



**Minutes of the UK Sport Board Meeting held  
from 9.30am – 3.30pm on Monday 10 March 2014**

**Present**

**Chair** Rod Carr

**Attendees:** Brian Henning  
Nick Bitel  
Jonathan Vickers  
Louise Martin

<b>UK Sport Staff</b>	Liz Nicholl	Chief Executive
	David Cole	Chief Operating Officer
	Simon Timson	Director of Performance
	Vijay Parbat	Head of Legal
	Paul Buxton	Head of Performance
	Jonathan Bennetts	Sports Investment Manager

**Board Secretary** Nicky Anderson UK Sport

**1. Introduction and Apologies for Absence**

**Action**

The Board being quorate the Chair commenced the meeting. Apologies were received from Mark Hanson, Sarah Springman, Lis Astall, Laura McAllister and Philip Kimberley. It was noted that Louise Martin would leave the meeting at lunchtime for an appointment regarding the Commonwealth Games.

The purpose of the meeting was to hear representations from sports, which were confidential and closed sessions, arising from the Annual Investment Review decisions on the 31 January 2014. The Chair highlighted that, with the exception of one sport, the key consideration for the Board was whether the Board accepted that there was performance evidence to support moving a sport to a higher Priority Band within the Meritocratic Table, and as a result any funding recommendation or decision that would follow.

The Chair stated the options available to the Board were either to i. reaffirm its previous decision; or ii. change its decision from 31 January 2014; or iii. defer the decision if the Board felt further work was required by the officers.

## **2. Declaration of Interests**

No interests were declared.

## **3. Approval of Minutes**

The approval of the minutes of the meeting on 31 January 2014 was not tabled and deferred to the meeting on the 18 March 2014.

## **4. Matters Arising**

As the Board was convened to hear representations all matters arising since the meeting on the 31 January 2014 were deferred to the meeting on 18 March 2014.

## **5. Representations**

For each sport it was confirmed that the Board had received the representation papers sent in by the sport and also the response from UK Sport's Executive Team to those papers. The process of the session was explained and it was clarified that the purpose of the representations made to the Board was to: give the sport an opportunity to provide their comments on the decisions of 31 January 2014; ask questions of the Board on the rationale of the original decision; and to request Board reconsider its original decision. The representations were not a legal appeal. The Board's decision would be notified to the sport in writing on 19 March 2014 and will include information on the subsequent appeals process (where appropriate).

### **5.1 VI Football**

Sue Hough, Jeff Davis and James Watkins from the GBDFa joined the meeting. RC introduced the Board and Executive Team members. The current position was summarised as follows. On entering the 2013 AIR Process, VI Football were categorised in Priority Band 5 (possible silver/bronze medal in Rio). Following the 2013 AIR Process VI Football were moved into Priority Band 7 (possible 4-8th in Rio & possible medal in 2020). Funding to the sport was withdrawn in light of UK Sport only funding down to Priority Bands 1 – 6 (to prioritise resources towards delivery of its Rio Mission).

The sport made its presentation to the Board. A question and answer session followed which included discussion on the factors considered in determining the Priority Band for the sport, ranking of the sport and qualification to Rio, the talent pathway and funding from the Home Countries to the GB team, the up and coming competition schedule to play the top 5 teams in the world, and movement to a centralised programme.

The Board considered all factors presented and the documents submitted (including the Guide, the Investment Principles, correspondence etc.), as well as the presentation and points discussed at the meeting.

The Board were not convinced that there was sufficient evidence to change its original decision of 31 January 2014. As a result, VI Football would remain in Priority Band 7.

In reaching its decision, the UK Sport Board noted the following factors: the closeness of the individual results at the 2012 Paralympics, recent performances against Spain in November 2013 for VI Football, and the improved qualification route to Rio 2016, positive performance indicators

for VI Football. It was therefore noted by Board that it might be possible that VI Football qualify for and achieve a top 8 finish in Rio (as was achieved at the 2012 Paralympics). However, when considered alongside the overall result at the 2012 Paralympics and the European Championships 2013 this was not deemed sufficient for Board to have sufficient confidence that performance would improve at the required rate for that to be followed by a possible medal at Tokyo 2020.

## 5.2 Synchronised Swimming

Maurice Watkins, David Sparkes, Biz Price and Ian Mason from British Swimming joined the meeting. RC introduced the Board and Executive Team members and confirmed they had received the sport's updated presentation. The current position was summarised as follows. Entering the 2013 AIR Process, Synchronised Swimming (Synchro) were categorised in Priority Band 4. As a result of the 2013 AIR Process Synchro were moved into Priority Band 8, largely due to a change in the athlete cohort, resulting in no athletes qualifying for Podium level support.

The sport made its presentation to the Board. A question and answer session followed which included discussion on the track record of the current athletes in the duet, performance trajectory of the current athletes, the judging system, the relationship between the duet and the team and funding from British Swimming, details of the overall revised programme and training (in terms of intensity and volume), the athlete's educational needs and competitor and top nations in the sport.

The Board considered all factors presented and the documents (including the Guide, the Investment Principles, correspondence etc.) submitted, as well as the presentation and points discussed at the meeting.

The Board were not convinced that there was sufficient evidence to change its original decision of 31 January 2014. As a result, Synchronised Swimming would remain in Priority Band 8.

In reaching their decision, it was noted by the Board that the new athlete cohort were considered by British Swimming to possess greater potential than the previous athletes and the new strategy was aimed at focusing on the duet programme to accelerate performance progress. However, they concluded that there remained insufficient performance evidence, when considering the progress that was needed, to break into the top 8 for Rio and then medal in Tokyo. The Board considered this to be particularly tough with the inexperience of the duet and limited performance track record to achieve the starting point of 14<sup>th</sup> place at the milestone event in October 2014 at the World Cup, the judged nature of the sport and the tendency for the same nations to dominate for a considerable amount of time and the ability of the duet to displace the nations above them.

## 5.3 Water Polo

Maurice Watkins, David Sparkes, Graeme Thompson and Fran Leighton from British Swimming joined the meeting. RC introduced the Board and Executive Team members and confirmed they had received the sport's updated presentation. Entering the 2013 AIR Process, Water Polo were categorised in Priority Band 6. After the AIR process Water Polo were placed in Priority Band 'Unclassified'.

The sport made its presentation to the Board. A question and answer session followed which included discussion on the factors considered in determining the Priority Band for the sport, qualification to Rio and competitor nations to beat to achieve that, funding the sport received before London 2012, centralisation of the programme and the facilities that will be available in Manchester, use of junior and senior athletes, overseas based players on the programme, milestone targets up to 2016 and the factors the sport considered relevant to place it in Band 6.

The Board considered all factors presented and the documents submitted (including the Guide, the Investment Principles, correspondence etc.), as well as the presentation and points discussed at the meeting.

The Board were not convinced that there was sufficient evidence to change its original decision of 31 January 2014. As a result, Water Polo would remain in Priority Banding 'Unclassified'.

In reaching its decision, the Board noted the strategies being put in place by the sport such as centralisation and overseas player recruitment. However, they concluded that the challenge to qualify for Rio 2016 was still significant and this was confirmed by the evidence they heard during the session. The Board were particularly unconvinced by the overseas "eligible player" strategy, both in the status of the two players who had been identified and the reliance on a further two as yet unidentified players. The Board felt that there was little evidence that the current strategies in place could accelerate the progress of the sport at a rate required to medal at Tokyo 2020.

#### 5.4 Badminton

Simon Clegg (SC), Adrian Christy, Jens Grill and Jakob Hoi from GB Badminton/Badminton England joined the meeting. RC introduced the Board and Executive Team members. The 2013 AIR Process concluded that the Podium places awarded to the sport should be reduced from 5 to 4. The 15 Podium Potential places awarded to Badminton were maintained. Badminton contested the removal of the additional Podium place.

SC confirmed that GB Badminton contracts the delivery of the WCP to Badminton England, and that the representations would be led by Badminton England. The sport made its presentation to the Board.

A question and answer session followed which included discussion on application of Investment Principle 4 to athletes coming on the programme mid or late cycle, athletes recent performances and ability to change their ranking based on the recent performances, financial and wider impact of the decision on the programme and athletes.

The Board considered all factors presented and the documents submitted (including the Guide, the Investment Principles, correspondence etc.) as well as the presentation and points discussed at the meeting.

The Board agreed that there was sufficient new evidence to change the original decision of 31 January 2014. As a result, the reduction in the Podium places would not be implemented. However, the Board reserved the right to place conditions in the funding agreement relating to their decision.

In reaching this conclusion UK Sport considered the performance results

since the AIR Panel (20 November 2013).

The decision is effective immediately. However, as stated in the e mail of the 4 February 2014 there were other amendments arising from the 2013 AIR Process that would be made to the Badminton funding agreement which, along with any conditions relating to this decision, would be confirmed by an e mail of variation in due course.

## **6 Any Other Business**

There being no other business the meeting was closed.

**7 Date of next meeting: Tuesday 11 March 2014 at 9.30 am.**