

1. Introduction

The BSS Board received a presentation from Dr Sarah Rowell at their September 2014 meeting on her independent review of the creation and implementation of the Olympic Qualification Standards (OQS) that governed selection of athletes for the Sochi 2014 Olympic Winter Games. The Board agreed, inter alia, that BSS should establish an Olympic Selection Philosophy (OSP) that would provide clarity about BSS’s views on the performance standards that a snowsport athlete should reach in order to be recommended by BSS for selection by the British Olympic Association (BOA) for inclusion in TeamGB.

The Board decided to seek all BSS members views to provide input to the creation of an Olympic Selection Philosophy. All BSS members were invited to respond to a survey during December 2014 and January 2015.

Disappointingly only 44 of BSS’s c500 members responded to the Survey. The 44 were from the following Disciplines:

Alpine	80%	35
Freestyle	5%	2
Nordic	9%	4
Snowboard	7%	<u>3</u>
		44

2. Member Survey statistical results

The percentage of yes / no answers to each of the questions asked in the survey are shown in the following section:

FIS World Championships requirements

A.1 Each BSS Discipline has, generally, been able to set selection criteria and select athletes for World Championship events without considering the selection standards and criteria that are established in the other BSS Disciplines. Should each BSS Discipline be free to set its own World Championship selection criteria?

Yes	40 responses	89%	No	4 responses	9%
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A.2 No common definition or understanding of “credible performance” exists within BSS. It could range from “unlikely to finish last” through to “should be capable of challenge for a place on the podium”. Should the BSS Board and Discipline Committees be challenged with the task of establishing a “credible performance standard” for BSS athlete’s selection for World Championship events.

Yes	30 responses	67%	No	15 responses	33%
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A.3 Should BSS enter the maximum number of athletes permitted by FIS and the organisers in World Championship no matter what their standard?

Yes	20 responses	44%	No	25 responses	56%
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B. British Olympic Association stated requirements

Do you believe that BSS should attempt, through negotiation with the BOA, to change any of the following requirements:

B.1 The BOA believe that the opportunities that European Youth Olympic festivals, youth Olympic Games and the BOA Ambition programme provide are all sufficient learning experiences to prepare athletes for the full Olympic stage. They do NOT believe athletes should attend the Summer or Winter Olympic games “for experience”. Should BSS seek to overturn the BOA “not for experience” requirement?

Yes	36 responses	80%	No	9 responses	20%
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B.2 Typically, in events with a low number of competitors (typically 36 or less) International Federations (in our case FIS) allocate Olympic places (Quotas) to Nations based upon athletes standings in World rankings. Sometimes a Nation will not take up all of the places that its athletes have earned through this system and the International Federation then reallocates these quota’s to the Nations of the next athletes on the list. The BOA chose, for 2014, NOT to accept any reallocated hand back quota spots. The BOA’s view has been that if an athlete has not qualified through achieving sufficient ranking position during the qualification period to qualify automatically then they should not be selected to represent Great Britain at an Olympic event. Should BSS seek to overturn the BOA’s refusal to accept hand back quota spots?

Yes	40 responses	89%	No	5 responses	11%
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B.3 The BOA require “credible performance” from athletes who are selected to represent Great Britain at an Olympics. When pushed for definition of credible performance the BOA state that for an event with high competitor numbers (typically the timed events rather than the subjective/judged sports or the “knock out” sports) they require a competitor to have demonstrated that they will finish in the top 2/3rds of an Olympic field. Should BSS seek to overturn the BOA’s stance on demonstrating ability to finish in the top 2/3rds of an Olympic field and make it easier for British Athletes to qualify?

Yes	30 responses	67%	No	15 responses	33%
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C. British Ski and Snowboard Philosophy

The BSS Board are committed to producing a philosophy that represents the majority view from the BSS Members:

C.1 The BOA currently accept that if a competitor generates a quota place in a restricted entry event (c36 entrants or less) then they have already shown the ability to achieve credible performance and, subject to maintaining form and fitness, can be recommended for selection to TeamGB. Should BSS continue to support this stance and recommend athletes for selection by the BOA if they have generated a quota spot in a restricted entry event?

Yes	40 responses	89%	No	2 responses	4%
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C.2 The BOA and UK Sport were disappointed with the results of TeamGB at the 2010 Vancouver Olympic Winter Games. In the review of the results in Vancouver it was suggested that Great Britain may achieve significantly better results at an Olympic Winter Games if double the money was spent on half the number of competitors. i.e. expenditure was kept at the same level but only half the number of competitors should be selected to compete. Do you believe that OQS should be set to ensure that only the athletes who will challenge realistically for top 25 places or better are recommended for selection for TeamGB?

Yes	3 responses	7%	No	41 responses	91%
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C.3 Thus far BSS has believed that it is correct to ask the BOA to enter an athlete who has qualified in one event in other events within the same Discipline if it is believed that competing in that additional event will assist the athlete in their main event. E.g. an athlete who qualifies for the Alpine Super Combined might be entered into the Downhill or a cross country athlete may be entered in both the sprint and the 15km when they have only qualified for the one event. Should BSS continue to recommend the entry of athletes in to additional “supporting events” even when it is thought that the athlete may not achieve a credible performance.

Yes	35 responses	78%	No	9 responses	20%
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C.4 Should an athlete from any Discipline who has been unable to score a World Cup point (they have not finished within the top 30 at any FIS World Cup event) be recommended to the BOA for inclusion within TeamGB if it is believed that they can finish within the top 2/3rds of an Olympic field?

Yes	42 responses	93%	No	2 responses	4%
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3. Member Survey opinion

The following section contains written narrative provided by members who responded to the survey:

A.2.1 If you believe that the BSS Board and Discipline Committees should be challenged with the task of establishing a “credible performance standard” for BSS athlete’s selection for World Championship events please tell us how you would define a credible performance:

1. It should be based on an understanding of the discipline. For example in a sport like Alpine skiing where there are 100’s of participants at a world level I do not consider it logical that it is limited to only those who can podium. It should be much broader to also allow athletes’ to gain experience. A performance where the athlete can be seen to proudly represent their country in the context of the size of the sport. A minimum standard of being capable to be within the top 2/3 of the participants would see reasonable.
2. Based on a competitors world ranking - minimum top 2/3. Also where an athlete is 100% self funded - if there is no qualifying entrant for that event they should be allowed to enter subject to any total number of entrants clause. If this clause comes into play then the self funded athletes are taken from the list based on their relative percentage position in their respective world ranking.
3. Using FIS standings and/or points to place an athlete within the field of a World Championship race. Placing would depend upon athlete age, experience, previous results. In this way athletes can be challenged to exceed previous performances and encouraged developmentally. As an example, Athlete A (aged 19y) might be expected to place more than 10% up a field, whilst athlete B (aged 27y) who has attended several World Championships already, might be expected to finish in the top 30. (b) Use previous results to focus on best/average/below average performances for all GBR athletes of an age/gender and use these to define credible performances. (c) Exceptional circumstances might prevail dependent upon age of athlete and requirements of team.
4. Strong potential to finish in the top 75%
5. Potential to make top 15 in their chosen event
6. Would depend on the nature of the discipline, but something along the lines of able to progress beyond the first heat or finishing in the top two-thirds of the field. Should be modified by any current or relevant fitness and/or injury concerns.
7. Top two thirds
8. Likely to finish in the top 30
9. Top 25 in the Olympic or World Championships
10. A finish within the top 2 thirds
11. An appropriate FIS point standard should be set in each discipline to ensure a credible performance, but the bar should be set at a level that is achievable by our aspiring athletes but selectors should have discretion as the points system is prone to anomalies. The standard should reflect the ability to obtain a place in the top 2/3 and/or excellent long term prospects.

12. Defer to FIS – if the athlete meets the FIS standard then they should be allowed to compete a reasonable alternative is that they should be capable of finishing in the top two-thirds of the field, though I believe the two criteria probably achieve the same result.
13. Top 90%
14. A top 2/3rds finish. FIS Penalty Points likely to achieve a top 2/3rds finish should be based on previous World Alpine Champs and/or Olympics that use a best 4 athletes from each country approach.
15. In Technical discipline we have qualifying races to get into the event main... if you get into this event I think its credible.
16. Consideration of their age and their personal objectives; gaining experience for younger racers and for more experienced racers, the chance to finish on the podium.
17. I would let the management of each individual discipline define it. And I would expect the discipline committees and, if appropriate, the Board to apply common sense in any challenge to or review of that definition.
18. Define as “the best ranked/seeded X from Britain” with X being the number of places available to GB entrants.
19. Comparatively it would vary to how many people were competing. In my opinion if 100 people were competing a credible performance would be a top 70.
20. Top 80% at the world championship event.
21. Top 70 if the field is 100 people.
22. In the opinion of their Coaches – can the athlete realistically expect to finish in the top 90% of the field?
23. An athlete capable of a performance result in top third of the field.
24. Likely to be able to achieve a result/position within the top two thirds, relative to the number of people on the start list.
25. It shouldn't be about the result it should be about the taking part and gaining experience for future events . Any British Athlete who has dedicated their time to the sport should be able to fill any quota places irrelevant of achievement i.e if there are 4 places we should let the top 4 attend.
26. Capable of challenging for a place in the top 30
27. “Met FIS criteria for selection”; “Performed to listing / ranking / seeding on the day” - This definition would apply to all major competitions.
28. If a British Athlete has met their ranking or listing at that particular event that should signify they have met the FIS criteria
29. Closer to, "unlikely to finish last". Given we are not the strongest country at alpine skiing i think we should be giving opportunities for athlete's to compete at events like these whenever we can.
30. 1st time Competitor - potential to achieve a final position in the top 3/4 of the competition AND have demonstrated progress in chosen discipline since the previous World Champs; Returning Competitor - potential to achieve a final position in the top half of the competition
31. Top 60%

OSP – Member Survey Results

D: The following is the bulk of the “further comments” made by members:

<p>Consistency. At the current time FIS points are used as “the only” measure of performance. A medal will be achieved through someone skiing fast and getting to the bottom. Athletes who consistently finish and consistently improve should be given priority over those who achieve a fantastic result “once a season”.</p>	<p>Current performance. Race entry criteria is based on points. Current performance should also be taken into account. Is a racer who is not currently skiing to their points should be considered at their current performance.</p>	<p>Comparison. To allow comparison key athletes should come together at least twice a season for performance comparison. One such event should be the British Championships to which teamGB athletes should be required to participate. This should also be important for sponsors.</p>	
<p>We are a group of minority sports – the more media coverage we generate whether local or national HAS to benefit ALL our sports.</p>	<p>Therefore if an athlete is self funded and they are the best we have to offer then they should be allowed to join Team GB (subject to their not affecting any better placed athletes due to quotas.) even if they fall short of the criteria.</p>	<p>(Eddie the Eagle is still a celebrity and I am sure he has helped increase participation in wintersports a great deal).</p>	<p>As for any funding of “prospects”. This should be shared out based on an algorithm based around projected finishing place / expenses incurred (some sports cost more than others).</p>
<p>I believe that the BOA’s selection policy is incorrect. An athlete aged 30 who qualifies for their third Olympics yet is only expected to finish 66% down the field may take a place from a younger athlete (aged 19y) who, though probably set to finish 75% down the field, is a greater podium prospect in the longer term. Their selection may serve to encourage their continuing in the sport. Although I accept that EYOWF, YOG, and aspirational groups are good experience for prospects, there is room for developmental selection. Reallocated quota places should definitely be used by GBR athletes. The consequence of not using them is to provide additional competition from other nations. “GBR best finishes” in recent Games could additionally be used as a selection criteria. The level and quality of support in each discipline needs to be assessed. To achieve podium places, sport bests, personal bests requires much greater support than has previously been allowed.</p>			
<p>A. 3 We need to apply standards, irrespective of disappointing athletes, if we are to avoid Eddie the Eagle Syndrome</p>	<p>B.2 The term 'hand back' has pejorative overtones. Could we adopt 'additional quota' as the terminology? We should accept additional quota provided the athlete thus included can meet the same criteria as those already in main quota. It may be a while before we find ourselves with more qualifying athletes than quota but the policy should allow for the eventuality</p>	<p>B.3 Suggest Strong potential to finish in top 75%</p>	<p>C.2 Suggest Strong potential to finish in the top 75%</p>
<p>I have said that BSS should not look to always fill the maximum quota. However this is only if you do not have a full quota of athletes capable of reaching a credible performance. You must also play close attention especially when it comes to speed events – does that athlete necessarily have the ability to ski a full world cup course even if they are the best in the country? Furthermore, top 2/3 in an Olympic event is possible without ever making a top 30 in World cup. The Olympics and World Championships from this point of view are ‘easier’ than World Cup as each nation can enter fewer competitors (so there are less Austrians, swiss, French ... so on).</p>			<p>Consider credible performances by individual athletes and not just point/performance scores.</p>

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<p>Despite not having much of an Alpine environment, the UK does have a long association with Alpine endeavours. We should be aiming for credible performances, not <i>also rans</i>.</p>	<p>Whilst it might be an ambition for an individual athlete to represent their country at the Olympics, it does the credibility of their sport no favours at all if they fail against the rest of the world. Failure on the international stage will act as a disincentive for participation.</p>	<p>Some of our results at previous Olympics have been frankly embarrassing on both a personal level for people who already participate in those sports (at all levels) and those bodies that represent them (at all levels), even when we can congratulate them face-to-face on “giving it a go”.</p>	<p>The BSS should not be in the business of making athlete’s dreams come true. The BSS should be in the business of making the UK’s dreams come true, showing UK athletics in a credible light and through that, driving participation and ambition at all levels.</p>
<p>This has been made far more complicated than it needed to be. If BOA demand or expect a top 2 thirds performance, we can look back over the last 2 Olympic cycles and get some data on what level the athlete (as in what level they are at in other events) needs to be in order to finish top 2 thirds.</p>	<p>That is the criteria that will mean BSS are meeting the BOA’s demands but also giving a fair chance to our athletes. Sport and in particular the ‘Olympic spirit’ is not about ‘If you’re not competing for a medal, don’t bother coming’. It is about getting involved, being part of it and giving it a shot from a decent and respectable level. No-one should go and embarrass Team GB but in the same vein, it should not be only for those who are going to podium at the first attempt! My thoughts anyway</p>		
<p>Having seen both ends of the spectrum (qualifying standards that were too easy in the 1980s, and too difficult in 2014), I believe that BSS should get back to the standards of 1994 and 1998, which were just about right: simple, tough but fair. They were: Top 30 in a World Cup event OR top 15 in a Europa Cup event with minimum penalty (not counting Combined, Indoor or Parallel events). Other disciplines that have non “restricted entry” events should be encouraged to adopt similar levels. Restricted entry events should be required to accept “handback” quota spots. If we don’t accept them, another nation will – so we are effectively handing an advantage to other nations’ athletes, and metaphorically shooting ourselves in the foot. The thousands of people who signed an athlete’s petition for selection reconsideration understood this – it is time time for BSS to make sure such a situation never happens again.</p>			
<p>Athletes’ ambition should not be just to be an Olympian. BSS should only send athletes who have proven to be competitive at Elite level, and who have delivered creditable results at World Cup or top ten results at Europa Cup.</p>			<p>Podium at Nor-Am could be an option too.</p>
<p>The Olympics is different from any other competition in so many ways that athletes need as much preparation as possible. The Youth Olympics is great preparation but even that can’t compete with the full Olympics and the time frame for competing at the Youth Olympics is so small that an athlete could easily miss their chance to compete due to injury, late entry iot the sport or 100 other reasons. Because of this I believe the athlete being able to compete at Olympics for experience purposes before they reach their peak is essential for future success.</p>			
<p>We are in favour of sending as many athletes as possible, where they demonstrate the appropriate ability and dedication. This does not necessarily mean filling all quota places as we understand funding is limited.</p>	<p>Equally athletes who have met the qualification and are within the quota should not be prevented from competing.(i.e. Self-funding should be allowed subject to the ability tests.)</p>	<p>We consider that the more athletes that compete, the better for British sport.</p>	
<p>Simply select the best athletes up to the allowed quota. E.g. If we are allowed to enter 4 x athletes, select the best 4 athletes. That is all the athletes and coaches require.</p>			

OSP – Member Survey Results



<p>Count-back is intended to ensure the best 32 athletes who are available at the time of a competition are entered. The BOA stance on count-back undermines the intent of the governing body to maximize the quality of the field as well as denying a British athlete the opportunity to compete in favour of a less able or qualified athlete from elsewhere. Given that each nation has a maximum number of athletes who may compete in any event it also opens the possibility that a strong team will be able to exclude athletes who would otherwise qualify by packing the rankings. The BOA approach is arrogant, in that it deems itself more qualified than the governing body to determine who will ski, and unfairly penalizes British athletes in favour of less qualified athletes from elsewhere.</p>	<p>To the extent that field size at the world championship determines the distribution of any financial surplus, the BOA/BSS stance on selection is harming the sport, as a whole, financially as well as the harm it does to individual athletes.</p>	<p>GB has a high participation rate in skiing but a low participation rate in alpine sport. Participants need to see more athletes competing at the highest level, ideally winning or scoring points, but at least competing. We have a tremendous group of young athletes who would have performed credibly at Sochi and could have used the platform and unique coverage and attention that comes with an Olympic Games to be role models and to encourage younger athletes to get into our sport. BOA policy meant that we missed a fabulous opportunity to showcase our amazing young talent and instead we sent a message to our athletes that GB doesn't give a monkey's a** about alpine skiing.</p>
<p>Why is this survey done using Microsoft Word? There is survey software available that makes it much easier for people to respond. If more people reply, it will make the survey is more meaningful.</p>		
<p>Question C2 does not give the amount of money that the BOA spends per athlete, but some of the numbers I have seen are astonishing and would bear no resemblance to costs that normal sporting events might produce. There has to be a strong suspicion that the BOA would need to scale back on its overhead as well if this line of argument were to have any credibility at all.</p>	<p>I think top two thirds of the field should be a guideline rather than an absolute, with an opportunity to argue against it in some cases. Particularly where there will or are likely to be restricted or small fields.</p>	
<p>Athletes should be selected discipline specific. For example, a specialist GB skier, who has qualified only for GS should compete for GB. If they have not qualified for another discipline eg. slalom, they shouldn't compete just because they are there and for experience. Another slalom specialist should take priority.</p>	<p>Athletes to qualify should show that they are consistently scoring low points and finishing within the top 2/3 of an event - depending on race type eg. A Race, CIT Race, Championship, or position in a Race Series.</p>	
<p>I think everyone should be taken into consideration, and although I think criteria should be made easier and more realistic, they shouldn't just fill the quota with the next best if it could be deemed dangerous or unrealistic to even remain in a credible performance sector.</p>	<p>I believe more thought and consideration should go into sending athletes for experience to major events. Not only will it take nerves away from the next time they compete on television for the first time, but it will allow more publicity and confidence for the athlete.</p>	

OSP – Member Survey Results



<p>The first question that really should be asked is whether the sport at large thinks there is value in entering athletes at the bigger alpine sporting events for experience. I believe that there is a consensus within the sport that there is a benefit for the athlete attending big events in overcoming stage fright etc. Reportedly, this is borne out by many Olympians, who are not prodigies, not producing their best performance at their first Olympics. An athlete has openly said he was out of his depth at his first Olympics, but the experience and a better understanding of the gap he had to close inspired and motivated him to work harder to close it.</p>	<p>If BSS do not support realistic qualification criteria for its athletes into the World Champs and the Olympics then why would BSS support the same athletes by entering them into World Cup events where the field of competition is considerably higher. It makes no sense. A sceptic would have a case for arguing that existing and previous selection criteria has been biased towards financial considerations rather than the interests of the athlete, GB Team Sponsors or even the viewing public. We're also told that there is some supposed historic desire or requirement to beat up Alpine for previous financial misdemeanours and false promises that have nothing to do with current athletes or BSS – why !!! Ultimately the athlete suffers from a lack of national media exposure, potential sponsorship before they ultimately decide to leave the sport before they peak as they can't afford it. A common theme over recent years that must impact on the numbers entering at grass roots level by the removal or the failure to replace alpine icons– it certainly dilutes and removes GB technical expertise in Alpine looking even further ahead.</p>	<p>The 2014 BOA OQC for alpine was totally inconsistent with the supposed premise of delivering top 2/3rds finish. This was borne out by Australian Alpine Ladies Team at Sochi finishing well within the top 40 (i.e. top 2/3rds) where many of them were much higher placed in the world rankings than their GBR counterparts and wouldn't have qualified under the BOA OQC – criteria that was more consistent with a World Cup top 20 finish. The BOA OQC, as advocated by BSS, needs to be based on a transparent philosophy and strategy to deliver it against criteria that is both suitable with an appropriate degree of flexibility - FIS Penalty Points etc alone don't tell the full story. The criteria must be understood and supported by the sport at large otherwise BSS cannot be considered to be governing the interests of the sport at either the elite end or at grass roots level.</p>	<p>All the above sounds rather negative, albeit it is intended to be constructive regardless , the mere fact that BSS has put out this Survey to engage the membership on pertinent issues concerning the governance of Alpine scores a massive positive in our eyes :D !!</p>
<p>To many people want the easy ride....</p>	<p>Criteria wasn't unrealistic for people who failed to achieve it... they blame the criteria when really they failed themselves!</p>	<p>For speed you have to be of a high level otherwise you are at a risk of injury</p>	
<p>For the moment, the alpine team is young and only one athlete is realistically likely to reach a podium position. However we should still utilise all the positions available as the younger racers are showing promise and getting good results. When the younger racers reach the top standard in the world, they will already have experienced a major event, which can only be beneficial towards their chances of being top in their discipline.</p>			
<p>For any discipline we should support and recommend “the best ranked/seeded X from Britain” with X being the number of places available to GB entrants. Any individual who has worked hard and succeeded at becoming “the best” that GB can produce then deserves the full support of GB at Olympic events regardless of their overall World ranking. GB should not restrict the numbers that this can include, that restriction is something that the International Olympic Committee will address if it were ever to become an issue/concern to them.</p>			



OSP – Member Survey Results

<p>The overwhelming majority of Alpine participants are self funded in one way or another. If an athlete is capable of returning a “credible performance” then they should be selected. Selection will assist them with profile of themselves and their sport, will assist with fund raising and ‘blood them’ i.e. offer them valuable experience of participation on a world stage.</p>	<p>The ethos of the Olympics is to send the best you have, I accept we really don’t need too many ‘glorious failures’ such as ‘Eddie the Eagle’. But I believe that the ‘credible performance’ criteria covers this point.</p>	<p>If we were awash with Government funding – or Lottery money – then I would accept the BOA could ‘set the bar higher’ BUT the Alpine programme is essentially a privately funded group and we need to do everything we can to widen the ‘gene-pool of talent’ that we draw from.</p>	<p>It is an accepted fact that Alpine athletes mature quite late in their careers. It is important to give emerging talent the exposure and the experience to cope with the pressures as part of their career development.</p>
<p>The BSS Board must be continually explore all areas of potential funding (commercial, private and many others) rather than hinging everything upon UK Sport where Olympic selection is then compromised due to the potential negative effects on future UK Sport funding. All places to major events should be filled with the best athletes in Britain at that particular time. Sending an athlete to an Olympic Games (or World Championships) with a view to the experience it will carry for following Games is very important, especially in Alpine Skiing.</p>		<p>The nature of Olympic Alpine events is that a ‘wildcard’ entry can do well on a particular day and in conditions prevailing at the moment they compete. Look no further back than Sochi to find competitors who ‘medalled’ there – yet struggle to break into the top 10 of World Cup events.</p>	
<p>We should be giving our athletes as much exposure as possible to experience being at these events. It will give them the drive and enthusiasm to try and achieve even more and it will give GB the much needed PR by having athletes on the start list.</p>	<p>I am a parent but I know that when I was a young boy, being selected for the county in basketball and also playing for a football team’s youths drove me to train harder and to raise my game higher as I wanted to prove to myself and also to show the selectors they had made the right choice and I was able to perform to a higher standard.</p>	<p>I realise that BOA and UK Sport need to justify performances at major events, but I truly believe that Alpine is on the verge of going somewhere and we have a large pool of talent who given the right support and encouragement can go all the way and attendance at these events is a major building block in the journey.</p>	
<p>Respect needs to be given by the all parties to the hard work, time, commitment and cost that the athletes, in participating in sport, have contributed of their own accord to get to their level of achievement, often with the goal of being part of the Olympic Games movement. If this goal for the relatively few is unreasonably denied then this may lead to participants in sport showing less interest.</p>		<p>The top two thirds approach is not a credible selection approach if widely applied among nations. In cross country skiing all Olympic women’s races would end up with just two Norwegians if this was universally applied.</p>	<p>At a basic level, if criteria are too stringent or too specific it is likely that many plausible unfunded or partially funded candidates will not be able even to afford to attend qualifying events.</p>
<p>I welcome and thank you for this (first I can recall) request for feedback, it feels constructive. I have spent nearly a decade thinking of BSS as an information and contact black hole in which decisions are made behind closed doors by persons unknown and un-contactable.</p>	<p>The bottom line in terms of your direct question above is that BSS should provide its athletes with EVERY possible opportunity to compete at the highest level possible. Opportunities for GB athletes are so few and far between that every opportunity needs to be sieved. I have never encountered a GB level skier who would embarrass BSS through their efforts or ability and so they should be supported.</p>		<p>BSS should take this opportunity to be honest and realistic about the service it does provide to its athletes and the service it CAN provide to its athletes. I know it provides less than it would like because of funding constraints and this makes the issue of what it can do even more important.</p>

OSP – Member Survey Results



<p>Athlete X is determined to do the best he can with no support and no money. To pay his own way he is now in his third year as a ski instructor, has almost got his final BASI 3 module completed and now has a car which enables him to get to a limited number of European resorts where he can enter Europa Cup and FIS races. It is worth noting that every race he entered last year was cancelled and it looks like the same fate awaits the first race he can get to this year.</p>		<p>Conclusion – Be realistic and honest about what you can / will do for athletes in each discipline and give every bit of competition opportunity at the highest possible level. It is only this which motivates self-funded people to keep going.</p>	
<p>All as noted in the sections above; The Olympic Charter should be read and understood by BSS to help with the philosophy.</p>	<p>If all countries reduced their number of entries based on 2/3rd 'rule' for potential results then the Olympics would diminish in numbers to 66%, 44% then 31% and so on, in the forthcoming Olympics – not desirable to anyone and this is contrary to the mission of the IOC which is to promote Olympism throughout the world and to encourage participation in sports.</p>	<p>The Olympic creed states "The most important thing in the Olympic Games is not to win but to take part..." . Article 6 of the Olympic Charter says that the Olympic Games are competitions between individual athletes or teams and are not competitions between countries. The IOC/BOC parties should allow that to happen and not restrict it.</p>	<p>Article 28 says the NOC mission is to develop, promote and protect the Olympic Movement, ie to promote, not denigrate participation in sport, as per the creed. A fundamental principle of Olympism is the practice of sport as a human right.</p>
<p>As the Olympics are run on a very different basis to world cups and other FIS races I think that it is really important that it becomes common practice to use all Olympic places to aim to get potential Olympic athletes to one winter games before they challenge seriously in their second games. This means that as many of the small variables as possible have been rehearsed to improve chances at the second appearance. In addition the BOA need to acknowledge that Olympic appearances are a very valuable currency to potential sponsors and it is a way of indirectly helping athletes by not wasting any places or opportunities.</p>		<p>I believe that the idea that we should not send athletes to any international event purely because they may not be able to challenge for the top spots, i.e top 10 or top 3, is a bad one. If an athlete has become the best in the country for any discipline I believe they have earned the right to represent the country in an international setting.</p>	<p>There should be a qualification race for EYOF as first year FIS athletes do not have time to get points representative of their ability. This has been proven as this year the 98s consistently beat 97s who were picked for EYOF. The 97s had a year to get their points down where as the 98s only had a month or so.</p>
<p>The BOA & UK Sport clearly have a responsibility to spend money wisely and very much need to be seen to be doing so. However, all that denying our best athletes the opportunity to compete truly facilitates is the creation of a media vacuum that generates even greater coverage for the likes of Vanessa Mae and Heather Mills. Only the most naive would fail to see that British snowsport was unquestionably damaged by the coverage Mae received, irrespective of who she officially represented. I wonder how many who watch skiing once every four years thought watched Mae and thought "and we can't send anyone better?" In that moment, our credibility was shot</p>		<p>Put simply, we had to have someone there, someone competing, someone who could show our skills, however 'podium uncompetitive' they were. One newspaper or media interview for our female Giant Slalom representative was one less opportunity for the media to fall under the spell of a previously unapproachable musician enjoying her holiday. And as Mae proved, you can work the media when you're in it and of interest to them. As a sport that really only gets one mass media week every four years, when that moment comes we have to have a story to tell.</p>	