



Minutes of the British Weight Lifting Board Meeting

Date: Tuesday 30 January 2024

Start: 13.30

Venue: Leeds United, Elland Road, Leeds, LS11 0ES

Present: Angus Kinnear (AK), Matthew Curtain (MC), Philip Edmondson (PE), Rupinder Ashworth (RA), Jenny Tong (JT), Sheona Southern (SS), Neill Wood (NW)

Apologies: Kelly Sotherton (KS), John Harrison (JH)

In attendance: Kath Leonard (KL), Mark Martin (MM), Tara Drake (TD)

Virtual: Stuart Martin (SM), Tom Whittaker (TW), Lilla Horvath (LH)

1 Welcome and Apologies

AK opened the meeting, thanking all members for attending and noting apologies from KS and JH. It was noted that JH will be invited to Board meetings going forward as a UK Sport representative with permission of the Board.

2 Declarations of Interest

No new conflicts of interests were declared out of those existing with KS (Sport England funding matters) and JT (I Trust Sport).

3 Minutes from Previous Meeting and Matters Arising

The minutes of the Board meeting held on 27 September 2023 were agreed as read and approved.

UK SPORT FUNDING SUBMISSION

MC noted that at the time of the last meeting of 27 September, BWL were in dialogue with UK Sport regarding the 2028 funding cycle for weightlifting and para-powerlifting, [REDACTED]. Funding submissions have since been submitted and TW and SM provided an update.

TW provided an update on provisional planning positions for para-powerlifting and whether BWL would be rewarded stable, decreased or uplifted funding. Draft submissions for both para-powerlifting and weightlifting were submitted prior to engagement panels in November 2023. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. Indicative investment figures will be received from UK Sport in March 2024. A draft budget will

be submitted prior to the Olympic Games, followed by a UK Sport panel review factoring in Olympic Games performance in October 2024 leading to a final funding decision in December 2024.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

TW noted that the para-powerlifting submission differed slightly due to the existence of the current WCP, building on strategic priorities and identifying a need for funding uplift since the programme has doubled in size and staff capacity and funding resources has remained the same. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Further updates on funding will be provided to the Board in April or May 2024.

ROAD TO PARIS – MARKETING PLAN

RA previously raised Road to Paris marketing plan as a discussion point. The Board welcomed Lilla Horvath (LH), BWL Marketing and Communications Manager, to the meeting to present and discuss the proposed Path to Paris Marketing and Communication plan.

LH noted that this is the provisional plan and welcomes feedback from the Board. The projects will run concurrently across various social media channels including Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, BWL website, YouTube and Spotify.

Historic Olympic Events

- Weekly Flashbacks - Feature iconic lifts and moments from previous Olympics, highlighting British athletes' achievements and significant global milestones in the sport.
- Podcast Series - Create short podcast talk shows about legendary Olympic weightlifters, their journeys, and their record-breaking performances.

Educational Content

- Weightlifting 101 - Educational posts or videos explaining the rules, techniques, and scoring of Olympic weightlifting and para powerlifting.
- "Did You Know?" Series - Share interesting facts about weightlifting history, Olympic records, and the evolution of the sport.

Interactive & Engaging Content

- Virtual Competitions - Host online challenges where followers can predict outcomes of historic Olympic matches.
- Q&A with Past Olympians - Arrange live sessions with former Olympic weightlifters and para powerlifters who can share their experiences and insights.

Behind the Scenes

- Training Day in the Life - Collaborate with training centres or local clubs to showcase what a typical training day looks like for an Olympic weightlifter and para powerlifter.
- Coach's Corner - Interviews or articles featuring insights from coaches, discussing strategies and preparations for the Olympics.

Fan Engagement

- Fan Memories - Encourage followers to share their favourite Olympic weightlifting and para powerlifting moments or personal stories related to the sport
- Olympic Countdown - Create a countdown feature with trivia, historical facts, and highlights from previous Games.

Build-up to Team Announcement

- Athlete Profiles - Even though the final team might be unknown, we can still feature potential Olympic hopefuls, sharing their stories and journeys.
- The Road to Selection - Share insights into the selection process, criteria, and what it takes to become an Olympian in weightlifting.

Leveraging Social Media Trends

- TikTok/Reels Challenges - Create fun, weightlifting-related challenges or trends that fans can participate in.
- Instagram Polls and Stories - Using interactive features to engage users in Olympic trivia, athlete predictions, and more. Social Media Platform: Instagram

Video Projects

- Masters Athlete - Lifting Through the Ages: The Master Athletes' Story
- Weightlifting Athlete - From Dreams to Olympic Rings: A Weightlifting Story
- Para-powerlifting Athlete - Rising Above: The Para Powerlifting Journey

Feedback was positive overall. AK and RA raised questions regarding how the success of the marketing plan will be benchmarked in terms of KPIS, including legacy, engagement and increased membership. MC noted that the main objective is to provide more opportunity to increase involvement in the sport, highlighting the refreshed coach, technical official and gym locators on the BWL website and noting the upcoming launch of the Partner Gym finder for commercial gyms which will all increase accessibility to weightlifting. LH noted links to all departments within BWL, with courses being promoted and therefore commercial viability, legacy and conversion being useful benchmarks of the marketing plan.

RA and SS suggested PR involvement or recruitment of a PR intern to encourage further promotion during the pre-Games period. SS agreed with the importance of the inclusion of the Masters community and MC noted that the overall improvement of the relationship with the Masters community.

4 Finance Matters

MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS FOR NOVEMBER 2023

MM provided an overview of the eight-month results noting a £71k surplus which is on an upward trend with four months to go we are set to break even and close the year on £74k. The budget was initially expected to achieve £27k. Successes include the £500k target for course sales, which we are on track to achieve and minimises risk on the forecast. Expenditure has been controlled by 1) not having a full staffing complement and 2) Savings in board fees and overheads, both leading to a strong

surplus. MC also noted the increase in partnership income. Noting the close proximity to year end, the forecasted profit of £74k looks stable which places us at the higher end of our reserve limit. The recommendation is to discuss releasing reserves into either staff bonus, which is not currently listed in the forecast, or investing into the charity.

MC noted that the marketing plan for Paris will be included in next years budget, and future income will be generated by Tier 4 competitions, increased membership and partnerships.

MM provided a brief update on the recent UK Sport spot check, which was successful.

METROBANK UPDATE

MM advised that the onboarding process is almost complete, and the account should be open within approximately one week.

FOUNDATION UPDATE

MC advised that the direction of the Foundation has been discussed with the trustees, with a proposal of purchasing a property for BWL and tying it in with charitable endeavours. It was highlighted that this should be a discussion point going forward.

5 Decisions Taken outside the Board Meeting

EFW ATHLETE COMMISSION

MC offered congratulations to JT on her recent interim appointment to the EFW Athlete Commission and JT will attend the EFW Congress in Sofia on 17 February 2024. MC highlighted that BWL international representation has gone from zero to five members since June 2022, including himself alongside Heather Allison (IWF Technical Committee, and Commonwealth VP), Keith Morgan OBE (IWF Coaching and Research Committee), Cyrille Tchatchet II (IWF Athletes Commission), Jenny Tong (EFW Athletes Commission). Moreover, in February 2023, Emily Muskett was also appointed to the Athletes Commission of the British Olympic Association.

2023 STAFF SURVEY

MC updated the Board on the results of the 2023 Staff Survey. The overall organisational culture has improved with a focus on mental health, wellbeing and working from home. There was feedback from the team regarding the BWL values 'Care, Share, Dare', and it was noted that these values should be reviewed. Results also showed that more team updates were required from the Senior Leadership Team. KL noted some positive shifts in the culture and very few negative responses were submitted. MC noted that with regards to flexible home working, the team feel trusted and respected and there are face-to-face working environments available at Nottingham, Loughborough and Brunel.

AGM 2023

MC noted that the last AGM held on 26 October 2023 was held online via a virtual conference facility.

ARMED FORCES AGREEMENT

MC advised that the agreement was finalised at the end of 2023.

OLYMPIC GAMES LOS ANGELES 2028

MC noted that weightlifting was readmitted back into the Olympic programme.

UPDATE: BWL TECHNICAL RULES AND REGULATIONS

TCRR's have been updated in the UK to encourage participation at club level by making competitions easier to host.

OPTIMUM NUTRITION

BWL have signed a new partnership agreement with Optimum Nutrition for two years.

RAMIRO MORA ROMERO – REFUGEE ATHLETE

Ramiro Mora Romero, originating from Cuba, has been granted asylum in the UK and permission to stay for five years. He is a competitive athlete and British record holder and is likely to be selected by the IOC to compete at Paris 2024 as a refugee. As of today, Clementine Meukeugni Noubissi, has also been granted refugee status with Olympic Games potential.

JT posed a question regarding Olympic qualification and if they must follow the same process as UK athletes. MC noted that there is no current provision within the Olympic qualification for refugees but confirmed that refugee athletes would sit outside of the 120-athlete quota and highlighted that they are subject to testing. JT raised a question around the impact of a refugee athlete testing negatively and the impact of that on GB athletes, MC confirmed there would be zero impact.

6 Minutes and Recommendations from the Sub-Committees

AUDIT

The Finance and Audit Committee last met on 6 September 2023. The next meeting has been confirmed for March 2024, ahead of the next Board meeting.

ENGLAND COMMITTEE

The England Committee last met on 8 December 2023 and the focus was consultation regarding the new Tier 4 competition format. The group agreed that the new format would be an umbrella under which we can develop different hybrid events at club level.

PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE

The Performance Committee last met on 19 October 2023 and was chaired by JT. Significant updates were provided for weightlifting (SM) and para-powerlifting (TW) and JT praised the pro-active nature of both teams regarding squads, selection and forward planning.

COMMERCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

It was noted the Committee met informally in early January to discuss the Optimum Nutrition partnership, SBD agreement as well as to evaluate the new BWL merchandise approach.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

No official meeting has been held noting ongoing informal dialogue continues with UK Sport in regard to BWL's consolidation focused strategy.

7 Operational Reports

PARA-POWERLIFTING

TW provided an update on recent performances. The team withdrew from the World Cup in Cairo due to issues around safety of travel and the event was replaced with the World Ability Sport Games in Thailand.

World Ability Games

Louise Sugden competed due to individual qualification strategy. She made weight in a new class and competed in women's 79kg and achieved a gold medal and a top 8 qualification total.

England Championships

Some athletes without the pressure to attend international events competed at the BWL England Championships. Mark Swan made a +7kg PB lift of 207kg in the men's 65kg class and ranks him second in the world.

Upcoming Events

In terms of upcoming events, there are two mandatory competitions to enable eligible athletes to achieve, defend or cement their top 8 paralympic qualification ranking:

- UAE World Cup, Dubai: 28th Feb – 7th March 2024
- UK World Cup, Manchester: 19th – 26th June 2024

There are a number of domestic events to be confirmed for non-pathway athletes.

Paris 2024

Currently six athletes in top 8 qualification slots, which is our strongest position to date. Target is minimum team size of six, which is an additional athlete bigger than our Tokyo cohort and will be a paralympic debut performance for half of the team:

- Mark Swan – 3rd, men's 65kg
- Olivia Broome – 3rd, women's 50kg
- Zoe Newson – 4th, women's 41kg / 45kg
- Liam McGarry – 7th, men's 107kg
- Charlotte McGuinness – 8th, women's 55kg
- Matthew Harding – 9th
- Rebecca Bedford – 10th

Prep camp has been confirmed for SGEL on 22nd – 30th August 2024. £11k funding was secured from the UK Sport Annual Investment Review to offset money lost surrounding the Cairo World Cup.

Immediate Priorities

- Individual athlete health strategies pre-games
- Team preparation ahead of Dubai World Cup
- TW will travel to Paris 4th – 7th February 2024 to investigate facilities and games environment.
- WCP selection – March 2024
- Talent Pathway continues to be a main focus for quality athletes and medal trajectories.
- Athlete development
- Athlete recruitment
- Domestic competition opportunities
- Projects:
 - o Women's health
 - o Daily activity monitoring
 - o World standards data insights

- Review of current support undertaken
- PDP conference

Build a broader and diverse base of athletes (Grass Roots)

- Bell Kettleby inducted and through probation
- New RTB projects being explored and rolled out this quarter including TA league / competitions
- New partnerships with other sports being explored

Sport Scotland Talent

Change the way we support athletes with potential

- Regional Squads relaunched
- STS Squads launched and 2 training camps delivered at Inverclyde
- Business as usual

Upcoming International Competitions

The following competitions are coming up for Olympic qualification. It was noted that this is a strong team of athletes.

European Senior Championships (Bulgaria) - February 2024

- Target 6 x medals, 3 x Top 5 finishes, 3 x Top 8 finishes, 4 x Top 10 finishes
- Jessica Gordon Brown - w59
- Zoe Smith - w64
- Jonathan Chin - m73
- Chris Murray - m73
- Erin Barton - w71
- Sarah Davies - w71
- Katrina Feklistova - w81 (weigh-in only)
- Cyrille Tchatchet II - m96
- Andrew Griffiths - m102
- Emily Campbell - w87+

Additional coaches have been invited to support the current team with the view of succession planning – Kristian McPhee, Mehmed Fikretov and Amy Kirby-Saunders.

IWF World Cup (Thailand) - April

- Qualify 1-2 additional athletes for Paris 2024
- Fraer Morrow - w49 (subject to fitness)
- Jess Gordon Brown - w59 (subject to performance at Euros)
- Zoe Smith - w64
- Chris Murray - m73
- Erin Barton - w71 (subject to performance at Euros)
- Sarah Davies - w71
- Katrina Feklistova - w81 (subject to fitness)
- Cyrille Tchatchet II - m96 (subject to performance at Euros)
- Emily Campbell - w87+ (weigh-in only)

JT asked about Chris Murrays chance of qualifying for the Olympics based on his recent category change. SM noted that most athletes have an outside chance due to the current qualification standards. With help from the quota system, Chris Murray could be 6-10 kg from qualifying, or 10-15kg without quota assistance but highlights his improved performance in training and he remains the

highest outside chance. Sarah Davies is 10kg from qualifying currently, Fraer Morrow will need 185-190kg to qualify, Zoe Smith will need 216-220kg to qualify. Katrina Feklistova could qualify based on fitness. The remaining athletes are around 15-20kg from the standards. [REDACTED]

SPORT ENGLAND AND EDUCATION

KL provided an update on Education, Competitions, Sports Development and Governance.

The focus on education remains ensuring courses remain for purpose through reviews and updates. New CPD courses have been launched including Nutrition for Fitness and an online PT course. A key area of focus has been on youth weightlifting courses with support from external consultants. Continuing to work with key partners on bespoke courses, including Armed Forces, Marines, Virgin Active and Pure Gym. We have recruited new lead educators for marking and grading and will be hosting an educator standardisation training day in March 2024. The DiSE programme continues to run as a two-year course for 16–18-year-olds with potential for the talent pathway. Fifty students have completed it with a current cohort of forty students taking part currently.

With regards to competitions, there remains a high demand from athletes. The British Age Groups 2023 in Leeds was the first time we ran a competition with three platforms to satisfy demand and this will become standard practice moving forward. We hosted the British Masters in Glasgow for the first time. We embarked on our first major collaboration with the National Fitness Games with the England Championships at the NEC in Birmingham as part of FitFest 2023, which showcased the sport to a much wider audience and is a strategy we will continue with in 2024. The TCRR were reviewed and updated in line with governance requirements and to make the sport more accessible at club level. The 2024 competition calendar is now almost complete.

In terms of Sports Development, membership currently stands at 3,547 individuals and 135 clubs with a membership churn that needs investigating. The Birmingham Legacy Programme has been extended to March 2024 and we have a few final projects to complete. It has resulted in more coaches, more technical officials and new programmes set up in clubs and schools. We have also launched a coaching scholarship scheme aimed at tackling inequalities in coaching communities, we had over 120 applications and have supported a total of 35 applicants along with a 50% discount to others. This represents a huge increase from only 20 applications a couple of years ago. Club support resources have improved, and we have recently launched an improved club, coach and TO finder on our website. We recently submitted a School Games application through the Youth Sports Trust but were unsuccessful on this occasion. We have been asked to continue the process with a view to progress in 2025. We are developing new Partner Schools and Partner Gym offerings as part of the lifting consultation.

WPPO World Cup 2024

For context, BWL ran the 2022 World Cup on behalf of para-powerlifting in 2020 and 2021. WPPO asked us to run the 2024 World Cup as the final qualifying event for Paris and an agreement was signed in 2022. The event is supported financially by UK Sport and Manchester City Council and a tripartite agreement was signed in February 2023 (UKS x MCC x BWL). In 2023, WPPO changed their technical rules with the introduction of a 'call area' between warm up and the field of play. This caused issues with the venue as it did not have sufficient space for the new requirements, but a potential solution was eventually reached. [REDACTED]

UK Sports Strategy Submission

Following TW's earlier update in this meeting, we have been invited to discuss an uplift of +17% with cases and causes for change highlighted as coaching resource, camp/international competition funding to service a larger and growing cohort of WCP athletes (from five to ten currently).

General Updates

- Louise Sugden was elected as WCP athlete representative role. Louise provides monthly feedback into the WCP SLT.
- Social impact project prepared to run February - June 2024 in support of local disability sport sessions in Loughborough.
- WCP welcomes Sean Clare as a new funded athlete in the men's 59kg class. Sean joined in December 2023 at confirmation level with two years to graduate into the Academy & Podium potential funding bracket.

JT raised a question regarding the two athletes who sat in 9th and 10th place respectively, and whether the qualification is top 8 or top 10 and if they sit across any other weight categories with athletes who have already qualified. TW confirmed that it is top 8 based on one athlete per nation.

WEIGHTLIFTING

SM provided an update on performance.

UK Sport Progression

After the World Championships, we have started to implement psychology support for athletes of high potential. Clare Churchman has been onboarded to provide support for podium and academy athletes.

Change the way we support athletes of high potential

- Clare Churchman onboard to provide psych support for podium & academy athletes
- New technical analysis software
- Exploring Power Bi with UKS innovation team

Raise the standard of coaching

- Performance team development day – 7 February 2024
- New accelerator coaching programme under design
- Coach conference 25 planning underway

Build a broader and diverse base of athletes (Talent Transfer)

- New cohort highest standards so far
- Multiple successes for TT athletes at HN Champs in December for existing athletes
- New recruitment streams being explored
- Emily Muskett back in post

Sport England Talent

Change the way we support athletes with potential

- Kristian McPhee settling into new role
- Squads relaunched in September and new coaching team in place
- Bulgaria training camp February 2024

Raise the standard of clubs

- Niko Hanakam inducted and through probation

[REDACTED]. If this competition is confirmed, this allows only four months of event planning. There are other paralympic events which are following the regulations and there is no movement from the policy. The decision now stands with WPPO alone and the tripartite partners currently wait for an update.

8 Board Matters

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSIVITY ACTION PLAN

KL advised that the DIAPS plan is in progress and the deadline has been extended to March 2024. The plan will require Board approval at the next meeting 20 March 2024.

SAFEGUARDING UPDATE

Following the annual CPSU review in 2023, BWL were rated as 'conditionally met'. One of the new mandatory requirements is Board safeguarding training, requiring attendance from a minimum of 80% of the Board. One three-hour session will be delivered virtually, and the Board agreed that an evening session on either 4 March or 11 March 2024 would be viable. These dates will be offered to CPSU, and a final session date confirmed to the Board in due course.

UKAD

There remains work to be done reporting against the framework.

CODE FOR SPORTS GOVERNANCE

KL noted the recruitment of a part-time Operations and Governance Manager, Lisa Smith, in September 2023 to assist with the production and submission of all the required documents to UK Sport by December 2024. These submissions included People Plan, Welfare & Safety Plan, Cascading Good Governance, Succession Planning, Business Continuity, DIAPS plan and Environmental and Social Governance. All documents have been submitted to UK Sport within the required timeframes, circulated to members prior to this meeting and require Board approval today.

The Board approved all the documents.

JT highlighted the benefits of being transparent to our members and suggested uploading these to our website. KL noted that these are all on the UK Sport portal. JT noted that our terms should be available for members to view. MC agreed and highlighted that the website will be redesigned in 2024 and this will be included.

9 Any Other Business

HOME NATION REPRESENTATIVE – BWL BOARD

Following proposals from the 2022 and 2023 AGM, a discussion took place regarding representation within the Board from the Home Nations. It was agreed that this had merit and as the Board was not at capacity, it was suggested that the Board recruits a non-executive Home Nation representative to the Board, noting due diligence of that representative to feed back to the Home Nations with an acknowledgement of confidentiality where required and that applicants from Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland would be considered as England already have representation from the England Committee. It was agreed that the discussion would continue offline.

10 Date and Venue of Next Meeting / Forward Agenda

- 20 March 2024 – Online (Budget)

- 5 July 2024 – In person (British Championships, NEC Birmingham)

The meeting closed at 16:15.

11 Private Meeting of NEDs and INEDs

It was agreed there was no need for a private meeting.