



**British
Biathlon
Union**

**BRITISH BIATHLON UNION (BBU)
20th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM)
LONDON, ENGLAND**

15th JULY 2017

CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT

INTRODUCTION

I am delighted to write my first Annual Report as the Chairman of the BBU. This report differs from all the 19 previous ones as it covers a period of having two Chairmen in post, and also of two winter seasons.

In his January 2016 report, my predecessor, André Oszmann, commented: *"We now find ourselves once again in a difficult time financially and, we are also facing difficult times on the International stage"*. Nearly 18 months on this situation prevails, as I shall comment later. But first, on behalf of all athletes and Members, I wish to thank André for everything he contributed to British Biathlon until his resignation as Chairman in July 2016. Having first been involved with the BBU as a sponsor in 2006, he joined the Board in 2008, becoming Chairman in 2011. That he left with the BBU still in *"a difficult time financially"* was equally frustrating to him, and to the rest of the Board. Thankfully, he and his wife Julie were instrumental in setting up the successful BBU Lottery – a legacy that continues to contribute direct support our junior civilian athletes.

SPORTING REVIEW

2015 - 2016

Following the retirements of Lee-Steve Jackson, Kevin Kane and Nerys Jones the 2015 – 2016 Season was a challenge on the World Cup. But, with the men having finished the previous season in 24th place in Nations Cup we still had two Start places, although only one for women. Sadly, at the end of the season GBR had fallen to 26th place (Men) and 27th (Women) giving a quota of only one man and one woman for the 2016 – 17 season.

With only three start places for our inexperienced Men's Team on the IBU Cup it was unlikely that we would improve on our IBU Cup Nations Cup placing of 27th. We did not, and fell to 32nd, although we did not compete in Trimester 2 due to it clashing with the Regional and Army/British Championships. No women were selected for the IBU Cup.

The World Cup Team consisted of Amanda Lightfoot, Scott Dixon and Marcel Laponder, the latter of whom who was stood down at the end of the season. Marcel first competed in World Cup in 2007 and in six World Championships; he lives near Ruhpolding and we are grateful for the support still provides to the Teams. The IBU Cup Team was Alex Gleave, Robert Sircus and new-comers Vinny Fountain, Martin Shaw and Sandy Wishart. Sircus and Sam Cairns both competed in the Junior World Championships in Romania.

We were served extremely well by our dedicated but small team of Support Staff. Simon Allanson was WC Team Manager with Italian Ilario Maddalin as the new wax technician. Wolfgang Pichler continued to coach Amanda and we had further support from his Swedish

Team. On the IBU Cup Lee-Steve Jackson was the manager, coach and waxman with some support from Daniel Graf. Si Burke once again took the juniors to their World Championships and was most ably supported by "JC" McBride.

2016 – 2017

Performances at the World Cup were mixed, with adequate results in Trimester 1, very disappointing in Trimester 2 but much brighter in the final Trimester. Here, Amanda Lightfoot recorded the best ever GBR female result and one of the top GBR half dozen of all time, when she finished 32nd in the 15 km Individual World Championships in Hochfilzen. In the final World Cup in Oslo, Scott Dixon also recorded a World Cup PB when he finished 65th in the Sprint. This season was the first of two for athletes to gain qualification for the 2018 Olympic Winter Games in PyeongChang. Scott has met the BOA criteria of a minimum of one top 2/3rd of a field placing once and Amanda 3 times. However she is only 113th in the IBU/IOC quota of 114 athletes for 2018, but should maintain her qualification next season. Scott is 5th reserve (119th) in the men's quota and must produce super-human results next winter to achieve qualification.

In spite of missing World Cups in Korea and Finland (re-located from Russia, following the repercussions of the McLaren Report into doping) both the Men & Women's teams finished 27th in the WC Nations Cup. Once again this gives GBR one start place on the WC next season. In the IBU Cup the men, with the same athletes plus Dixon but without Sircus, improved to 27th. New international athletes Emma Drew and Sam Grist together with Amanda Lightfoot also finished 27th. There was no GBR entry in the Junior World Championships although Holly Rees-Lay showed promise on the IBU Junior Cup before Christmas.

Pending his retirement from the Army, Simon Allanson left the BBU in June. He first raced WC in 2006 and following three World Championships became the Assistant Team Manager for Sochi 2014 and Team Manager 2015 -16. I thank him for all his efforts, and wish him well as Manager/Coach of the potential GBR Paralympic Team for PyeongChang. Daniel Graf replaced Simon, but only on snow, whilst Ilario Maddalin was again an exceptional Wax Technician and Wolfgang Pichler an Advisory Coach. Lee-Steve Jackson master-minded almost all aspects of the Army Advanced Biathlon Development Squad and the IBU Cup team, assisted in Trimester 1 by Ben Woolley.

FINANCE & SPONSORSHIP

The BBU has never been in a strong position financially and for the past dozen years has been kept solvent by the Sec Gen and BBU Director, Mark Goodson. The athletes and the Board are immensely grateful and fully appreciate his decision not to renew this facility at the end of the current Financial Year on 30 June 2017. In spite of many efforts, we have failed to replace the two major sponsors of the last decade and in the past two seasons received no sponsorship money at all. Indeed we only survived and competed last season due to the receipt of a most unexpected Grant from the IBU. Our current international standing and lack of podium potential is such that it does not attract Lottery funding from UK Sport.

Given this background, the Board appointed a fund-raising consultancy "Apt" in the summer of 2015 to raise our profile and hopefully increase new funding. Unfortunately this proved difficult and, following the resignation of the Chairman last July, Apt terminated their contract. The Board has continued to seek new avenues of sponsorship and funding without success.

GOVERNANCE

Behind the scenes a number of willing and dedicated volunteers have helped sustain the BBU show over the past 18 months. Member Elected Director Carl Carrier focusses on Development and Coaching; Terry Hall is the Anti-Doping Officer; Charles Brooks our long serving "Honorary

Legal Advisor”; Nicola Walker runs the BBU Lottery and Gordon Seaton the British Biathlon Rifle Club providing general shooting advice and a conduit to Firearm Certificates. Their support and contribution goes largely unrecognized and without them the BBU would not have been sustained. Formally, I would like to thank them all.

I have already mentioned the departure of André Oszmann but in December 2016 we also said farewell to Colonel Jon Campbell. He joined the Board in 2010 serving initially as Strategy and then Development Director. I thank him on your behalf for an enlightened and dedicated approach to his role. At the same time, three Directors, Mark Goodson, Eddy Lowe and Colonel Adrian Thurgood gave notice of their intention to resign on 30 April 2017. However for legal and financial reasons this date is now 15 July 2017.

Mark (Secretary General & Finance Director) and Eddy (Sport & Technical Director) were “Founder Members” of the BBU back in 1996, although before that Mark had been Chairman Army Nordic for 4 years whilst Eddy managed the GBR team at both the 1992 & 94 Olympic Winter Games. Adrian has been on the Board for 5 years as Director Military Liaison and British Championships. Fortunately, as the BBU is lucky enough to have the Army organise the British Championships on our behalf, we shall still see Adrian in Ruhpolding in his “Army” hat; as indeed we shall see Mark & Eddy in their “Contractor” hats!

The whole of British Biathlon owes them an enormous debt. With over 50 years of cumulative biathlon administrative knowledge they will be a very hard act to follow, but follow them we must.

THE FUTURE

Looking to the future I have formulated the following intent:

- **The Vision.** The vision is to deliver British Biathlon medal success within fifteen years.
- **The Pathway.** A new BBU Board will be selected by the end of July 2017 and with it the means to develop a medium- to long-term strategy in pursuit of the vision. In the short term, and in a climate of severe BBU financial austerity, with support from volunteers the current members of the Board will identify funding streams (from the military and other sources) to reduce the likelihood of insolvency and set the conditions for assured support to the current athletes this season and the next.
- **Governance.** Over the next two months selection criteria for the new members of the Board will be based on diversity, strategic insight, passion for the sport, influence and commitment. The BBU will conform to UK Sport governance and will have the structure, people, communication, standards and conduct, policies and processes in place accordingly. British Biathlon will continue to qualify for UK Sport and Sport England funding, but clearly in a highly competitive financial market much will depend on the success of the athletes.
- **Assistance.** The BBU will partner Nordic to achieve economies of scale and adopt best practice. But, none of this can be achieved without the full support and a commitment of those who are associated with the sport, in small or large part. I need assistance to set British Biathlon on a road to achieve the milestones, objectives and the vision that will be prescribed by the Board in the forthcoming months. Thank you.

Rob Weighill
Chairman
17 June 2017