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8 July 2022

## **CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR SEASON 2021/22**

### **INTRODUCTION**

I write to you as Chairman of the British Biathlon Union for the fifth consecutive year. The previous season has seen us deliver on the strategy that we crafted last year, building a 4-tiered system to support everything from grassroots entry into Biathlon to World Cup performances. We are proud to have delivered on all our short-term objectives and will now continue the momentum into the next cycle.

There is still much work. But we have now proven the initial concept, seen the impact and witnessed the growth in the team. We are now at a pivotal point of change as our youth and junior cohort begin to come through the system that we have designed and started to deliver.

### **SPORTING REVIEW**

We successfully planned, adapted to prevailing circumstances, and delivered another full season. Even with the pressures of COVID we managed to navigate through many consequent challenges and learn from previous year's lessons, as well as continuing to pursue our strategic objectives.

**Tier One UK Hubs:** We delivered several in-school programmes across the country, as well as securing an initiative in partnership with Decathlon stores to provide taster sessions for customers. The engagement was superb, and we have now set the foundations to grow these outreach projects.

**Tier Two National Development Programme:** We launched the first ever BBU Talent Campaign where over 200 Athletes came forward for a series of selection camps. 20 Athletes were then selected and transitioned onto snow camps culminating with a collaborative sponsored project with Biathlon Canada, where they had their first chance to compete. Nine of these Junior Athletes have now been selected for the BBU Development Programme.

**Tier Three Performance Programme:** We were delighted to see the IBU Junior Competitions back up and running and had Anna Berger, Titus Clarke, Alfie Sprake and Quentin Wedderburn competing throughout the season. This concluded at the World Youth and Junior IBU World Championships. Anna Berger also represented Team GB at the European Youth Olympic Winter Festival and was selected as the opening ceremony flag bearer.

**Tier 4 Elite Team;** The Athletes who competed on the IBU Cup in Trimester 1 and 2 included Vinny Fountain, Amanda Lightfoot, Ciara Mitchell and Marcus Webb. Amanda Lightfoot also took part in several World Cup Events as she sought to secure her final selection to compete at her third Olympics. Unfortunately, despite her two best performances ever this season (including a personal best finish for either a British Male or Female Biathlete at the IBU Cup and a top 20 finish at the World Cup), it was not enough to secure her place. She now retires with over a decade of international racing experiencing behind her including more than 250 appearances for Great Britain. We hope that she will remain closely connected.

## **FINANCE & SPONSORSHIP**

Finance remains a perennial challenge. However, this year we were able to secure several key grants through the IBU, supporting three projects with €30,000. These included the purchase of lasers weapons, running our talent campaign and providing an opportunity to collaborate with Biathlon Canada.

We also secured the Olympic Solidarity Grant for National Development Teams of \$30,000 to support efforts across the junior development space. Finally, a UK Sports grant of £6,000 provided an opportunity to get Amanda to the Olympics. Our membership numbers also bolstered some income generation, as did the BBU Lottery.

We have this year already secured a further €30,000 in IBU grants for an in-schools programme, junior development support and to focus on female development. We have recently partnered with the Skiers Trust of Great Britain to help raise more funding for our young and talented athletes and will launch a targeted campaign in the coming months.

With a more stable operating and financial platform combined with a compelling narrative, we will apply significant collective efforts to raise vital sponsorship to sustain our trajectory over the coming cycle. We unfortunately have not received any UK funding for this coming cycle to Milan Cortina.

## **GOVERNANCE**

Following a large overhaul last year, we will ensure we continue to maintain and review all our policies as we professionally deliver the BBU Strategic Plan into the next cycle.

## **THE FUTURE**

The Summer has seen four athletes in full-time training, a Development and Junior Team supported through monthly training camps, a new Talent Campaign launched, and engagement in the GB Roller Ski Series.

The next cycle will generate further challenges as we continue building on the foundation we have created, and providing a base from which athletes will competitively compete for places. The aspiration is to have a full junior male and female team throughout the IBU Junior Cup competitions in 2022/23 culminating in World Youth & Junior World Championships and two other major events: the World University Winter Games and European Youth Olympic Festival.

Despite being unlikely to have World Cup Athletes this year we will have representation on the IBU Cup Competitions through Marcus Webb and Ciara Mitchell.

As we expand capacity, continue to plan for the future and deliver our strategic objectives, our priority remains with the effective development and management of our athletes, giving them the springboard to perform to the very best of their ability. A close second will be the generation of revenue, critical for the successful achievement of our aspirations.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Weighill', with a horizontal line underneath it.

Rob Weighill  
Chairman