

---

# President's Report 2024

---



**CLIMBING  
NEW ZEALAND**

---

**MAY 2024**

---

**Climbing New Zealand**

**Authored by: Richard Waldin**

---

# Climbing New Zealand AGM for the year 2023/24

## President Report

This report is covering the period from April 2023 through to the end of March 2024, including the full 2023/24 competition season.

The last 12 months have been highly eventful with some incredible occasions and performances to acknowledge and celebrate.

Our first international event for 2023 was the Australian Youth Nationals in Sydney. Great results from the team with 7 athletes making finals in bouldering with two wins (Lucy and Yume), and 9 athletes making finals in lead with 2 wins (Jasmine and Yume).

Early World Cups produced excellence results with PBs, National and Oceania records. More on the speed programme later in the report.

World Championships. We had 5 Speed Climbers and Rachel Maia competing in Para-climbing at the 2023 IFSC World Championships in Bern, Switzerland. The Speed climbers all competed well on this big stage and Rachel made history with a Bronze medal in her category, being the first Kiwi ever to medal at a World Championship event. Congratulations to Maia on this achievement.

Fifteen CNZ athletes traveled to Seoul, Korea, accompanied by three team officials, for the 2023 IFSC World Youth Championships. The trip included a six day stop-over in Sydney to train. The Team included three Speed Team athletes that did not train in Sydney but instead joined the group in Seoul having traveled directly from a series of World Cup events in Europe.

Overall, the competition was NZ's most successful ever. Jasmine Arnold-Clark made the Youth B female Lead semi final finishing 22<sup>nd</sup>. Abby Gebert and Julian David made the Junior Speed Climbing finals with Abby finishing 11<sup>th</sup> and Julian finishing 1<sup>st</sup>, winning NZ's first ever medal at a World Youth Champs. It was an amazing time to be a New Zealander at this competition and all the Team were there to celebrate Julian's win with him.

**Climbing New Zealand**

---

Thanks to Sarah Sorenson, George Sanders and Troy Robinson for leading the team to Seoul.

Once again the New Zealand Secondary School Climbing Championship event was hosted in Mount Maunganui with the lead support from BOPSCA.

A change in format was implemented, with speed split out to a separate event. This also allowed use of the Blake Park speed wall for the speed event. Once again the event is generously supported through a range of sponsors brought together by Rob Waddell and associates with broadcasting support by Whakaata Maori. Big shout out to the BOPSCA team. In 2024 Mount Maunganui will again host, but more of the organization will fall to Climbing New Zealand. The support of other regions will be important to sustain the event in Mount Maunganui.

The 2023/24 National Championship series kicked off with the La Sportiva Open Bouldering Championships held at Northern Rocks. Oskar Wolff and Lucy Sinclair were crowned champions. At this event we added an Open B and Youth B boulder jam to the day as a trial. This opportunity seemed to be well received by the competitors giving these athletes a go on the Open qualifier boulders.

Next event was our Youth and Master Bouldering Championships, held at BoulderCo in Auckland. For the first time we had so many entries that we had to close registrations early. Something to review before next season to manage this growth.

In November we sent a team of 31 athletes to Melbourne for Paris 2024, Oceania Olympic Qualification event.

New Zealand filled all the allocated places in Lead and Bouldering with 19 athletes competing. In Speed, we had 6 male and 5 female competitors so a great turnout.

New Zealand was also represented at the event through Travis Rangitahi being a member of the setting team and Sabrina Street acting as Head Judge.

**Climbing New Zealand**

---

Thanks to all the supporters who traveled to Melbourne to support the team and especially to Rob Moore and Troy Robinson for their athlete coaching and support.

The winners of each category earn places at the Paris Olympics.

The boulder / lead competition was dominated by the Australians. NZ had three athletes, Rebecca Hounsell, Amanda Speed and Oskar Wolff make the finals.

In the speed event, New Zealand prevailed with Julian David and Sarah Tetzlaff winning the titles and places at the Paris Olympics. It was not until late February that the two athletes had their selections confirmed by the New Zealand Olympic Committee at a special ceremony at the Mount Maunganui training facility. The first Olympians to be selected for Paris and of course the first Olympic representatives in Climbing.

With their performances in 2023, we nominated two athletes for the Halberg Awards, Rachel Maia in the Para-athlete category, and Julian David in the emerging talent category. Julian was judged to be a finalist and went on to be announced as the winner in his category at the Halberg Awards in Auckland. Congratulations again Julian, it was a privilege to attend and witness the occasion.

We returned to National competitions in 2024 with the Youth, Masters and Para-climbing Lead event held at Extreme Edge in Hamilton.

A well-attended event, with many great performances. We had two new para-climbers competing also. Thanks to the team who brought the event together, special thanks to Extreme Edge Hamilton for hosting and to the Waikato Climbing Club.

Open Lead was held at The Wall and Basement Cinema in Rotorua. The event doubled as a second selection opportunity for athletes seeking international selection in Lead. Our champion lead climbers from 23/24 were Oliver Chinn and Rebecca Hounsell. Thanks to our host and Rotorua Climbing Club.

**Climbing New Zealand**

---

We finished the 23/24 season with the La Sportiva National Speed Championships held at Blake Park, Mount Maunganui on the day after the Open Lead Championships.

Our Open Speed Champions for 23/24 were Abby Gebert and Julian David.

Julian set a new National record of 5.60 seconds. A further 6 youth records were set on the day. Thanks to the BOPSCA club for organizing and supporting a successful event.

The NZ Speed Climbing Squad has, by any measure, had an outstanding year in 2023, competing regularly at international events, including World Cups and 2023 IFSC Climbing World Championships in Bern, Switzerland. Regular National and Oceania records were broken and outstanding results at the Youth World Championships. To cap it all, the Oceania Olympic Qualification event resulted in 2 Olympic selections. An incredible team effort, led by Rob Moore with Rob being supported by Kim David and Sarah Sorenson as well as many others in the BOPSCA community. We acknowledge the support of HPSNZ who have continued to back the squad and reward results. We also acknowledge the support of the New Zealand Olympic Committee for guiding us through the Olympic process and ultimately supporting the nomination of our athletes with the selection of Julian and Sarah to compete in Paris. 2024 will be next level again, we have already seen great performances with new Oceania records and finals performances (for next year's report – but congratulations, Julian, Sarah and Abby). We wish the team all the best for the lead into Paris 2024 and beyond.

Climbing New Zealand development.

The most significant development for Climbing New Zealand in the 12 months has been the establishment of a paid development officer role. For any sporting organization there is an adjustment in thinking and mindset when there is a paid role in and around supporting a team of volunteers. It is really important that there is a recognition of the difference, the paid role is not to magically do all the work of the volunteers, and equally the paid role needs to balance the doing with the support and coordination of the activities across the organization.

**Climbing New Zealand**

---

Felia Faber has brought new thinking and passion to Climbing New Zealand and I trust we can continue to build the effectiveness of the role within the organisation. Felia has put efforts into ensuring that our volunteers are heard and supported in their roles within the sport, has looked to improve our event organization to make this a better experience for all and has stepped into securing additional funding to support our event and non-event activities.

As part of looking at the organization of events, Felia has also been working with Climbalong, a climbing event management system developed in Europe. This new to the market system is looking very promising as a way of further digitizing and streamlining our events.

It is early days, the role is not yet securely funded and this needs to be a priority to ensure that Climbing New Zealand can leverage the investment being made.

Climbing New Zealand invested in some new holds for the Lead Championships, with a plan to add to these each year to allow more diversity of setting and evenness in the competitions.

Development of officials. At an international level we now have IFSC Judge of many years experience Nelson Lim representing New Zealand and most recently Nelson has been awarded with a Judging role at Paris 2024. Congratulations to Nelson. We have had Sabrina Street recognized as a level 1 Judge with the IFSC after undertaking training with the IFSC.

Wiz Fineron was also acknowledged as a Level 1 route setter by the IFSC.

There has been a solid ongoing programme of training for Judges provided by the Auckland event management team.

**Climbing New Zealand**

---

As part of ensuring that Climbing New Zealand is better connected into the wider climbing community we support ACAT's membership drive through our contacts and social media, this support was really appreciated by ACAT and builds a strong connection for future opportunities to help each other.

Financially we had another solid year with great support from sponsors and funding organisations. Hosting events continues to be a challenge financially, we are ok while we are able to attract funding support for the events. We are getting positive approaches from Bouldering Gyms wanting to host events, our options for Lead events remain limited, unfortunately.

Thanks to our key sponsor La Sportiva, who have again provided amazing support this season, including support for all our podium prizes. A big thanks to the team at Mountain Adventures for supporting all our events.

Thanks to the ongoing sponsorship from RAB, The North Face and Black Diamond.

A special thanks to The North Face who, this season, really stepped up their support providing a range of spot prizes for our Volunteers, brilliant.

We also secured the support of a new sponsor Kordia which came into effect from the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2024. Kordia wishes to be seen as an employer of choice for climbers as they seek to employ staff with a mix of technical skills as well as staff comfortable with working at heights as they undertake significant infrastructure builds.

Event planning and organizing continues to be a key activity as events evolve and we move hosting around locations and gyms.

A big thank you to everyone who has played a role in making the events a success, we cannot create these events and competitive opportunities without this support.

**Climbing New Zealand**



---

There are a few that carry huge workloads in bringing the events together. While we are paying Felia in her role I know that she goes well above and beyond to make the events happen. Dion has been the other key organizer who puts in days of effort to ensure events are planned and organized. Thanks to our key officials at the various events, particularly Sabrina Street, Dion Clapperton, Nelson Lim, John McKnight, Chris Wade and Kim David.

Thanks also to Peter Lofthouse, Rob Moore and Chris Warburton for leading the selection processes, and to Duncan Kenderdine for convening the selectors.

At the grassroots I want to acknowledge those who have continued to provide events last year. The annual climbing calendar is getting so full that date clashes which we all do our best to avoid seem to now be an inevitability.

It is great to see local and regional events occurring throughout the year.

The work of climbing organisations in the Auckland region were recognized in 2023:

The Auckland Climbing Youth Development Club was a finalist in the Sport NZ Local Impact awards for "Putting Out the Welcome Mat", a programme which focused on bringing girls, at-risk youth, youth with disability and rainbow youth into the climbing community.

This programme was also a finalist in Disability Auckland's Programme of the Year award.

The Auckland College Climbing Series made it as a Sporting Event of the Year finalist for the 2023 Harcourts Cooper & Co Harbour Sport Excellence Awards

To the CNZ Committee, thank you for everything you do to support Climbing New Zealand and ultimately support our athletes. On the committee thank you for supporting each other and supporting me in my role.

**Climbing New Zealand**

---

I would like to especially thank Shane Death as he steps down from the CNZ Committee at the AGM. Shane has held many roles while a member of the CNZ Committee, as well as being our Treasurer, Shane has been head judge or POJ at many events and has also lead the organization and running of the NZ Secondary Schools events each year, thank you Shane.

I also want to acknowledge others outside of the committee who contribute significantly, including Conor Boyd (website), David Sanders, Sarah Hay and Stephane David (Oceania Council).

Troy Robinson, George Sanders for coaching the Youth Team. Sarah Sorenson for leading the Youth Team to Korea and more recently in the role of Manager for the Speed Team. To Kim David for acting as Secretary for the Speed Team.

To our clubs and communities, thank you for supporting our sport and for all of you who have volunteered your time at events - thank you, we cannot do this without you all.

I wish to especially acknowledge Rob Moore. Rob has a passion beyond imagination and has achieved so much for Climbing in New Zealand through the Speed programme. The obvious pinnacle event in Sport Climbing is the Olympic Games and having achieved this with two athletes is something to be truly celebrated. Few in the wider climbing community understand the sacrifices that Rob has made over the last 2 years. Truly inspiring. Rob, we wish you, Sarah and Julian all the best for your road into the Olympics and the Olympics themselves.

Sarah and Julian you are both incredible athletes and ambassadors for our sport, Congratulations once again.

To all our athletes, thanks for choosing climbing as part of your turangiwaewae. As I look to step back from my role at Climbing New Zealand, the reason I got involved and

---

will always take an interest is the positive impacts that Climbing has on young people and their paths in life.

Nga Mihi Nui