

FISA Congress 2017

GBR Federation Feedback on Proposed Rule Changes

09/11/2017

GBR PROPOSALS AND FEEDBACK ON PROPOSED RULE CHANGES 2017

World Championships (Senior, U23, Junior) in 2020 Olympic Year

As discussed in Rotterdam GBR would like to propose that in Olympic and Paralympic years:

- World Championships & World U23 Championships – combined
- World Junior Championships – Separate

There is a strong case for the U23s to be combined with the World Championships rather than the Juniors, mainly because the ages of the rowers are closer – all adults – and it means less ‘risk’ in mixing U18s with seniors on welfare issues.

Rule 19

GBR understands the exact wording of this is still under discussion however we would suggest this rule should only apply to Juniors since their ability to select their nationality (whilst they are still under 18 and living with their parents) is limited. GBR would propose that Junior rowers can change their national affiliation immediately if they have held more than one passport for a minimum of two years, but they can only compete for one country in each season. The case-by-case assessment of older individuals changing nationality can remain as current.

Rule 20/27

GBR would prefer to maintain the current rule so that both male and female coxswains have a pathway and opportunity to race at the highest level.

Rule 31

In Rio lightweight reserves were allowed to weigh in at the same time as the crew which they were covering. I discussed this as a sensible idea with Mike Tanner and propose that this is written into the rules.

The current rule states that a substitute may only be weighed in “if needed” in the 2 – 1 hour ‘window’ before the race, meaning that if a crew rower is injured or ill in the hour before their race there is no chance for a substitution.

This rule should be updated to read:

‘A reserve may be weighed in at the conclusion of weighing-in the crews for that race. The weight of the reserve must be such that the average weight of the crew remains within the FISA limit if the reserve is required to race.’

Bye-Law to Rule 39 – Heel Strings

GBR has serious concerns about the “7cm” length of heel strings required as being too prescriptive. It would be normal and natural for some rowers through ankle flexibility or length of foot to move through and beyond the range permitted by ‘7cm’.

We are a ‘leg lead/driven’ sport and the foot connection to the boat is fundamental to achieve best performance – where a rower has a steep stretcher angle or very large feet a 7cm heel restraint would be too restrictive - a ‘one size fits all’ approach is difficult to justify.

A form of wording defining the important safety function of the string/shoe without any specific length/dimensions would be a step forward and we would propose the rule is updated to:

'In all boats the foot stretcher, shoes or other devices holding the feet of the rowers shall be a type which allow the rowers to get clear of the boat with no delay.

Where shoes or other devices remain in the boat, each shoe shall be independently restrained such that the heel **must be prevented from rising higher than the lowest fixed point of the shoe. Likewise, the foot release from any other type of fitment that may be used must be self-acting and not require the intervention by hand of the rower or rescuer.**

In addition, where laces, Velcro or similar materials must be opened before the rower can remove **their** feet from the shoes or other device, these must be able to be released by a single hand action of pulling one easily accessible strap.'

This amended wording takes into account the need for a 'steering' foot to require a bit more length, and is much easier for the Control Commission to perform checks (lifting heel and visually checking that the restraint meets the standard).

Rule 50

GBR does not support the changes to the advertising rules. Whilst we agree more could be done to support athletes' ability to generate income – the use of advertising space should be between the NF and their athlete. GBR would support an increase in advertising space on boats and athletes' clothing.

Rule 80

GBR Federation would like to propose that an item is added to the agenda for Tokyo Congress to consider a change to the rule regarding dead heats such that where there two boats cross the finish line at the same time to 1/100th of a second the distance between crews on the photo-finish needs to be greater than the accuracy of the start line in order to place one boat ahead of another.

We understand that ongoing work is taking place to ensure the start installation is as accurate as possible and this level of accuracy could be used to determine the tolerance allowed for a dead heat.

Articles 4, 11, 12, 13

Should state 'World Anti-Doping Code' (rather than WADA Code)

Article 18

GBR would like more detail about what exactly this means – what broad principles or specific procedures?

Article 38

GBR welcomed the introduction of a Bye-Law which lists expected key competencies and attributes of Council members but suggests this should be "for the roles they are fulfilling."

Article 53 & 54

GBR supports the changes to the commissions as proposed.

Annamarie Phelps, CBE
President GBR Federation