



BRITISHROWING

Summer Racing Survey

Report

August 2019

TEAMWORK | OPEN TO ALL | COMMITMENT



Introduction

British Rowing reached out to the rowing community to ask questions about the spring/summer racing calendar in general and the British Rowing Senior Championships (BRSC) in particular.

The need for a survey stems from the response of the rowing community to the change of date of the BRSC from October to June which resulted in a cancellation of the BRSC in 2019.

For this reason and to get a better understanding of the views of the rowing community about the calendar a survey ran between Wednesday 19 June and Sunday 21 July 2019 using British Rowing trusted Survey Gizmo software.

The feedback received via the survey will shape the future of the BRSC and inform changes to the spring/summer racing calendar where needed. The feedback was fantastic, with results giving a clear indication on the views of the rowing community.

The survey was developed in collaboration with Henley Women's Regatta and Marlow Regatta and endorsed by Marlow Regatta, Reading Amateur Regatta, Thames Valley Park Regatta, Barnes and Mortlake Regatta, Marlow Town Regatta, Chester Regatta and Durham Regatta.

This report outlines the findings from the survey by providing quantitative as well as qualitative results on both the summer racing and BRSC questions.

Marieke Bal
August 2019

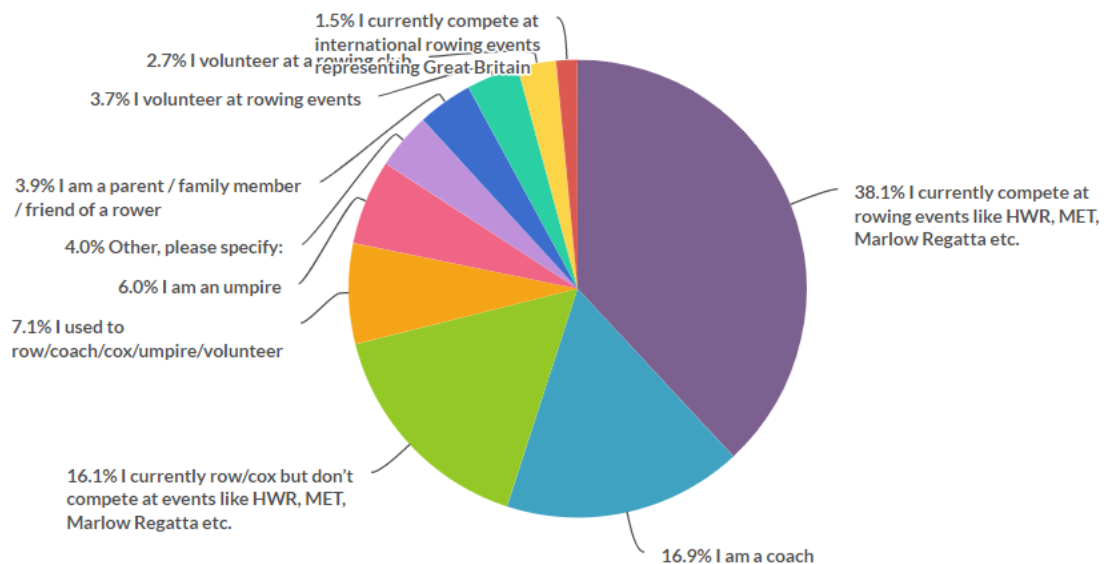
Response

A total of 1,091 people provided feedback in the summer racing survey out of the approximately 30,000 British Rowing members. This is a response rate of 0.4%. As we can assume several people filling out the survey aren't British Rowing members this percentage is possibly even lower. This is a low percentage but very much in line with the response we get to the annual British Rowing Membership survey which is shared across the same channels and to the same audience.

Out of all respondents, 826 people filled out every question in the survey whereas 265 people partially filled out the survey. In this report all responses have been included but for clarity a total response to each question is included.

Over a third of respondents to the survey were rowers who currently compete at rowing events like HWR, MET, Marlow Regatta and other high-level events (38.1%, 416) followed by coaches (16.1%, 184) and rowers and coxes who are active but don't compete at events like HWR, MET and Marlow Regatta (16.1%, 176).

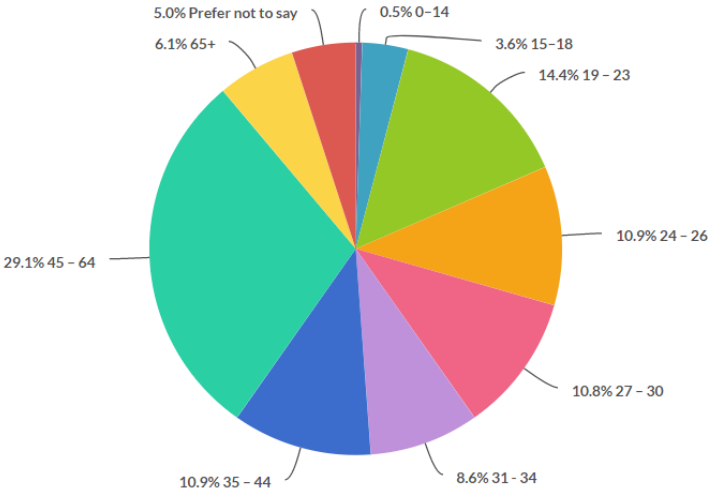
Q1: Which statement primarily describes your involvement in rowing? (n=1,091)



The majority of respondents were based at a club (77%) followed by university (15%) and school based (8%). A minority (19%) were based at an established classified as a British Rowing High Performance Centre.

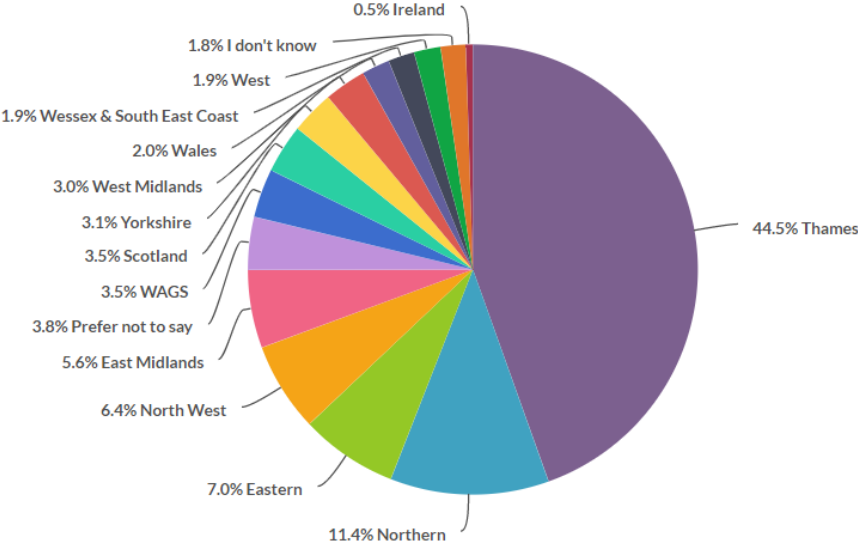
Out of all respondents, 60,5% were male, 36.5% female, 0.2% other and 2.8% prefer not to say. A third of respondents were between 45-64 years old and the majority of all responses came from people between 19 and 64 years old. The chart Q22 shows the exact age breakdown.

Q22: What is your age? (n=834)



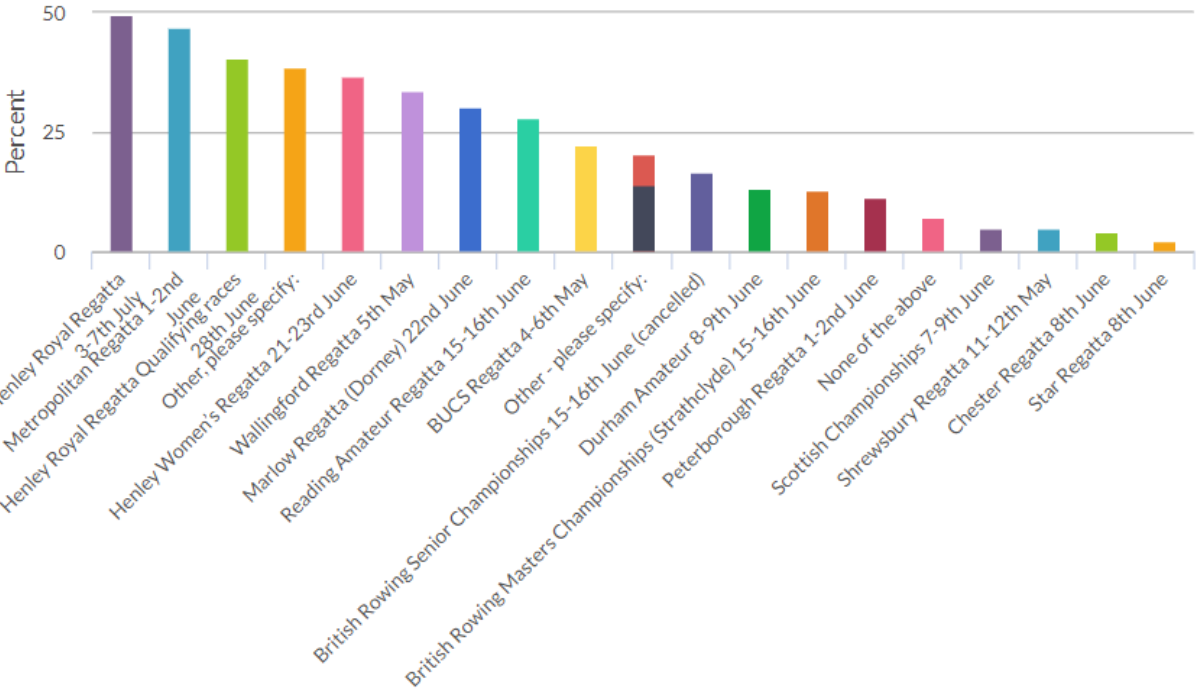
About half of all respondents take part in rowing activity in the Thames Region (44.5%) followed by the Northern region (11.4) and Eastern region (7.0%). The graph of Q23 below shows all responses.

Q23: In which British Rowing region or country is your rowing club located? (n=833)



Almost half of all respondents (49.8%) attended Henley Royal Regatta followed by 46.9% attending Metropolitan Regatta, 40.4% Henley Royal qualifying races and 36.7% Henley Women’s Regatta. By filtering some of the data based on the event people attended or the main role as asked in question 1 of the survey data can be analysed from different angles.

Q6: In 2019 which races of the below have you attended/ planned to attend/ will you be attending? Please tick all that apply and add other UK and foreign races in the ‘other’ boxes provided (n=988)



Respondents were able to leave the name of their rowing club at the end of the survey if they wanted to. 400 respondents did that. The demographics of respondents was used to look at the survey data from different angles. Filters were applied to calculate responses from specific sub-groups to help understand the data in greater detail. Where relevant data in this report will be broken down for different sub-groups (i.e. coaches, rowers, region, age group etc.)

The summer racing calendar

Respondents were asked several questions about how busy they feel the rowing season is between April and July. The majority of respondents feel it's neither too busy or too quiet and selected neutral (73.5%). The sentiment from respondents who selected 'neutral' was that they feel there are races that suit everyone between April and July. Quite a few respondents noted April is quiet but early April is when the majority of squads go on camp. This view is shared by respondents who indicated the rowing season is too busy or not busy enough. Rowing coaches were slightly more likely to state the period between April and July is not busy enough (9.8% compared to

Below highlights some of the feedback given when asked why respondents selected neutral:

“There's an expectation that Spring training camps in early April lead into a late Spring & Summer Race programme, with events running every weekend through to the end of the Summer.”

“Currently the big regattas (Wallingford/Bucs, Nat Schools/Metropolitan, Marlow, and Henley) are reasonably well spaced with c.2-3 weekends between each, plus the option of other reasonably big ones (Nottingham, Durham, Scot Champs, Reading Am.) on the odd weekends being good secondary options in between.”

“There are currently a good mix of high and medium level events for me to volunteer at, without currently feeling like I have to turn events down or I have too many free weekends.”

“Enough races to send crews to to give them experience of racing so that when the main events come around, they are ready. Could do with a race mid-April, but gaps between Wallingford, Nottingham, and Met already appropriate.”

“My favourite time of the year with camps and trials and races.”

Some of the arguments for this period being not busy enough are listed below:

“There is little in the way of major club regattas between Men's Head and Wallingford. Universities have BUCS and there's GB finals trials but it would be good if there was a club regatta (such as Brit Champs) between the Head and Wallingford.”

“There are not enough events and competition that matters. There are no events that host international level competition other than Henley which is a straight knock out. The season is over very quickly.”

At the end of April could be fuller. There is nothing major other than GB trials mid April. The last weekend could be a good start to the season with Brit champs. Before MET, HWR and HRR.”

“It has weekends full of oversubscribed events. But these are skewed to particular groups with far too many filled up with multiple small entry junior and maters events. Because clubs can thereby run their regatta(s) successfully they have no incentive to changes nor space to encourage particular athlete groups. What is needed I either for events to focus more or for there to be more events focusing just on a particular athlete group.”

Respondents who stated this period of the rowing season was too busy mainly referred to the bulk of events happening in June and July. This theme is shared with the respondents who said this period isn't busy enough. The majority of respondents agree that the rowing season could be extended into April and July more to offer more opportunities to train and race.

“Too many high-quality multi-lane regattas compressed into June and July. It would benefit by making more use of the month of April and extend the multi-lane calendar through to end of July.”

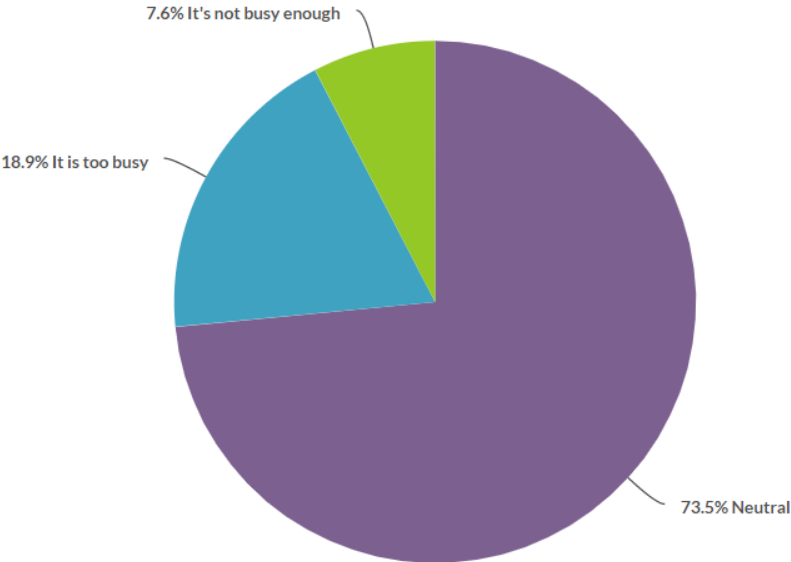
"After a long drawn out winter, summer is all crammed into a few short weeks. Much of the best rowing weather then falls into the off season.”

“Too many 'must do'/'require to do' events in SE England. BUCS/Marlow [as HRR qualifier]/HRR/HWR/National Schools/Nat Champs. Now getting far too many and far too expensive for the support services/personnel for smaller clubs not located in the Thames Valley.”

“I am a student, so the summer racing season unfortunately tends to coincide with the busiest time of year in school - exams, end of year business etc. I enjoy racing and obviously love rowing but often have to choose between doing races, which comes with the extra training, and doing well in my exams.”

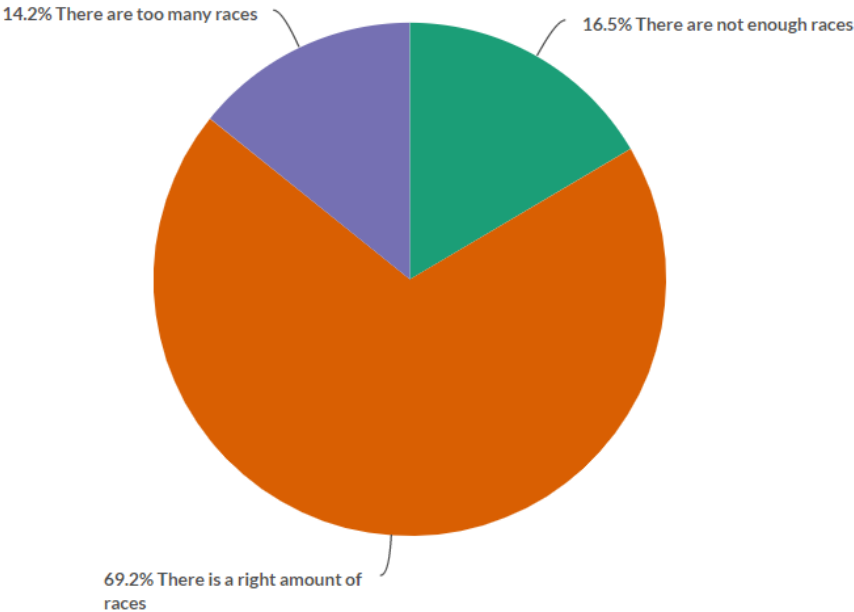
“All the big races are too close together, in between May and June, yet the season starts in April. It would be more efficient to use the all season from April to July.”

Q2: How do you feel about the rowing season between April and July? Please think about the training load, races, camps etc. (n=1,084)



69.2% of respondents indicated there is a right amount of races in the rowing calendar. 16.5% indicated there are not enough races and 14.2% of respondents indicated there are too many races (see graph Q4).

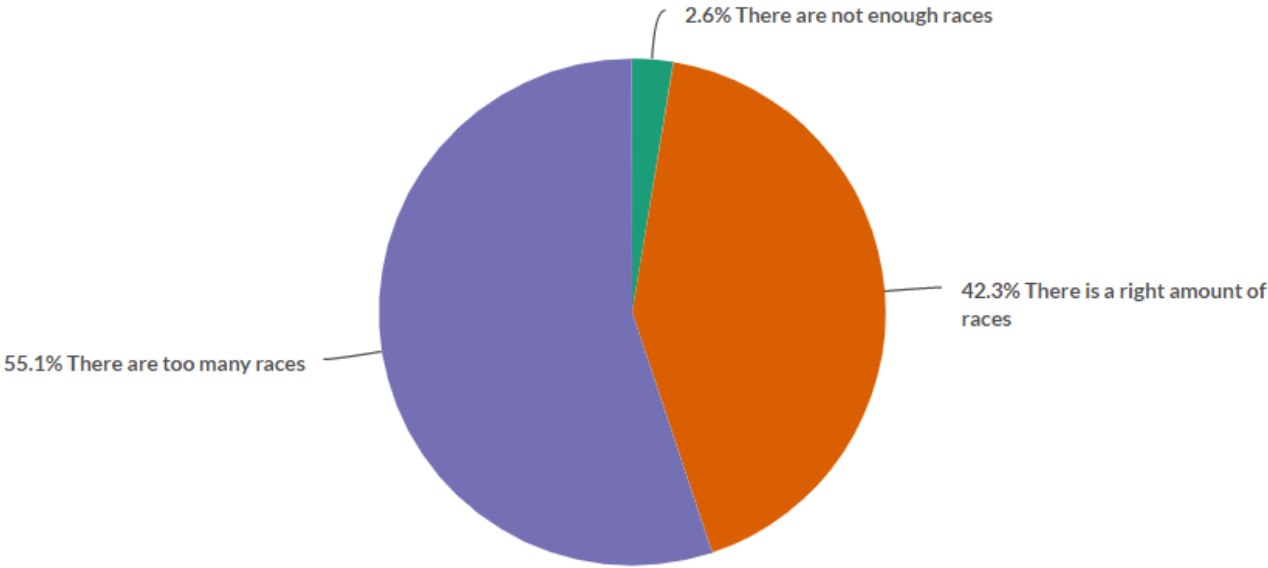
Q4: How do you feel about the frequency of racing between April and July? (n=1,046)



80.9% of respondents who indicated the rowing season from April to July is neither too busy nor not busy enough feel there is a right amount of races. From the respondents indicating in question 3 that the period is not busy enough 78.5% stated that there are not enough races.

From the respondents who said the period is too busy(18.9%), 55.1% stated this is because there are too many races (see graph Q4 filtered). This data shows that the feeling of being busy between April and July isn't solely based on the number of races taking place. When combined with the qualitative responses this paints the picture that this period is perceived neither too busy or not busy enough because of camps, seat races and other activities which generally take place in preparation of the regatta season.

Q4: Filtered on Q3: Rowing season between April-July **'it is too busy'**

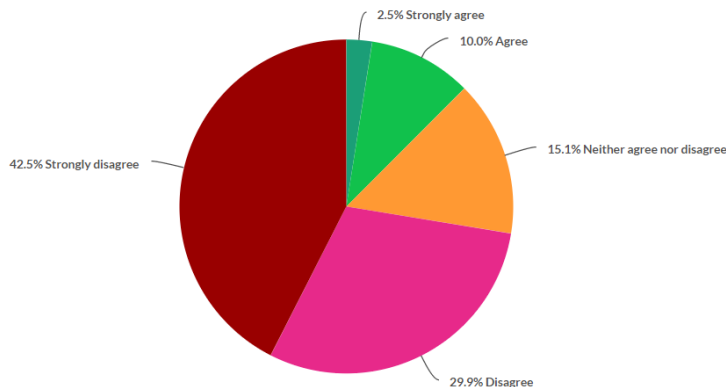


British Rowing Senior Championships

899 respondents left feedback about the British Rowing Senior Championships (BRSC) in the survey. 39.5% of respondents did attend BRSC in the past whereas the other 60.5% of survey respondents did not attend a BRSC in the past five years.

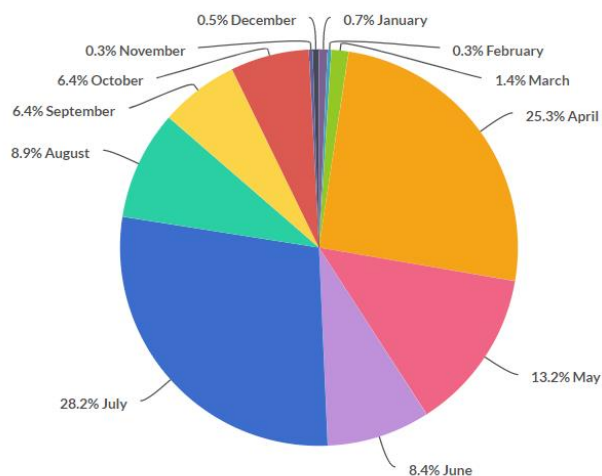
72.4% disagreed or strongly disagreed with the decision to move BRSC to 15-16 June 2019. This was a similar response across age groups and the type of involvement in rowing (rowers, coaches, umpires etc.)

Q9: To what extent did you agree with the decision to move the British Rowing Senior Championships to 15-16 June 2019? (n=882)



When asked in which month respondents think the BRSC should take place there were two popular months: April and July.

Q11: In which month do you think the BRSC should take place? (n=858)



The data filters provide further insight into the responses to this question. The table below shows the different data filters applied and the results by different stakeholder groups. The most popular month in which respondents think BRSC should take place is marked in green font colour. The results indicate that the groups who currently race at a high level in clubs, HPPC's and the GB Rowing Team think BRSC should move to April. The rowers not competing at high level events as well as coaches, umpires and the 30+ year old demographic think BRSC should take place in July. The sentiment of most comments made underline the two different views:

-April- 'As part of the GB squad final trials - can't be a National Champion if not racing the best in GB, could be a 'spotting' opportunity for some who haven't put themselves into the Trials spotlight, best in GB clubs can be inspired by racing with Squad rowers.'





-July- 'I always liked the date in July although I realise it didn't really fit in with international duties. But the BR champs should be intended as a climax to a season and I would much prefer that BR look to use it to extend existing regatta seasons into July and August.'


Data filter/Month	April	July
All respondents (n=858)	25.3%	28.2%
Rowers Competing at HRR, HWR, MET & GB Team(n=355)	31.0%	23.1%
Rowers Not competing at HRR, HWR, MET (n=123)	13.8%	32.5%
Coaches (n=150)	19.3%	30.7%
Umpires (n=56)	28.6%	39.9%
BR HPPC club members (n=134)	34.3%	14.9%
Non BR HPPC club members (n=570)	24.7%	31.8%
0 - 30 year olds (n=306)	32.4%	19.9%
30+ year olds (n=413)	22.8%	34.1%

The choice from respondents of their preferred month to organise the BRSC is reflected in the potential objectives of the BRSC as the highest ranked option was for it to be a clubs/universities championship (not including national squad athletes) closely followed by the second ranked objective for it to be an event where the winners are the best rowers in the UK (including national squad athletes representing their clubs).

Unsurprisingly, respondents who indicated April as a preferred month for BRSC ranked an event with national squad members highest. Respondents who voted for July ranked the objective to have a club/universities championship higher. The table below shows the ranking across the different stakeholder groups.

Q13: Please rank the potential objectives of the BRSC in your preferential order from 1= your top choice to 4= your least favourite choice (n=825)

Item	Overall Rank	Rank Distribution	Score	No. of Rankings
An event where the winners are the best rowers/crews in the clubs/universities (not including national squad athletes)	1		2,237	822
An event where the winners are the best rowers/crews in the UK (this would include all available club and national squad athletes representing their clubs)	2		2,126	825
An event that recognises national champions at different levels like Beginner, Elite etc.	3		1,941	823
An event where the winners are the best club rowers in the country (not including universities, schools and national squad athletes)	4		1,935	824



Data filter/Objective	Winners clubs/ uni's -No GB squad	Best rowers incl. GB squad
All respondents (n=858)	2237	2126
Rowers (n=355) Competing at HRR, HWR, MET & GB Team	912	919
Rowers (n=123) Not competing at HRR, HWR, MET	301	269
Coaches (n=150)	419	368
Umpires (n=56)	153	146
BR HPPC club members (n=134)	365	405
Non BR HPPC club members (n=570)	1536	1383*
0 - 30 year olds (n=306)	801	826
30+ year olds (n=413)	1153	1019

*a club championship only (excluding schools, universities and national squad athletes) was the second ranked objective with 1418 votes

Respondents ranked moving the BRSC to July and combine it with the British Rowing Junior Championships to form an end of season event which will run over five days on top. Followed by second ranked combining the BRSC with the final squad trials in April. This is very much in line with April and July being the most popular months to move the BRSC to.

Q15: Please rank the following possibilities for the future of the BRSC in order of your preference: 1 = top choice 6 = bottom choice (n=764)


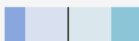


Item	Overall Rank	Rank Distribution	Score	No. of Rankings
Move the British Rowing Senior Championships to July and combine with the BR Junior Championships to form an end of the season event which will run over 5 days.	1		3,614	764
Combine the British Rowing Senior Championships with the final squad trials in April.	2		3,146	763
Run the British Rowing Senior Championships within existing regattas like Open Men's Women's Lightweight's 8+, 4- and 4x at Wallingford and 2-, 2x and 1x at MET for example.	3		2,703	763
Remove the British Rowing Senior Championships event and base the title of "Champion" on results of a selected set of events, which could include the major head races and regattas (e.g. a tournament)	4		2,318	764
Continue to hold the British Rowing Senior Championships in June and change the date of the BR Masters Championships.	5		2,270	763
Continue to hold the British Rowing Senior Championships in June and manage the congestion.	6		1,979	763


Lowest Rank Highest Rank

The data shows that especially rowers from BR HPPC's ranked combining BRSC with the GB Rowing Team April Trials. This was still the second ranked option for all other sub groups. More analysis might be needed to understand the results in more detail. The table shows the data filtered on results from specific key stakeholder groups.

Data filter/Possibilities	April with Trials	July with BRJC
All respondents (n=858)	3146	3614
Rowers (n=355) Competing at HRR, HWR, MET & GB Team	1390	1463
Rowers (n=123) Not competing at HRR, HWR, MET	389	504
Coaches (n=150)	533	634
Umpires (n=56)	210	255
BR HPPC club members (n=134)	592	585
Non BR HPPC club members (n=570)	2294	2708
0 - 30 year olds (n=306)	1340	1380
30+ year olds (n=413)	1600	1986

The most important factors to attend the BRSC in the future are the date and the level of competition. Data showed this was similar for all different stakeholder groups.

Item	Overall Rank	Rank Distribution	Score	No. of Rankings
The date	1		2,366	756
The level of competition	2		2,048	756
The range of events / categories offered	3		1,746	756
The location	4		1,400	756



 Lowest Rank Highest Rank

The sentiment shared was that the date needs to work first and that the competition should fit within the existing calendar. Some qualitative examples are listed below.

“Level of Competition should be the same - or treated like BUCS with several options for the level of racing and the boat classes, e.g. different classes on different days to allow for people to race in more than one event. Date is most important because it should add to the racing calendar, not replace it.”

“I will most likely continue to volunteer at the event regardless. But would want to feel it is representative of the name 'national championship.’”

“Competition should be at the forefront to allow people to compete against other crews of a higher level to attain a national medal. Location is preferable to all in regards to easier access and less travel time. The closer the better, but it cannot be the same for all. Fair rotation or in the middle of the country may be the only solutions. Date is important for clashes with other events in the calendar of a similar status. Range of events should be broad to allow people to compete in their preferred boat class, but not too much so that there is less chance of having competition, or more than one crew as opposition.”

“It should be the most competitive event, you want everyone to be there so you know if you win you've beaten everyone in the country.”

“A trip to Dorney again would be very expensive for those in the north so Nottingham is the best alternative, but you also want to race the best in the country to feel like you have earned the title of British champion”