

## Athlete's Commission Report – 2020

2020 was a very difficult year from a lifter's perspective, with the Pandemic causing a series of lockdowns and confusion throughout the last 18 months.

Planning training for subsequently cancelled Championships, being unable to train at all or managing with make-shift home gym set ups, needless to say it's been very difficult to maintain any level of normality.

However, I think it's important that we should not forget those who regrettably were severely impacted by the very real dangers the pandemic caused the nation to face. On behalf of British Powerlifting's lifters I'd like to extend my deepest sympathies to those who have lost loved ones during this difficult time and to those who continue to feel the negative effects of what is still an on-going global emergency.

British powerlifting only managed to host 3 national Championships during 2020, which we were lucky enough to host during the first quarter of 2020 before the lockdowns began.

The British Powerlifting board, with my support, decided fairly early on in the pandemic that our focus should be on our domestic calendar as it became more and more evident as time went on that the chances of British Powerlifting attending international Championships was becoming increasingly remote.

Little did we know that the impact of the pandemic would also be felt so hard here in the UK and the impact this had on the limited number of Championships we were able to host.

Trying to balance the decisions of whether to nominate teams for internationals with the back-drop of the confusing lock down rules with the lifters desire to attend international Championships and keeping the federations members safe was extremely difficult.

I feel we did everything possible to hold the decisions on attending international events as late as possible without damaging the federations finances and giving our lifters the best possible chance of attending Championships should they be able to go ahead. The difficulty this left us with however was the lack of clarity we could give to the teams on whether or not we would be nominating teams for Championships, but this really was a juggling act.

So, 2020 was a very quiet year from a Championships perspective, however, rather ironically, this has worked in the federations favour in some key respects.

As mentioned in the 2019 Athlete's commission report the excessive spending on international competition entry fees, which peaked in 2019 at £66k was resolved for 2020 overnight when Championship after Championship was cancelled, this along with limited domestic Championships has led to 2020 becoming a profitable year for British Powerlifting (the first I can remember).

This really should come as no surprise and should serve as further evidence that the situation with international entry fees being supported by the federation without limit needs to be re-addressed, this along with entry fees for British Championships will be key discussion topics at the next Athletes forum.

There were some key recommendations from the 2019 Athlete's commission board report that remain valid. (Included in Appendix 1 for reference) and I'd like to highlight what I believe to be some key ones and the actions that have subsequently happened around these:

Recommendations (1-4) – These are really all related to the way British Championships are managed by the board of British Powerlifting, finding the right (and willing) candidate to serve as British Powerlifting Championship director would help to deliver items (2-4). This key role on the British powerlifting board has been long overdue and I'm glad this along with the development director and the performance director roles were advertised during 2021.

The board of British Powerlifting has a strong desire to work with British Championship promoters to continue to drive up the quality and standard of British Championships and deliver the best possible experience for the lifters involved and really show case the sport in the correct light to potential sponsors and future athletes.

As lifters we want great venues, well run Championships, big crowds, prizes (including money and sponsorships) and Championships to be a real showcase for the sport. Driving towards these goals is the task (and not a small one).

We have seen however some great appointments and successes during this last 18 months, Ben Davis was appointed as sponsorship officer and has done a fantastic job building relationships with new and potential future sponsors and continues to develop strong relationships with external sponsors which will be critical for the success of the Championship, Performance and Development roles.

With the sad passing away of Fred Sterry (long serving Chairman, referee and ambassador for British Powerlifting) it highlighted some key concerns around the succession planning for the board members of British powerlifting.

The federations success really rests on the shoulders of only a few key individuals, so the clear need to have successions plans in place and a larger board with more shared responsibilities has been made evident. I will continue to push the board to set up sub-committees to allow more of the burden of administration and decision making be made by a wider base of individuals and hopefully allow us to future proof the board.

I'm incredibly grateful for the contribution made by our deputy Chairman Ian Finch and the support he has shown to the Athlete's commission in attending the forums and being a strong stand in for Fred who left some very difficult shoes to fill.

The (seemingly) ever on-going process to obtain NGB status continues on, whilst we all hope for a successful outcome, I'd like to stress even with successful recognition, the benefits we hope to obtain from gaining NGB status is really only the start of yet more administration and corporate governance requirements that would allow us to apply for grants and access to funding. So, be under no illusions here there will still be a huge amount of work to do even if we are successful and the work that has gone on behind the scenes to get us to this stage should not be underestimated. I think again we should be working on sharing this burden the bulk of which has sat with our CEO for the last 9 years.

BUC's recognition, a huge thank you and kudos should be given to Nathan, Ade and Mark for the progress they have been making in trying to get Powerlifting recognised as a sport with BUC's, again another hugely administratively heavy process which these guys have taken the lead on, the benefits this will give to our university lifters is very high indeed and will be fantastic for the development of the federation and nurturing future talent. Great work guys.

Lastly I'd to say a massive thank you to the lifters who have been attending the lifters forum's, I will continue to find different ways in which to engage with British powerlifting's lifters and get your

voices heard, so please continue to reach out to me at the e-mail address here [athletescommission@britishpowerlifting.org](mailto:athletescommission@britishpowerlifting.org), I will re-surface the Championships feedback questionnaires in the last quarter of 2021 and hopefully I will see you at a Championships soon.

Tony Cliffe

Chair of the British Powerlifting Athlete's commission.

## Appendix 1

### **Key recommendations/requests:**

1. *Appoint a Competition Director to deliver consistent standards.*
2. *Create a set of British Powerlifting Championships standards to be written and approved by the board against which future Championships can be checked.*
3. *Create a Central centre of excellence/fall back like Czech Rep for the EPF.*
4. *Higher qualifying totals or some other form of restricting numbers per class at British Championships. \**
5. *More promotion for the 2020 feedback questionnaire, with links on the entry form and the website.*
6. *Review the timing of the British Equipped Championships for 2021 onwards. (Very close to prior year World Championships).*
7. *In 2021 the British raw masters are in October as is the Classic world masters, can we find somewhere else in the calendar to fit it?*
8. *No Representative for NI on the Commission for athletes so could do with some help finding a replacement?*
9. *Advertising and marketing of events. Do we have a budget for this and how do we push this forward?*

*\*Caveat this with unless the numbers can be handled safely and efficiently by the promoters and follow the USA format with the "prime time" flights.*