run commercial sessions. Some of these centres run voluntary coaching sessions for freestyle; although this is rare and often lacks the frequency to sustain skills improvement. These types of activities require further support both in coaching resource and funding. It's common for these activities to be negotiated with Canoe Slalom funded programmes or commercial rafting activities to share water releases.

There are also independent commercial providers offering paid and sponsored programmes. Although some of these programmes are hugely successful, many parents struggle to pay commercial prices on a regular basis, and those companies that provide sponsored support programmes have limited capacity to accommodate the required optimum numbers.

Greater emphasis needs to be placed on alignment, and sign posting clubs and community groups to these services; ensuring that the clubs can gain maximum benefits from these interactions in terms of up-skilling coaches and providing opportunities for participants. It's vital that the Development Pathway takes into consideration sustainability, ensuring that clubs / community groups, centres, and private coaching providers may flourish.

SUMMARY

The recreation and high performance barriers analysis identified a number of key areas of focus; these are addressed in the Development Pathway and implementation programme.

THE DEVELOPMENT PATHWAY

The Development Pathway provides an overarching clearly defined system that outlines a transparent individualised, multi-layered and progressive route to excel in freestyle paddlesport; that is based on evidence and experience and considers quality processes and participants welfare. Within the Development Pathway sit a suite of complimentary programmes with specific areas of focus, such as the Competition Pathway and the Coaching Development Pathway. These are defined to provide additional clarity around certain aspects without overloading the Development Pathway.

The Development Pathway encompasses five stages, providing paddlers and coaches with a broad range of opportunities to engage in freestyle paddlesport at all ages from grass-roots development to the high performance programmes. The Development Pathway framework (colour coded for easy reference) is as follows:

Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4-5
			
Community Engagement		Performance Foundation	Performance Excellence

Through these environments we seek to add opportunity and structure so that all potential freestylers, no matter what their ambition, can grow via the pathway.

The GB Freestyle Development Pathway aims to;

- Create a sustainable development environment both in recreational and competitive freestyle paddlesport for lifelong learning.
- Support athletes in achieving their potential to compete at an international level and obtain a podium position.
- Develop coaching capability to support all levels of freestyle paddlesport.

The Development Pathway is designed to be community centred, supporting recreational growth, whilst increasing the opportunities available to explore the possibilities of competitive freestyle. It looks to develop the individual by enabling freestylers to thrive in a learning environment that allows them to fulfil their potential and reflect positively on their experiences.

The freestyle-specific components are:

- Technical
- Tactical
- Physical
- Psychological

These are then combined with the following attributes;

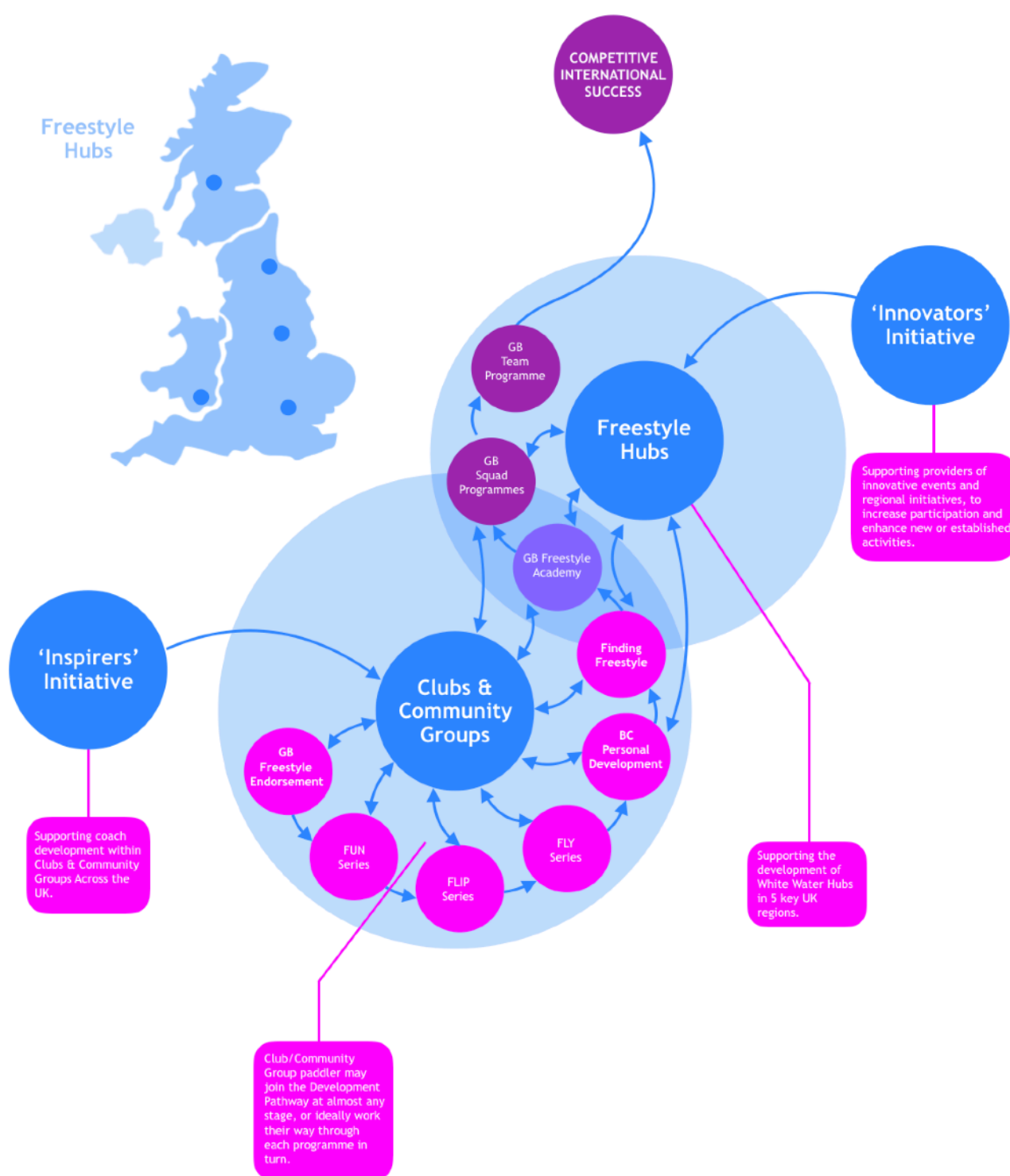
- Lifestyle
- Parental
- Educative
- Competitive
- Excellence

The environment is developed to guide coaches, individuals and/or parents in understanding the key skills that are required at the major milestones in a freestyler's development.

Freestylers Journey

GB Freestyle organise a series of events and programmes to drive increased participation and a freestyler's personal growth. This will initially focus on 5 hubs (whitewater centres), chosen to support a broad range of ability and provide suitable training environments throughout the annual calendar of freestyle activities. We plan to extend this network in a progressive manner to ensure availability of the necessary resources.

The development pathway will provide easy to understand guidance documents detailing how to get involved in all areas of the framework initiatives and programmes. These will be available to download free from the GB Freestyle website.



Development Pathway

The 5 stages of the Development Pathway are further subdivided into 10 phases allowing us to more effectively plan and review the effectiveness of the development pathway. The table is a visual means for facilitators, coaches and freestylers at every stage to understand the progression pathway, available programmes and the skill level required for each stage.

DP Stages	STAGE 1		STAGE 2	STAGE 3		STAGE 4		STAGE 5		
DP Phases	First Experience of fundamentals.	Extension and Refinement of Movement.	Specific Commitment and/or Competition.	Demonstration of Potential	Talent Verification	Practicing and Achieving	Breakthrough and Reward	Senior/Junior National Representation	Podium Success	Sustained Success at Championships
Freestylers are	Learning the fundamentals of freestyle through regional programmes or from other mediums.	Participating in organised skill and development programmes and/ or informal paddling.	Attending coaching and / or competition sessions or partaking in national event series.	Demonstrating high potential from training, competition and/or talent ID Trademarks.	Potential verified and embedded within a Performance Foundation programme.	Training within Junior/ Senior Squads and achieving set benchmark/ performance standard and results.	Excelling at National Series level.	Top 8 finisher at Championship and/or elite International Event.	A Podium finisher at Championships and/ or elite International Event.	Continued Podium success over 4 years or more
Freestylers Primary Development Environment	Informal settings (e.g family) and/or Fun Series and/or BC Personal Development.	Finding Freestyle Programme and/or Flip Series and/or BC Personal Development.	Clubs and Community Groups and/or Fly Series and/or BC Personal Development.	Academy/Squad Development Programme and/or Club, Community Group Activities.		Squad/ Team Foundation Programme or Club, Community Group Activities.	Squad/ Team Excel Programme or Club, Community Group Activities.	GB Team High Performance Programme		
Competition Environment	Non-competitive.		Regional Leagues/ Events and/or Youth Freestyle Series Events.	Regional Leagues, National Championship and/or other National/ International Events.		ICF/ECA European / World Cups and/or other International Events.		European / World Championships and/or Euro / World Cups, and other International Events.		
Athlete Category	Participation			Underpinning		Emerging	Developing	Podium Potential	Podium	
Coaches are	Support activities for example warmups, skill demonstrations; and keen to share their enthusiasm and help others.	Delivering taster sessions, whilst work alongside other coaches to give newcomers a great first time experience.	Able to plan, deliver and review progressive sessions safely, effectively and independently supporting early development freestylers in recreational or competitive environments.	Able to deliver long term-development programme, with responsibilities for developing both groups and bespoke individual goals. Partaking in the Mentoring Programme and been supported in the management of Academy, Foundation, Excel programmes, implementing appropriate training practices, providing interventions to enhance learning and performance, supporting the competitive experience, including associated athlete profiling and tracking performance activities.			Highly proficient in making performance critical decisions and interventions that positively impact on GB Team athletes readiness for competition, promotes the desired performance levels during competition, and uses the competitive experience in a meaningful manner to further the athletes' development after competition;			
Coaches Primary Development Environment	Paddlesport Activity Assistant.	Core/Freestyle Coach and/or Inspires Programme.		British Canoeing Performance Coach or Coach Diploma and the GB Freestyle Mentoring / CPD Programme.			British Canoeing Coach Diploma (or equivalent experience) and completion of GB Freestyle Mentoring/CPD Programme.			
KEY Drivers	Coach Parents Siblings Friends GBF BC	Parents Coaches Friends GBF BC	Clubs Coaches Private Providers GBF BC	Clubs GB Academy Coaches GBF BC	TID Process Club GBF BC	Clubs Hubs Parents HP Services Coaches GBF		Athletes HP Services Coaches GBF BC		

Competition Pathway

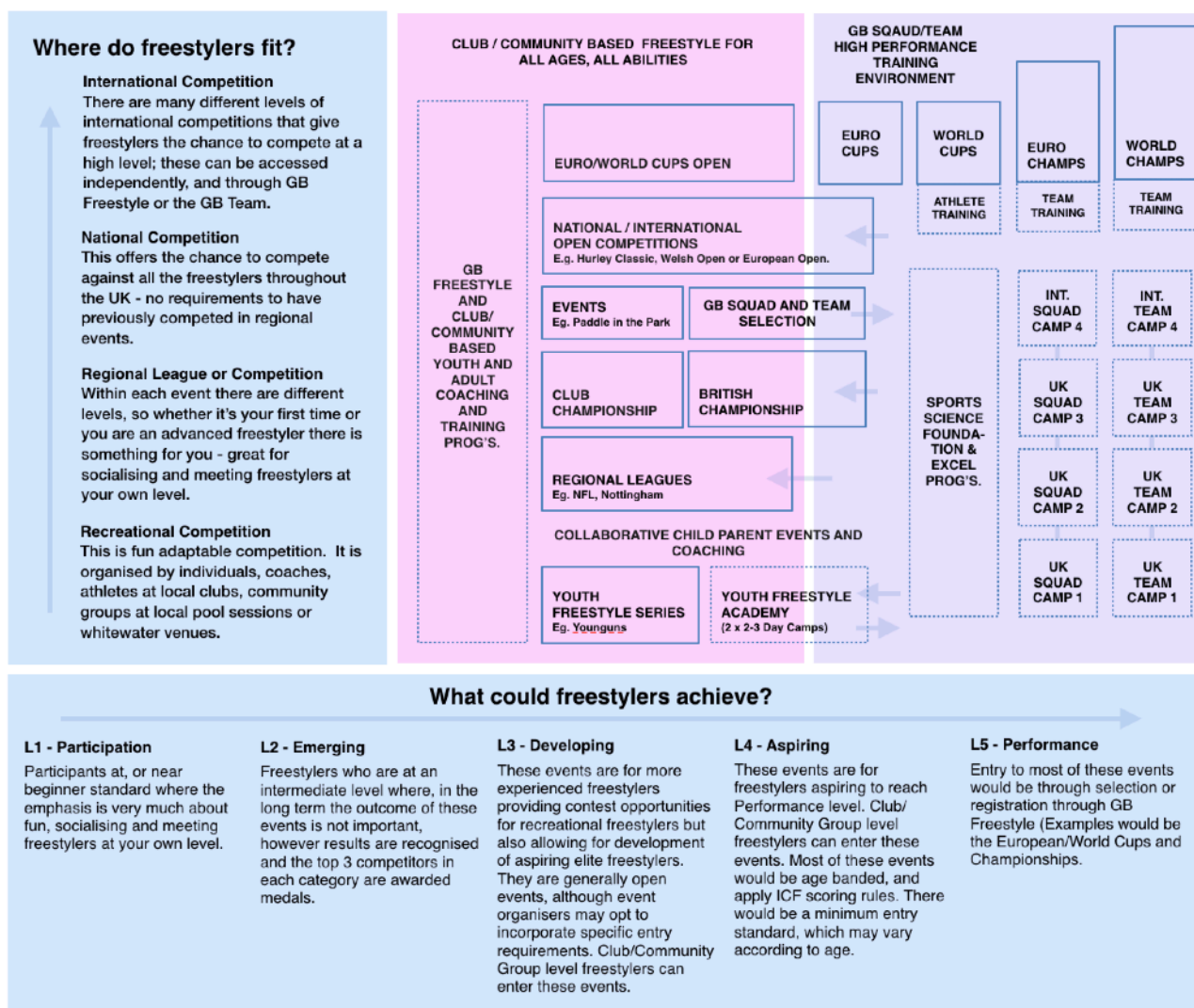
In 2019 we're developing a Competition Pathway that will signpost athletes to competitions, and provide an incremental series of appropriate competitions for all levels of freestylers. This will identify 5 different levels of competition (L1 to L5) across Local, Regional, National and International Competitions. Each level of competition is designed to cater for freestylers with a specific level of experience.

Information about competitions recognised by GB Freestyle will be available in a standardised easy to follow format on the GB freestyle website; providing a clear pathway through competitive events that will assist participants in making decisions on events appropriate to them and their goals.

In addition to information on the range of competitions available throughout the UK, the brochure will provide information on participation ability level, competition type, competition categories, coaching opportunities, maximum entry, the event director, judging rules and the entry processes.

The competition pathways goal is to build upon the existing competition structure to ensure that all participating freestylers have an enjoyable and fulfilling experience, and those who aspire to achieve competitive success are fully supported in doing so; providing a route to build competitive experience and invaluable opportunities to all paddlers from recreational paddlers to those aspiring to ICF European and World Championship podium success.

Proposed framework for the Competition Pathway:



DEVELOPMENT PATHWAY IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

Implementation of the pathway focuses on the following key areas that will govern and provide direction for our nation's development environment;

1. Creation of a developmental framework.
2. Coaching Pathway, including Inspirers, Innovators and CPD programmes.
3. Supporting and energising Regional Whitewater Freestyle Hubs.
4. Introduction of the Fun, Flip, Fly freestyle development series.
5. Increasing awareness and participation through 'Finding Freestyle' events.
6. Creation of the GB Freestyle Academy.
7. Squad / Team Foundation & Excel Programmes.
8. Introduction of the GB Freestyle Endorsement Scheme.
9. Creation of extended Competition Pathways to include Clubs/Community Groups.
10. Establishing a Freestyle Development Advisory Group (DAG).

1. Creation of a developmental framework.

The Development Pathway utilises a framework that provides a pathway for non-athlete and athlete development; representing a continuum, from active lifestyle to high performance sport.

The framework consists of; Participation; Underpinning; Emerging, Developing; Podium Potential and Podium; offering a practical planning and review tool for freestyle. The framework recognises that recreational participation and the acquisition and refinement of fundamental skills is the key to lifelong enjoyment of the sport and high performance athlete development.

The framework aims to encapsulate the holistic and integrated nature of development and recognise the complementary factors supporting a

freestylers development such as coaching, resource and organisational support.

Our challenge is to create the environment for clubs and community groups to thrive, to remove any barriers and for the Development Pathway programmes to work alongside and compliment community initiatives in ways that are empowering, engaging and meaningful.

2. Coaching Pathway, including Inspirers and Innovators and CPD programme.

The Development Pathway incorporates Coach Development Pathways to allow clear visibility of progression pathways and opportunities for coaches to up-skill across disciplines. This will occur at all levels.

Clubs and Community Groups are the common entry level to the Development Pathway, developing the fundamental skills. In order to support these positive contributions, there are two new initiatives, "Inspirers" and "Innovators". These initiatives work together to increase participation in freestyle and provide freestyle coaching development opportunities.

The Inspirers programme will train freestyle coaches who will visit clubs, to run a series of structured taster sessions (designed to up-skill club coaches in freestyle), and provide information about facilities, events and training.

The programme is designed to provide potential new participants with information and face to face contact with someone from within the sport who can inspire them.

The "Inspirers" are complimented by the "Innovators" initiative. As exemplified by the name, "innovators", GB freestyle aims to provide an overarching, authentic sense of purpose that keeps volunteers energised, committed and passionate.

The aim is to nurture and facilitate innovation at all levels of the

freestyle community - giving volunteers a voice inside the Development Pathway to grow new ideas, and help individuals see the direct impact of their contributions. Initially aiming to identify and support the current and future generation of freestyle coaches and event organisers; the innovators programme provides a structured way to drive innovation and share ideas throughout the Freestyle community. For example; ever had a great idea or coaching technique that you've wanted to share - the Innovation facilitators can help you network with like-minded people or subject matter experts / industry to leapfrog freestyle development nationally.

Innovation facilitators assisting the programme are individuals with high level skills for networking and programme development, who embrace and promote a positive culture of innovation.

The Development Pathway Manager will co-ordinate the Inspirers / Innovators and strengthen the relationship between clubs, community groups and regional Freestyle Hubs.

A range of club and community group support resources will be used in conjunction of these two initiatives to support continued development, resources will have a phased implementation through 2019-20.

Opportunities to observe and assist with our coaching programmes will be offered to those advocating and engaging in the pathway opportunities. For example, a club coach could join our 'finding freestyle' programme for the day, or those interested in competitive coaching may be invited to join our Academy weekend and potentially GB Squad or Team training. These learnings can then be shared with their club and its members.

A GB Freestyle coach mentor programme is to be set up within the national development environment to allow succession plans for future coaches as well as

up-skilling the general coaching environment. In unison with the current British Canoeing Coaching Pathway there will be a GB Freestyle mentoring and CPD programme rolled out in 2019.

All coaches joining the GB Academy, Squad and Team programmes will access the GB Freestyle Mentoring and a CPD programme. This programme supports new coaches to gain real world experience, whilst being closely mentored by experienced senior coaching staff. Upon successful selection to the programme, coaches will gain trainee status, and will complete an assessment portfolio to become trained and join the technical coaching team. This will also be integral to the further development of the GB scholarship programme.

3. Supporting and energising Regional Whitewater Freestyle Hubs.

The Development Pathway aims to broaden community involvement in hub recreational and competition activities; providing a win-win situation of improved participation at the hub locations and better freestyle development opportunities aligned to the pathway. Key to this is developing stronger ties with regional freestyle hubs to promote an active lifestyle and talent development. The development pathway proposes a holistic strategy that draws clubs, community groups, centres, local freestyle facilities and their activities together to raise their profile to potential freestyle participants and markets. This integrated and coordinated approach avoids unnecessary duplication and identifies complimentary facilities / activities within Local, Regional and National networks.

Our objectives are to:

- Identify and address specific local and regional needs in engaging in the Development Pathway.
- Strengthen strategic partnerships with clubs, community group, and whitewater centres.
- Support new and existing events, competitions and recreation activities.

- Explore opportunities for innovation in facility provision and activity delivery.
- Optimise learning, health and social benefits of freestyle activities.

The Development Pathway has an inclusive approach to ensure that activities and learning's precipitate through all levels, from grass-roots to world class.

4. Introduction of the Fun, Flip, Fly freestyle development series.

The Fun, Flip, Fly series aims to provide the best start to those in the early development stages of freestyle paddlesport. It achieves this by providing a more long-term approach based firmly on the principles of 'community centred development' and aims to bring a structured approach to freestyle coaching at a club and community group level. This longer-term approach is designed to help individuals of all ages and all abilities to get involved with freestyle paddlesport, to motivate individuals of all ages to stay in the sport and help reach their full potential, and maybe even enter into competitive freestyle at a national or international level.

The objective is to provide a structured fun learning environment supported by coaching resources for delivering freestyle activities. These provide guidance in three main areas;

- Considerations for effective coaching.
- Fundamental skills that underpin more effective learning methods.
- Opportunities to develop competitive skills in the form of fun challenges, and goals to motivate longer-term development.

Resources are designed so that those starting out in freestyle coaching will find confidence in their ability to deliver productive sessions to all levels of ability, and those with experience, reassurance that they have the knowledge and resources to explore this fascinating sport and assist in shaping its future.

The series will provide a positive environment, where fun is the key factor and where participants are free to experiment as part of their development. The overall programme of activity within this resource is 18 months, each series lasting 6 months.

The aims of the Fun, Flip, Fly series are to:

- Assist coaches to deliver freestyle paddlesport activities at a grass-roots level and be aware of how individual best learn.
- Provide guidance on planning freestyle activities on a seasonal basis, to outline goals, and adapt session activities as the season progresses.
- Encourage paddlers to get involved in competitive freestyle paddlesport and optimise standards of recreational and competitive freestyle.

5. Increasing participation through 'Finding Freestyle' events.

A series of events around the UK promoting and increasing participation. The programmes will be subject to ongoing review and adaption to maximise programme effectiveness. After each event a questionnaire will be used to gauge the target groups perceptions of the sport, its benefits and accessibility.

All aspects of the Development Pathway will be analysed yearly and an annual report will be provided.

These events will be promoted through the British Canoeing 'GO Canoeing'.

6. Creation of the GB Freestyle Academy.

To support Young Athlete Development, a GB Freestyle Academy programme will be launched in 2019 that recognises talented young paddlers (aged 8-15). Talented paddlers, identified by the hubs, clubs and centres will be invited to attend annual camps each year. These training camp are not only intended to expose talented paddlers to one of the most fantastic learning environments in

the world, but also provide a life experience that they will never forget, and to inspire them to take the next step to competitive freestyle.

It's envisaged that those returning to their Freestyle Hubs and Clubs will further energise and promote the Whitewater Centre's, Club's and Community Groups own programmes. The overall goal is to increase the performance standard of paddlers going for National Selection, whilst promoting the recreational benefits of freestyle as a whole.

It's all about enhancing our community, and where possible, we will strive to ensure participants at all stages of the pathway are part of the freestyle journey.

7. GB Squad/Team Foundation & Excel Programmes.

Access to the Squad and Team programmes is through the GB Academy (Squad Only) or GB Team Selections. The Squad / Team programme represents a focused series of domestic and international camps & a competition programme. The priority is enhancing daily training environments and supporting athletes that have demonstrated realistic medal winning potential for future World Championships (called Podium Potential). Once an athlete achieves a Podium, the aim is to sustain this for a target of three World Championships.

Athletes entering Squad level are typically 2-4 years away from a podium positions. At this stage, whilst there is a focus on delivering results, the key emphasis is on development of the athlete and transitioning them from being a promising, talented athlete into a robust and high performing athlete with the knowledge, skills, and experience required to be successful in the World Championships.

To facilitate this transition from talented individual to world champion, we are developing a more robust and sustainable way of delivering two progressive programmes 'Foundation' and

'Excel' to be launched in 2019. These offer a mix of innovative remote and practical interactions with the GB Coaching and Sports Science Team including a monitoring and communication tool to be used by athletes and staff.

The coaches and Sports Science Team work together closely to share technical expertise through these programmes and to ensure that athletes can move seamlessly between Squad and Team.

8. Introduction of the GB Freestyle Endorsement Scheme.

GB Freestyle will launch an accreditation scheme for clubs and community groups delivering freestyle activities. There are two accreditations that can be gained; for freestyle recreational activities and/or talent development. To gain this endorsement the clubs activities must integrate the Development Pathway programmes and objectives. The endorsement demonstrates that a Club/ Community Group provides GB Freestyle programmes and encourages everyone to enjoy freestyle; providing a fulfilling place for participants of all ages.

9. Creation of extended Competition Pathways to include Clubs/Community Groups.

To better deliver athlete development through the existing competition structure a domestic competition review process will be initiated. This will establish a new Competition Pathway, to be implemented in 2019, which will compile events and competitions throughout the UK

By providing standard information on available freestyle competitions and how these relate to the Development Pathway (levels L1 to L5), it is hoped to enable athletes to identify a clear pathway to future competition goals and have an enjoyable and fulfilling experience. Those who aspire to achieve competitive success are fully supported in doing so; providing a route to build competitive experience and invaluable

opportunities to all paddlers from recreational paddlers to those aspiring to ICF European and World Championship podium success. The information will be presented in any easy to follow format on the GB freestyle website and in the Competition Pathway Guidance brochure.

By design, the Competition Pathway will be a living document that can be updated by clubs (to identify new activities) as well as providing a search tool. It is envisaged that clear access to available competitions and their integration with the Development Pathway will increase participation; including encouraging the cross discipline model of athletes competing across multiple disciplines.

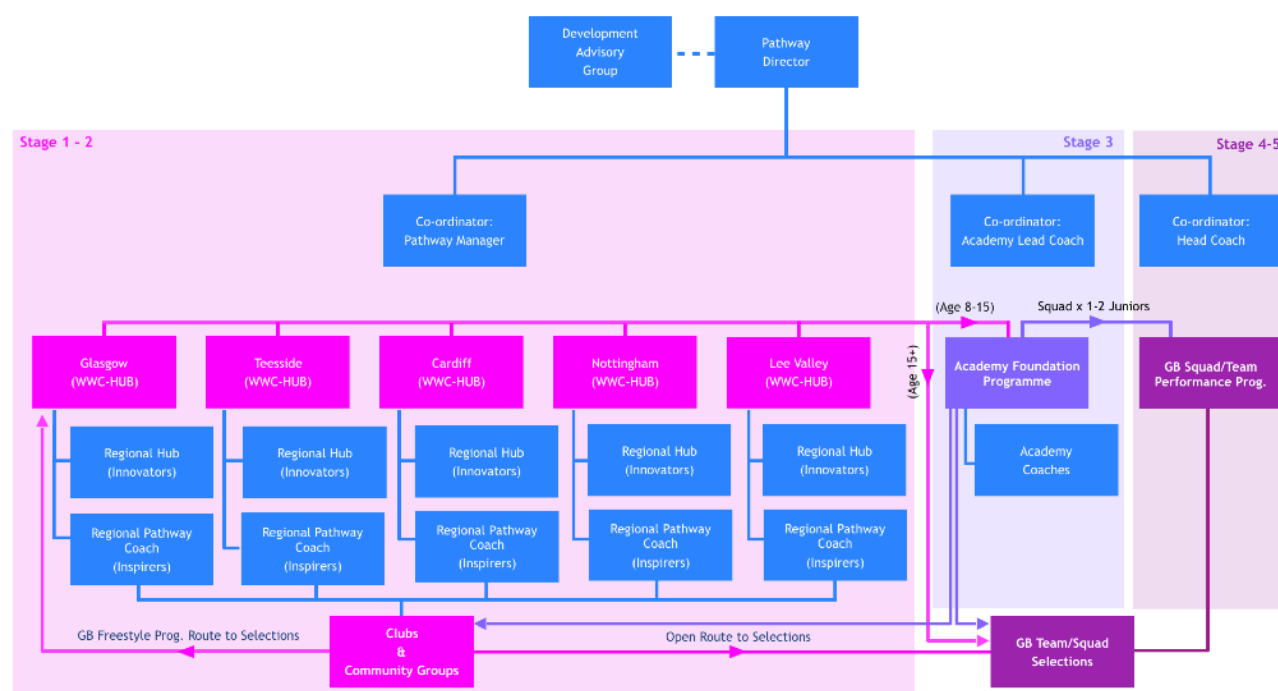
10. Establishing a Freestyle Development Advisory Group.

The Freestyle Development Advisory Group (DAG) looks at building and strengthening the relationship with external partners, British Canoeing and the key disciplines and departments that can provide or add expertise to GB Freestyle. Greater ties will allow for more continuity across programmes as well as best practice at the Local, Regional, National and International level. The formation of a Freestyle Development Advisory Group will help shape and guide the recreation and performance pathway environment.

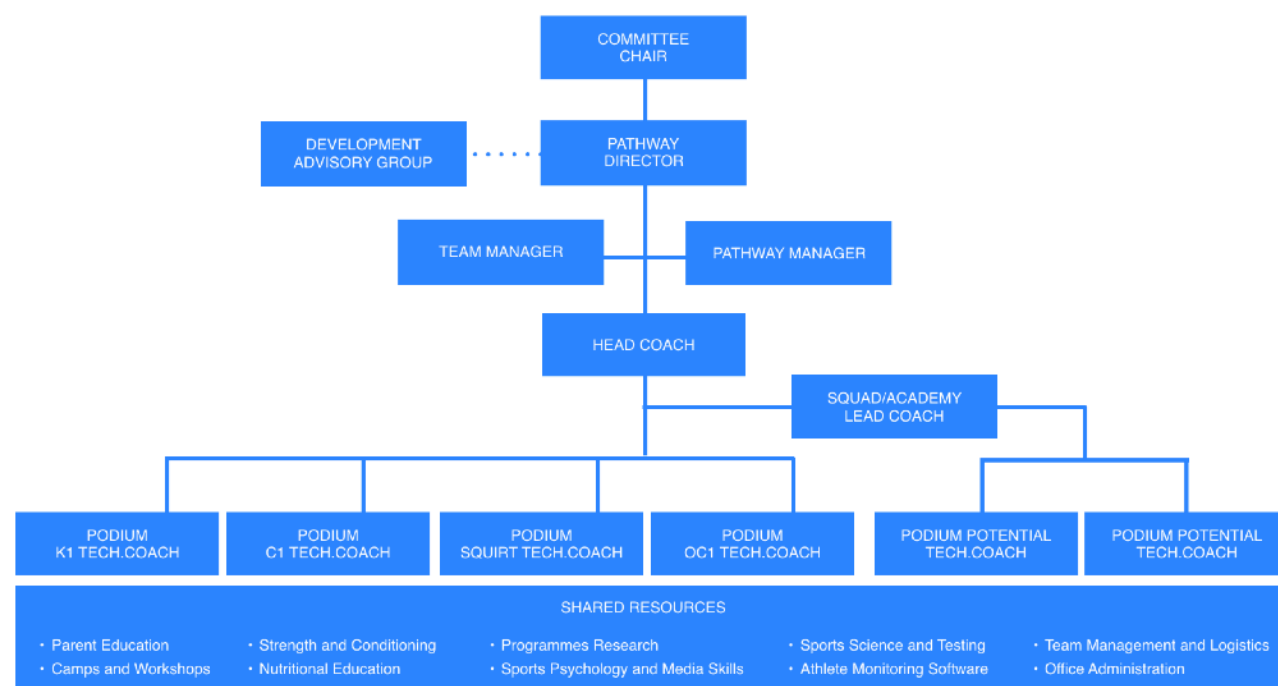
Recreational & Performance Structures

The overarching organisational structures are shown below. These identify the key personnel co-ordinating delivery and continuous improvement of the Development Pathway programmes.

Pathway Management Structure



Academy, Squad, Team Management Structure



Priorities, Time Frames and Objectives

To facilitate the implementation of the Development Pathway the following implementation plan is proposed.

OPERATIONAL PLAN	PRIORITY L = Low M = Medium H = High	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBILITIES
Strategy: Develop and Support Clubs, Community Groups & WW Freestyle Hubs.			
Objective: Nationally coordinated 'Regional Whitewater Freestyle Hubs' will be identified and integrated into the Development Pathway.			
Provide resources to support increasing freestyle participation, and personal development opportunities within Clubs and Community Groups.	H	2019	PD, PM
'Finding Freestyle' - create programmes and establish a review and research processes. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a questionnaire to research programmes specific aims and objectives. Create a guidance document and e-brochure for programme goals and activities. 	H	2019	PD, PM
Create Club/Community Group freestyle sessions that lead to regional series sessions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Phase 1, 2 and 3 (FUN, FLIP, FLY) All ages (modified activities and challenges) Create a guidance document and e-brochure for programme goals and activities. Include review process for all programmes.	M	2019	PD, PM
Partnership supported through GBF, with an assigned liaison (programmes management role); <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen the relationship with Clubs, Community Groups, Events, Freestyle Hubs and Home Nation freestyle programmes. 	H	2019	PD, PM
Periodic GB athlete and/or coach interactions to support club and community group freestyle activities.	H	2019	PD, PM
Develop the Inspirers and Innovators training / orientation programmes. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish club, community group, events and competition interactions. 	H	2019	PD, PM, DAG
Club and Community Group coaching volunteers invitations to shadow or assist the Freestyle Academy Camp pilot programme.	M	2019	PM
Web media (GBFC Website, GBFC FB page, British Canoeing etc.) will be used to promote the Clubs/Community Groups freestyle activities, including related programmes - sharing news, participants experience and aspirations.	H	2019	PD, PM, ASLC, INS
Continue to support and actively target promotions to engage more gender, and ethnic diversity in freestyle. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotion Material (Templates) for Freestyle Activities/Competitions. Develop a questionnaire to research, and help inform our strategic direction. 	H	2019	PD

Strategy: Creation of a Performance Pathway.			
Objective: To create high performance training environments for all athletes and coaches involved within each discipline, which will include shared resources amongst all programmes.			
All performance programmes to fall under one central co-ordination point of the Head Coach.	M	2020	PD
Matrix to be developed covering all aspects of athlete development in each learning phase.	H	2019	PD, DAG
Create a 'Foundation' and 'Excel' programmes for all freestyle disciplines. This programme will be Squad and Team based for each discipline - supporting training for national and international championships, plus sharing common resources for athlete development; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sports Science Support (TTPP). • National & International camps. • Highly bespoke individual athlete development. • Athlete remote education sessions for all disciplines. 	H	2019	PD, HC, SST, DAG
Enter into a partnership with a University to ensure that talented athletes gain access to testing and sports science support opportunities.	H	2019	PD
Appointment of a Development Pathway Manager (PM) based on the objectives and priorities of this plan. Assisting the Pathway Director (PD) in implementation of this Development Pathway Plan.	H	2018	PD
Establish a sustainable resources, planning, delivery, monitoring, review processes for the Development Pathway Plan.	H	2019	PD
Establish the Development Advisory Group (DAG) for the Development Pathway: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a terms of Reference for a Development Advisory Group. • Establish a group composition of GBF, BC, WCA, SCA and other external partners. 	H	2019	PD
Create a terms of reference for Development Pathway leadership and governance roles. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a generative collaboration working model. 	H	2019	PD, PM
Creating stronger links with other discipline communities, and actively engage talented paddlers with the Development Pathway Programmes.	H	2019	PD, PM, ASLC INS, INN
Strategy: Creation of an extended competition pathway to Clubs and Community Groups.			
Objective: Strengthen inter competition, including talent identification aspects.			
Linking Club Championships and other appropriate competitions to club/community group development environments.	M	2019	PD, PM
Development of an inter club/community competition that will also be used for the GB Academy programme.	M	2019	PD, PM, ASLC
Cross discipline (e.g. racing and freestyle, or K1 and C1) competition formats created to allow for transfer of athletes.	M	2019	PD, PM

Beginner/Intermediate competition strategy to be enhanced in order to create a competitive edge at the grass-roots level.	H	2019	PD, PM, ASLC, DAG
Bring all appropriate UK competitions under the umbrella of the Youth Freestyle Series, strengthen the strategic relationship with organisers.	H	2019	PD
Create clear sign posting to competition opportunities and their benefits through a Competition Pathway guide. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement a domestic competition/events review • Establish a new competition pathway. • Provide standardised information on available competition/events and how they relate to their needs. • Provide a web tool that can be managed by organisers. 	H	2019	PD
Strategy: Creation of a young freestylers development programme and academy.			
Objective: Nurture talent paddlers and create young ambassadors for freestyle to inspire others.			
Create Club/Community Group freestyle sessions that lead to regional series sessions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phase 1, 2 and 3 (FUN, FLIP, FLY) • Phase 1,2 and 3 with age 7-12 activity modifications. Include a review process for all programmes.	H	2019	PD, PM, ASLC
Establish annual Academy Camps designed to increase energy and enthusiasm in Club and Hub activities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a guidance document and e-brochure for Academy goals and activities. 	H	2019	PD, ASLC
Appoint an Academy Lead Coach to manage the co-ordination of the programme.	H	2018	PD
Create a process for Hubs, Clubs, and Community Groups to nominate young talented paddlers to attend the GB Freestyle Academy Camps.	M	2019	PD, PM
Create incentives for participants regularly attending the GB freestyle youth development programmes. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentoring from GB Athletes. • Links to external providers programmes. • Links to paddlesport manufacturers initiatives. 	M	2019	PD, PM
Web media (GB Freestyle FB page, British Canoeing etc) will be used to promote the GB Freestyle Academy - sharing news, participants experience and aspirations.	M	2019	PM, ASLC
Set up an Academy Coach status based on criteria to be developed by Development Advisory Group. Coaches would be offered extra up-skilling opportunities linking in with GB National Coaches and programmes.	H	2019	PD, PM, HC
Strategy: Develop a Coach Mentoring/CPD Programme.			
Objective: Long-term sustainable coach development environment to be created.			
Inspirers and Innovators project recruitment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-ordinate orientation/training programme. • Provide CPD opportunities through Pathway Programmes. 	H	2019	PD, PM

Manage the Inspirers and Innovators orientation/training programmes. • Training to be provided to coaches on the Development Pathway and the practical coach skills needed at each of the 10 phases (e.g. social development and activity modification for all ages, and abilities levels).	H	2019	PD, PM, DAG
Creation of a GB Freestyle Coach Mentor/CDP programme for Academy, Squad and Team coaches. Establish a tool for developing and evaluating the following areas; • Planning Practice • Managing Programmes • Designing Programmes • Supporting Athlete Training • Analysing Performance • Supporting Competitive Experiences • Ethical Decision Making	H	2019	PD
Set up a coach network group within each discipline (e.g. K1, C1 and SQR) to meet bi-monthly to discuss the current and future development environment. • Create Development Pathway Coach Network.	M	2019	PD
Talent Development coach status to be developed, key coaches to be targeted and mentored as future national coaches.	M	2019	PD, PM, ASLC
Develop and implement a system of official's and coach's identification and recruitment that attracts new volunteers.	H	2019	PD
Recognise the contribution and success of coaches within the Development Pathway through commendations from the GBF Chairman and British Canoeing President.	H	2019	PD
Strategy: Effective monitoring processes of athletes and coaches			
Objective: To create an accountable environment for all stakeholders involved.			
Develop monitoring software to track athlete developmental progress.	H	2019	PD, DAG
Develop monitoring software to track coach development and performance as part of a Coach Mentoring/CPD programme.	H	2019	PD, DAG
Creation of databases and systems to monitor athlete competition results.	H	2019	PD, DAG
Identify key stakeholders to have access to the software as part of an individuals' athlete development plans.	H	2019	PD, DAG
Strategy: Stronger ties with BC, WCA, SCA.			
Objective: Long term sustainable coach development environment to be created.			
Strengthen relationships with British Canoeing departments and personnel. Engagement must include meetings and being actively involved in British Canoeing High performance discussions.	M	2019	PD, HC

Liaising with British Canoeing and other Nations Associations regarding recreation and high performance strategies.	M	2019	PD, HC
Develop a portfolio of policies relevant to environment that align with the relevant policies of British Canoeing.	H	2019	PD, PM

Stakeholder Engagement

Engagement of key stakeholders plays an integral part in the delivery of our key strategies. Our stakeholder engagement plan revolves around inclusion as well as identifying key areas of support that will be required to deliver a successful training environment.

STAKEHOLDER	ENGAGEMENT	BUY-IN	PERSONNEL
Clubs & Community Groups	Through consistent correspondence, communication tools (emails, social media) and periodic meetings.	Pathways for club / community group based freestylers to progress in as a supplementary environment.	PD PM ASLC INS INN RDO
Coaches	Through coach development plans, meetings, pathway programmes and coach network groups.	Investment in their Club / Community Group programmes, including recognition and Personal Development opportunities.	PD PM DAG INS INN ASLC
GB Athletes	Through athlete performance plans, actionable conversation (e-communication), bespoke sessions, camps and competitions.	Investment in the athlete via regional, national and international development environment.	PD HC PTC, PPTC, ASLC SST
Sports Science	Through team staff engagement, meetings, athlete plans and competition support.	Athlete and team support as well as access to additional athlete services.	PD HC PTC, PPTC, ASLC DAG
BC/WCA/SCA	Through correspondence, consultation and support. Creation of ongoing 2-way communication.	Increased support, and quality of development environment within the UK's nations.	PD PM DAG HC ASLC SST

Notes:

PD Pathway Director (previously the Performance Director)
PM Pathway Manager
DAG Development Advisory Group
INS Inspirers
INN Innovators (aka. Innovation Facilitators)
ASLC Academy/Squad Lead Coach
HC Head Coach (Freestyle)
PTC Podium Technical Coach
PPTC Podium Potential Technical Coach
SST Sports Science Team
RDO Regional Development Officers (BC, WCA, SCA)

GBF GB Freestyle
BC British Canoeing
WCA Welsh Canoe Association
SCA Scottish Canoe Association

VOLUNTARY ROLES AND THERE PRIMARY PURPOSE

GB Freestyle aims to create a generative collaborative environment which supports achievement of the programmes goals, whilst providing our volunteers the opportunity to grow their potential.



"I'm incredibly grateful for the volunteers who have helped my journey to becoming a World Champion, without them GB Freestyle and our sport in general wouldn't be the same"

- Otilie Robinson-Shaw

(Junior Ladies European & World Champion)

DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY GROUP

The Development Advisory Group (DAG) will consist of representatives from all aspects of the Development Pathway and cover multiple disciplines. It will also include representatives from the Sports Science Team plus 2 independent members.

The DAG will provide a monitoring and advisory function in relation to the delivery of the strategic plan and the future development of

freestyle from grassroots to high performance.

PATHWAY DIRECTOR

The Pathway Director (PD) is directly accountable to the Committee Chairman. The role is to develop, review and implement the Development Pathway strategy towards GB Freestyle ambition; to create a sustainable development environment both in recreational and competitive freestyle paddlesport for lifelong learning.

The role will be responsible for leading the transition of these ambitions into reality, and for enabling the delivery of the Development Pathway strategy to reach its objectives. The PD works closely with the Chairman in strategising and operationalising the Development Pathway and Chairs the Development Advisory Group.

PATHWAY MANAGER

To lead a developing team of support staff and athletes into a new chapter in GB Freestyle by providing inspirational and dynamic

leadership and management to the Development Pathway programmes.

This includes supporting athletes in achieving their potential to compete at an international level and obtain a podium position, and develop coaching capability to support all levels of freestyle paddlesport.

HEAD COACH

The post holder will lead the Senior and Junior GB Team, Squad and Academy programme Athletes and Staff. The Head Coach will provide Performance Leadership to the GB Freestyle Coaching Team, staff and athletes. They will support the day to day development, planning and elite technical coaching.

The Head Coach will oversee the whole performance planning for the GB Freestyle Programme and work closely with the Team Manager and programme leads to excel at delivering those plans.

The Head Coach will oversee the delivery of the day to day technical training programmes in line with the agreed performance strategy and provide technical coaching guidance to the coaching team. The Head Coach will lead the Team to achieve the GB Freestyle Target in targets for 2021 World Championships and beyond.

TEAM MANAGER

The Team General Manager is responsible for organisation of Team Selections, International Competitions and Team General Administration (coordinating all the tasks that need to be done and making sure communications are clear to all affected individuals and that any outstanding issues are clarified in a timely basis. The Team Manager will accompany the team at European or World Championships events.

The purpose of the role is to manage the implementation of the Team operational plans directed by the Head Coach for the Freestyle Performance Programme for European and World Championships. To support the

Head Coach and Lead Coaches to facilitate a leading performance environment in which athletes, coaches and support staff thrive.

GB SQUAD/ACADEMY LEAD COACH

The Squad/Academy Lead Coach role oversees the delivery of the Squad & Academy Programmes, and will work closely with the GB Freestyle Pathway Director to build on the progress made to shape a sustainable Development Pathway (as part of the Development Pathway 2021 strategy), supporting Team GB's ambitious long-term international goals and inspiring the next generation of paddlers.

INSPIRERS

Being inspiring comes with the name of the role and that means bringing high energy, knowledge, skill and excitement. The primary purpose is to create a positive vibe around freestyle, endorse and motivate people into the opportunities that currently exist and develop. Identifying pockets where either by geographical or influenced opportunity more people are interested in freestyle is a key aspect of this role, inspirers will recognise these opportunities and are an integral part of driving better practice and arranging bespoke visits and hub activities with GB athletes and coaches.

The Inspirers are on the ground with the paddlers and facilitators. They can recognise common needs and in doing so have the ability to create resource that can be used by paddlers and coaches.

INNOVATORS

Innovation facilitators assisting the programme are individuals with high level skills for networking and programme development, who embrace and promote a positive culture of innovation. The primary purpose is to nurture and facilitate innovation at all levels of the freestyle community - giving volunteers a voice inside the Development Pathway to grow new ideas, and help individuals see the direct impact of their contributions. Initially aiming to identify and

support the current and future generation of freestyle coaches and event organisers; the innovators programme provides a structured way to drive innovation and share ideas throughout the Freestyle community.

PODIUM POTENTIAL TECHNICAL COACH

The Podium Potential Technical Coach will support the development of GB Freestyle Academy events, and nominated GB Squad Podium Potential athletes. The purpose of the post is to develop talented athletes to be the best they can be in line with 'WITTW' model.

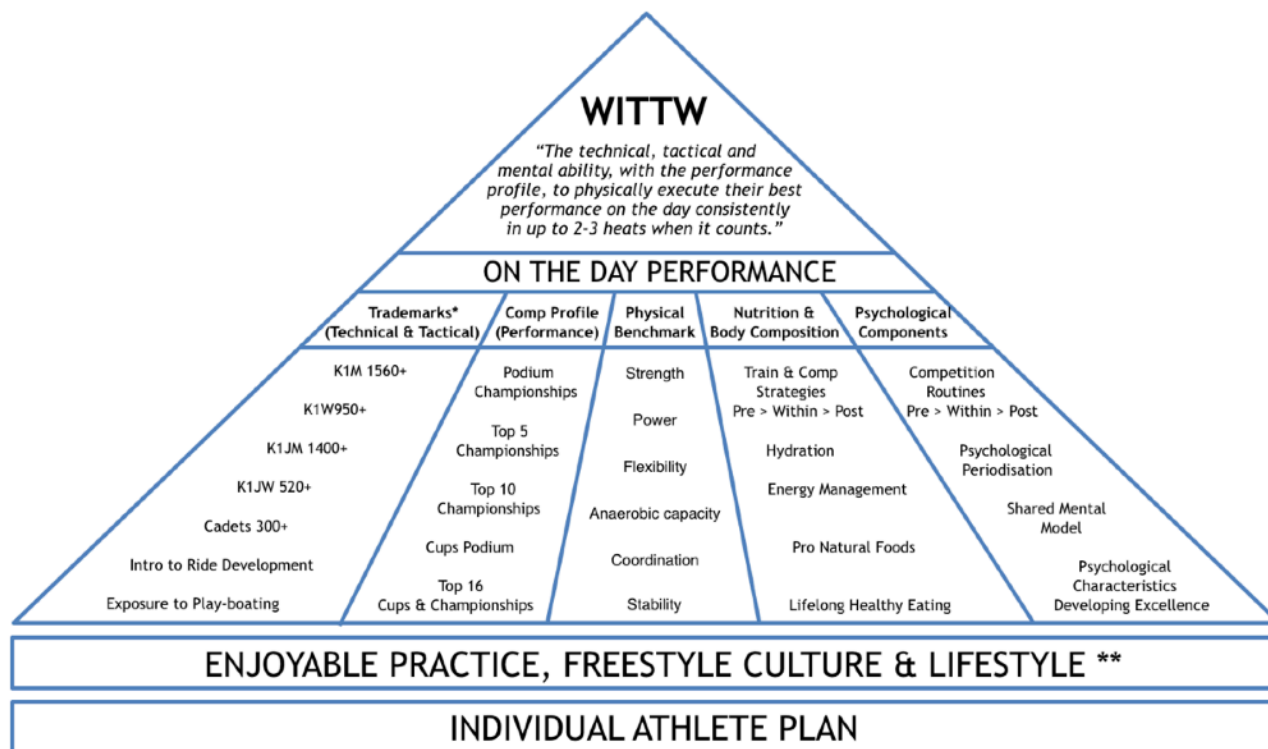
PODIUM TECHNICAL COACH

The Podium Technical Coach will support the development of nominated GB Team Podium Potential athletes. The purpose of the post is to develop talented athletes to be the best they can be in line with 'WITTW' model.

APPENDIX

Appendix 1 - 'What It Takes to Win Model' (WITTW)

GB Freestyle are developing an evidence based WITTW Model aimed at developing and preparing athletes who can ultimately perform on the day and deliver their best performance at World Championships.



* optimum performance training: Trademarks will be provided for all disciplines; C1SM, C1SW, C1JM, C1JW, SQRT-SM, SQRTJM, SQRTSW and SQRTJW
 **Programming that ensures the physical and social wellbeing of participants

Glossary

PD	Pathway Director (previously titled Performance Director)	K1	Kayak Discipline
PM	Pathway Manager	C1	Canoe Discipline
DAG	Development Advisory Group	SQRT	Squirt Discipline
INS	Inspirers	OC1	Open Canoe Discipline
INN	Innovators (aka. Innovation Facilitators)	JM	Junior Men
ASLC	Academy/Squad Lead Coach	SM	Senior Men
HC	Head Coach (Freestyle)	MM	Masters Men
PTC	Podium Technical Coach	JW	Junior Women
PPTC	Podium Potential Technical Coach	SW	Senior Women
SST	Sports Science Team	MW	Masters Women
RDO	Regional Development Officers (BC, WCA, SCA)	TTPP	Technical, Tactical, Physical, Psychological
GBF	GB Freestyle	CPD	Continued Personal Development
BC	British Canoeing		
WCA	Welsh Canoe Association		
SCA	Scottish Canoe Association		