

FISA
Matt Smith
2020congresses@fisa.org

Subject: New 'Rule 29' Rules of Racing

Amstelveen, 22 September 2020

Dear Mr. Smith,

The new 'rule 29' in the Rules of Racing adds a new requirement for innovations in equipment. The new proposal adds that a race is a contest between athletes and not between manufacturing, technology or construction. Technological advancements should not make existing recent equipment obsolete.

We have serious doubts whether the rules should exclude technological innovations mainly aimed at the improvement of speed, even if it meets the current 5 requirements set out in the new rule 29, that the Dutch Rowing Federation fully endorses.

The new wording seems to discourage innovation and limit the scope for competition in the equipment market. The Dutch Federation would rather see that FISA *encourages* innovation, with some constraints as defined in the current 5 requirements.

We believe innovation in all dimensions is essential to all high-performance sports and essential to keep any sport thriving. See e.g. how the introduction of foils is currently revolutionizing sailing and is pulling many young people back to this sport. In all sports equipment manufacturers are a very relevant part of the sport ecosystem, innovating not only equipment but often the sport itself. We really do not understand why an International Sport Federation would prefer to frustrate or put unnecessary limitations to this process.

If rowing is not also a contest between manufacturers and/or technology, why does FISA reserve quite extensive identification space for manufacturers and product technology on equipment, including boats, oars and clothing? Over the last decades wooden boats, wooden oars and Macon blades became obsolete. They were replaced by newer materials and designs, mainly based on speed improvements that this technology brought to the sport of rowing. Will these types of innovations

Bosbaan 10
1182 AG Amstelveen
TEL +31 20 646 27 40

info@knrb.nl
knrb.nl • roeien.nl

ING bank 67.59.26.319

IBAN NL25 INGB 0675 9263 19
BIC INGBNL2A

BTW NL002563435B01
KVK 40531815

still be allowed under the new rule 29? If so, can you explain how the objective decision process for these innovations would have taken place under the new rule?

Para-rowing, Coastal Rowing and Beach Sprints are relatively new additions to rowing. There is still a rapid development in the equipment for these types of rowing competitions. These developments, more likely than not, will include technological innovations aimed at performance and speed. The Dutch Federation is of the opinion that the proposed limitations in rule 29 will work adversely in the development and popularity of these relatively new types of rowing competitions.

We suggest to change the first three sentences of the new rule 39 to the following: *The fundamental principle with regard to rowing competition is that a race is first of all a contest between athletes.*

This makes it sufficiently clear innovations in equipment must serve the athlete and not the other way around. At the same time, it does not ignore the technological advancements that are normal in this day and age.

Yours sincerely,
KONINKLIJKE NEDERLANDSCHE ROEIBOND

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'M. Visser', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Monica Visser
Executive Director KNRB