

## Director for Scotland Report - British Powerlifting AGM 2025

In preparation for this year's report, I took some time to review our 2024 summary, where we laid out our ambitions for the future, our aspirations for growth and our commitment to delivering a fantastic experience for everyone in our very special community. We recognised then that our future success would depend on our ability to innovate and anticipate the needs of a growing and vocal membership base, who rightly expect us to continually improve their experience of being part of Scottish Powerlifting.

From the significant elevation of our competition standards and the commitment to investment in athlete experience, to the introduction of a flagship coaching development programme and a record representation at international level, 2024 totally surpassed any reasonable expectation of an organisation of our size and scale, and each and every one of our members should rightly reflect with a sense of pride at what has been collectively achieved.

What has been most important is the overwhelming culture of support, team spirit, collaboration and involvement – from new lifters coming to compete for the first time, nervous and full of trepidation and leaving with a sense of belonging, to volunteers going over and above time and again to make sure that events are brilliant and that our lifters have the best experience possible. We saw it at home and abroad, with so many nations commenting on how Team Scotland brought not just fantastic lifting performances to the platform in South Africa, but also brought a fierce sense of pride, camaraderie and sportsmanship that everyone wanted to be part of.

2025 is an exciting prospect for us as a federation as we look to submit our application to sportscotland for National Governing Body status. Achieving that recognition and as the official home of powerlifting in Scotland would be a monumental achievement, and one with the potential to significantly impact the next decade for Scottish Powerlifting. While applications are currently on hold pending a UK wide review of the NGB accreditation process, we feel confident that we can make a compelling case for that endorsement.

We also recognise the continued strides taken at the British Powerlifting level, and working collaboratively with the Board and other Home Nations and divisions will continue to be a focus to ensure that the federation continues to develop positively. Our thanks go to outgoing British Powerlifting Board members Sabrina Downes (Competition Director), Annie Nelson (Chair of the Athlete's Commission) and James Brincat-Smith (CEO) for their tireless efforts and commitment to our sport – your passion and dedication to the membership does not go unnoticed.

As always, my personal thanks to everyone who has contributed to the success of Scottish Powerlifting this year. I am exceptionally proud to be part of this community, and I am grateful to every single one of you for making 2024 the success it has been.

**Claire Tocher, Chair and Director for Scotland**

## Committee Update

The 2024 Scottish Powerlifting AGM was held in December 2024, where we formalised the committee for 2025.

Executive Committee:

Director for Scotland and Chair – Claire Tocher

General Secretary – Johanna Platt

Competition Secretary – Mark Fulton

Treasurer – Kirsty McCahill

Webmaster (Interim Exec) – Molly Gill

Operational Committee:

Membership Secretary – Beth Chinchin

Safeguarding Officer – Jaclyn Smith

Volunteer Coordinator – Kirsty Gauld

University Representative and ED&I Officer – Charlotte Murphy

Partnerships Officer – Ron Kane

Records Registrar – James Wilson

Sponsorship Coordinator – Aimee Jarvie

Media Officer – Alyce Macpherson

Club Development Officer – Senga Dent

## Membership Update

Membership for the division had surpassed 700 by the end of Q1 2024 keeping us on pace for anticipated 30% growth by the end of the year. Our continued ambition is to achieve 1000 members by 2026 and to cement ourselves as the federation of choice in Scotland. Our thanks go to Beth Chinchin, Membership Secretary, for all of her hard work in managing such growth, and for her support in the recent sport80 implementation alongside Kim Cowell and Craig Wilkins.

## Competition Update

The 2025 calendar has already commenced, and by the date of the British Powerlifting AGM we will have already hosted 10 competitions, including 2 championships events: Scottish University and College Championships and Scottish Masters Championships. We have a further 10 events scheduled for the remainder of the year, with a mix of first timer, club, and championship events offering opportunity for all levels of lifter. In 2025 we have committed significant investment and resource into the Scottish Classic Championships in July, marking this as our flagship championship event in terms of athlete and spectator

experience. This year's event will be hosted in a theatre auditorium space at Howden Park Centre in Livingston, the first year that this event will be hosted outside of a gym venue.

### **Scottish Powerlifting Hall of Fame**

At the 2024 AGM we introduced the Scottish Powerlifting Hall of Fame, recognising individuals who have made significant contributions to the sport of powerlifting in Scotland. This includes athletes, coaches, and volunteers who have demonstrated exceptional dedication, performance, and impact on the powerlifting community. Our inaugural inductees for 2024 are:

#### **Alex Mathieson – Official, and Marlene Mathieson – Volunteer**

While these are two separate awards, it is very hard to talk about one without the other when it comes to “The Mathiesons”. Alex is most recently known for being our most senior referee and is still very active as a Cat I International Official at home and abroad. He has been inducted to the British Powerlifting Hall of Fame and has also been heavily involved in supporting the Special Olympics. Marlene has been at the heart of supporting the smooth running of championships and committees, and in fact received a special recognition award from the IPF. We are delighted to be able to celebrate the dedication, commitment and generosity of Alex and Marlene with this special recognition from home.

#### **Bernie McGurk – Male Lifter**

There are almost too many world records, championship titles and awards to count when it comes to Bernie's achievements in powerlifting, and he continues to be at the top of his game competing at the highest level as a Masters athlete in the Open category - a phenomenal achievement by any standard. Bernie has also sat on both Scottish and British Powerlifting committees and boards, refereed and volunteered and been a stalwart of the sport for as long as I think most of our membership will remember, so it was a very easy decision to recognise him as one of our first Hall of Fame inductees.

#### **Tasmin Campbell – Female Lifter**

Tasmin first hit the Scottish Powerlifting scene back in 2016 at the Aberdeen Open and has been breaking Scottish and British records ever since. In 2018 she became the first woman in Scottish Powerlifting to deadlift 200kg, and since then has gone on to even bigger records, becoming a multiple World and European record holder and this year becoming the strongest Masters lifter in the IPF of all time, beating the likes of Kimberly Walford and Jennifer Thompson. Tasmin continues to compete at the highest level of the sport as part of the GB Open Team, and her continued success is a testament to resilience and commitment.

## Coaching Development Programme

As part of his Head Coach remit, in 2024 Team Scotland Head Coach Will Brown rolled out a pilot coaching development programme, offering divisional coaches the opportunity to develop their knowledge and skills through a blend of online and practical learning sessions and tailored personal development plans. The pilot programme allowed us to invest in bringing new coaches to the Commonwealth Championships and Marion Hammang Cup, supporting their ongoing development and strengthening our coaching talent pathway.

Following a successful first year, we have reinvested into the programme for a second year and now have over 40 members. Investment has been made into bringing impactful seminars from external thought leaders, including Matt Gary (Team GB and Team USA Head Coach) and Mike Tuchscherer (founder of Reactive Training Systems), as well as supporting coaches to achieve their British Powerlifting Level 1 certification.

## Referee and Technical Update

In January 2025, a record 21 members achieved their British Powerlifting Divisional referee status, bolstering our referee capacity substantially and demonstrating the strong spirit of giving back to the sport that we appreciate so much,

Congratulations also to Mairi Scobie, Darren Marr, Joanne Parkin, Kirsty McCahill, Angela Lauder, Johanna Platt and Jaclyn Smith on their promotions to National Status, and to Beth Chinchin and Catherine Gordon on their promotion to Senior National.

## Financial Performance

Our financial position remains robust, and we were able to invest in a full Eleiko platform set, plates and bar for competition use, alongside the much-anticipated Eleiko Skai soft pad. We have increased our investment in competition enhancements and venues and have been able to mitigate the financial impact thanks to the support of competition sponsors. As a non-profit organisation, our aim is to balance our investment back into the sport with the financial capacity to operate, and the appointment of our external accountants has provided us with the structure to be able to do this effectively.