



Chief Operating Officer Report October 2022

Introduction

As I reflect on my first full season with Waterski and Wakeboard Scotland what stands out to me is that our sport is at its best when it brings people together. It doesn't seem to matter whether that's a sunny evening at the club or site, at an event or as a member of a British team. When people come together, they always leave feeling included, motivated, and inspired. So, I would like to start by thanking all of those who put so much work into making these opportunities possible!

Around the time of last year's AGM, we were reaching the closing stages of developing our 2022-2025 Strategic Plan which shortly afterwards we took to **sportscotland** as part of their strategic review process. We were successful in gaining their support for our strategy and will shortly be returning to show them the continued progress we are making and hope to secure a commitment for more support in the future.

In our strategic plan, we set out our three focus areas of work for this period: Promotion & Partnerships, Coaching & Development and Support & Advice. We also detailed the strategies we would use to deliver these for three key groups: Our Participants, Our Community and Our Sports. Below I have provided an update on what we have delivered and what we have planned for each of these groups.

Our Participants

Whilst some events were able to take place towards the end of last season, this year has marked the return to the calendar of a more meaningful programme of events. Our focus has been on supporting a programme of events that are welcoming and inclusive and provide an opportunity for people to come together and enjoy our sports in a sociable environment. We must thank all our event hosts for embracing this approach and look forward to building on this again next season.

Similarly, this year we have been able to develop our Coaching Clinic offering which sees days of focused coaching and detailed feedback provided to participants in locations around the country. Across the season these clinics have covered waterskiing and wakeboarding (boat and cable) and participants ranging from Beginners to World Champions. We hope to develop this offering further next season with our coaches visiting more sites and providing more opportunities.

As a governing body, one of our key roles is keeping our participants up to date with information about developments in our sports. Whilst on the face of it a simple task, in a sport with many disciplines and a diverse participant base this required the use of several different channels and forms of communication. We have introduced a series of regular newsletters – each tailored to a different group – sent direct emails where appropriate and have made extensive use of social media.

When we think about our participants, we must think about this in the widest possible sense, from our committed regulars right through to those potential participants who are considering giving our sports a go. Our free E-Membership product has been designed with those potential participants and other new participants in mind and is a great way to stay up-to-date and access some basic benefits. This has been our first full season of operating the E-Membership and it has continued to grow quickly, our thanks must go to our Partner Sites for promoting this to their participants.

Looking ahead we will continue to develop our communications with more interesting content reaching the relevant people at the right times through the right channels. In the immediate term, we are excited to be working with BWSW on placing content in the magazine including a 'Focus on Scotland' piece in the next edition.

This will also be a chance to celebrate the success of our athletes on the national and international stage, and what a successful season it has been. Orla Winn and Charlotte Docherty both took National Titles with Orla also taking a World Champion title at the WWA Wake Park Worlds. Both riders also made the British Cable Wakeboard team for the World and European Championships with Eve Smith-Lang also joining them. The European Wakesurf Championships ran alongside the Wake Park Worlds and Raymond Colquhoun took home gold in the Men's Masters category. Ollie Jessop won the British Slalom Waterski Championships in Men's 35+ category and was joined by Kevin Lochhead and Chris Heron in the British Team at the 35+ World Waterski Championships.

This year we became a full member of Water Safety Scotland, whose main purpose is to understand the risks around water in Scotland and develop a consistent approach to the prevention of water-related fatalities. We will continue to contribute to and learn from this work and will be sharing their key messages and resources with our participants as we move forward.

Our Community

During the off-season, a major piece of work that took place was the development of new websites. Our old website needed a refresh, and we took this opportunity to separate the Governing Body and Town Loch National Training Site presence online. Thanks to Lawrence McNamara of WebXeL – and member at Town Loch – for all his hard work in putting these together.

Over the past couple of years our Development Coach, Ali Brotherton, has with the support of others developed a set of coaching resources in the form of booklets and videos. These resources are only available to Members and E-Members and can be found in the 'Members Zone' on the new Waterski and Wakeboard Scotland website. We intend to continue to grow and develop this offering over time building this into an invaluable resource for our members.

To ensure that our participants have the best experiences it is important that we support our clubs and sites to have exceptional staff and volunteers, this includes boat drivers. We are committed to developing a full pathway of support for drivers and began this process by developing two Advanced Driver Training modules. These modules are designed to help those who have completed the Ski Boat Driver qualification and gained some experience driving at their club or venue to develop their skills. We plan to expand our support of this pathway with the development of a framework to support those undertaking boat driving lessons and support to bridge the gap between the Ski Boat Driver qualification and driving skiers in the specific disciplines of all levels.

In addition to providing support and resources to our clubs, sites, and members it is also important that we recognise and reward their contributions and their successes. To do this we are introducing a set of awards with the first winners being announced at the 2022 AGM. Each year we will give awards which recognise exceptional performances by Scottish athletes and the massive contributions of our volunteers. We will also be able to recognise those who have made significant and long-standing contributions to our sports via a Service Award.

Our Sports

We continue to develop our relationships with the Affiliated Clubs and Partner Sites around the country. Over the winter months, we used Club Gatherings as an opportunity to gain feedback on the season gone and get input directly from the clubs on what support they needed going forward. As we moved into the season, we continued to stay in touch with the clubs through regular update communications and by working with them directly to provide individualised support. Work that

Chris Heron who has recently taken up the Development Officer role will continue in the coming months.

This year saw the return of the Scottish Wake Series and the introduction of a Backyard Slalom Series. The Scottish Wake Series faced some challenges throughout the season with only half the intended events taking place. The series finally got started with Loch Stock hosted by Loch Lomond Wakeboard, the event for the first time including a Wake Surf competition. The focus then shifted to Cable Events with Foxlake holding a 10th-anniversary celebration competition and Glasgow Wake Park rounding out the year with their ever-popular event. We will be taking some time over the winter to listen to feedback, review this series and refine the offering for next season.

The Backyard Slalom Series provided a set of four fun-focused events which were truly inclusive of all abilities. The early season events hosted by Kyle Waterski and Wakeboard and the Town Loch National Training Site provided an opportunity for the community to come together in a sociable environment with a competition format that gives everyone a chance to shine. Evidenced by the fact even I managed to make a podium appearance.

A massive congratulations to everyone who took part in any of the series events and especially well done to all our event and overall series medallists. We must thank Raymond Colquhoun and Gordon Forsyth at Scotland Nautique for sponsoring both series this year, without their support these would not have been the success that they were.

I would like to thank the Town Loch National Training Site team led by Chris Heron for all their hard work and resilience in what has at times been a challenging season. The team have introduced several new initiatives this year with more planned for the winter and into next season all driven by the Town Loch Development Plan which was put together this season.

By forming partnerships with other national and local organisations we can expose new people to our sports. We have begun working in partnership with Water Safety Scotland and a Fife Coast and Countryside Trust to put together a programme which will bring groups from local primary schools along to Town Loch. Over the course of the programme, each child will experience waterskiing or wakeboarding, explore the wildlife found in the country park and learn about how to keep themselves safe in and around water. Once established we hope to be able to offer this programme as a package which other sites can use.

Another partnership we continue to develop is with British Water Ski and Wakeboard including with the many volunteer-led committees which support their work. We want to work together with them, support one another and ensure that our members in Scotland receive quality support that is relevant to them. This year we were able to secure a Friends of Tournament Development Day at the Town Loch National Training Site. This saw British Team Member Glen Campbell travel up to provide a day of coaching to a group of young and developing waterskiers and was fully funded by Friends of Tournament. We were also fortunate to be able to organise for Glen to provide a subsidised Coaching Clinic open to all participants the day before.

As you will hopefully see we have made a strong start in delivering our strategy and I believe we are in a strong position to deliver significantly more over the coming years if we continue to all work together.

Calum Reid – Chief Operating Officer