

Scottish Powerlifting Chair Report 2023

2023 can best be summarised for Scottish Powerlifting as something of a transition period.

Competitions and Championships

As a newly established committee, we pulled together quickly to find our rhythm and went on to deliver a fantastic calendar of competitions throughout the year, catering for lifters from Inverness to the Central Belt.

Turnout and demand for competitions continued to be very high, with almost every competition fully subscribed many of which sold out in minutes. We saw record membership, becoming the first division in British Powerlifting to surpass 700 members (a phenomenal 35% increase from 2022) and made some great partnerships with new venues and sponsors which have undoubtedly elevated the experience for all our lifters.

It has been heartening to see the many positive comments we have received through our regular feedback form, and we'll continue to reach out to our membership to make sure we're delivering to the level they have now rightly come to expect.

International and National Successes

There was plenty of success for Scottish athletes at the British and International levels, including an all-Scotland podium at the British Women's Open Championships as Rebecca Stace, Annie Nelson and Tasmin Campbell dominated in the u69kg class. There was success too for our Home Nations team, who were just pipped to the post by Team Wales on overall GL points, but put in a fantastic team performance which they should all be proud of.

Our contribution to the success of Team GB on the international stage was huge, with Scottish lifters at every major IPF and EPF International Championship in 2023 – a testament to the breadth and depth of the talent we now have in our lifting community. Building on this will be a focus area for us as we move into next year, and we will of course look to send a strong Scotland team to the Commonwealth Championships in Sun City, South Africa in 2024.

Volunteers and Officials

Supporting our lifters, we of course also have our referees and volunteers, without whom we simply could not deliver competitions at all.

We ran two referee exams this year and welcomed 13 new divisional referees to our pool, which will be hugely beneficial in reducing the workload for our small but committed group of referees across competitions in the next year. We also saw two of our referees gain International Official status, with Michelle Brand being promoted to Cat I and Lynda Banks achieving her Cat II status.

We were also delighted with the impact of introducing priority entry for regular volunteers, which has drastically increased our volunteer numbers across the year. Volunteers (or a lack thereof) have historically been our most challenging obstacle to running competitions – we are certainly seeing the tide turn here, and have even on

occasion been oversubscribed, something we never would have imagined even just a year ago.

We have also seen several individuals taking personal initiatives – from Lauren Williamson setting up her own SP focussed 3Lifts podcast, to Jim Shedden working with other divisions to transform our streaming capabilities, and James Wilson becoming the unofficial SP stats guru for commentary to name just a few. These kinds of initiatives just go to show that volunteering doesn't just have to be spotting and loading or being on the committee – if you have something that you can bring to the table, the opportunity is there to be grabbed with both hands.

Personal Reflection

This was my first year in the Chair role, and on the Executive Committee, so this for me has also been something of a transition year. I spent quite a bit of time at British and International Competitions in various capacities, and in meeting counterparts from other IPF federation nations I have been both inspired by what can be achieved by small committees of avid volunteers and been proud of how much we already do and take for granted that other nations simply do not offer.

While it's been both challenging and rewarding in equal measure, what I can now clearly see is that our future success will depend not on our ability to do what we do well already. Instead, it's going to hinge on our ability to innovate and anticipate the needs of a growing and vocal membership base, who rightly expect consistently high standards of competition, as well as regular and widespread opportunities, to compete both locally and internationally.

Look Ahead to 2024

Next year is an exciting one for Scottish Powerlifting, as with it comes the opportunity to showcase our lifting talent on the international stage at the Commonwealth Championships in Sun City, South Africa in October. We also have the honour of hosting the Home Nations Championship for the first time since 2018, which is a huge undertaking but also a real opportunity to show our fellow BP regions just how far we have come as a division since the last event.

We have lots to review and take stock of in terms of further growth of the sport, making sure that we are best set up for success. Things already under consideration are new approaches to grassroots club support and infrastructure, access to potential funding and scholarships, opportunities for the development of coaches and officials, and ultimately, recognition from Sportscotland as the NGB for powerlifting in Scotland.

I'd finally like to extend a huge thanks to everyone who has been involved in Scottish Powerlifting this year, in whatever capacity that has been. The sense of camaraderie, support and genuine passion for the sport you all show is second to none, and I hope you all share my sense of pride at being associated with Scottish Powerlifting.

Claire Tocher

Chair, Scottish Powerlifting