

**2017 WORLD ROWING REVIEW PROJECTS
NATIONAL FEDERATIONS MEETING
WORLD ROWING CUP III, LUCERNE – 7 JULY 2017**

The following questions and comments were received from the national federations (NFs) present. The response from FISA is noted below each question:

1. Rule 36 – World Rowing Championship Programme

NF If we want to convince the IOC of the value of lightweight rowing, we should not cut all lightweight sweep rowing. If we keep a small boat, like the pair, then in the Olympic year some of these athletes may be able to access the open pair.

FISA Noted

NF What is the thinking on the Natural Death Rule – if new events are added will they be given a grace period to give them time to establish themselves and build participation? Because the Natural Death rule may cause problems for gender equality.

FISA This will be discussed by the FISA Council on 9 and 10 July.

2. 2020 Olympic Qualification System

NF An idea to make an objective decision about which crews, having the same placing, would qualify from the Continental Qualification regatta is to rank crews based on results from World Cups and other World Rowing events as they do in skiing and other sports.

FISA Noted. We have had similar suggestions in the past and it was difficult for non-European teams to stay away from home for long periods of time as well as the financial implications. It has been suggested that, when a subjective decision is the case, that a set of standard criteria could be used by NFs to make their selections.

NF Reducing the 4x quota to 7 would mean many small to medium-sized NFs will not see any possibility of qualification, so will not bother developing quads. Would it also create an issue in the balance between sweep and scull?

FISA It is a very difficult decision to make to reduce the number of quads, understanding these impacts. The balance between sculling and sweep is one of the factors that must be looked at when considering the different scenarios.

NF We support the previous comment about reducing the quota for the quads. We believe that a minimum of 10 boats are needed to justify funding from the NOCs.

FISA Noted.

NF We are strongly against the inclusion of the pairs in the Continental Qualification; it is not the right time for this and it is not appropriate to compare the Olympics to the YOG, as there are only two boat classes in the YOG and it is a very artificial situation. If places must be taken from a boat to allow for pairs in the continents, they should be taken from the eights.

**2017 WORLD ROWING REVIEW PROJECTS
NATIONAL FEDERATIONS MEETING
WORLD ROWING CUP III, LUCERNE – 7 JULY 2017**

FISA Noted.

NF The comment in the IOC letter regarding the Olympic Programme regarding the inclusion of lightweights in future Games is cause for speculation and uncertainty. We should not be increasing the number of lightweight doubles if there is risk that they will be cut in future and we lose those athlete quota places.

Also, we think that a two-boat D final would not be very attractive so it makes sense to reduce the number of lightweight doubles to 18.

FISA The IOC letter indicates that the lightweight question is not resolved and we will have to continue defending lightweight rowing in the Games. We therefore need to find the arguments that will convince those people external to FISA of the value and necessity of the lightweight category. FISA is also speaking to IOC members and management to try to understand the situation.

NF Should we do some research into what makes rowing attractive to Olympics audiences? For example the role of personalities. Winning more than one medal will create personalities or stars, so what has been done to look at allowing doubling up athletes from the small boats in the long boats? Can we experiment with this at World Cups, for example?

FISA To date we have not supported compulsory doubling up at the Games as our argumentation with the IOC has been that the different boat classes require different or specific skills, and justify the 14 boat classes.

We have also been opposed to allowing athletes to win more than one medal in principle, because we want many NFs winning medals.

NF We should think about the number of fours and quads in relation to allowing doubling up in eights – we need more fours and quads. The time to double up is now, while we still have the athlete quota – if the quota is cut it will be more difficult to double up.

FISA Noted. The Council will address this at its meeting.

NF Is the quota of 7 eights really a requirement? Why not 6 boats?

FISA The 7 boats is based on the principles of our event programme that we need at least 7 boats to create an attractive racing programme (to ensure at least three rounds of racing).

NF Our NF believes that we should increase the number of eights to 8, so that there are two equal heats of 4 boats. And the ideal situation would be to have eights racing every day of the Olympic competition like at Henley, for example, by having four rounds of 2-boat races for the first four days to get a ranking for the final rounds.

FISA Noted.

**2017 WORLD ROWING REVIEW PROJECTS
NATIONAL FEDERATIONS MEETING
WORLD ROWING CUP III, LUCERNE – 7 JULY 2017**

2.1. Additional Comments received via the website

The following additional comments were received in the period between the NF Meetings in Poznan and Lucerne:

1. Rule 36 - World Rowing Championships Programme

NF The extension and inclusion of JW4 + and LW4-, LW2- etc. has to be questioned. FISA has already mentioned that the number of participants in a world championship has reached a critical level. If now additional classes of boats are introduced which are not part of the Olympic program, FISA could soon begin to introduce quotas for world championships. Adding these boat classes to the World Championship Program will affect the entries of the Olympic boat classes. We should not artificially restrain the growth of our sport. Therefore only certain venues which can hold a very large amount of athletes could bring their bid forward for World Championships.

NF We do favour reducing the number of events and boat types in international competition, limiting the boat types to the Olympic boats (1x, 2x, 4x, 2-, 4-, 8+). This creates more competition, reduces investment in boats, and benefits the spectator experience.

We do favour maintaining a challenging set of events for lightweight athletes who form a lively and valued community within our sport and clubs. Since in our country lightweight sculling is usually performed by former juniors and lightweight sweep rowing by later entry student rowers, we favour maintaining both disciplines in the competition programme for lightweight men, and introducing sweep rowing for lightweight women. However we expect that LM4- will attract less entries than before, and we do not see LW4- as a viable event. We therefore propose to maintain and introduce only the pair (2-) for LM and LW respectively. A greater focus on sculling events for lightweight athletes makes sense as a pathway to the remaining Olympic event for this category (2x).

We do favour gender equality, offering a similar set of events for both men and women. Our experience is that offering events usually generates demand, also where demand might now seem to be low.

Reflecting on the 10 scenarios presented, we therefore favour scenario 2a.

For para-rowing we support the proposed additional events (PR2 1x, PR3 2- for men and women).

We do endorse the current 'natural death' rule for events that attract less than 7 entries in 3 consecutive world championships as a general rule for established events, although we should allow new events and disciplines, like lightweight sweep rowing for women, time to mature.

A Personal view In my opinion the World Championship Programme for U-19, U-23 and Seniors should be equal as for the Olympics. Already today most of the National Federations are supporting only Olympic categories. All other categories can be rowed in National

2017 WORLD ROWING REVIEW PROJECTS
NATIONAL FEDERATIONS MEETING
WORLD ROWING CUP III, LUCERNE – 7 JULY 2017

Regattas if necessary. An identical programme is clear for all - the athletes and the public. Furthermore, if there are less categories, the quality of the races will be higher, because there are more athletes competing for a place in the team.

In one clause:

The World Championship Programme for all categories (U-19, U-23 and Senior) is equal to the Olympic Rowing Programme.

2. 2020 Olympic Qualification System

NF

As an NF, we think it is very important that Rowing develops in countries where it is still minor for the future of our sport. Needless to say, the Olympics is the biggest chance to do that.

In that sense, we strongly agree with what FISA is currently working on; 1) Making it possible for more countries to participate, 2) plus maintaining the competition level of Olympic Games as the most valuable race, 3) moving to gender equal structure where it is fair for both genders.

Thus here is our action proposal to support the 1)~3) directions.

1) For more participating countries: We think Scenario 1a (with 4 quota allocation at Asia Continental for LM2X and LW2X) is favorable for balanced Excellence/Participation ratio.

2) To maintain level of Olympics: No limit on number of boats qualified at the World Championships or Final Qualification

3) For gender fairness: NFs may qualify a total of two boats in the Continental Qualification with no restriction on the gender of the boats. As we don't know what boats will be qualified at World Championships or Final Qualification, we think it's better to give each NF choices.

NF

For the 2020 Olympic Qualification process we do value having a Final Olympic Qualification Regatta for as many events as possible. This allows for teams to differentiate in their build-up to Tokyo and offers alternative options when primary qualification during the last World Championships fails. In this case it also helps to keep high performance programmes 'alive' across the Olympic season.

From the 1a-1d scenario's, we favour scenario 1d because in our view it offers the most realistic numbers for the quads and fours.

We regret that the most spectacular event, M8+ and W8+ has only 7 teams competing in the proposed scenarios. We understand this from a quota perspective, but in our view longer term we should seek ways to increase this number.

NF

A further reduction of the fours would mean that many small and mid-sized Rowing Federation will take these classes from their pathway in the future. As for an example these Federations are currently not able to qualify the eight, they have not even tried to enter for the last 20 years. The eight has been dominated by big federations which also seed the fours before.

**2017 WORLD ROWING REVIEW PROJECTS
NATIONAL FEDERATIONS MEETING
WORLD ROWING CUP III, LUCERNE – 7 JULY 2017**

The same will then happen to the four and quad if only 7 boats receive a ticket for the Olympics.

We propose to keep at least 12 Quads and Fours in the Olympic program. Furthermore we propose to qualify 6 Eights (Full Final) instead of 7 for the Olympics in Female and Male.

Why? Firstly, the heats with 4 and 3 Boats are not attractive for television and a straight final with a maximum of one lane allocation race will do.

Secondly, the seventh eight dropping out of the final is automatic seventh without rowing a B final.

Thirdly, we can reallocate those 18 Athlete spots.

It is better to compensate the decrease of the 24 Athlete spots less for Tokyo when taking away the seventh Eight.

NF

We all want to increase the number of nations and to give as many nations as possible the chance to take part at the Olympic regatta. Participating at Olympic Games is crucial for the survival of rowing in many countries.

Our proposal is to limit the entries per nation. Every federation that qualified a certain number of boats (e.g. 8) at the qualification World Championships should not be allowed to enter any crews at the continental qualification regatta. This will guarantee excellence, not restrict any fast crews and increase the number of nations at the Olympics. Every boat that qualified through the World Championships will be allowed to start at the Olympic Regatta even if the federation has qualified more than the agreed number of boats.

This proposal will significantly increase the number of nations at the Olympic Regatta.

A
Personal
view

My comment would be to take into account when developing rowing programmes have an invitation to Youth Olympic Games in Buenos Aires 2018 and Tokyo 2020 for generating greater support from the Olympic Committee for the development of rowing. Lightweights total men 72.5kg women 59kg.

A
Personal
view

The Olympic classification system must be more open to all countries that are developing their rowing programmes. To have accessibility to the different classification process established by FISA through regional, continental and world events as well as specific classification events prior to the Olympic Games. Development countries often only have the opportunity to attend qualification events during the Olympic year. The planning of more qualification events where direct quotas are given to the Olympic Games will be an opportunity for the developing countries to provide more attention to these events and allow more interests in developing rowing in these countries.
Thanks for this opinion space

3. Lightweight rowing

NF

Instead of limiting the weight of individual athletes we should limit the boats.
Taken the fact that the IOC has problems to understand why there is a specific

2017 WORLD ROWING REVIEW PROJECTS
NATIONAL FEDERATIONS MEETING
WORLD ROWING CUP III, LUCERNE – 7 JULY 2017

lightweight rowing class we should take their position very seriously and break new grounds with a completely new approach:

Instead of limiting the weight of the rowers we should limit the material.

Our proposal is to limit the racing shell of the 4-. The boat class will still be called "open class" but the racing shell looks more or less like a lightweight four.

These racing shells can actually be the same as we've been using as lightweight fours. No heavy weight crew can use these boats. We will fulfill the IOC guideline not to have any restrictions on the weight of certain rowers and we will no longer have all these well-known problems with weighting in the athletes. Every crew will optimize its weight to the boat.

Sailing does exactly the same: The International Federation designs boat classes and the athletes have to adjust to these boat classes. In sailing no one would ever officially weigh the athletes but the sizes of the boats are officially checked.

This measure only needs to be imposed. No new material needs to be designed nor bought. We all have enough lightweight fours.

My proposal to describe the boats would be rather simple: we take a variety of recent lightweight fours from different boat builders and measure them. Then we define a maximum length, width, height of the shell and no boat may exceed those maximum parameters.

Very simple and very effective.

The only obstacle is our rules. We need to find out how and when we can adjust our rules in order to install the boat class.

Please think about our idea carefully and think of effective ways how to install these ideas. It will certainly need some 'thinking out of the box'.

4. Para-rowing

NF I have reviewed the minutes of the NF Meeting in Poznan. There was one question of FISA concerning funding for all the boats which are not on the Paralympic Programme to attend the World Championships. I had recently contact to our Organisation for disabled athletes and they give us a clear statement that they would only support athletes and crews which are participating in Paralympic categories.

I see no needs to offer as much as possible boats and would support to include PR3 2x if IPC will accept this proposal

Para-Rowing Commission members There are a limited number of para athletes around the world and we should be careful at how many events are offered. The PR3Mix2x has had limited entries, we don't want to see this happen with other events.

As the 2- flows on to the 4+ better, is it feasible to replace this event with a 2-? Maybe a mixed pair (is possible, AUS do it at a national level) or M2- and W2-. Also allows those with upper limb impairments to compete in smaller boats.

2017 WORLD ROWING REVIEW PROJECTS
NATIONAL FEDERATIONS MEETING
WORLD ROWING CUP III, LUCERNE – 7 JULY 2017

Is the World Champs the best platform for “development” events? Maybe not. It might be worth looking at the Gavirate Regatta as the platform for “development” events and leave the World Champs as the major event each year for the top athletes. The World Champs should be showcasing the best athletes in the world. Developing nations and athletes can use Gavirate as their peak event each year as they develop.

We have to be careful with what events are offered. The PR3 sport class is the easiest for a number of reasons, but it’s important to offer events for all sport classes. My suggestions below.

- Replace the PR3 Mix2x with PR3 2- events as this flows to the 4+ better. Take away the 20 point minimum loss
- Add the PR2 1x as this flows to the PR2 Mix2x
- Add the PR1 Mix2x to provide this sport class with more racing opportunities.

Due to the small number of athletes in each country, I think it is important to allow athletes to double up. If not, we risk the events going down the natural death path, or never having the number of entries required to push for Paralympic inclusion.

Another reason we need to add these additional races is with the ultimate goal of adding more Paralympic boats - as part of that approval process, we need to provide proof that there is demand for the events we are looking to add (I believe the criteria asks for 3 years’ worth of data - and the more entries and more number of countries we can provide, the better). This will obviously also provide the opportunity for countries that don't have the correct make up for a bigger boat, to start a program with even one athlete. And this will help with universality of the sport. For this reason, we have also talked about the addition of the PR3 1x as this is often the "easiest" boat to start a para program with.