



# SCHOOL-AGE ROWING STRATEGY

## 2019-2023



TEAMWORK | OPEN TO ALL | COMMITMENT

# Introduction

## FIGURE 1 SCHOOL-AGE ROWING STATISTICS

*11,879 British Rowing members are 12 to 18-years-old (37% of total membership). 47% are female and 53% male.*

*59% of these rowers are members of 117 school clubs while 41% are members of 178 community rowing clubs.*

*Of the 117 school rowing clubs that are registered with British Rowing, 97 are linked to fee-paying schools and 20 to state schools.*

*Based on Cornish Pilot Gig Association and Sea Cadets' figures approximately 7,500 young people (under 18 years) row in 360 clubs/cadet units.*

*In all, 8,246 young people participated in 264 inter-school indoor rowing events in 2017 / 2018 with 2,618 going on to compete at 20 county events. Sixty-four were then selected to attend the first ever National Finals.*

British Rowing is the governing body for the sport of rowing. We are committed to ensuring that the sport continues to thrive from grassroots right up to winning medals at the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

School-age rowers, aged 12-18 years<sup>1</sup>, represent 37% of our total membership and supporting the continued development and growth of this important group is critical to the overall success of our sport.

We also know that participation in rowing, whilst at school, can have a transformational impact on the lives of young people. As detailed in our Inclusive Club Guide, we are committed to ensuring everyone has the opportunity to enjoy the many benefits associated with the sport. These include personal development, health and wellbeing, as well as learning new skills and forming lasting friendships.

In recognition of the importance of school-age rowing, this strategy sets out how British Rowing plans to support its continued development and growth over the next four years. It is designed to align with British Rowing's Strategic Plan (2015-2024), encompasses all three rowing disciplines (fixed seat, sliding seat and indoor), and considers all levels of the sport from grassroots to high performance.

The strategy has been informed by a comprehensive review of school-aged rowing undertaken by British Rowing in 2017 with the support of the Youth Sport Trust. The review explored the current landscape of school-age rowing (see Figure 1), why young people and schools row (see Figure 2), as well as key challenges and opportunities.

A comprehensive School-Age Rowing Review, the appendices to which detail the findings of an extensive stakeholder survey process, is also available.

*“Rowing teaches things about teamwork that other sports can't. In rowing there are no heroes. Teamwork starts the moment the crew move the boat. About 85% of the young people get teamwork after rowing.”*

**2017 School-Age Rowing Review**

<sup>1</sup>British Rowing's 2016, 'Guidance - On-Water and Indoor Rowing by School Children', details why rowing is recommended from year 8 upwards.

# The strategy

British Rowing's overarching mission with respect to school-age rowing is:

**To work with existing and new school and community rowing clubs to deliver a high-quality and enjoyable rowing experience for young people of all abilities and backgrounds, promoting lifelong involvement in the sport.**

This mission aligns with British Rowing's overarching vision, mission and values and reflects feedback from the school-age rowing community regarding the need to:

- Attract and invest in volunteers to support the growth of school-age rowing activity.
- Support new schools and clubs to get involved in and offer high-quality rowing activity.
- Expand the school-age rowing offer to appeal to, and retain, more young people.
- Support the sustainability of school-age rowing programmes.

## FIGURE 2 WHY SCHOOL-AGE ROWING?

### WHAT DO YOUNG PEOPLE LIKE MOST ABOUT ROWING?

1. Being part of a team 46%
2. Feeling fit / healthy 37%
3. Pushing myself to new limits 35%
4. Being outside on the water 31%
5. Rowing with friends 28%

### WHY SCHOOLS OFFER ROWING

1. Benefits personal development 87%
2. Benefits health / well-being 87%
3. An alternative sport offer 75%
4. Young people request it 43%
5. Parents request it 33%

### WHY CLUBS OFFER SCHOOL-AGE ROWING

1. Benefits health / well-being 83%
2. Benefits personal development 80%
3. An alternative offer 51%
4. Open to the local community 37%
5. The young people request it 31%

British Rowing School-Age Rowing Review 2017

# The strategy



PHOTO CREDIT: NICK MIDDLETON

*“Those who opt to row grow in confidence, improve in their academic studies, are self-motivated and leaders within the school. Rowing is viewed as a USP.”*  
2017 School-Age Rowing Review

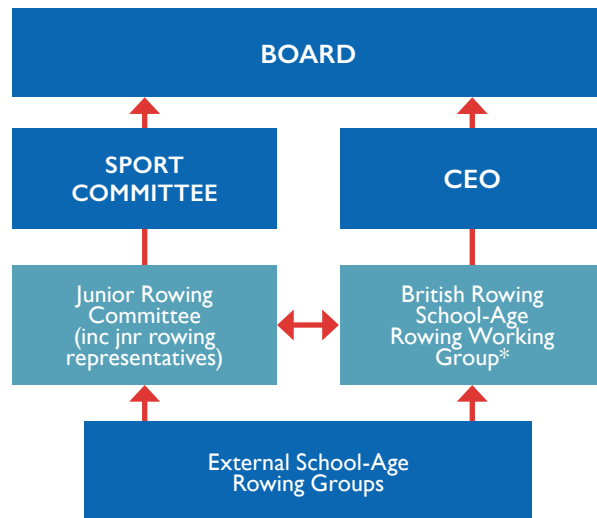
To achieve our mission we have identified five strategic objectives that will guide British Rowing's school age rowing-related work over the next four years:

- 01 Strengthen structures** - support improved governance and co-ordination of school-age rowing, invest in volunteer development and enable effective partnership working.
- 02 Empower clubs** - provide best practice guidance and support to school and community clubs across all aspects of club management and development.
- 03 Transform the offer** - support the development of viable, varied and relevant offers and pathways that attract, retain and benefit more school-aged rowers.
- 04 Lead the way** - maintain Great Britain's position as a leading nation at junior international rowing events.
- 05 Champion insight** - initiate an annual review of school-age rowing, in partnership with other key stakeholder groups, to inform its ongoing development.

The rationale for each of these strategic objectives, and the key actions which will be taken to achieve them, are summarised within this strategy.

# 01 Strengthen structures

FIGURE 3  
PROPOSED BRITISH ROWING SCHOOL-AGE  
ROWING GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES



*\*Formed of:  
School-Age Rowing Programme Lead  
JRC representative  
Staff representatives from:*

- Performance
- SCT Coaching Programme
- Clean Sport Team
- Safeguarding
- England Talent Pathways
- Education & Training
- Indoor Rowing
- Rowing Community

**Support improved governance and coordination of school-age rowing, invest in volunteer development and enable effective partnership working.**

It is recognised that the varied objectives and actions identified within this strategy will only be sustainable if effective governance structures, volunteer development plans and partnership working practices are in place.

A review of the role, objectives and make-up of the Junior Rowing Committee (JRC), as the key British Rowing committee representing and supporting school-age rowing, is therefore recommended. Further strengthening of the JRC is proposed to ensure it can effectively support the delivery of this strategy's varied recommendations, with a clear remit and a structure that represents the views of different constituent groups, including the voices of school-age rowers in school and community clubs.

The creation of a school-age rowing working group (Figure 3) comprising relevant staff from across all British Rowing directorates and with an identified programme lead is also recommended. Working closely with the JRC, this working group will have overall responsibility for delivery of the strategy, with a strong emphasis on stakeholder relations and proactive partnership-working across school-age rowing. The programme lead will coordinate and drive the activities of the working group, act as the key point of contact with the JRC and act as a central point of contact on school-age rowing-related matters.

The establishment of effective school-age rowing volunteer support and development mechanisms, informed by a better understanding of their motivations and needs (see objective 4) will also be key to the effective delivery of this strategy. School-age rowing will therefore be a key strand of the proposed British Rowing Volunteer Research / Strategy planned for 2019.

Opportunities to develop school-age rowers as volunteer leaders, coaches and officials across the sport will also be explored, building on programmes such as the Diploma in Sporting Excellence (DISE). This recommendation is explored further in relation to strategic objective 2.

# 01 Strengthen structures

*“At a national level there is a lack of leadership around school-age rowing. We need to address this and have clear objectives to work towards.”*  
2017 School-Age Rowing Review



PHOTO CREDIT: NICK MIDDLETON

Further recommendations to support delivery of strategic objective 1, as identified in the School-Age Rowing Review, include the development of a school-age rowing partnership working plan to support effective cross-sector working. This will include a robust communication plan, as well as considering other mechanisms to improve partnership working. This should consider how to engage effectively with key events, groups and agencies, as well as schools and clubs<sup>2</sup>.

## **Strategic Objective 1:**

**Strengthen structures - support improved governance and co-ordination of school-age rowing, invest in volunteer development and enable effective partnership working.**

### **Key actions:**

- 1.1 Undertake a review of British Rowing school / school-age rowing governance structures.
- 1.2 Establish an internal school-age rowing working group and a programme lead.
- 1.3 Include school-age rowing considerations within any British Rowing volunteer and coaching strategies.
- 1.4 Develop a school-age rowing stakeholder engagement / partnership working plan incorporating a robust communications plan.

### **Lead responsibility:**

The British Rowing School-Age Rowing Working Group will lead on the delivery of Strategic objective 1, working closely with the existing JRC members and other key external school-age rowing stakeholder groups.

<sup>2</sup>To include, for example, the Youth Sport Trust, School Games Organisers Network, Scottish Rowing, Welsh Rowing, Kitchin Society, Professional Association of Directors of Sport in Independent Schools (PADSIS), the Independent / state school partnership forum (ISSP), National Citizen Service (NCS), Sea Cadets, Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme, Stewards' Charitable Trusts (SCT), London Youth Rowing (LYR), Girls' Day School Trust (GDST) rowing group, The Scullery, National Schools Regatta, Schools' Head and others as appropriate.

# 02 Empower clubs



PHOTO CREDIT: NICK MIDDLETON

\* *ClubHub is British Rowing's new online club and membership management system which includes a comprehensive set of 'how to' guides covering all aspects of running a rowing club. ClubHub will be available to all clubs as a benefit of their affiliation to British Rowing.*

## **Provide best practice guidance and support to school and community clubs across all aspects of club management and development.**

The School-Age Rowing Review identified strong demand, across the school-age rowing community, for high-quality guidance and support from British Rowing. This should address the development of new rowing clubs, ongoing school and community club management, workforce development, volunteering, facility and equipment provision, as well as fundraising and financial sustainability.

While it is recognised that British Rowing has extensive knowledge and expertise in these areas, accessing resources and support is considered to be challenging. A more streamlined approach to delivery of guidance and support to the school-age rowing community, building on British Rowing's new online ClubHub\* resource library, is therefore proposed.

It is also recognised that while some of this guidance is relevant to all rowing clubs, there is also a need for further tailored guidance which takes account of the unique challenges and opportunities associated with school-age rowing activity. The development of school-age rowing community-focused ClubHub resources, which incorporate school-age rowing case studies and best practice, is therefore planned.

In addition to written resources, British Rowing will audit how it currently supports school-age rowing across its varied activities, from club support through to safeguarding, coaching and education. While some of this support is very public, much is behind the scenes and often invisible. It will be important to consider how this support and its delivery could be further developed to better support the needs of this community.

Key considerations with respect to the development of tailored guidance and support, based on feedback from the School-Age Rowing Review are summarised in Table 1 on page 8.

# 02 Empower clubs



PHOTO CREDIT: DREW SMITH

*“At some regattas the experience is poor and the timetables are not designed for schools. Organisers and umpires need to adapt and be more supportive and encouraging.”*

**2017 School-Age Rowing Review**

**TABLE I  
BEST PRACTICE GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT CONSIDERATIONS**

Guidance / support	Key considerations
<b>Club governance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Working with the British Rowing safeguarding team to issue clear guidance on the key posts (and their roles / responsibilities) that school and community rowing clubs need to have in place to meet safeguarding requirements, relating to school-aged rowers (age 12 to 18 years). Guidance should identify how requirements differ between school and community clubs and recognise where school governance policies take precedence.</li></ul>
<b>Club management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Continue to support school and community clubs through the new ClubHub membership management system, welcoming feedback on how the system can be developed to reflect the specific needs of school-age rowing.</li><li>Create tailored ClubHub 'how to' guides to reflect the specific needs of the school-age rowing community where appropriate.</li><li>Establish a mechanism by which school and community clubs can propose new topics / challenges on which they require guidance to be developed. Example topics, as identified in the 2017 review, include:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Safety advice for schools, clubs, outdoor leaders and parents on how to get young rowers out on the water safely.</li><li>Clarity on British Rowing insurance versus schools' insurance policies.</li><li>GDPR.</li></ul></li><li>Work with school and community clubs to identify, and share, best practice case studies on a range of topics and from across the sport. Example topics, as identified in the 2017 review, include:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>School-age rowing community communications including social media and parental engagement.</li><li>School-club and school-school partnerships (e.g. including independent schools opening up to state schools).</li><li>Alternative membership / fee structures to help drive inclusivity.</li></ul></li></ul>



# 02 Empower clubs



PHOTO CREDIT: NICK MIDDLETON

**TABLE I**  
**BEST PRACTICE GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT CONSIDERATIONS CONTINUED...**

Guidance / support	Key considerations
<p><b>New club development</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In partnership with relevant stakeholders, develop guidance on how to 'start a school rowing club' and 'how to start a junior rowing section' across all three disciplines of the sport (sliding, fixed and indoor).</li> <li>• Identify and connect prospective new rowing schools with schools / clubs that have recently been successful at starting a school-age rowing programme (e.g. buddy / mentoring relationship).</li> <li>• Establish relations between schools and local rowing clubs with the potential of collaborating (e.g. running school-age rowing programmes out of the local rowing club during the day).</li> <li>• Explore the establishment of a new school-age rowing support package, including funding for coaches, for schools / clubs working to drive inclusivity through engagement with currently under-represented and disadvantaged communities. This should build on the lessons learnt from Project Oarsome, the Stewards' Charitable Trust programme and other UK-wide best practice club models (e.g. Warrington and Fulham Reach). Potential for this programme to be funded by the newly established British Rowing Charitable Foundation is to be explored.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Workforce development</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• British Rowing to define and better communicate what best practice looks like with respect to school-age rowing club structures, committee roles, indicative ratios etc.</li> <li>• Work with schools and other relevant stakeholders to find ways to improve teacher access onto rowing coaching courses (e.g. consult with schools on how to make the Session Coach courses more relevant and accessible to schools). This should include a flexible delivery model which can be adapted to the specific needs of club, school, college and university coaches, all of whom have different requirements.</li> <li>• Create a task force with current School Games Organisers to act as rowing champions in their areas and promote rowing across all schools in their respective regions.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Developing young people as volunteers</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop opportunities to train school-age rowers as volunteer leaders, coaches and officials, building on programmes such as the Diploma in Sporting Excellence (DISE) and aligned to delivery of competitions such as the School Games. For example, an official indoor rowing workshop could be developed for children to support the National School Games Level 4 event and other indoor rowing competitions.</li> </ul>

# 02 Empower clubs



PHOTO CREDIT: NICK MIDDLETON



PHOTO CREDIT: NICK MIDDLETON

**TABLE I**  
**BEST PRACTICE GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT CONSIDERATIONS CONTINUED...**

Guidance / support	Key considerations
<b>Developing senior volunteers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support volunteers by providing clear step-by-step guidance on how to implement health / safety and other requirements for school-age rowing activities, delivered via online resources, courses, webinars etc.</li> <li>• Working with the National Umpire Committee, create a guide of additional considerations when officiating young people at sliding, fixed seat and indoor rowing competitions.</li> <li>• Provide advice for event organisers on additional considerations when offering junior events at competitions (e.g. pre-race briefings for junior coaches at races).</li> <li>• Research the motivations of school-age rowing volunteers and their needs as part of the wider 2018 British Rowing Volunteer Strategy development process (see Strategic Objective 4).</li> </ul>
<b>Facility and equipment development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support schools and clubs with local funding applications, providing access to facility consultant services where appropriate.</li> <li>• Signpost national and local funding opportunities for schools and clubs.</li> <li>• Work with fitness / gym equipment providers to establish low cost and / or second hand indoor rowing equipment packages for schools.</li> <li>• Establish an online market for second hand rowing equipment sales.</li> </ul>
<b>Fundraising and financial sustainability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop ClubHub guidance and support on how to run a fundraising event to raise money for the rowing programme / school / club.</li> <li>• In partnership with relevant stakeholders, develop ClubHub guidance on different types of business models relating to school-age rowing (e.g. pay-as-you-go classes, indoor only programmes etc), considering the sustainability of different models in different settings.</li> </ul>

# 02 Empower clubs



PHOTO CREDIT: NICK MIDDLETON

## Strategic Objective 2:

**Empower clubs - provide best practice guidance and support to school and community clubs across all aspects of club management and development.**

### Key actions:

- I.1 Develop a series of tailored ClubHub 'How to' guides for the school-age rowing community incorporating school-focused case studies and best practice - informed by the research findings in Table 1.
- I.2 Undertake an audit of British Rowing's varied community support activities to identify where they could be further developed to better support the needs of the school-age rowing community – informed by the research findings in Table 1.
- I.3 Explore the establishment of a new school-age rowing support package, including the potential for financial support through the new British Rowing Charitable Foundation, for schools / clubs working to drive inclusivity through engagement with currently under-represented and disadvantaged communities.
- I.4 Develop improved British Rowing governance and support mechanisms relating to school-age rowing stakeholder management, partnership working and community development (see Strategic Objective 1).

### Lead responsibility:

The British Rowing School-Age Rowing Working Group will lead on the delivery of Strategic Objective 2, working closely with the existing JRC members, and in consultation with key external school-age rowing stakeholder groups, as appropriate.

# 03 Transform the offer

## Support the development of a viable, varied and interesting rowing offer that attracts, retains and benefits school-aged rowers.



PHOTO CREDIT: DAN HETHERINGTON

\* *The 2017 British Rowing School-Age Rowing Review offered a categorisation of rowing competition types as ‘challenge’ (aimed at reaching a specific target / goal), ‘recreational’ (aimed at providing a fun experience) and ‘outcome’ (which rowers train towards and where the outcome is important).*

The School-Age Rowing Review provided clear evidence that young people have different motivations for participating in rowing. Success isn't always about winning. Having a fun and meaningful experience is more important for many people and key to long-term engagement in the sport. This is particularly important as we look to minimise drop-out amongst 18-24-year-old rowers and support life long involvement in the sport.

Continuing to support the development and delivery of a varied rowing offer which suits different motivations and needs, and is focused on life long rather than short-term involvement, is therefore an important strategic objective for British Rowing.

This objective will mean supporting a shift away from the current predominant focus within clubs on ‘high performance’ and ‘outcome’ events towards a culture where both inclusive participation and performance objectives are valued equally. There should be a broader range of training and competition opportunities available to rowers which include ‘challenge’, ‘recreational’ and ‘outcome’ events, across all three disciplines of the sport (indoor, sliding seat and fixed seat). This approach aims to broaden the current offer to suit a wider range of young people and minimise drop-out amongst 18-24-year-olds.\*

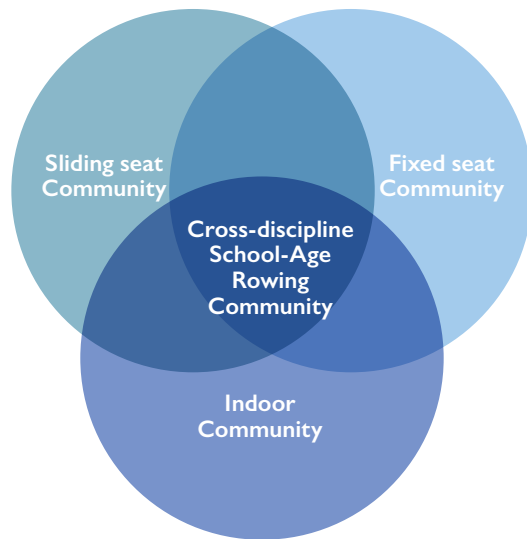
While many British Rowing programmes and initiatives (e.g. Inclusive Club Guide and Stewards’ Charitable Trust coaching programme) already have a strong inclusive participation focus, there remains a perception that it is focused on high performance to the exclusion of other opportunities. High-quality, sustained and consistent messaging and marketing activity will therefore be essential in communicating British Rowing’s support for a more inclusive and varied offer effectively.

A series of practical steps can be taken to promote this approach and embed it within the rowing community: it is recognised that this change represents a significant cultural change for the sport. It will take time to achieve and will require significant development work with the school-age rowing community (see Strategic Objective 1).

Practical considerations with respect to the development of a more varied rowing offer that attracts and retains more school-aged rowers, based on feedback from the School-Age Rowing Review, are summarised in Table 2.

# 03 Transform the offer

**FIGURE 4  
CROSS-DISCIPLINARY CONNECTIVITY  
AND MOVEMENT**



*“Challenge events are a great way to offer variety for rowers of all ages and abilities.”*  
2017 School-Age Rowing Review

**TABLE 2  
DEVELOPMENT OF A VARIED ROWING OFFER**

Guidance / support	Key considerations
<b>Overall</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>High-quality, sustained and consistent messaging and marketing activity will be essential in effectively communicating British Rowing's support for a culture where both inclusive participation and performance objectives are valued equally.</li> <li>Review, develop and effectively communicate (with clubs, teachers, coaches and other key stakeholder groups), the varied pathways which are available to existing school-age rowers and newcomers to the sport.</li> <li>British Rowing to invest in the development of rowing programmes / competition models which are sustainable, low-cost and easy to replicate in different settings.</li> <li>Strong partnership working with different stakeholder groups will be critical to success (see Strategic Objective 1).</li> <li>Work with education partners to explore and develop new offer / opportunities for school age rowers across the rowing disciplines, aligned to existing educational programmes e.g. GCSEs, DoE, skills badges etc.</li> <li>Explore the development of a cross-discipline school-age rowing community / forum which, through a focus on shared values and interests, encourages lifelong connectivity and movement between the rowing disciplines, as illustrated in Figure 4.</li> </ul>
<b>Sliding seat rowing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School-Age Rowing Working Group to work with the School-Age Rowing Forum (see strategic objective 1) to define and create a new class of 'recreational' and 'challenge' events aimed at young rowers (J16 and J18) in addition to the current schools competitive racing calendar.</li> <li>Provide guidance for new school and club rowing programmes on which events to enter.</li> <li>Provide schools with guidance on how to enter / create more enjoyable racing by encouraging participation in less competitive events and inter-school races.</li> <li>Work with regatta organisers and other stakeholders to build greater connectivity between feeder events (e.g. women's talent development days, local events) and national events.</li> </ul>

# 03 Transform the offer

*“Delivery style is really important. When you are teaching a whole class of year 9s you have to adapt. Teachers should know enough to run a session which is fun, safe, educational and informative.”*

2017 School-Age Rowing Review

**FIGURE 3**  
WHAT MOTIVATES YOUNG PEOPLE?

1. **Having fun 81.3%**
2. **Staying healthy 71.3%**
3. **Feeling good 70.8%**
4. **Spending time with friends 72.7%**
5. **Being successful 70.3%**
6. **Achieving goals 72.9%**
7. **Competing 56.8%**
8. **Developing myself as a person 56.5%**
9. **Doing something worthwhile 55.3%**
10. **Spending time with family 47.5%**

*British Rowing School-Age Rowing Review, 2017 based on a question from Sport England’s Under the Skin understanding*

**TABLE 2**  
DEVELOPMENT OF A VARIED ROWING OFFER CONTINUED...

Guidance / support	Key considerations
<b>Sliding seat rowing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support schools in running private matches as a way of widening participation and offer high-quality racing opportunities to second and third crews and to smaller schools.</li> <li>• Work with the Kitchin Society to review the attendance of schools at heads and regattas in order to create a pathway of meaningful competitions and events</li> </ul>
<b>Fixed seat rowing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the Sea Cadets to find ways to engage all their units in meaningful alternative activities outside the structure of their current racing calendar.</li> <li>• Support a pilot of ‘fixed seat distance events’ (e.g. row from Oxford to London) which, if successful, could be expanded and become feeder events for national events like the Great River Race, Thames 100 or Great Tyne Row.</li> <li>• Support the CPGA and other fixed seat rowing stakeholders in the development of their school-age event offers.</li> <li>• Undertake further research into the fixed seat school rowing community to inform the ongoing development of their school-age rowing offer.</li> <li>• Improve school-age rowing related guidance and support for fixed seat rowing boats, clubs and events.</li> </ul>
<b>Indoor rowing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a new school indoor rowing offer, which includes a range of indoor rowing products from which schools can select those which meet their objectives and the needs of their students.</li> <li>• Create a pathway of indoor rowing activities using a virtual league for school-age rowers into the university indoor rowing series.</li> <li>• Develop a strategy for Level 4 School Games recruitment.</li> <li>• British Rowing to develop an engaging and robust virtual competition platform for young rowers to log personal progress through national rankings e.g. using data from the School Games Programme and / or the British Rowing Personal Ranking Index to engage young rowers at all levels.</li> <li>• Highlight the benefits of indoor rowing to the school community to increase participation and depth of current engagement with the sport.</li> <li>• Establish school-rowing club partnerships to connect indoor and on-water rowing.</li> </ul>

# 03 Transform the offer



PHOTO CREDIT: NICK MIDDLETON

*“It is important that we build a pathway for indoor rowing. A pathway that doesn’t have to lead to on-water rowing.”*

**2017 School-Age Rowing Review**

## **Strategic Objective 3:**

**Transform the offer - support the development of a viable, varied and interesting rowing offer that attracts, retains and benefits school-aged rowers.**

### **Key actions:**

- 3.1 British Rowing to invest in the development of new sliding-seat rowing programmes / competition models which are sustainable, low cost and easy to replicate in different settings and establish a roll-out plan, including communications activities with appropriate support to optimise take-up.
- 3.2 British Rowing to work with the fixed seat rowing community to explore, and support development, of their existing school offers.
- 3.3 Develop a new school indoor rowing offer and pathway, which includes a range of indoor rowing products (including fitness, challenge and competition offers linked to the School Games) from which schools can select those which meet their objectives and the needs of their students.
- 3.4 Further explore the development of an online virtual league to support indoor rowing activity, aligned to the new indoor rowing offer / pathway.

Strong partnership working with different stakeholder groups will also be critical in achieving this strategic objective

### **Lead responsibility:**

The British Rowing School-Age Rowing Working Group will lead on the delivery, working closely with the existing JRC members and in consultation with key external school-age rowing stakeholder groups, as appropriate.

# 04 Lead the way



JM8+ ON THE PODIUM AT THE 2017 WORLD ROWING JUNIOR CHAMPIONSHIPS WITH THEIR BRONZE MEDAL.

PHOTO CREDIT: NAOMI BAKER

## Maintain Great Britain's position as one of the leading rowing nations at junior international rowing events.

Continued international success remains an important part of British Rowing's long-term strategy. One of our five strategic objectives is to 'Be one of the leading rowing nations at the Olympic and Paralympic Games'. To achieve this we recognise the need to:

- **Create a collaborative climate committed to excellence.**
- **Uphold the robust performance strategy and track performance against targets.**
- **Provide optimum conditions and support to ensure all rowers reach their potential.**
- **Assess and improve access to GB Rowing Team pathways.**

Whether junior-level success represents the pinnacle of an athlete's career, or a stepping stone on a long-term athlete development programme, maintaining our position as one of the leading rowing nations at junior level is important to British Rowing. Supporting the long-term development of school-age rowers is important as it provides opportunities for them to fulfil their potential and stay in the sport for life.

Our School-Age Rowing Review findings underline the importance of a balanced offer which supports high performance as well as varied pathways. However, there also remains strong support for high-quality performance pathways for those with the desire and potential to excel in the sport.

As a late maturing sport in which development levels start at a later age than many other sports, junior level involvement is not critical to future international success. However, 60% of athletes in the Rio 2016 Olympic team started rowing at school-age in a school or club programme. We are committed to providing the best possible coaching and support, as well as competitive opportunities for junior rowers.



# 04 Lead the way



PHOTO CREDIT: NICK MIDDLETON



ZOE ADAMSON AND HOLLY DUNFORD WINNING GOLD IN THE JW2X AT THE 2017 JUNIOR WORLD ROWING CHAMPIONSHIPS.

PHOTO CREDIT: NAOMI BAKER

This requires continued investment and development of our England Talent Pathway (ETP) programmes, which are funded by Sport England and we aim to provide performance pathways for talented junior rowers, as well as targeted activity to ensure these pathways are truly open to all. There is currently a difference in the standard of rowers on the ETP when we look at gender and an under-representation of young rowers from lower socio-economic groups and ethnic diverse backgrounds. Positive action to engage these groups is considered essential if we are to achieve both our school-age rowing and wider diversity and inclusion objectives.

Changes during 2018 in the Olympic rowing programme to achieve gender parity further reinforce the need for positive action to attract junior women into ETP programmes of a higher standard. The relative lack of performance-level events for school-aged female rowers also needs to be addressed.

*“We need to ensure equality of opportunity across the genders at the GB Rowing Team junior level.”*

**2017 School-Age Rowing Review**

# 04 Lead the way



PHOTO CREDIT: NICK MIDDLETON

## **Strategic Objective 4:**

**Lead the way - maintain Great Britain's position as one of the leading rowing nations at junior international rowing events.**

### **Key actions:**

- 4.1 Continue to advocate investment in and growth of the ETP.
- 4.2 Continue to invest in J16 training camps (boys and girls) and improve the monitoring process of those identified on the ETP (ongoing).
- 4.3 Use DiSE programmes to manage dual career pathways for talented junior females and males (starting Autumn 2018).
- 4.4 Take positive action to develop more performance level junior women, aiming for equity in numbers and standards (Note: Three year programme started in 2017).
- 4.5 Continue work to identify opportunities for an equitable number of 'performance events' for junior women to help with developing more junior women of the right standard.
- 4.6 Improved diversity and inclusion-focused activity at performance level, to include continued investment in activities targeting lower socio-economic groups e.g. the Stewards' Charitable Trust (SCT) programmes.
- 4.7 Continuing to provide opportunities to support and develop more female coaches working with school-age rowers, who can lead programmes in the future.
- 4.8 Identify more, and diverse, competition opportunities at all levels for school-age rowers, without restrictions on format and dates in the calendar to run such events.

### **Lead responsibility:**

The British Rowing School-Age Rowing Working Group will lead on the delivery of Strategic Objective 4, working closely with the Pathways and Performance Directorates, the JRC, and in consultation with key external school-age rowing stakeholder groups, as appropriate.

# 05 Champion insight

## Initiate an annual review of school-age rowing, in partnership with other key stakeholder groups to inform its ongoing development.

The 2017 School-Age Rowing Review highlighted the importance attached to creating an evidence base around the varied benefits of school-age rowing activity (both for schools and young people) as well as the provision of guidance on best practice within the school-age rowing community. This information can be used to support investment decisions and inform how school-age rowing activity is developed and delivered.

British Rowing plans to undertake a review of school-age rowing activity every two years. It will also support other internal and external research projects relating to school-age rowing. These include a review of the motivations and support needs of school-age rowing volunteers (as part of a wider volunteering research programme), recognising the critical role they play in supporting the growth of school-age rowing activity.

Key considerations with respect to the initiation of an annual review of school-age rowing, based on feedback from the School-Age Rowing Review, are summarised in Table 3.



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*“Our data management shows that the ‘value added’ of the boys involved in rowing is higher than those not involved in rowing across the school. When boys stop rowing to concentrate on their studies, their grades and ‘value added’ drop.”*

**2017 School-Age Rowing Review**

# 05 Champion insight

*“The school’s rowing success adds value to school recruitment and helps to set the school apart from other local schools. The rowing programme helps in retaining girls in the sixth form.”*

## 2017 School-Age Rowing Review



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**TABLE 3**  
**ANNUAL REVIEW OF SCHOOL-AGE ROWING**

Key considerations
<p>Initiate a regular (every two years) review of school-age rowing activity and linked to this:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Work with the Youth Sport Trust and other NGBs to establish a set of common 'health of school sport' questions and factors that can be monitored.</li><li>• Undertake a Sport England youth personality survey across indoor, fixed and sliding seat rowing disciplines to inform the development of their offers.</li><li>• Work with event organisers and the JRC to understand the types of events that local school and junior clubs want in order to provide a better school-age rower experience.</li><li>• Support external partner-initiated school-age rowing research where appropriate.</li><li>• Work with key school-age rowing stakeholders to jointly fund, and commission, detailed research into the educational benefits of school-age rowing programmes. A longitudinal (minimum 12 month) study into the impact of rowing against GCSE results and value-added progress is recommended.</li><li>• Research the motivations of school-age rowing volunteers and their needs as part of the wider 2018 British Rowing Volunteer Strategy development process.</li></ul>

# 05 Champion insight



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## Strategic Objective 5:

**Champion insight** - initiate an annual review of school-age rowing, in partnership with other key stakeholder groups to inform its ongoing development.

### Key actions:

- 5.1 Initiate a regular (two yearly) review of school-age rowing activity aligned to relevant partners (e.g. Sport England and YST) research methodologies where appropriate.
- 5.2 Support external partner-led school-age rowing community research.
- 5.3 Identify and work with external partners to initiate and / or support detailed longitudinal research into the educational benefits of school-age rowing programmes.
- 5.4 Include school-age rowing community considerations within other British Rowing research as appropriate, such as the proposed 2018 British Rowing Volunteer Strategy.

### Lead responsibility:

The British Rowing School-Age Rowing Working Group will lead on the delivery of Strategic Objective 5, working closely with key national agencies and school rowing stakeholder groups, as appropriate.

# Next steps



This is an exciting time for rowing in Great Britain. The 2017 School Age Rowing Review clearly identified the positive impact that rowing can have on the lives of young people as well as the commitment across the rowing community to continuous improvement across all aspects of school-age rowing.

This strategy sets out how British Rowing plans to support the continued development and growth of school-aged rowers over the next four years. We recognise that we need to work proactively in partnership with the wider school-age rowing community to achieve our shared objectives.

A school-age rowing working group is being established to support delivery of this strategic plan. This will include staff from British Rowing's Performance, Partnerships & Communications as well as Rowing Community and Membership Directorates. The working group will also be supported by the Innovation Directorate with respect to programme management and insight activities.

A school-age rowing project lead will be appointed to coordinate and drive the activities of the working group. They will also be responsible for managing school-age rowing community stakeholder relations and act as a central point of contact on school-age rowing related matters.

Liasing with the working group, the school-age rowing lead will be responsible for coordinating the development of a detailed action plan to support this strategy and, linked to this, a monitoring and evaluation plan, to assess annual progress.



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