

GREG SMALE

PROPOSED CANDIDATE FOR MEMBERSHIP OF THE ICF BOARD OF DIRECTORS CANOE POLO CHAIR



Personal Details: Greg SMALE

DoB: 21/6/64

National Federation: British Canoeing - GBR

Occupation: Police Officer – Detective Specialising in Safeguarding

Other relevant information: Married to a Spanish national.

Aims & Objectives

The global pandemic has like all discipline sand all sports caused significant disruption to this amateur discipline and has impacted on all committee members to some degree.

During the pandemic my professional role has meant I've been regarded as an essential worker and voluntary time has been impacted BUT by the time this congress takes place I will have formally retired and will be able to focus significantly more time towards the continued development of Canoe Polo.

One of the roles of a Chair is to show leadership, even in difficult times. The ICF CAP worked closely with Italy to try and find a way to have the 2020 ICF Canoe Polo World Championships and kept in close contact with designated team leaders who themselves are volunteers in sport. Very frustratingly, but in the interests of global participation at the world championship, with acute awareness of travel restrictions and quarantine requirements with support of the ICF Board we took the difficult decisions to postpone twice and then to cancel the world championships. It is vital for the stability and growth of the discipline that the 2022 ICF Canoe Polo World Championships is successful and accessible for as many countries as possible. Nothing can be certain in this pandemic but the future looks more promising and we are already in contact with the HOC for August 2022.

With athletes and coaches in mind the 2019 Canoe Polo Seminar generated detailed discussion on 'what the athletes want' as opposed to rules being imposed on them. This has resulted in the proposed rules which for the very first time since the rules began really address the card system and will hopefully ensure more proportionate sanctions by referees and should need less revision in the future and generate more consistency for athletes.

This 'settling' of the rules will allow more time on development, coaching and referee support. While Chair in the last period, in conjunction with the sponsor Yupin Sports, we have been able to provide Egypt with equipment and prior to the pandemic were keenly observing the growing activity and planning coaching support which we hope to do in this period. Post pandemic Argentina is to benefit from sponsored equipment kindly provided by Yupin Sports. I am conscious other countries want more assistance and with the additional time in retirement and the pandemic hopefully passing I envisage this happening and the ICF CAP know we need to spend more time helping development.

The completion/translation of an online Canoe Polo coaching course is close to completion which will support help support development.

The next IWGA World Games are to be In Birmingham, USA and with Covid-19 postponements and other events will be a challenge but with increased teams/global representation one which will be achieved.

The inclusion in multi-sport games is important. We should be more of a support to Continental Associations as these have closer contacts to organisers. With Canoe Polo in the World Games and having already been a demonstration sport in the Asian Games the possibility for future inclusion in the Pan-Am Games is an obvious next step. Good work is already in progress in Brazil and Argentina but this development needs more support in these and other South American countries who wish to develop the discipline.

The 2022 ICF Canoe Polo World Championships are in France with 2024 in China for the first time. Having already attended the continental championship in China in 2019 working with China to produce a spectacular world championships will of course be a significant part of the next activity period.

Sport Information

ICF Positions

ICF Board Member and Canoe Polo Committee Chair 2006-2014 and 2016-2021.

International Level – Roles at Major Events

Relevant Key Roles held at major events

- IWGA World Games – Jury Member - 2017, 2013
- IWGA World Games – Chief Official – 2009, 2005
- ICF Canoe Polo World Championships - Chief Official - 2020 (now 2021 - cancelled), 2018, 2014, 2012, 2010 and 2008.
- ICF Canoe Polo World Championships –Chief Referee - 2006
- ICF Canoe Polo World Championships – Technical Organiser, Chief Scrutineer and Referee – 2004
- ECA European Canoe Polo Championships – Chief Official – 2007
- ECA European Canoe Polo Championships – Chief Scrutineer and Referee - 2003

Other notable international activity

- 2019 – Pan-Am Canoe Polo Championships – financial support for two persons to assist organisers.
- 2019 – Asian Canoe Polo Championships – referee.
- 2019 – African Canoe Polo Championships – financial for French referee to travel and conduct referee course.
- 2019 – Cambodia – Development boats
- 2019 – Egypt – Development equipment and boats
- 2018 – Canada – Development equipment and boats
- 2013 – Namibia – Support to continental championship.
- 2010 – Puerto Rico

National Level – Positions

- British Canoeing – Vice President (first elected 2019)
- UK Sport – International Leadership Programme – graduate.
- British Canoeing – Member of Board of Directors 2007 to current day.
- Member of British Canoeing Canoe Polo Committee (2003-04)

Athlete Background

- British Canoeing Canoe Polo Senior A Team for 10 years – won circa 25 International Tournaments
- 1993 European's – Silver
- 1994 World's – Gold
- 2008 World Masters Games – Australia – Gold (O/35) and Silver (U/35)

Coaching Experience

8 consecutive European and World Canoe Polo Championship Finals

- 2002 Men World's – Gold
- 2001 Men European's – Silver
- 2000 Men World's - Gold
- 1999 Men European's - Silver
- 1998 Women World's - Silver
- 1997 Women European's - Gold
- 1996 Women World's - Gold
- 1995 Women European's - Silver
- 2005/2006 - Coach Sweden Men

Development

I led the ICF Canoe Polo Committee initially for 8 years (2006-2014) and more recently (2016-2020) during we moved the discipline forward in many ways:

- In terms of participation - 61 countries.
- Successful re-introduction of U/21 Women into World Championships.
- Finances - sponsorship of Conti – now Yupin Sports and the manufacturers licence scheme. Development initiatives - donation of equipment to Puerto Rico, Czech Republic, Colombia and Namibia.
- Rules - introduction of shot-clock and consistency for manufacturers.
- Officials (referees increased from 38 to 245 in 28 countries and all costs covered for world championships).
- Online training courses for referees.
- Media – with great support from ICF HQ and organisers live broadcasting of all of world championships.
- Good presence in the IWGA World Games - 2005, 2009, 2013 and 2017. In 2013 in Colombia Canoe Polo was ranked in the top three sports.

In late 2019 to engage more with coaches and athletes and the sport rules forward I chaired a Canoe Polo Seminar in Spain. Eighteen (18) persons from 13 countries representing four of the five continents attended and were chosen primarily from those who have entered all four categories at World Championships plus a few others to ensure global representation. This was very well received and covered primarily rules, including Under 15 development and other areas of the sport. In summary the next rule revision is 'what coaches and athletes' present want.

General Paddling Background

I started canoe polo and slalom as a boy scout at the age of fourteen with St. Alban's Canoe Club. I have a little experience in marathon competition and canoe life-saving but predominantly my canoeing life has been Canoe Slalom and Canoe Polo.

I have been a very active athlete, coach, referee and administrator all in my voluntary time for 43 years!