

Sprint Racing Committee Chair's Report – 2026

2026 has been a year of major milestones for our sprint community — internationally, domestically, and organisationally.

International Success

Our athletes made headlines at the European Championships with a historic first: a junior men's **K4 bronze** for *Tom Hatton, Oliver Mazur, Freddie Kemp and Sam Dickson*. This came alongside a superb **K2 1000m silver** from Tom and Sam.

At the World Championships, the medal tally grew again.

- **Amy Green** delivered a brilliant **U23 women's 200m silver**.
- **Sam Dickson and Dianora de Bilio** added another silver in the **U18 mixed K1 5000m relay**.

Our Para team once again dominated the global stage, topping the medal table at Worlds. Their consistency, teamwork and commitment continue to set the standard — and they demonstrated great team work in creating space for new athletes to gain Olympic qualify points.

In the senior ranks, competition remains fierce, but our women's K4 continues to prove itself to be a talented, hard-working crew firmly on track for Olympic qualification.

Domestic Highlights

The September regatta marked an emotional moment as several long-serving organisers retired. Many have supported our regattas for over 25 years — their skill, reliability and dedication have shaped the sport.

A heartfelt thank you to: **Cathy Wynne, Ann and John Hoile, Wendy Dodson, Phil Caisley, Paul and Sarah Edwardes**. Their contribution has been extraordinary.

2027: A Year of Change

A contributing factor to retirements is the end of our outdated regatta management IT systems that they have kept working for so long. This winter we are investing in **new, state-of-the-art regatta management software and hardware**. For many of our volunteers it will be transformational — and it's the perfect moment for a new team to step forward.

Alongside this, Paddle UK is building a **new entry system**, ready for trial in January 2027.

We are also redesigning the **regatta racing format** to create closer, more meaningful racing. Instead of up to 6 classes paddling at similar speeds, we will move to **two ranking lists: Female and Open**. Movement up or down will depend solely on race

outcomes, who beats who — *not* times — removing weather bias. Initially this will only use K1 results, with crew boats to follow.

Regattas will be seeded by ranking, meaning we will no longer run separate junior/senior or canoe/kayak races at standard events. Once entries are received, paddlers will be grouped according to the ranking list, crew boats being ranked by the combined ranking of the boat. Selection regattas and national championships will continue to run by age group.

Rule reviews are underway, and more detail will follow.

Please take time this winter to understand the new system. We will offer multiple opportunities to discuss the changes and answer questions.

Change brings challenges. We will not get everything perfect immediately. Please support those working to improve our events, and encourage anyone with concerns to engage openly with the SRC.

Our Direction of Travel

Our vision is simple: **A sport that is more fun, more competitive, and financially sustainable — with crew boats at the heart of our progress.**

Fun

- Strengthen the community we already have.
- Increase racing opportunities over time.
- Introduce fun races and activities for younger paddlers.

Competitive

- Enable the fastest paddlers to perform at their best.
- Ensure everyone has close, meaningful races.
- Improve the experience for newcomers.

Revenue

If participation grows, we can reinvest:

- +80 competitors per regatta = break even
- +160 competitors = **£15,000 per year** to invest back into the sport

A Call to the Community

2027 will be a year of learning — new formats for paddlers, new systems for volunteers, new roles for organisers. There will be bumps along the way, but the potential benefits are huge.

Success depends on **engagement**. We can create opportunities to learn and discuss, but they only matter if paddlers, clubs and squads take part.

Whatever your role, please ask yourself:

- *How can I support the community through this transition?*
- *How can I help regattas run smoothly next year?*
- *How can I ensure the paddlers I work with feel confident about the new system?*

The SRC will lead the changes, but they will only succeed if the community embraces them and supports each other.

2027 will be a huge step for the sport, please join us in moving to a better future.

Dave Martyn

October 2026

2027 Roll of Honour

Volunteer Awards:

Cathy Wynne	PUK Vice President
Ann Hoile	Award of Honour
John Hoile	Award of Honour
Carol Hardy	Outstanding Contribution
Brian Hardy	Outstanding Contribution

Keith Sunderland	Outstanding Contribution
Phillippa Sunderland	Outstanding Contribution
Phil Caisley	Outstanding Contribution
Paul Edwardes	Outstanding Contribution

International Competition:

Sprint

European Championships

Tom Hatton & Samuel Dickson	K2 Junior Men 1000	Bronze
Hatton, Dickson, Mazur, Heard	K4 Junior Men 500	Bronze

World Championships

Amy Green	K1 U23 Women 200m	Silver
Samuel Dickson & Dianora de Bilio	K1 Junior Mixed 5000m	Silver

Paracanoe :

European Championships

Hope Gordon	KL3 Women	Gold
Hope Gordon	VL3 Women	Silver
Emma Wiggs	KL2 Women	Silver
Emma Wiggs	VL2 Women	Gold
Charlotte Henshaw	KL2 Women	Gold
Charlotte Henshaw	VL3 Women	Gold
David Phillipson	KL2 Men	Gold
Stuart Wood	VL3 Men	Silver

World Championships:

Hope Gordon	KL3 Women	Gold
Hope Gordon	VL3 Women	Gold
Emma Wiggs	VL2 Women	Gold
Charlotte Henshaw	KL2 Women	Gold
Stuart Wood	VL3 Men	Bronze

