

2017 WORLD ROWING REVIEW PROJECTS

FISA COUNCIL POSITION FOLLOWING ITS MEETING ON 9 JULY 2017

At its meeting following the World Rowing Cup regatta in Lucerne, the Council discussed the principles presented in the World Rowing Championships Programme (Rule 36) and the 2020 Olympic Qualification System Review Projects. The Council position on the principles is as follows:

1. WORLD ROWING CHAMPIONSHIPS PROGRAMME (RULE 36) PRINCIPLES

1.1 Purpose and Goal of World Rowing Championships

Draft at 22 July 2017:

World Rowing Championships

The World Rowing Championships is the annual pinnacle competitive rowing event for rowers worldwide which showcases the very best of the sport and those who partake in it.

Vision: The World Rowing Championships is the most important international rowing competition, other than the Olympic Games. It is a globally respected, prime sporting event which allows the world's very best rowers to present their talent and skills in regatta venues that showcase the value and attractiveness of the environment in our sport.

Purpose and goals of the World Rowing Championships

1. To provide a platform and the conditions that allow the best rowers of the world to perform to the best of their abilities
2. To determine the world champions, medallists and a final world ranking for a given year in each boat class of each age category
3. To promote and facilitate broad participation for rowers representing national rowing federations from all around the world
4. To provide an entertaining and informative experience for participants, spectators and television viewers of all nationalities, languages and ages
5. To stage the event in a way which supports FISA's strategic plan for the sport of rowing and upholds FISA's principles: development of the individual, promoting international understanding, promoting rowing as a lifetime sport and affirming collective environmental responsibility.

1.2 The criteria for including a boat class in the World Rowing Championship programme

There are currently no specific criteria in the Rules however this was recognised as something to be developed for the future. The seven guiding principles that have been identified and endorsed by the member federations during the Olympic programme review as well as the World Championship programme (Rule 36) review project could form the basis for such a set of criteria.

1.3 Gender equality

The Council believes gender equality is essential and favours that all World Championship programmes become gender equal immediately.

1.4 Excellence, minimum entry threshold and Natural Death Rule

The Council supports the principle that is the basis of the Natural Death Rule: to be on the World Championship program, the competition in the event must be of a certain standard of excellence. The standard of excellence proposed requires at least three rounds of racing and the winner having competed with at least six other crews. One way to institutionalise this “excellence” is the natural death rule that automatically eliminates events that do not reach this threshold for three consecutive years. The Congress would then review such events at each Extraordinary Congress.

1.5 Rule 36 Scenarios for the open, lightweight and para-rowing categories

Council strongly favours a gender equal programme as a priority.

Currently, the Council position on the options is as follows:

- **Open weight options:** three scenarios are presented to move forward for consideration by the delegates.
- **Lightweight options:** Council does not wish to remove any of the options before seeing the entries at the U23CH and WCH but notes that some of the options are not gender equal.
- **Para-Rowing options:** there are some scenarios with several new boats proposed but the ratio between para and non-para events must be considered; both options will be carried forward to the Congress.

1.6 Pathways

The events offered should have a clear relationship to each other to allow logical pathways for athlete development and competition structures, and should provide the best opportunity for developing rowers to progress along the pathway to the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

The Council noted that national, regional and continental events are an integral part of the pathway to the Olympic and Paralympic Games, making these important opportunities for rowers to reach their full potential. The Council therefore, while encouraging the application of the guiding principles discussed above, recognises the autonomy of each continental association to develop its event programmes as relevant to the local context.

2. 2020 OLYMPIC QUALIFICATION SYSTEM PRINCIPLES

2.1 Excellence to Participation Ratio

The Council agrees that Rio's ratio of 70 percent excellence to 30 percent participation, in terms of boats, is generally appropriate and should guide the decisions on the 2020 system, but that the extent to which this is achieved will depend on studying the impact on other principle positions.

2.2 Excellence quota per boat

The Council agrees that a target should be set for the number of boats per event that are qualified through the "excellence" route (i.e. at the World Championships or the Final Olympic Qualification Regatta) and is generally in favour of the following allocations:

- **Singles, pairs and doubles:** 13 (11 at the WCH / 2 FOQR) – Council supports this.
- **Fours and quads:** 7 to 10 boats (5 to 8 WCH / 2 FOQR) – Council prefers 10 but recognises that the options may be limited by the impact of other principle positions.
- **Eights:** 7 (5 WCH / 2 FOQR) – Council supports this.

2.3 Including pairs in the Continental Qualification Regattas

The Council sees the positive sides of this proposal but, given the cut in the athlete quota for 2020, does not see a way to include pairs to the Continental Qualification Regattas without impacting the achievement of the other principle objectives.

2.4 There should be two chances to qualify for each event

Agreed that this is a strong principle to maintain for our sport.

2.5 Doubling up

At the Lucerne National Federations (NF) Meeting, an attendee suggested that a system of compulsory doubling up be included into the Olympic racing programme. The Council has considered this suggestion and would like to make a clear statement on this topic. In discussions with the IOC on the event and athletes quota, FISA has explained that each of the seven Olympic boat classes is unique and requires specialised skills and a specific training regimen.

Based on this principle as well as a number of other factors, the competition format currently planned for the Tokyo 2020 Olympic regatta does not support compulsory doubling up, and is structured on the basis that athletes are selected for and training in one boat class only. Compulsory doubling up, therefore, will not be considered for the Tokyo 2020 Olympic racing programme.

2.6 Limiting the number of places that an NF may qualify through the World Rowing Championships and the Final Olympic Qualification Regatta

Council does not support capping the number of qualification places that may be achieved by countries via the World Championships and Final Olympic Qualification Regatta.

2.7 Countries qualifying a certain number of boats at the World Championships may not participate at the Continental Qualification Regatta to gain places reserved to increase “participation”

Council agrees with this in principle but wants to study further all possible impacts and consequences.

2.8 Limiting qualification through the Continental Qualification Regatta to one boat per gender per NF or one boat per NF or two boats per NF

The Council would like to receive more feedback from the stakeholders on these ideas, recognising that the objective of the Continental Qualification Regatta is to increase participation in the Games by our member federations.

A new proposal was presented in which the winner of an event in a Continental Qualification Regatta would qualify for the Games, subject to a maximum of two boats per NF. In the case of an NF winning three or four events at the Continental Qualification, the NF would be required to choose one boat of each gender, but in the case that two boats of the same gender from an NF win, then the NF should be allowed to select both of those crews, but being still subject to the two-boat limit, would not qualify a boat from the other gender.

Regarding the method for selecting which crew qualifies in the case where more crews are eligible than the places available, the Council believes that a clear and objective method for selecting crews has not been found and, therefore, the decision should be left to the NF. The Council is still considering whether to publish a set of guidelines for selection criteria that may be used by NFs. The Council would encourage NFs to publish their criteria within their NF before the COQR.

2.9 Qualification places obtained at the Continental Qualification Regattas should be reallocated to the next-ranked crew from an NF that has not yet qualified any boats for the Olympic Games

The Council currently favours this idea but wants to continue to study all consequences of implementing such a principle.

2.10 Unallocated participation places from Continental Qualification Regattas are added to the Final Olympic Qualification Regatta

The Council currently favours the idea that, when applying the above principles to increase participation, and there are no further crews to which places can be allocated, unallocated places are added to the Final Olympic Qualification Regatta for qualification.