



Chief Operating Officer Report October 2023

Introduction

We are now well into our 2022-2025 Strategic Plan and have continued to make good progress in delivering against it. Shortly after the last AGM our Chair, Kevin Lochhead, and I met with **sportscotland** to update them on our progress in the hope of securing a commitment for more support going forward. Overall, the feedback was positive, and we were successful in securing two years of a slight increase in investment. This increase in investment is a recognition of what has been achieved in recent years but it comes with a challenge to step this up significantly in order to secure a strong future for our sport.

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

Last year we saw the return of a meaningful programme of events to the calendar and while we are always looking to build the number of events taking place our focus this year was on refining and developing what already takes place. The Backyard Slalom Series had another successful season with participation continuing to grow in number as well as diversity. Our thanks must go to the Town Loch National Training Site and Kyle Waterski and Wakeboard Club for hosting these events. Our ambitions for the series in 2024 include at least one event taking place at a new venue.

Over the winter we took a hard look at the wakeboard calendar and decided to retire the Scottish Wake Series (at least for now) and for Boat Wake disciplines to focus our attentions on fun and inclusive events which grow the number of people taking part. We introduced a Scottish Open Championships for Cable Wakeboarding which took place recently as part of Foxlake Adventure new event concept, JibFest. The Scottish Open Championships will rotate amongst the Cable Wakeboard sites moving forward and will be held at Glasgow Wake Park in 2024. We must thank all our event hosts for embracing our approach and look forward to building on this again next season.

As always, we continue to do our best to keep our participants up to speed on everything that's going on in our sports. We send regular newsletters, tailored to the relevant groups, send updates for clubs to disseminate and make extensive use of social media. This year we have also been successful in having content featured in almost every edition of the BWSW Magazine helping to share stories to participants across Great Britain. It is however face-to-face and word of mouth that continues to be the most successful for our sport and to that end we have done our best to get out and about to speak to members and participants around the country.

Last year I said that we must think about our participants 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 goes some way to supporting our potential and new participants through the communications they receive and access to our online coaching resources.

That said there is significant work to be done in this area and we will be looking at the big picture of our membership offering over the winter period.

One task that always puts a smile on our face is celebrating our athletes when they compete on the national and international stage. While there has been success and podium visits for athletes across our disciplines it is even more exciting to see several new athletes travel to compete at events across the UK and Europe as well as some experienced participants returning to competition after some years away. A full role of honour can be found appended to this report.

Our Community

Development Coach, Ali Brotherton, has continued to grow and develop our online coaching resources through the production of additional booklets and coaching videos. These resources are only available to Members and E-Members and can be found in the Members Zone on the Waterski and Wakeboard Scotland website. We intend to continue to grow and develop this into an invaluable resource for our members so if there are things you think are missing then please do let us know.

In addition to the content within the Members Zone, we have produced an Observer/Helper Online Training designed to help train and develop volunteers to support the day-to-day running of their site. The training is made of a series of short videos and a knowledge tester. This training was developed in response to a request by our clubs and we hope it will help encourage and inspire people to get involved.

We have continued to develop our offer of development opportunities for the staff and volunteers of our clubs and sites. During the off season we offered an Online Disability Inclusion Training, driver training, a Waterski Judges Course and a British Water Ski and Wakeboard Level 1 Coaching Course. During the off-season we convened a short-life working group focused on driver development which helped us to fully define the pathway of support needed to develop drivers. This group also produced a 'Learn to Dive Framework' and began work on a Minimum Standard Scheme which we hope to progress during this coming off season. In addition to this work, we have further developed our internal driver training resource with Chris Heron becoming an SBD Principal for Level 2 and Level 3 (Module A & S).

At the 2022 AGM we were delighted to present the first Waterski and Wakeboard Scotland Annual Awards. The awards presented are Performance of the Year, Volunteer of the Year, and a Service Award. The Service Award recognises the outstanding contribution of long-standing people in the sport. As part of our 'launch' of this award and in recognition of the fact that many people have made significant contributions to the organisation/delivery of the sport – that may have gone somewhat unrecognised – over the past decade or so we gave the Service Awards to a group of deserving people. A full role of honour can be found appended to this report.

Our Sports

Our Affiliated Club and Partner Sites are the core of our sport, and we continue to do what we can to develop our support offering to them. We again held an end of season Club Gathering as an opportunity to gain feedback on the season gone and get input directly from the clubs on what support they need. We also met with all the Partner Sites individually to get feedback from this part of our sport. This helped inform our work for the off-season and into this season.

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 created last season.

Our work to build new partnerships with other national and local organisations continues. This work is a vital part of exposing new people to our sport and creating a more diverse community. This year via the Town Loch National Training Site we have developed a partnership with Scottish Autism which has provided us with support and resources which help us to provide the best possible service to autistic participant. We also worked with Access Adventures and Scottish Disability Sport during the off-season to organise the previously mentioned Disability Inclusion Training.

Our project with Water Safety Scotland and a Fife Coast and Countryside Trust to bring groups from local primary schools along to Town Loch has been delayed due to funding challenges. Our aim was that over the course of the programme, each child would experience waterskiing or wakeboarding, explore the wildlife found in the country park and learn about how to keep themselves safe in and around water. We are committed to bringing this important project to fruition in some form and have already begun working on an alternative lower cost model.

We also continue to develop our relationship with British Water Ski and Wakeboard including with the many volunteer-led committees which support their work. We now have representation on a number of these committees and contribute the 'Scottish voice' where required. This year we further enhanced our relationships with Friends of Tournament gaining support for another Development Day at the Town Loch National Training Site as well as funding for our Backyard Slalom Series events to support Trick Skiing development. Our thanks go to Friends of Tournament for this invaluable opportunity.

The Future

As you will hopefully see we have made some good progress in delivering our existing strategy as well as beginning to look beyond this to ensure a vibrant future for our sport.

*Prepared by Calum Reid
20 October 2023*

Appendix 1 – Roll of Honour (National & International) 2023 Season

Waterski

Oliver Jessop

- San Gervasio Pro Am – 1st +35 Men's Slalom
- UK Combined National Championships – 1st +35 Men's Slalom
- IWWF E&A +35 Championship - Great Britain Squad Member

Chris Heon

- San Gervasio Pro Am – 2nd +35 Men's Slalom
- UK Combined National Championships – 2nd +35 Men's Slalom
- IWWF E&A +35 Championship - Great Britain Squad Member & Team Vice Captain

Kevin Lochhead

- San Gervasio Pro Am – 4th +55 Men's Slalom
- UK Combined National Championships – 3rd +35 Men's Slalom
- IWWF E&A +35 Championship - Great Britain Squad Member

Matt Mills

- UK Combined National Championships – 2nd +75 Men's Slalom

Cable Wakeboard

Eve Smith-Lang

- O Fest – 6th Open Women

Ali Brotherton

- UK Cable Wakeboard National Championships – 3rd +30 Men

Kai Kinney Smith

- UK Cable Wakeboard National Championships – 2nd U11 Boys

Mai Kenney Smith

- UK Cable Wakeboard National Championships – 3rd U11 Girls

Boat Wake

Raymond Colquhoun

- Nautique European Wakesurf Championship Spain – 2nd Veteran Men Surf
- Nautique European Wakesurf Championship Spain – 1st Veteran Men Skim
- Nautique European Wakesurf Championship London – 1st Veteran Men Surf
- Nautique European Wakesurf Championship London – 3rd Veteran Men Skim
- Masters Wakesurf Championships – 3rd Veteran Men Surf
- Masters Wakesurf Championships – 3rd Veteran Men Skim
- Nautique Wakesurf Series – 1st Veteran Men Surf

- Nautique Wakesurf Series – 1st Veteran Men Skim

Appendix 2 – Roll of Honour - Annual Awards 2022

Volunteer of the Year – Iain Stewart – Aberdeen Waterski & Wakeboard Club

Performance of the Year (Waterski) – Oliver Jessop – Town Loch

Performance of the Year (Cable Wakeboard) – Orla Winn - Foxlake Adventures

Service Award:

- Campbell Cavana – Loch Lomond Water Ski Club
- Andrew Haslam – Town Loch
- David Henderson – Loch Lomond Water Ski Club
- Matt Mills – Town Loch
- John Morton – Aberdeen Waterski & Wakeboard Club
- Katrina Morton – Aberdeen Waterski & Wakeboard Club
- John Radford – Kyle Waterski & Wakeboard Club
- Stuart Wood – Town Loch