

Options to consider for the selection process for the Regional W12 team in the Premier division at Nationals 2016

Option 1: Status quo - select the two top finishers in the W6 500m at the annual Regional Sprint Champs in December.

Pros:

- Established teams have already had time to gel, so their ability to form an effective W12 is relatively high
- Results of the approach have been good in the Women's division (2nd placings for last three years), but below average in the men's division (5th placings for last three years)

Cons:

- A number of very good paddlers are not necessarily paddling in a W6 team that can make the top two at Regionals (so the two top teams are unlikely to necessarily feature the best paddlers to make up the W12)
- In all previous years, teams had the ability to substitute some of their own paddlers with paddlers from either within their own clubs and also other clubs (the latter was actively encouraged in 2014). But the selection of outside paddlers (despite there being suitable paddlers available and willing) has never happened, perhaps primarily due to a strong incentive for existing teams to stay together and not to "rock" the boat by substituting some of their own – despite the W12 being a "regional" team rather than a club or inter-club team
- Smaller clubs tend to be disadvantaged by the existing policy (they are less likely to be able to field a competitive crew) . Indeed, in all three years where the Regional W12 has existed, the regional W12 has only ever been made up from teams/paddlers from 3 clubs (out of a total of 12 clubs in the region): PCKC, TOA, TROTR

Option 2: Select paddlers from a wider pool based on ability

Pros:

- Ensures all paddlers have a shot of making the regional W12
- Avoids interest capture as selection done by an independent selector

Cons:

- Requires appointment of a coach or independent selector with relevant skills and knowledge, the region currently lacks the resources / structure to support such a selector appropriately
- Lack of information to base selection on, other than results at Regionals
- Ideally would require separate trials of W12 combinations to see how paddlers fit in, but this is not feasible due to lack of support/resources/structures

- Not clear that those paddlers could actually paddle together effectively in the race, training together is mostly unrealistic as paddlers may be dispersed across many clubs. In addition, the regional W12 is only one race, so there are no heats and semis to get used to each other.

Option 3: Select paddlers based on W1 results at the Regional Champs

Pros:

- Ensures all paddlers have a shot of making the regional W12
- Avoids interest capture as selection done based on race results
- The W1 250m Premier Dash race is open to any age division, so would a good comparator across age groups; this could be supplemented with the top finishers in the W1 J19 Dash race.

Cons:

- Performance in W1 is not necessarily a good indicator of team performance, and the selected paddlers may in fact never have paddled together (which in turn is likely to affect performance). As per option 2, it is not clear that those paddlers could actually paddle together effectively in the race, training together is mostly unrealistic as paddlers may be dispersed across many clubs. In addition, the regional W12 is only one race, so there are no heats and semis to get used to each other.
- Some paddlers that would be excellent in a W12 may not do well in W1, or alternatively may not even participate in the race to be considered for selection (this in turn would result in a weaker W12 than could be possible)

Option 4: A mixture of Option 1 and 3 - Select at least 5 paddlers from the top finishing team in the W6 500m at the Regional Champs, and the rest of the paddlers is selected based on the W1 Dash race results at the Regional Champs (up to 5 paddlers from the Premier Dash races (which feature Masters paddlers also), and up to 3 paddlers in the J19 Dash races.). Where paddlers in the top W6 team also rank highly in the Dash races, the next fastest paddlers in the W1 would be selected.

Pros:

- Ensures that key paddlers not part of a good team have a shot of making the regional W12, including J19 and Masters
- This option would likely result in more clubs being represented in the regional W12
- Avoids interest capture as per option 1 as selection is done based on a range of race results, including W1
- By selecting only 5 of the 6 paddlers in the top finishing team avoids interest capture and the incentive for that team to stay together without questioning – while at the same retaining the core of that team (including paddlers that may not be that good in a W1). The selector would select the top 5 from that team, perhaps initially based on a recommendation by that team's captain or manager.

- While a selector is required for this option, the selector can be mutually agreed before the Regionals (eg outside Hoe Tonga committee and executive), and because selection is largely based on race results, it reduces some of the issues as experienced in option 2 (knowledge about abilities).
- While performance in W1 is not necessarily a good indicator of team performance, because this option is a combination of options 1 and 3, it ensures you get the best of both worlds, ie a core from an existing team, supplemented by other highly able paddlers.

Cons:

- Requires a selector with relevant skills and knowledge who may have to make some judgement calls (eg in case there are insufficient paddlers entered in the Dash races, or paddlers are unavailable to go to Nationals, therefore requiring the selection outside the race result parameters)