

INTERNATIONAL BREAST CANCER PADDLERS COMMISSION



Report of Meeting with Daniele Scarpa Held on Monday 6th July 2010 Buchintoro, Venice, Italy

Background - At the conclusion of the meeting held in Peterborough, Canada (June 2010) between IBCPC Board members and Italian representatives from Florence and Rome there were a number of areas that remained in need of clarification from the IBCPC perspective. One of the issues involved the perceptions around Daniele Scarpa and his role with the BCS teams in Italy.

It was agreed that as I was going to be in Venice in early July that I should try to meet with Daniele Scarpa in an effort to clarify the situation. Daniele went out of his way to arrange a time to meet with me and our meeting was amicable.

Also present were:

Mariagrazia Cevolani - Pres.t LILT Venezia/Mestre

Nicoletta Oniga - res.le AVAPO Venezia (Oncologic Assistant Volunteer)

Lucia Diglio - the President of Bucintoro (www.bucintoro.org Est 1882) in Venice

Daniele explained how became involved with BCS teams:

- Daniele had apparently been in Rome when the Internationally Abreast crew first visited Italy as part of the World Club Crews.
- He met Orlanda Cappelli on her first Vogalonga. She asked for his assistance in promoting the message as she was struggling to get interest and felt his name would help.
- Daniele willingly lent his name as an Olympian to try and open doors as well as gaining recognition and support for the BCS paddlers.
- Daniele's wife, Sandra, spoke at a Donna 2000 (a support group – already in existence before the dragon boat group of the same name that sprung from this group) meeting to try and generate interest in paddling and said Daniele would be willing to be the coach. A few women tentatively came forward and thus the group in the Venice area began.
- The name Forza Rosa was adopted as a result of Jane Frost's initiative bringing a BCS crew from Canada to Vogalonga in 2009.
- The media grasped the name and it is felt, by Daniele and several of the BCS members as something that now has a considerable recognition and to which many are rather attached.
- Daniele felt the name Forza Rosa was now established, accepted by the Vogalonga organisers as well as in the wider community and that it would be foolish to abandon it.

Daniele clarified **he is not** an official team member nor is he part of the constituted Forza Rosa. He provided a copy of the office bearers as filed with the registration documents to support this.

His role is as a mentor and to offer 'testimonials' for the teams, which means lending his name and support at key moments. He confirmed that he has been a spokesperson for the team and also acted as coach, but he indicated that if the teams preferred not to have him involved he would be very willing to step back.

I outlined the concerns raised in Peterborough about the independence of BCS dragon boat teams in Italy and:

- the need for spokespersons to be survivors rather than Club Presidents or well know people such as himself; and
- the perception that Orlanda's memory was being lost as Founder of the BCS dragon boat movement in Italy.

Daniele was visibly shocked to hear of the perception that Orlanda's memory was being lost – he was insistent that this was definitely not the case as far as he was concerned.

I went on to explain that it was the IBCPC expectation that each BCS team should actively work towards becoming fully independent and that:

- They need to be actively encouraged and trained to steer, coach and;
- Be trained and mentored to become their own public spokespersons
- Be actively encouraged and supported to take full responsibility for their own development and;
- IBCPC sees this as very much an ongoing part of the self development and empowerment for BCS teams and vital to their sustainability into the future

Daniele agreed with the IBCPC assessment and confirmed that it was very much his goal too, he expanded on this saying he could not be relied on to always be available as it was unrealistic for his schedule. But his primary concern was safety for the team members, and I completely agreed that it was paramount.

We then discussed events that teams might choose to enter and I explained that IBCPC was primarily concerned with the participatory nature of BCS races and raising breast cancer awareness. I emphasising that when considering where a BCS teams should participate decisions should be made by the team themselves based on:

- Suitability for BCS paddlers and whether this falls within the mandate of the team
- Providing a positive 'experience of a lifetime' – such as the Festivals in Vancouver, Caloundra and Peterborough
- Awareness raising opportunities

I heavily stressed that BCS teams needed to remain independent of politics between IDBF and the ICF. I explained IBCPC were recognised by the IDBF and felt a strong allegiance as far as the sport of dragon boat racing was concerned. I explained IDBF

had given us excellent support to establish BCS dragon boating in the international arena as well as spread our message of awareness via inclusion in events such as the World Championships until such time as we became too many.

Forza Rosa and Daniele are, in addition to dragon boating, supporting and encouraging participation, via outrigger, canoeing and kayaking for those BCS who are not able to be in a dragon boat for any reason or in addition to dragon boat. I agreed there was absolutely nothing wrong with doing this but that these did not fall under the IBCPC framework.

We touched briefly on the topic of the Vogalonga and Daniele expressed the desire to see, with IBCPC support, an event run in conjunction with Vogalonga that caters exclusively to the BCS crews. I agreed to bring this back to the Board for discussions once more details are known.

At the end of the meeting I was introduced to many of the women who had arrived for a paddling session. Daniele translated the gist of our discussions stressing my emphasis on participation and inclusiveness, and that it was breast cancer that brought us into the dragon boats and that this is our (IBCPC) core focus, not the sport of dragon boat racing and that the women themselves need to be independent and take responsibility for their own team development as part of their empowerment post breast cancer diagnosis.

Conclusion – It is my assessment that Daniele Scarpa is very genuine in his support of the BCS paddlers and that he would not deliberately do anything to their detriment.

It was also very clear Mariagrazia Cevolani and Nicoletta both hold Daniele in high regard and are very comfortable to refer women to the programs he is promoting and/or overseeing. They openly credited him with building up the team numbers.

The main problem in Italy seems to be the considerable difference of opinion, between the BCS teams themselves, over the name Forza Rosa and the establishment of a national body. It is my belief the advice IBCPC gave to the Italian attendees at the Peterborough meeting re a joint statement and striving to work together on a national framework and representative body is the correct advice.

The solutions and/or problems with the Italian situation do not rest with Daniele Scarpa, rather they rest with the Italian women, who as BCS dragon boat paddlers, need to make the decision on how and if they wish to proceed with the establishment of a national body and under what name.



Michelle Hanton OAM
President
IBCPC Steering Committee
25th July 2010