



BRITISH ROWING

The trials and tribulations of turning athletes from other sports into rowers

Questions and Answer Sheet

TEAMWORK | OPEN TO ALL | COMMITMENT



Questions Unanswered on Webinar

How frequently do you have athletes with over specialization characteristics from another sport and how do you overcome this?

Reasonably often when the athletes come from an elite sport background!

I'll refer back to our sporting transfers table - not every athlete from each sport will have all of those transferred skills (if any at all) but they're a culmination of observations from our group. Certainly athletes with a more diverse set of sporting skills seem to carry more positive transfers than negatives - but this might come back to our question "will the right athlete find a way to the top" if they've been good at several sports beforehand!

To overcome it, we screen in the first instance and then we use a combination of trial and error to problem solve (with constant review) and call on experience from other coaches/professionals within WCS and the wider rowing/sporting community - Steve Gunn in particular seems to have seen it all in his time!

When will the next set of testing take place?

Under normal circumstances WCS tests all year round, however in line with social distancing guidelines, testing itself has been suspended. You can still sign up of the British Rowing Website, and the programme will be in touch, put you in contact with the right people and then you can arrange testing once appropriate. www.britishrowing.org/world-class-start

World class start gets a bad rep for not delivering medal winners. Is there any truth to this?

There has been a WCS athlete in every GBRT Gold or Silver medal winning crew at the last two Olympic Games, and the Olympic team at the London & Rio Games were made up of over 33% & 25% (respectively) athletes who have come through the WCS programme!

Questions Answered on Webinar

If a J14 is showing a lot of rowing talent, would you advise that they also do other sports to build on their base/foundation or, if they wish to would you allow them to start to focus on rowing only?

Not exclusively being a rower can still be valuable for rowing as a junior. Worldwide almost every programme utilises cross-training in their programme - and being involved in other sports can help keep this exciting and useful for rowing!

Younger juniors will likely have the energy to be very active if they're used to playing sport, but their developing bodies are less likely to be able to deal with the demands of rowing training exclusively compared with young adults/older juniors, so we would always encourage them to take part in wider sports as well and gain some positive transfer skills!

Does an earlier transition (age) benefit the athlete?

There's lots of evidence that athletes with a wide variety of sporting experience when they are younger can be very successful in rowing (perhaps more successful than those who specialise early). There are lots of examples across the GBRT Team of athletes who started rowing 'late' after transferring their successes from previous sports into this one!

What has been the biggest change of approach to progressing new recruits since the Start program began? Also how might this change again over the next decade? Many thanks.

The biggest change in the last 10 years has been that the programme has become more skill-focused, emphasising the importance of good early technical development with regular assessment and intervention as athletes progress through the programme, it's much more comprehensive than it was in the early years!

The next 10... If we knew we would have already started! We will always be listening to Sports Scientists on the best and most up to date practice, but we will also keep pushing coach education (internal and externally!) to make sure the knowledge and skills to develop athletes to the Olympics are as widespread as possible!