

## **Address to BSS AGM**

The last twelve months have seen huge progress and success.

The standout highlight was our first OWG medal at Sochi, won by Jenny Jones. But we must not over look the overall success of our team, including 6 top ten finishes, which has undoubtedly regained our credibility as a sport and NGB in the eyes of UK Sport and the BOA, after a turbulent time at Vancouver 4 years ago. We must congratulate all of our team, including our performance director Paddy Mortimer, the coaches, discipline committees and support staff who helped to make this possible. It was fantastic to see what must have been record coverage of our sport in the media and the subsequent queues at slopes and snowdomes around the UK.

After a tremendous amount of hard work from many of our staff, coaches and athletes, we have secured an unprecedented grant of £4 million from UK Sport for BSS and £0.8m for some of our athletes for the next 4 years. It is worth reminding this meeting that the award of such a sum to BSS four years ago would have been unthinkable. It enables us to move ahead with our performance plans, and to focus on our crucial strategic target of winning more medals at world and Olympic level. We cannot be distracted from this – at Sochi people hoped we would win a medal – in PyeongChang we will now be expected to win medals.

We have also been fortunate to secure headline sponsorship, and additional funds, from Delancey, driven and overseen by our long term supporters, the Ritblat family. My grateful thanks go to Sir John Ritblat for his continued support of British Ski and Snowboard, and for his Presidency of this organisation, and to Dave Edwards for helping to secure this deal.

As a result, I am delighted to report that the last 12 months have brought financial stability to BSS. The Board have agreed that we will work to build a modest financial reserve, and I would like to acknowledge the work that my fellow non-executive director, John Foster, has put in behind the scenes along with David Edwards, to put us in a robust financial position.

I am also pleased to report that since the last AGM, we have re-visited the constituent members of our Board, and whilst there have been no radical changes, we do now have representatives from the Home Nations attending our Board meetings. I believe that this has gone some way towards meeting some of the concerns about our governance structure previously expressed by Snowsport Scotland, and I am delighted that BSS are consistently working closely with colleagues from all of the Home Nations to move the sport forward at all levels. In June, we hosted a very productive meeting that brought together the Chairs and CEO's of both BSS and the Home Nations, and we plan to have more of these meetings in the future.

We are also very close to establishing an Athlete Committee, which has representation on the Board. I am a firm believer in the need for athletes to have a strong voice, and this initiative is long over due. The Board look forward to working with this group as we move forward.

Other areas of progress include a review of the structure of our office here at the BOA, and the potential for further financial deals in the future although the financial market for sponsorship remains tough, and is certainly not the open cheque book that many would like to think.

On the back of this success and progress, it would be wrong not to highlight some of the difficulties and issues that BSS have faced in the last 12 months. The Board were very aware of criticism from some quarters of the selection policy for the Sochi Games. For that reason, we commissioned an independent review of our selection policy and process from Wharton Consulting, a widely respected company with vast experience in this area. This morning, their lead consultant, Dr Sarah Rowell, reported back to the Board, and I am pleased to say that she has confirmed that our policy and processes were largely correct. We sent any athlete who had met the BSS standard to the games. However in the area of communication, BSS could certainly have done better, and the Board will work hard to rectify this in the future. We will shortly be making a summary of the report available on our website.

As members will know, we have also faced issues with the recent election of the Chair of the Alpine, Speed and Telemark Committee. This post is subject to an appeal next week so I am not in a position to pre-judge or make comments that could influence the outcome, suffice to say that as a Board, we must have the highest possible standards of conduct and Governance, and Board members must be aware that they are legally obliged to act in the best interests of the entire Company. It is a matter of great disappointment to me that considerable time has been taken up by senior staff in dealing with this issue, and I am grateful to Adrian Pery for agreeing to step in as interim Chair until the matter is resolved.

Finally, as well as thanking all those volunteers, donors, coaches and athletes who have contributed to such a successful year, I would like to acknowledge and thank the hard work of three Board members who have stepped down in the course of the last twelve months:

Simon Ashton, as Chair of the Freestyle discipline, devoted a huge amount of time to supporting the sport and his hard work and insightful contributions to Board discussions will be missed. Along with other colleagues, I look forward to working with his successor, Iain Mackay.

Andrew Lockerbie has recently stepped down from his role at Disability Snowsport UK, and with that decision has relinquished his position on the Board of BSS. I would like to thank him for his hard work, and of course acknowledge the unprecedented success of our disabled skiers, who won a record number of medals at the Sochi Paralympic Winter Games.

And today marks the end of Konrad Bartelski's tenure as a Board member of BSS. I would like to thank Konrad for his dedication and hard work, often during difficult times, and to acknowledge the debt that the sport owes him over many years. We hope that Konrad will still remain within the sport, since he has much to offer and vast experience of elite performance.

There is much to do in the next 12 months, but we are now in as good a position as anyone could have hoped to move forward. We must not lose the opportunity that so many months and years have now offered us – we are acknowledged now as an Olympic medal winning sport for the first time, and our reputation with key stakeholders such as UK Sport and the BOA is higher than it has ever been. The only danger is that we lose sight of our medal winning objectives, and I can assure you that this Board is determined not to let this happen, and to build on our progress and success to date.

That concludes my review of the last 12 months. Members are now able to ask questions of the Board.