SNOWSPORTS CLUB 2016/2017

This year has been another fantastic year for St Andrews Snowsports. We have continued to see engagement in our club and our brand from all years and boast a dynamic membership base of 370, a number which we have sustained for 4 years and continues to make us the most well subscribed sports club in the university. With each year we see different aspects of our club grow and gain traction. As a committee this year we have focused greatly on the sustainability of our membership base so that both our two competitive teams and our valued social side are able to flourish.

Our race team, lead by race captain Lily Longton, has continued to thrive this year - sitting more than comfortably ahead of most other Scottish universities, consistently in the top three position with Glasgow and Edinburgh. Indeed, in their final competition of the year at the British Universities Indoor Series, the first duals team fought valiantly and have performed better than I have personally seen any of our duals teams do in my four years in this club. With the present strength of the individuals and teams that the Race contingent boast, it is encouraging to see them perform so well with such a young team and we look forward to seeing them excel further in the coming years, with continued investment in their development and the resources available to them. At other competitions, such as the British Universities Dryslope Series, the race team took more competitors than the club has ever entered in the past. With the focus on developing novice racers and encouraging mentorship from senior to junior racers, we hope we can continue to
sustain the involvement of new racers and the continued interest of senior competitors.

The freestyle team, lead by captain Max Cutting, has seen an unbelievable transformation this year with the widening of participation and focus on strengthening the foundation of the team. From about this time last year, the focus of this team has been on encouraging involvement in student sport. During Freshers week, we encouraged complete freestyle newcomers to take part in Max’s 8-week coaching program at Aberdeen Ski Club and the uptake was unprecedented. This year we have entered more competitors than ever in this discipline and the interest in our commitment to improving engagement has been recognised by both alumni and those outside the university. We hope to sustain this commitment to increasing participation through continued investment in both team leadership and in training and coaching resources.

We have continued to see this change in size and dynamism in other aspects of our club. Our recreation captain helped us to continue to introduce students to a new sport through her beginner skier and snowboard lessons, with an active group of 8 beginners in the first semester. This year, we took a smaller number of students on our annual trip to the Alps, when 272 of us travelled to Les Deux Alpes in January. We have developed a close relationship with tour organiser, NUCO, and the response rate from trip goers exceeded expectations. The overall evaluation of trip from members was outstanding. We have found that taking a number close to 300 is far more beneficial and allows us the opportunity to engage with members and give students a much
better experience in resort and with snowsports. We have agreed with NUCO that we will work with them again next year, and hope that through continuing an already fruitful relationship we will be able to further improve the student ski experience here at St Andrews.

Our social secretaries have had a successful year providing social opportunities for our members in the form of more relaxed meets, to monthly sports nights at the Union and culminating in a very successful ball hosted at the Balgove Larder in March. Our engagement with Alumni and charities has been headed up by Vice President Esme. Our alumni continue to be passionately interested in the wellbeing of the club and its members. We hosted one alumni event in November, when they were invited to come to a competition weekend in Edinburgh, and they have been invited to another weekend this semester which looks set to be well attended. Our charity partner this year has been Snowcamp, for whom we have raised £500 so far and hope to raise more for before the end of the academic year.

Finally, looking forward as a committee we have been interested with the continued sustainability and development focus of the club. To this end we have produced our club’s first Club Development Plan. This has a 1 to 3-year focus representing each committee position and its respective responsibilities. This development plan is openly available to members to look at and can adapt to the changing nature of the club as each year passes. However, the overriding focus and intent of this project is to give each new committee and membership cohort a focus for their tenure. The objective is that the incoming committee is aware of the opportunities and threats facing the development of the club, and how each committee member is best positioned to help drive the club forward. The overall development goals of the club reflect three areas: participation, outreach and performance. These are the overarching themes for the club’s development, the individual goals of each committee position and their responsibilities should be practical goals to help move the club forward.

The success of any sports club relies on the engagement of all its members, not just the work of 11 committee members. This year we have continued to focus on the experience of our members and hope that the continued interest our members exhibit for our sport, and the activities we take part in, will see St Andrews Snowsports continue to thrive in the new academic year.