U23 & Junior GB Selection Races 2016

The selection races for the 2016 GB Junior & U23 teams took place on Saturday 9 and Sunday 10 April at Lee Valley White Water Centre, London.
Race one on Saturday would see competitors race over the full day with the best of their two runs counting towards their result.
After demo runs had taken place and forerunners had completed their runs the selection competition began with C1 Men. Competing for selection for the junior team was newly promoted Sam Maingay, and Robert Harratt had his sights set on the U23 team. Both Sam and Rob put down clean first runs with quick times, which would be there best runs of the day. Next came the C1 women with Jasmine Royle and Megan Bate both competing as under 23’s.
Jasmine’s first run was clean and fast putting her in third position behind Kimberly Woods and Mallory Franklin, but her second run would be six seconds faster and even though she picked up four seconds of penalties this was enough to award her second place. Megan fought her way down the course putting in a gutsy performance on both her runs but picking up penalties along the way it was not to be Meg’s day. But as always Meg came of the water with her great big smile!
It was time for the K1 men and competing for selection from Stafford and Stone were Christopher Bowers, Paul Sunderland, David Bain, Austin Barker, Mike Dickinson and Isaac Barker all very capable of challenging for a place on the tea. David Bain’s first run was fast and clean putting him in third position for the U23 spot at the end of day one, and Christopher Bowers had two very fast times, although picking up a few penalties, which would put Chris in 1st place for the junior team. There were no S&SCC U23/Junior K1 women or C2 men competing in the selection races for the 2016 GB teams.
At the end of day one the course was reset and everyone watched the demo’s before leaving the course to contemplate what they needed to do tomorrow.
Day two would prove to be much tougher with selection race two taking place in the morning followed by selection race three after lunch, so each paddler would only have one run in each race to challenge for a place on the team!
It began with C1 men, Sam Maingay had a tricky first run picking up penalties but improved his performance in the afternoon to finish in a respectable 20th place. A great performance for the newly promoted S&SCC C1 paddler and with his place on the National Talent Squad I am sure he is one to watch in the future for the Junior GB team. Robert had a good first run only picking up one penalty and in the afternoon improved his raw time, but picking up an extra penalty meant he came away with 25th position. Robert who has represented S&SCC on the GB Junior team in C2 and is now in his first year at university has joined the S&SCC coaching team and is supporting junior paddlers at HPP, Nottingham. Robert who is now focusing on competing in C1 and K1 will be challenging for a spot on the GB U23 team over the next few years.
Onto C1 women with Jasmine and Megan giving it there all on day two! Jasmine had a better run in the afternoon and secured a third place in both races on the day to secure her place on the U23 team. Megan put on her best performance in the morning to finish in 15th place, with some fantastic support from the riverbank! Jasmine and her family are fantastic supporters of S&SCC and have been for many years. Megan has represented the S&SCC junior paddlers as the club’s Youth Representative for the last two years.
The final places for S&SCC paddlers on the U23/Junior GB teams to be decided were the K1 men. This category is always closely fought and day two would be no exception. Christopher Bowers put in two exceptional runs to secure his place as first boat on the team. After the morning runs Paul Sunderland and David Bain were neck and neck. It was all down to the final afternoon runs as to who would come out on top?
Both paddlers had clean runs and the times were very close, but Paul pipped David to the post by only 1.38 seconds. Paul has secured first reserve place and David second reserve place on the U23 team.
A fantastic weekend of racing and again S&SCC paddlers have performed outstandingly. We congratulate you all!
The successful athletes first port of call to represent team GB will be at the ICF Junior/U23 World Championships in Krakow, Poland in July.

Photographs by Peter Milsom (attached)