



BRITISH BIATHLON UNION (BBU)
23RD ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM)
RUHPOLDING, GERMANY

11th JANUARY 2020

CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2018/19

INTRODUCTION

This is my third Annual Report as the Chairman of the BBU. It covers a period of persistent evolution and challenge for the National Governing Body and the sport as a whole, achieving measured but, encouragingly, relentless progress. At the international level, the IBU has gone through a significant transition in 2019, adopting a revised constitution and the wholesale election of a new board – more of that later.

The BBU's financial position remains constrained and will continue to be so for the foreseeable future. Apart from financial contributions from the IBU, the new source of income derived from the new membership programme and the Lottery, all other routes of funding have dried up. However, a concerted BBU marketing and sponsorship campaign was initiated in the latter half of 2019, and the signs are promising.

The number of elite athletes that GBR has participating at international events has increased in 2019. The biathletes continue to be drawn principally, although not exclusively, from the military. However, there is little sign that the Army's change in policy regarding the demise of the Advanced Biathlon Development programme in 2017 will be reversed. This means that there is no direct military financial support for athletes selected to represent GBR, placing a direct burden on the individuals themselves. We will look to extend our identification of young and diverse elite biathlon talent.

Drawing from the new IBU *Target 26 Strategy*¹ and accounting for the current status of British biathlon, a new BBU strategy will be published in 2020. The aim of this strategy, currently in final draft form, will be to describe the development of key areas where we can, and must, improve in forthcoming years, not least to seek continued alignment (especially governance) with GBR and international sporting and biathlon organisations. It stands on the shoulders of the BBU which has been built over many years, ensuring that members of the GBR biathlon family remain integral to its future pathway and an attainable strategic design is implemented for successful delivery over the next ten years.

TRIBUTES

As most of you will know, it was with great sadness that in 2019 we witnessed the deaths of two stalwarts of our biathlon family, both utterly worthy of tribute:

¹ International Biathlon Union 'Target 26 – Our Strategy for Focusing Hitting and Moving – Together'.

- **Spud Leaning** had been a Member of the Army's AWSA Management Committee from 1965 to 2012. He was a three-time member of the winning Princess Marina team; GBR Biathlon Team Captain at the OWG in 1968; and was awarded a Churchill Fellowship in 1985. He managed teams at the 1988, 1992 and 1994 Olympic Winter Games. In 1993 he was the UK's lead organiser of the International Modern Pentathlon & Biathlon Extraordinary Congress, when the IBU was formed to become the International Governing Body for biathlon.
- **Terry Hall** played a crucial role as the Anti-Doping Officer since 2013 ensuring that our international athletes complied with all the regulations of the IBU and the UK Anti-Doping agency. He was as tireless and conscientious in this role as he had been during his service with the Royal Logistic Corps.

I would also like to thank Nicola Walker for her management of the BBU Lottery, which she has run for the past nine years. In all likelihood the Lottery will cease in 2020, subject to further analysis and a BBU Board decision. But Nicola's contribution has been significant, generating a substantial source of income over the years, not just in support of the BBU or the collective financial benefit of many winners, but also go towards developing youth and junior athletes.

SPORTING REVIEW

From a sporting perspective, the 2018/19 year was another bridging year at the start of an Olympic cycle and proved to be a challenging one. Amanda Lightfoot took a year out of international competition and we did not manage to put anyone onto the World Cup circuit. Nonetheless, we fielded a team for the IBU cup consisting of Adam Williams, Adam Peacock, Brett Stevens, Holly Rees-Lay, James Smith and Vinny Fountain. We were also particularly pleased to be able to enter a number of the Junior IBU cup races with Shawna Pendry, who is showing great promise managing to achieve 50th in the Sprint at the Junior Open European Championships in Norway against much older competition. Keeping the theme of the Juniors, we also sent a delegation to the 'Future Stars' event in Östersund, which ran in parallel to the World Championships. This was a brilliant event and inspirational for Jake Bell, Titus Clark and Tristan Marshall.

None of our competitions would have been possible without the amazing support offered by Mike Lay, Kev Kane, Joe Brooks, Ian Pendry and Scott Dixon all of whom helped ensure a challenging season was possible.

Looking forward to the 2019-20 season, we are in a much better place. Ilario Maddalin has come on board as the GB Head Coach and is developing a training pathway for elite athletes that has run through the summer in preparation for the winter season. At various times Ilario has had Adam Williams, Adam Peacock, Amanda Lightfoot, Beinn Horsfall, Holly Rees-Lay, Shawna Pendry, Titus Clark and Vinny Fountain as part of the training programme. This training programme is a significant milestone for the BBU and is instrumental in supporting our strategy for the development of elite athletes.

FINANCE & SPONSORSHIP

The successful financial consolidation of 2018 has enabled the BBU to invest in a pathway for our biathletes in 2019, setting the conditions for their potential participation at the Olympic Winter Games in 2022. We have been able to employ a full-time coach for the squad over the summer training months and continue this support into the 2019/20 season, supplemented by a wax man.

The new BBU membership model has now matured and is covering the cost of the administration of the BBU which means all money received from the IBU and other sources can be directed directly into performance development and racing. We have invested in a team minibus that we hope will reduce

the amount of money, and carbon, expended on flying the team across Europe during previous seasons.

Presently we are approaching a variety of companies from across the UK, as well as those with known links to biathlon based in Europe with a view to securing financial backing. Since the beginning of November 2019, 104 proposals have been sent out. The feedback has been positive.

Some companies have offered VIK (Value-In-Kind) rather than financial backing. We have put those arrangements to one side to focus on looking for a headline sponsor who will be willing to put money into the BBU. Once that headline sponsor is secure, then we can go back to the companies who offered VIK and evaluate whether or not that partnership is worth pursuing. Through January and February 2020 we hope to have targeted around 150 companies in all, from the UK and further afield.

Thus, we look forward to 2020 in a reasonable financial state, although it continues to be a battle to stretch the funding to enable a commercially viable pathway to the 2022 Olympics.

GOVERNANCE

In last year's report, I highlighted the key issue of governance and we have made progress in this area. The minutes of Board meetings are published on the BBU website along with a summary of our accounts. Terms of Reference for the Board of Directors and a Code of Conduct have been drafted and will be published before the AGM on 2nd February 2020. This latter element is an important factor in achieving governance alignment with both GBR and international sporting bodies, but especially UK Sport. The latter organisation in particular holds the key for potential release of funds in the future, but only on the basis that we have our house in order.

Individual Terms of Reference, to include job specifications for the Chairman, Secretary General and each Director, are yet to be completed and policies for safeguarding and data protection are at the research and planning stage. However, the progress made so far is sufficient to convince our superior governing bodies, the IBU and UK Sport, as well as any potential sponsors, that the management and guidance of British Biathlon are sound and that we are well worthy of their support.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

The IBU

- In 2019 an External Review Commission (ERC) conducted a thorough and comprehensive review of the IBU's constitution and rules, coming up with a series of recommended changes and additions designed to meet the IBU Executive Board's mandate. The IBU Executive Board accepted all of the ERC's recommendations, and as a result the ERC endorsed the draft Constitution. Given that the new IBU Constitution and Rules were adopted at the Extraordinary Congress in October 2019 (at Munich), they introduced the highest standards of integrity and transparency to the IBU, in line with international best practice in this area, and will ensure that the IBU has a greatly strengthened its ability to protect itself against, and to respond robustly to, future threats to the integrity of the sport.
- In addition, the IBU Constitution established a new Biathlon Integrity Unit (BIU), which will replace the current IBU Ethics Commission. It will be responsible for investigating and prosecuting violations of the Integrity Code and ensure that the IBU complies with its obligations under the World Anti-Doping Code and with its other governance and ethical compliance obligations.

- We will remain closely allied to the IBU's creation of their Biathlon Academy, which will provide practical support to the Member Federations, not least because we can tap into what is predicted to be a more effective system of financial support.

Our Longer Term Goal

- As described, in the short term, and in a climate of persistent BBU financial austerity, the Board has continued to identify funding streams in order to increase capacity and build potential across all the biathlon functions. The priority for the 2018/19 season was to identify and select elite biathlete talent and support them in IBU Cup, IBU World Cup and IBU World Championships, where appropriate, albeit this was under challenging conditions.
- Looking to the future we will aim to attract new people to biathlon, both at home and abroad. We will extend our reach in terms of revenue and identify future elite talent, upgrade our governance and innovate, especially adopting new technologies to help us prosper, such as the exploitation of social media and other digital platforms. We should follow the IBU objective to develop 'Street Biathlon' to attract a young, diverse audience while maintaining strong and enduring links with the military.

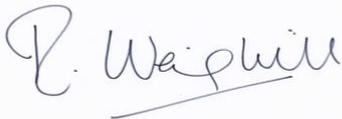
Assistance. Last year we implemented a strategy of stakeholder engagement and relationship building with wider partners. This included GB Snowsport and other national and international sports bodies that are in one way or another related to biathlon. Although for a number of reasons we elected currently to remain discrete from BSS, we have established a constructive working relationship with them, drawing from best practice and identifying potential opportunities.

SUMMARY

Although I am in danger of repeating myself, few if any of our goals can be achieved without the full support and a commitment of those who are involved in the sport, in small or large part. Please help the BBU in any capacity you are able and contribute to the future success of British biathlon.

Finally, with the future publication of the BBU Strategy, we will design a plan for the future with clearly defined and deliverable objectives accompanied by an action plan. We will involve as many of you as we can to ensure that it is owned and delivered by the GBR biathlon family.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rob Weighill". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Rob Weighill CBE
Chairman BBU