

2. Rowing

2.1 About rowing

The origin of rowing

The boat was mankind's most significant mode of transport for centuries and the oar is considered to be the most important invention before the wheel. The first representation of a rowing boat was discovered in Finland and dates back to 5,800 BC. The earliest regatta was held on 16 September 1274 in Venice, Italy, where regattas developed as challenges between gondoliers and boatmen in a variety of rowing boats. Rowing has evolved all over the world wherever people and water mix. However, the origin of the sport of rowing as we know it today comes from England, where the world-renowned Oxford versus Cambridge University Boat Race was first held in 1829 on the River Thames.

Rowing at the World Rowing Championships

The first World Rowing Championships were staged in Lucerne, Switzerland in 1962. Initially held every four years, the championships soon became an annual event. It is the biggest annual World Rowing event, often with around 1,000 athletes and 60 nations entered.

In non-Olympic years, both Olympic and international boat classes compete at the World Rowing Championships, while in Olympic years only international boat classes take part.

Female boat classes were included on the World Championship programme in 1974, with lightweight categories for both men and women featuring annually from 1985. Para-rowing was integrated into the World Rowing Championships programme for the first time in 2002 and has attracted an increasing number of participants ever since.

Rowing at the Olympic & Paralympic rowing regattas

Rowing became an Olympic sport in 1896, at the first Olympic Games of the modern era held in Athens, Greece. However, rough seas in the Piraeus harbour forced the event to be cancelled, which is why rowing won its first Olympic medals four years later in 1900, on the outskirts of Paris. Women's events were added to the Olympic programme in 1976 and lightweight events in 1996. Para-rowing first appeared at the Paralympic Games in 2008.

2.2 Boat classes

Rowing events are either sculling or sweep events. In sculling (denoted by an 'x'), each rower has two oars whereas in sweep rowing (denoted by a '-' for boats without coxswains and '+' for coxed boats) each person in the boat has one oar.

Olympic boat classes

Men

Women

Single Sculls (M1x)	Single Sculls (W1x)
Double Sculls (M2x)	Double Sculls (W2x)
Lightweight Double Sculls (LM2x)	Lightweight Double Sculls (LW2x)
Quadruple Sculls (M4x)	Quadruple Sculls (W4x)
Pair (M2-)	Pair (W2-)
Four (M4-)	Eight (W8+)
Lightweight Four (LM4-)	
Eight (M8+)	

International boat classes

Men

Women

Lightweight Single Sculls (LM1x)	Lightweight Single Sculls (LW1x)
Lightweight Quadruple Sculls (LM4x)	Lightweight Quadruple Sculls (LW4x)
Lightweight Pair (LM2-)	Four (W4-)
Coxed Pair (M2+)	
Lightweight Eight (LM8+)	

Para-rowing boat classes

Men

Women

Mixed

AS Single Sculls (ASM1x)	AS Single Sculls (ASW1x)	TA Double Sculls (TAMix2x)
		LTA Double Sculls (LTAMix2x)
		LTA Coxed Four (LTAMix4+)

*Note: All boats compete at the Paralympic Games except for LTAMix2x.

Scull boats

1x Single scull

1 rower
 Average length: 8.2 m (27 ft)
 Minimum weight: 14 kg (30.8 lbs)
 Olympic Events: W1x, M1x



2x Double scull

2 rowers
 Average length: 10.4 m (34 ft)
 Minimum weight: 27 kg (59 lbs)
 Olympic Events: W2x, M2x, LW2x, LM2x



4x Quadruple scull

4 rowers
 Average length: 13.4 m (44 ft)
 Minimum weight: 52 kg (114 lbs)
 Olympic Events: W4x, M4x



Sweep boats

2- Pair

2 rowers
 Average length: 10.4 m (34 ft)
 Minimum weight: 27 kg (59 lbs)
 Olympic Events: W2-, M2-



4- Four

4 rowers
 Average length: 13.4 m (44 ft)
 Minimum weight: 50 kg (112 lbs)
 Olympic Events: M4-, LM4-



8+ Eight

8 rowers with cox
 Average length: 19.9 m (62 ft)
 Minimum weight: 96 kg (221 lbs)
 Olympic Events: W8+, M8+

