

**Australian Weightlifting Federation
High Performance Program Review**

Report

Submitted to the AWF Board on 31 May, 2009

Introduction

In October 2007 the findings and recommendations contained within *the Review of High Performance Pathways in Australian Weightlifting* were endorsed by AWF Members.

The main findings and recommendations of the Review focused around finding and appointing a strong leader who should have full responsibility and accountability for creating a High Performance Program under which to unite weightlifting. On the 21 January, 2008 Michael Keelan began his appointment as AWF full-time employed High Performance Manager.

In recognising the importance of sport and the significant emerging challenges to Australia's sustained success in elite sport, the Minister for Sport outlined in the Commonwealth Government's directions paper *Australian Sport: Emerging Challenges, New Directions*, the need for widespread and continuing reform of Australia's sporting system.

To ensure the AWF's High Performance Program continues to gain optimal use of available resources and maximise opportunities to achieve international success for athletes and coaches the next step after the 2007 Review was to look at what has been implemented within the HPP and decide, if any, what further improvements could be made to the HPP to enhance its impact. To this end a Forum was organised that provided opportunities for feedback from a broad range of stakeholders who have and continue to make an investment into the AWF's HPP.

Methodology

- On the 13 April, 2009 information (**Attachment 1**) was emailed to 68 individuals inviting them to voice their opinions, concerns or ideas through lodgement of agenda items that will be discussed in detail and entered into a report that will be used to influence and strengthen the future ongoing direction and development of the AWF High Performance Program.
- Thirty-three (33) respondents initially accepted the invitation to participate in the Forum (**Attachment 2**)
- Eleven (9) forms were returned representing nine (9) stakeholders (**Attachment 3**) raising issues relating to a number of HPP initiatives and policies.
- Professor David Shilbury agreed to act as the external facilitator on the day of the Forum and provided input into the Forum Agenda (**Attachment 4**)
- The topics were grouped under four (4) themes - Coaching, DAS, Selection Procedures and Development. Questions (**Attachment 5**) pertinent to each theme were developed and distributed to each respondent on 8 May, 2009 together with the Forum Agenda and background information. It was intended that the responses to these questions would inform the HPP review findings. At this point the respondents were encouraged to complete answers to the questions prior to gathering in groups and at the conclusion hand in their sheets containing response in order to provide accurate information rather than rely on interpretation of verbal comments provided by the spokes person from each group. Note that no sheets were handed over.
- On the day of the Forum participants worked in groups that represented all internal stakeholders including elite athletes, coaches, State reps, AWF Directors and members of the High Performance advisory Committee.
- Using the questions provided discussion took place among the members of each of the four groups. A spokes person from each group gave a brief overview of the discussion that was supported by written bullet points (**Attachment 6**). The common responses from each group were noted and the whole group determined the responses that required further discussion by the AWF Board of Directors.

Considerations

Coaching

- Concern was aired about the cost to participate in the AWF Coach Education Program. The current fee is \$600.
- Weightlifting coaches currently engaged in coaching and lifters starting at retirement could perhaps receive a discounted CEP fee.
- The AWF should explore other ways of providing continuing education accessible by coaches operating at all levels. Examples may include coach scholarships, traineeships, conferences, state workshops, clinics, mentoring.
- Should the AWF establish a centralised program then, and only then, would there be a need for a National Coach – the position description for this role needs to be discussed widely and there needs to be an identified relationship with other AWF employed positions.
- Examine current coach selection process and investigate ways in which personal coaches with appropriate level accreditation could be provided with increased opportunities to go away with representative teams in an official capacity.
- AWF should investigate ways to reward coaches other than through payment, examples may include education, rewards, profiles on website, uniform.

DAS

- On the whole stakeholders agreed that the Super Squad athletes should receive the majority of DAS funds – this ties in with the AWF's objective of having an athlete centred, coach driven and administratively supported program capable of achieving international results at the highest level.
- DAS Bonus could be restricted to Super Squad athletes only providing resources to increase DAS Bonus payments.
- The AWF may consider reviewing frequency of DAS payments. Currently, payments are transacted quarterly.
- Private Health Insurance was discussed at length and was seen as a must for any athlete involved in weightlifting at a high level. However, some lifters preferred to receive money in hand and be given the right to choose what to spend the cash on.
- Coaches felt that they should have a strong influence over DAS – personal coaches not AWF Administration will make fiscal decisions. For example, should a lifter miss training frequently for no justifiable reason the personal coach can inform the HPM and only part DAS will be paid? Such a system has pros and cons and these must be strongly considered before any departure from the current DAS payment structure takes place.
- Should personal coaches of Super Squad athletes receive 'Direct Coach Support' and also operate under terms of an agreement?
- Youth lifters should continue to be recognised and rewarded. Is there a need to move away from cash payments and replace with boots, uniform and payment of yearly training fees?

Competition Selection Processes

- Restricted opportunity currently exists for athletes to qualify for international events. Consider increasing the number of qualifying events.
- The AWF may consider widening the qualifying periods particularly for Open and Age National Championships.
- Introduce some subjective measures for athlete selection to create some flexibility and provide opportunity for the 'best' athletes to contest the 'big' events.
- Consider re-introduction of average Sinclair scores gleaned from 'Aussie Only' performances.
- Introduce different selection criteria for each event.

Development

As this was the last theme of the day this topic did not have time for thorough discussion. However some dialogue did centre on State needs and the following areas were highlighted.

- States felt they needed some assistance with establishing intensive training centres in partnership with SIS/SAS agencies.
- Due to lack of resources within states, generally support is required with athlete recruitment (TID), athlete development and coach development.
- Access to facilities and equipment was also sounded as a concern and it was felt that the AWF should provide some support.
- It was felt that the Board and the State Members could work more closely together to work on solutions to problems and better use existing resources. Examples may include workshops after National events, more frequent teleconferences, utilisation of State personnel within working groups and AWF Committees.

Attachment 1



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Affiliated with
International Weightlifting Federation
Commonwealth Weightlifting Federation
Oceania Weightlifting Federation

Member of
Australian Olympic Committee
Australian Commonwealth
Games Association

Supported by the Australian Sports Commission

AWF MEMORANDUM

Attention: Super and Games Squad Athletes, High Performance Advisory Committee. AWF Executive Board, AWF Team Nomination Panel

Cc: Matthew Curtain, AWF Chief Executive Officer, State Members

From: Michael Keelan, High Performance Manager

Subject: High Performance Program Review Forum – 17 May, 2009

Date: 13 April, 2009

Response Required: Monday 20 April, 2009

The AWF High Performance Program (HPP) is athlete centred, coach driven and administratively supported.

In order that the Australian Weightlifting Federation remains on target to achieve its HPP targets it is vital to review the activities that have taken place since February, 2008.

The review will involve all key internal stakeholders – squad athletes, high performance coaches, HPAC members and AWF Executive Directors. The review will take place at the Victorian Weightlifting Stadium, Hawthorn on Sunday 17 May, 2009. It is envisaged that this forum will give everybody an opportunity to ensure that our successes are evaluated as vigorously as our failures. Modifying what we could do better should be examined and understanding what we are doing well is critical and all too frequently ignored.

Individuals are therefore invited to voice their opinions, concerns or ideas through lodgement of agenda items that will be discussed in detail and entered into a report that will be used to influence and strengthen the future ongoing direction and development of the AWF High Performance Program.

Agenda items discussed may be related but not limited to the following High Performance Program areas:

- Developing and supporting a group of talented and committed athletes
- AWF athlete and coach funding model
- Qualification standards, qualifying events and qualifying periods
- Regular national and international competitions at appropriate levels
- Athlete benchmarking – training and competitions plans and projected performances
- Supportive administration which provides maximum support to create an environment which assists lifters and coaches to carry out their tasks effectively.
- Athlete and Coach Agreements
- Good talent ID and development systems with a network of feeder programs.
- Sports science and sports medicine programs
- Adequate training venues and equipment – add to this the ease of access to all the facilities where athletes live, train, eat, recover and receive medical support

Please complete and return the attached HPP Review Forum Form no later than **Monday 20 April, 2009** via email mkeelan@awf.com.au stating either your attendance or non-attendance at the Forum and detailing the agenda item/s you wish to discuss. I will use the information off the returned forms to compose the agenda and once finalised this will be circulated to all forum participants.

I can be contacted on telephone 07 3245 6461 or on mobile 0411 424 328 should you require any further information and/or clarification.

Michael Keelan
High Performance Manager

High Performance Program Review Form

Name:.....

AWF Role:.....

I am ABLE / UNABLE to attend the HPP Review Forum in Melbourne on 17 May, 2009.
(Please circle appropriate response)

Signed:.....Date:...../...../2009

I wish to speak to the following Agenda Item/s during the Forum:

Agenda Item	Discussion Points	Proposed Recommendation

Signed:.....Date:...../...../2009

Please return no later than **Monday 20 April, 2009** via email: mkeelan@awf.com.au

Attachment 2

High Performance Program Review Respondents (33)

NSW (5)	QLD (5)	SA (3)	VIC (5)	TAS (4)	HPAC (5)	Executive Board & ASC (3+2+1)
Steve Tikkanen Elena Palamara George Chamoun Malek Chamoun Luke Borregine	Ian Moir Damon Kelly Ben Turner Deborah Lovely Robert Galsworthy	Arjun Tokhi Nicole Chamberlain Max Dalsanto	Martin Leach Belinda Van Tienen Corran Hocking Anthony Dove Vivian Lee	Mark Brown Jenna Myers Camilla Fogagnolo Chris Chugg	Lyn Jones Jacquie White Michael Noonan Miles Wydall Angela Wydall	Robert Kabbas Robert Mitchell Boris Kayser Matthew Curtain CEO Michael Keelan HPM Renee O'Callaghan ASC

The Working Groups will be as follows:

GROUP 1	GROUP 2	GROUP 3	GROUP 4
Steve Tikkanen – NLC/NSW	Elena Palamara -Athlete	George Chamoun - NLC	Luke Borregine (NSW)
Ian Moir (QLD)	Damon Kelly - SS	Ben Turner –SS	Deborah Lovely – SS
Robert Galsworthy - GS	Belinda Van Tienen - GS	Nicole Chamberlain – Athlete	Max Dalsanto – Athlete
Martin Leach (VIC)	Mark Brown (TAS) - NLC	Corran Hocking – SS	Anthony Dove - NLC
Vivian Lee –GS	Jacquie White - HPAC	Jenna Myers – SS	Chris Chugg (TAS)
Lyn Jones – AWF Director	Robert Kabbas - AWF President	Michael Noonan – HPAC	Miles Wydall - HPAC
Angela Wydall – HPAC	Michael Keelan – AWF HPM	Robert Mitchell - AWF Director	Boris Kayser - AWF Director
Camilla Fogagnolo - Athlete	Malek Chamoun - GS	Arjun Tokhi (SA)	Renee O'Callaghan (ASC)
Matthew Curtain – AWF CEO			

Each group is represented by a minimum:

1 AWF Director

1 National Licence Coach (NLC)

1 HPAC Member (HPAC)

1 State representative (TAS, SA, QLD, NSW, VIC)

1 Games or Super Squad athlete (GS or SS)

Attachment 3

Topic	Leader
Summary of HPP initiatives and outcomes	Michael Keelan
Qualification standards, qualifying events and qualifying periods	Ian Moir
2010 Commonwealth Games Team Selection Policy	Deborah Aason
Gold Medal Incentive Program – Alternative Model	Corran Hocking /Belinda Van Tienen & Anthony Dove
Coach Selection Policy	Luke Borreggine/Steve Tikkanen
Succession Coaching & Co-Coaching	Steve Tikkanen
Training Camps and International Competition	Ben Turner & Luke Borreggine
National Coach Appointment	Luke Borreggine/Steve Tikkanen
HPP Budget Allocations - State Driven	Luke Borreggine
Role of State Academy/Institutes	Ben Turner
Access to Equipment	Mark Brown & Vivian Lee
Development and Support	Mark Brown

Attachment 4

Theme Questions

Coaching

- The AWF is committed to raising the profile, expertise and experience of its coaches. What is the AWF currently doing? How can coach development opportunities be improved?
- How can the AWF better recognise and reward its coaches for their contribution to the High Performance Program (HPP)
- Identify what you believe are the major weaknesses to the current coach selection and appointment processes. What changes would you make to this aspect of the HPP?

DAS

- AWF athletes need to travel extensively to attend training, competition and selection events. The AWF introduced DAS, a performance based support initiative that reduces the expenditure burden. DAS is currently tiered. Super Squad athletes receive the highest percentage of financial support. Is this appropriate? Does the program need to change? If so, what changes need to be considered and when?
- Should the AWF continue to develop a comprehensive national medical support network? What do you believe is the role of the AWF, States, individual coaches and their personal coaches in this regard?
- Are there better ways to distribute the sport medicine assistance currently given to Super Squad (\$1400 pa) and Games Squad (\$1000 pa) members? How would you structure this support?

Competition Selection Processes

- Does the current state, national and international competition structure compliment and align with the HPP athlete/coach pathways?
- How can athlete access to domestic and international competitions be improved? Determine gaps in the current qualification and selection process and state the best ways to address identified issues.

Development

- What do you believe are the major weaknesses, or impediments to success of the current AWF High Performance Program? What would you do differently?
- How could more guidance or direction from the AWF impact upon the high performance pathway in your state?
- What role does the HPP have in broadening weightlifting participation at club and state levels?
- Whose responsibility is it for the establishment of formal processes in the identification and record management of targeted athletes who have the potential to achieve high results? Where does this process begin and end?
- Whose responsibility is it to deliver talent identification and talent development initiatives? The States, the clubs or the HPP? What roles and resources need to be implemented to establish a national TID program? Should a portion of the HPP budget be quarantined for State TID and talent development initiatives such as TID camps and targeted competitions, athlete tracking and reporting?
- Is it appropriate to run state based rather than national/overseas training camps?
- Should the AWF provide individual athletes with training equipment? State reasons.

Attachment 5**Australian Weightlifting Federation
High Performance Program Forum
Sunday 17 May, 2009****Forum Objectives:**

1. To provide the AWF Board with feedback from coaches, athletes, officials and administrators who have made a personal investment into the AWF's High Performance Program.
2. Identify High Performance Program strengths and weaknesses and target areas for future improvement or change in accordance with available resources.

Time	Theme	Facilitator/Presenter
9.00 - 9.10	Welcome and Overview of Program	David Shilbury
9.10 - 9.30	Summary of HPP Initiatives Since 2007 Review	Mike Keelan
9.30 – 10.30	Theme 1: Coaching Workshop	
10.30 - 11.00	Report Back Theme 1	David Shilbury
11.00 - 11.15	Morning Tea	David Shilbury
11.15 – 12.00	Theme 2: Direct Athlete Support Workshop	
12.00 - 12.30	Report Back Theme 2	David Shilbury
12.30 - 1.15	Lunch	
1.15 - 1.25	Theme 3: Qualification Standards, Events and Periods	Ian Moir
1.25 – 1.50	Workshop 3	
1.50 – 2.10	Report Back Theme 3	David Shilbury
2.10 - 2.20	Theme 4: Development & Support	Mark Brown
2.20 – 2.45	Workshop 4	
2.45 – 3.00	Report Back Theme 4	David Shilbury
3.00 – 3.30	Considering Outcomes and Close	David Shilbury

Attachment 6

SUMMARY PAGES

Coaching	DAS	Competition Selection Processes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial Structure of coaching <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Cost of courses ○ Payment ○ Travel and support ○ Recognition/coach athlete selection • Coach accreditation → retention <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Target right people ○ Retention of ex lifters • Coach selection <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Right coaches – get? right team ○ Consistencies of policy ○ Opportunity to coach/Apprentice ○ Athlete impact? • Centralised program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Need for head/national coach ○ AIS role? ○ Impact on development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequency of payment • Need to review payments system • Possible broaden • Private health Insurance • Central/Medical <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Structured medical • Super squad to receive more (broaden?) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The current qualifying standards need to be • Increase number of qualifying events for international events • Every qualified athlete should be given the opportunity to attend the event • All States and Territories should agree on a standard qualifying process for all events. • Athlete selection criteria needs to be geared to the respective event.

Group 1

Coaching	DAS	Competition Selection Processes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coaching course attendees → active w/l coaches • Mentoring course attendees • Rewards for becoming an active w/l coach • Payment of coaches? • Centralised system? • Dual/Shared coaching • Personal coaches • Appointed national coach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review regular routine of athletes and consistency • Direct payments into w/l specific fields eg feed and boots (split funds) • Athletes with injury, continued payment monitored by the coach • Communication regarding \$ and recovery • Private health for DAS recipients mandatory • Recommended Physicians eg NSWIS • Designated “medical officer”? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Champs entry? • Qualifying events (squad vs teams) • Totals • Selection Policy (communicate)

GROUP 2

Coaching	DAS	Competition Selection Processes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There <u>is</u> a clearly defined coaching pathway in existences • Financial rewards for coaching (to set performance/ event) (not every coach) • Group consensus that present system doesn't need "national Coach" • Consideration given to number of athletes on team (for p/coach) – not sole deciding factor • The head coach should be "well rounded" person capable of working well with everyone in the team (manager, p/coaches. Athletes) • Inconsistent application of coach selection criteria • Notification given if any deviation from originally published criteria • Coach recognition (other than financial) eg coach of the year award. • Incentives for highest qualified coaches to continue with profession development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gap between super squad and games squad funding? • More DAS vs Bigger teams • AWF to continue to drive DAS • Investment (Medical) v reward • DAS strictly to athletes who have met standards or fill gaps with you top athletes anyway? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Sinclair? ○ % of standard • Should medical be the same for Games and super squad members • Greater awareness/info re medical support network. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant qualifying standards for different events? • Qualifying process too rigid (lifting qual totals at selected comps) • Expand qualifying event opportunities • Qualifying periods extended for national championships • Send all qualified lifters to events (vs funding issues).

GROUP 3

Coaching	DAS	Competition Selection Processes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limitations for National Coaches (head) ie one international comp/ year • Need consistency and cohesion • Often best coach for Oceania's is best coach for worlds • Cost of coaching accreditation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Discrimination for weightlifting personnel • Team and coaches selected at the same time for comps and relevant/most appropriate selected ie some relationship with athletes • Centralise head coach only needed if centralised training program • Select head coach with experience, then select assistant coaches appropriate to selected athletes ie personal coach • Performance based coach stipend for state coaches • Funding for coaches of athletes who make Oz teams • Athlete voice in coach selection • Athlete feedback from comps re coaching responded to • Continued good communication between coaches and between coaches and athletes • Next 18 months on 1 team manager- not giving other people opportunity or experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tier structure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Fair? % elite/juniors ○ Appropriate? ○ Other form of support for juniors – clothing, boots, trophies • External funding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ ASC/ACGA ○ Use of payments (medical expenses etc) • Medical support structure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ State based medical officers ○ Injury management scheme ○ Constant communication with medical services director ○ AWF HPP private health insurance (covered by athlete of AWF?) ○ Medical care 100% responsibility of AWF • Support staff <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Masseuse/physio, how important? • Health expense audit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Cheaper for AWF to insure everyone. • Super squad <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Criteria Sinclair/% WR ○ # Men vs Women? Or top 10 system • other incentives • supplements/ vitamins 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of opportunity to qualify <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ More comps to qualify ○ Awareness of qualifying periods ○ Funding? (non funded athletes) • Selection processes – totals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Pressure to perform (only one window of opportunity) • Possible selection – medal based • Exposure to international events • Various standards for various events • Commonwealth games selection processes have not been released! Athletes need to know!! • Standard needed to be reached in order to compete at a national level! • All states and territories should follow standardised rules.

GROUP 4

Coaching	DAS	Competition Selection Processes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course education is great but include updates, send out more info after level 1 & 2. eg current coaching trends. • Level 1 - \$600+ half numbers dropped out in TAS. AWF standardised course - \$600 cost. Should states be able to select certain participants to pay less. Eg potential weightlifting coaches? Eg states can give vouchers to selected participants? Eg in QLD we subsidize certain club lifters to be coaches. • Performance base monetary incentives for coaches? • Young/new coaches to be supported more than top level? • Tax deductions as a “paid” coach by the state? Eg paid \$100 monthly with tax deductions of \$1500 etc • National policy but state based + facilitated • <u>Coach selection policy...</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Main coach may be selected regardless of athletes in team, but other coaches selected on a sliding scale to give new coaches some development. ○ Head coach based on lifers produced, past coaching achievements eg a grand father clause...Lyn ☺ ○ Coach apprentice scheme based on state nomination...based on numbers? <p>What incentives for or how can HPP be involved in coaching? Or individual states?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thanks for the money firstly. Very big incentive • If DAS or \$ based on monthly payments & does that increase with results at comps • Not just based on improvements or results but reaching a certain standard → eg medals • DAS shouldn't overlap with selection criteria • Pay fees for youth rather than DAS • Yes HPP super squad athletes get the most. • PB money does help and make a differences • Should criteria for payments need a love for the sport and dedication or just results → younger lifters • Injured athlete get 100% for a period of time (stipulated by a surgeon (agreed by AWF) eg 3-6mths after surgery) then 70% for rehab period until that ime has expired then results expected – HPM needs communication with coach and athletes • Should athletes verify the medical payment • What accountability do coaches have if they get paid? • Some coaches clearly explain to their athletes that they will get a % of DAS? • How does shift work get around it? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women's 10th place diff (easier?) than men's 10th? • Need to keep in mind the diff goals of competing at worlds/Olympics, Nationals/Comm Games <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Worlds are our best lifers ○ Nats/Comm Games - medals • Do wee look at rankings for the Comm Games, will all available knowledge then select case by case for best results • Customised criteria • Before qual period starts, need an update about qual totals etc • High standards make athletes aim high • Bigger gap (12 week build up) between trials and event • Last year 2008 Olympic trials were well done • Flexibility of injured elite athletes for selection outside the selection period for (the best) a common goal of best athletes to compete internationally • Subjective criteria allows common sense of best athletes competing at chosen events • Selection needs flexibility.