

2012 MEDIA GUIDE 1

SAMSUNG WORLD ROWING CUP I

Belgrade, Serbia
3-6 May





Belgrade, Serbia

3 - 6 May 2012

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Cover Photos:

Alexandra Tsiavou (s) and Christina Giazitzidou (b) (GRE)
2011 World Rowing Female Crew of the Year

Hamish Bond (s) and Eric Murray (b) (NZL)
2011 World Rowing Male Crew of the Year

Alla Lysenko (UKR)
2011 World Rowing Adaptive Crew of the Year



1. General

1.1 2012 Samsung World Rowing Cup I Looking towards London

The 2012 World Rowing season is underway, and what a season it will be!

Nearly all Olympic qualification spots have been booked – 172 boats so far, representing 459 athletes. One final chance for qualification is coming up in a few weeks' time, the Final Olympic Qualification Regatta in Lucerne, Switzerland, where a further 28 boats and 85 athletes will qualify for this year's climax event, the 2012 Olympic Rowing Regatta.

The first stage of the 2012 Samsung World Rowing Cup in Belgrade, Serbia, is bound to showcase tight and exciting racing. Boats that have already qualified for the Olympic Games will seek to measure themselves against their competitors in the lead up to London while crews still dreaming of qualification will attempt to prove their worth to selectors ahead of Lucerne.

But the regatta in Belgrade will also be a key milestone in preparation for the 2012 Paralympic Regatta. Adaptive athletes will do all they can to secure the final Paralympic spots still available. The top two finishing crews in each of the four Paralympic boat classes will earn the privilege to row in London along with the 32 boats that already qualified at last year's World Rowing Championships.

The format of the World Rowing Cup series remains unchanged. As has been custom since the inauguration of the series in 1997, an event leader will be determined in each boat class at each of the three stages of the series. The leader will be awarded the yellow leader bib and will carry the leader status forward to the next regatta. The 2012 overall series winner will be awarded at the end of the final stage of the Samsung World Rowing Cup in Munich, Germany.

In this Media Guide Supplement you will find practical information about the World Cup in Belgrade. A detailed "Who to Watch" gives a comprehensive summary of the crews to look out for not only at this first stage of the 2012 Samsung World Rowing Cup series, but also in the months leading up to the Olympic Regatta. A wide range of historical results & statistics is also available in the Annual Media Guide which can be consulted online (go to www.worldrowing.com -> Media Centre). Also of interest is our online athlete and results database where you can find the biographies of all current and past rowers (go to www.worldrowing.com -> Athletes -> Results & Bios Database) as well as archived results from past World Rowing regattas (go to www.worldrowing.com -> Results).

The World Rowing Cup series is proud to be sponsored by Samsung Electronics. "A valued Olympic TOP sponsor since 1997, Samsung has come to appreciate rowing's unique values and targeted reach," says FISA President Denis Oswald. Samsung is an established leader in innovative digital

technologies that offer new and exciting experiences for everyone, and aspires to use the power of sport to emotionally bond with consumers around the world. World Rowing would also like to thank Gazprombank, Vnesheconombank, Taihe Media Group, Parmigiani Fleurier SA and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) for their valuable support and partnership.

And, in closing, World Rowing would like to extend a special thanks to you, the media, for your support and enthusiasm in promoting our sport and our athletes throughout the world. If there is anything we can do to help you in your work, or any improvements we can make in the services we provide to you, please do not hesitate to let us know.

We wish you a great start to the Olympic season!

The World Rowing Communications Team

Debora Meier-Feutren, FISA Communications Manager

Christine Jacobsen, FISA Media Operations Officer

Laura Fell, FISA Communications Coordinator – Social Media

Lisa Hayden, FISA Communications Coordinator - Website

Melissa Bray, FISA Journalist



1.2 The Samsung World Rowing Cup - Scoring System, Titles & Prizes

The World Rowing Cup in its current format was created in 1997 as a partnership between successful existing regattas and FISA in order to create top competition opportunities for the athletes and in order to better promote the sport of rowing.

It is a series of three regattas that include the 14 Olympic boat classes seeking points based on finish order. At each regatta, the national rowing federation with the most points at that particular regatta will be declared winner of that World Rowing Cup event and will receive the leading nation cup.

The title of 2012 Samsung World Rowing Cup champion in each Olympic boat class shall be conferred on the federation with the most points earned from racing in that boat class at all three regattas.

The National Federation with the most points overall from all Olympic boat classes will be declared overall winner of the 2012 Samsung World Rowing Cup. This will take place following the final race at the final stage of the series at the Munich Regatta Course in Munich, Germany on 17 June.

At each regatta, in each event, the highest placing boat from a National Federation will be awarded the following points:

Place	Points	Place	Points	Place	Points
1 st	8	4 th	4	7 th	1
2 nd	6	5 th	3		
3 rd	5	6 th	2		

Points will not be awarded to the second crew of a federation placing a crew in one of the first 7 places.

Olympic and World Rowing Cup Boat Classes

Men

Single Scull (M1x)
 Double Scull (M2x)
 Lightweight Double Scull (LM2x)
 Quadruple Scull (M4x)
 Pair (M2-)
 Four (M4-)
 Lightweight Four (LM4-)
 Eight (M8+)

Women

Single Scull (W1x)
 Double Scull (W2x)
 Lightweight Double Scull (LW2x)
 Quadruple Scull (W4x)
 Pair (W2-)
 Eight (W8+)

Note: Other boat classes are known as International events



2. Samsung World Rowing Cup I - Belgrade (SRB)

2.1 Key Media Information

Local OC Press Officer

Aleksandar Simić
simic@belgraderowing2012.rs

About Belgrade

The Republic of Serbia is located in the central part of the Balkan Peninsula. Serbia's population is around 7.2 million people (July 2011 estimate) of which 1.6 million live in its capital city, Belgrade. Belgrade lies at the confluence of two rivers, the Danube and the Sava.

Belgrade's Ada Ciganlija Regatta Course is situated on Sava Lake, 5km from the city centre. This river island was artificially transformed into a peninsula when two dams were built in 1967. Both banks of the lake are now attractive spots for families and recreational activities in the spring and summer seasons. Lake Sava is also crucial to Belgrade in providing drinking water.

Media Accommodation

Hotel Continental
Vladimira Popovica 10,
11070 Belgrade, Serbia
Tel.: +381 11 311 3333
www.continentalhotelbeograd.com

Note: Reservations through the Organising Committee only.

Currency

Serbia's national currency is the *dinar* (RSD).

1 RSD = 0.01 EUR

1 EUR = 111.21 RSD

Exchange rate at 24 April 2012

Source: Oanda.com

Transport & Parking

There will be no transport from the airport to the hotel for media representatives. A taxi drive from the airport to any hotel in the city should cost between 15 and 20 Euros.

A shuttle service between the media hotel and the regatta venue will be provided at a cost of 6 EUR per day (*Note: Euros will be accepted*).

Parking for media representatives will generally not be allowed at the regatta venue. The nearest parking area is situated 1km from the venue. However, a restricted number of parking passes will be available for photographers carrying heavy equipment.

Media Facilities

The media centre will be open on Thursday 3 May in the afternoon and from Friday 4 May to Sunday 6 May from minimum one hour prior to the first race until two hours after the last race of the day.

TV and radio commentary positions are located near the finish tower and must be booked in advance through the host broadcaster.

The usual facilities are available to the press in the media centre and the tribune:

- Workspaces with power
- Telephone lines
- Access to wireless LAN
- Internet terminal
- International telephones
- Fax machine and copy service
- TV monitors in the media centre for viewing racing on finals day (no individual monitors on work place)
- Drinks and snacks throughout the day

Note: Power sockets are European two pin

Accreditation

Last-minute media accreditation requests should be made directly to debora.feutren@fisa.org. Local media should contact the local press officer directly.

Accreditation can be collected on site upon arrival at the venue. A media accreditation confirmation e-mail will be sent to media having requested accreditation for this event.

Photographers

Photographers wishing to be taken to the start should enquire at the media centre information desk about being taken to the start area in time for the chosen races.

General Programme

Monday, 23 April 2012		Close of entries
Monday, 30 April 2012		Opening of the course
Thursday, 3 May 2012	16:00	Team Managers' Meeting and Draw
	18:00	Adaptive Heats
Friday, 4 May 2012	09:00	Heats, Repechages
	20:00	Nations Dinner
Saturday, 5 May 2012	09:00	Quarterfinals, Semifinals, Repechages
		Finals C, D, E
	16:51	Finals B + A – International Events
	18:05	Finals B + A – Adaptive Events
Sunday, 6 May 2012	09:00	Finals B – World Cup events
	10:43	Finals A – World Cup events

Other useful information sources

www.worldrowing.com

The official World Rowing website provides detailed coverage of the 2012 Samsung World Rowing Cup series. The live race viewer and race results feed allow you to follow the racing as it happens.

A wide range of photos covering the event will be uploaded regularly to the website photo gallery. Should you wish to get usage of these photos, please contact the World Rowing communications staff who will be happy to put you in touch with the right photographer.

Access to live video streaming of the event is available through www.worldrowing.com. Check the direct links depending on which country you are accessing from.

World Rowing Database of athlete bios and results

This is perhaps the most comprehensive database of rowing athlete biographies and results. We'd like to encourage you to use this fantastic resource. We will have PCs running the athletes database in the media centre. Please ask a member of the FISA media team to show you around the site.

www.Infostradasports.com

World Rowing has compiled this media guide in association with Infostrada Sports Media Services. Infostrada provides historical and statistical information on a wide range of sports – from football to Formula 1 to rowing.

2.2. Time Table of Events (provisional at close of entries)



Belgrade, Serbia 3 - 6 May 2012

PROVISIONAL COMPETITION SCHEDULE
(Subject to the Draw at 16:00 hrs on Thursday, 3 May 2012)
(As of 24 April 2012)

Thursday, 3 May			Friday, 4 May 2012				Saturday, 5 May 2012				Sunday, 6 May 2012												
N°	Event	#	Heats		Reps		Quarterfinals		Semis/Reps		FE	F D	F C	Exhibi	Reps	Semi-finals	F D	F C	Final A	Final B	Final A	Final B	
International Events																							
16	W1x	9	11:06	11:12						10:12										16:51	17:15		
17	LM1x	16	09:00	09:06	09:12					10:18	10:24			10:42						16:57	17:25		
19	LM2-	9	11:18	11:24						10:30										17:03	17:35		
World Cup Events																							
1	W2-	16	09:18	09:24	09:30					15:42	15:48			10:48			13:00	13:07			09:00	W2-	10:43
2	M2-	26	17:30	17:36	17:42	11:48	11:54	12:00	09:00	09:06	09:12	09:18					13:14	13:21	16:03		09:07	M2-	10:55
3	W2x	12	12:06	12:12											13:28	13:35					09:14	W2x	11:07
4	M2x	17	09:36	09:42	09:48				09:36	09:42	09:48			10:54			13:42	13:49			09:21	M2x	11:19
5	M4-	16	09:54	10:00	10:06				09:54	10:00	10:06			11:00			13:56	14:03			09:28	M4-	11:31
8	LM2x	12	12:18	12:24											14:10	14:17					09:35	LM2x	11:43
9	LM2x	25	12:30	12:36	12:42	12:48	12:54	13:00	09:24	09:30	09:36	09:42					14:24	14:31	16:15	16:39	09:42	LM2x	11:55
10	LM4-	14	10:12	10:18	10:24									11:06			14:38	14:45			09:49	LM4-	12:07
11	W4x	8	13:06	13:12											14:52						09:56	W4x	12:19
12	M4x	14	10:30	10:36	10:42									11:12			14:59	15:06			10:03	M4x	12:31
13	W8+	4	13:18	13:24	13:30	13:36	13:42	13:48	09:48	09:54	10:00	10:06		11:24							10:10	W8+	12:46
7	M1x	27	10:48	10:54	11:00								10:36				15:13	15:20	16:27	16:45	10:17	M1x	13:01
6	W1x	16	13:54	14:00										11:18			15:27	15:39			10:17	W1x	13:16
14	M8+	7													15:51							M8+	13:31
Adaptive Events																							
Heats																							
81	ASW1x	9																			18:05	18:27	
82	ASW1x	12																			18:15	18:39	
83	TA2x	7						17:22													18:51		
84	LTAMix4+	7						17:38														19:03	

General Training Times 7:00-13:00, 15:00-17:30 6:30-8:30, 14:15-15:30 and after 18:15 hrs 6:30-8:30, 11:30-12:30 after 19:10 hrs 6:30-8:30

Notes for FISA and OC people:

- 1. Thursday's meetings:
 - 13:30 hrs - Technical & Rescue Rehearsal
 - 14:30 hrs - Handover meeting
 - 15:00 hrs - Jury Meeting and Inspection of the Course
 - 15:00 hrs - Preparation Meeting for the Draw
 - 16:30 hrs - Fairness Committee Meeting
 - 16:00 hrs - Team Managers Meeting and Draw

General notes:

- 1.* Races for allocation of lanes
- 2. On Saturday from 15:27 to 16:27 - TV Rehearsals
- 3. Adaptive Training Times:
 - Wednesday and Thursday: 13:00 - 15:00 hrs with Practice Starts on Thursday from 14:00-15:00 hrs.
 - Course closed for non-adaptive crews.
 - * Friday: 14:30-15:30 hrs in the middle 5 lanes only. And during all General Training times on the dedicated adaptive training course beyond the finish line.
 - * Saturday: 11:30-12:30 hrs in the middle 5 lanes only. And during all General Training times on the dedicated adaptive training course beyond the finish line.
 - And during all General Training times on the dedicated adaptive training course beyond the finish line.

Broadcast information: all times indicated are local times. Televised races are indicated in bold font. Please revert to the EBU offer for international signal times and details.
The last medal ceremony will finish approximately 20 minutes after the start of the last race

Follow the live results on www.worldrowing.com



TITLE SPONSOR

2.3. Actual Entries by Country (provisional at close of entries)

Belgrade, Serbia

3-6 May 2012

ENTRIES BY EVENT

As of 24 April 2012

Olympic Events

W2-	M2-	W2x	M2x	M4-	W1x	M1x	LW2x	LM2x	LM4-	W4x	M4x	W8+	M8+
[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]	[6]	[7]	[8]	[9]	[10]	[11]	[12]	[13]	[14]

16	25	12	17	16	16	27	12	25	14	8	14	4	7
----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	---	----	---	---

ARG	ARG	AUT	AUT	BLR	AUT	AUT	AUT	AUT1	ARG	CHN	ARG	GBR	FRA
AZE	BLR1	CHN1	CARG	CRO	AZE	AZE1	CHN1	AUT2	CHI	GBR	CRO	NED	GBR
CHN1	BLR2	CHN2	BEL	CZE	BEL	AZE2	CHN2	AUT3	CHN	GER	CZE	ROU	GER
CHN2	CRO1	CHN3	CZE1	FRA	CHN	BEL	DEN	AUT4	DEN	POL	DEN	UKR	NED
FRA	CRO2	CZE	CZE2	GBR	CZE	CHN	GBR1	CHN	FRA	ROU	EST		NZL
GBR1	CRO3	FIN	EGY	GER	EST	CUB	GBR2	CRO	GBR	RUS	FRA		POL
GBR2	CZE1	GBR	FRA	GRE	GBR	CYP	GRE	CUB	GER	UKR	GBR		UKR
GER	CZE2	GER	GBR	ITA1	IRL1	CZE	HUN	CZE1	HUN	USA	GER		
NED1	FRA1	HUN	GER1	ITA2	IRL2	DEN	NED	CZE2	ITA		ITA		
NED2	FRA2	NED	GER2	NED	NOR	EGY1	RUS	DEN	NED		POL		
NED3	GBR1	POL	ITA1	NZL	POL	EGY2	SWE	EGY	NZL		RUS		
ROU1	GBR2	UKR	ITA2	ROU	SLO	EST	USA	FRA	POL		SLO		
ROU2	GER1		ITA3	RUS	SRB1	FRA		GBR	POR		SUI		
UKR	GER2		NOR	SLO	SRB2	GBR1		GRE	RUS		UKR		
USA1	GRE1		RUS	SRB	SWE	GBR2		HUN1					
USA2	GRE2		SLO	UKR	UKR	GER		HUN2					
	HKG		SRB			ITA		HUN3					
	HUN		UKR			NOR		IRL					
	NED1					RUS		ITA					
	NED2					SLO1		NOR					
	NOR					SLO2		POR					
	ROU					SLO3		SLO1					
	SRB1					SUI		SLO2					
	SRB2					SVK1		SWE					
	UKR					SVK2		TUR					
						SWE							
						USA							



Belgrade, Serbia

3-6 May 2012

ENTRIES BY EVENT

As of 24 April 2012

International Events

LW1x	LM1x	LM2-
[16]	[17]	[19]

9	16	9
---	----	---

AUT1	AUT	AUT
AUT2	CHN	CHN
CRO	CZE	CZE
GBR	EGY	FRA
IRL	FRA1	GBR
SUI	FRA2	GER
SWE1	GBR	HKG
SWE2	GRE	NED1
USA	HUN	NED2
	IRL	
	ITA1	
	ITA2	
	NOR1	
	NOR2	
	NOR3	
	SVK	

Adaptive Events

ASW1x	ASM1x	TAMix2x	LTAMix4+
[81]	[82]	[83]	[84]

9	12	7	7
---	----	---	---

ARG	ARG	ARG	BLR
CAN	BLR	BLR	BRA
CHN	BRA	BRA	EST
DEN	FRA	NED	ITA
HUN	GER	NZL	RSA
JPN	HUN	RUS	RUS
RSA	IRL	USA	UGA
RUS	ITA		
USA	JPN		
	POL		
	RSA		
	UKR		

	NFs	Crews	Competitors
Men	33	106	288
Women	23	56	135
Lightweight Men	27	64	138
Lightweight Women	13	21	33
Adaptive Men	12	12	12
Adaptive Women	9	9	9
Adaptive Mixed	11	14	49
Total	43	282	662



2.4. Who to Watch in Belgrade

Women's Pair (W2-)

The highest ranking crew competing in this boat class in Belgrade is Great Britain's Helen Glover and Heather Stanning. Glover and Stanning missed out on World Championship gold last year by less than a second. At the 2010 World Rowing Championships, the British duo also won silver. With a home Olympic Games in sight, they enter the 2012 season with high expectations for success. But the pair will have fresh, and perhaps unexpected, competition on their hands.

Sitting in the bow of Romania's number one crew is the formidable, and formerly retired, Georgeta Andrunache. Andrunache's record is astounding. She won gold in the pair at the past three Olympic Games and also doubled up to medal in the women's eight at the same time. Andrunache took a break from rowing after Beijing but at age 36 is now back in time for London with new partner and two-time Olympic medallist, Ioana Rotaru.

The United States pairing of Erin Cafaro and Eleanor Logan, both on World Rowing's 2011 list of Top 10 female rowers will no doubt be a durable pairing. Both Cafaro and Logan are regulars in the USA's repeatedly-winning women's eight. Keep an eye out too for You Wu and Yulan Gao of China; silver medallists at the 2008 Olympic Games, they finished fourth at last year's World Rowing Championships and will aim to peak in time for London.

W2-: Major results since 2008

Place	OG 08	WRCh 09	WRCh 10	WRCh 11
1	ROU	USA	NZL	NZL
2	CHN	ROU	GBR	GBR
3	BLR	NZL	USA	AUS
4	GER	GER	AUS	CHN
5	NZL	AUS	CAN	ROU
6	GBR	GBR	GER	RSA
7	USA	FRA	ROU	ITA
8	FRA	RUS	CRO	USA
9	CAN	ARG	CHN	CAN
10	AUS	CRO	NED	GER
11		CHN		BLR
12		BLR		FRA

Men's Pair (M2-)

This field will bring surprises. None of last year's medalling crews are racing in Belgrade; New Zealand and Italy are absent while Great Britain is presenting a new combination. But watch out for the very competent Greek crew of Nikolaos and Apostolos Gkoutoulas. The Gkoutoulas twins were fourth last year at the World Rowing Championships, but won world silver in 2010 and bronze in 2009.

The Greek brothers will be facing a fired-up Germain Chardin and Dorian Mortelette of France. Chardin and Mortelette were part of the bronze medal four at the Beijing Olympic Games but have struggled to find

success since. The French are aiming to qualify this boat for London and at Italy's Memorial d'Aloja in early April they showed their form, having succeeded in winning against Italy's 2011 world bronze medallists of Niccolo Mornati and Lorenzo Carboncini.

Serbia's most successful rower Nikola Stojic will be racing in this boat class with partner Radoje Deric.

M2-: Major results since 2008

Place	OG 08	WRCh 09	WRCh 10	WRCh 11
1	AUS	NZL	NZL	NZL
2	CAN	GBR	GBR	GBR
3	NZL	GRE	GRE	ITA
4	GER	FRA	ITA	GRE
5	RSA	USA	GER	CAN
6	USA	RSA	FRA	GER
7	SRB	GER	RSA	AUS
8	CZE	SRB	ESP	NED
9	FRA	CUB	USA	USA
10	DEN	CZE	SRB	SRB
11	ITA	POL	ARG	HUN
12	CRO	CAN	SLO	FRA

Women's Double Sculls (W2x)

Coming out of winter training and British trials, Katherine Grainger and Anna Watkins remain unchallenged as the country's top two scullers. They have also remained unbeaten on the international front since uniting in 2010. If past history is anything to go by Grainger and Watkins will make easy work of the double in Belgrade.

But watch out for Germany. Top German single sculler Annekatrin Thiele is back in the double after a year out successfully racing the single. Thiele was part of the hair-splitting Olympic final in Beijing where she finished with silver by a fraction of a second behind New Zealand in the double. Now partnered with the very accomplished Britta Oppelt, this duo will be a boat to watch.

Keep an eye out too for regular 2009 World Champions and 2010 world bronze medallists Julia Michalska and Magdalena Fularczyk as well as the feisty Czech sisters Lenka and Jitka Antosova.

W2x: Major results since 2008

Place	OG 08	WRCh 09	WRCh 10	WRCh 11
1	NZL	POL	GBR	GBR
2	GER	GBR	AUS	AUS
3	GBR	BUL	POL	NZL
4	CHN	AUS	CZE	UKR
5	USA	CZE	USA	POL
6	CZE	USA	GER	CZE
7	UKR	NZL	NZL	GER
8	AUS	GER	CHN	CHN
9	ROU	FIN	DEN	USA
10	ITA	DEN	ITA	FIN
11		UKR	FIN	SRB
12		BLR		IRL

Men's Double Sculls (M2x)

Racing at last year's World Rowing Championships the German crew came second despite a last-minute change due to injury. The original crew of Stephan Krueger and Eric Knittel (2009 World Champions) are back together and will be the crew to beat in Belgrade. The Germans will be up against two very experienced crews. Slovenia's Iztok Cop and Luka Spik are back together as they prepare for London and as Olympic Champions from Sydney 2000 and Olympic silver medallists from Athens 2004, this duo has a wealth of experience. Cop also has an Olympic bronze from the Barcelona Games in 1992 and London will be his sixth Olympic Games.

The French double of Cedric Berrest and Julien Bahain are also a handy combination. They rowed together in the men's quadruple sculls in Beijing, picking up bronze, and their switch to the double in 2009 has led them regularly on to the medals podium.

The big surprise, however, may come from Italy's new combination of Alessio Sartori and Romano Battisti. When Sartori won his Olympic gold in the quad at the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games, Battisti had not yet started rowing. Now this pairing of experience and relative youth showed that they had great boat speed when they raced at the Memorial d'Aloja international regatta early April. But Italy is also boating two other crews in this event, one of which includes two-time Olympic medallist Simone Raineri and the other Olympic silver medallist Simone Venier. Italy is yet to qualify in this event for the London Olympic Games and they will be hoping one of these three crews will prove to be the magic combination. Be prepared to witness an Italian showdown in Belgrade.

M2x: Major results since 2008

Place	OG 08	WRCh 09	WRCh 10	WRCh 11
1	AUS	GER	NZL	NZL
2	EST	FRA	GBR	GER
3	GBR	EST	FRA	FRA
4	NZL	NZL	NOR	AUS
5	FRA	SLO	AUS	SLO
6	SLO	SRB	GER	GBR
7	BLR	SUI	USA	EST
8	BEL	POL	EST	NOR
9	GER	UKR	CZE	ARG
10	BUL	BEL	ARG	LTU
11	RUS	CUB	SUI	CAN
12	USA	GBR	CHN	CZE

Men's Four (M4-)

Last year's top two crews – Great Britain and Greece – will face off at Belgrade but with Great Britain having adjusted their boat to include their top two sweep rowers, Andrew Triggs Hodge and Pete Reed. Hodge and Reed move from three years in the pair to join their country's priority boat, the four. The new crew has been described by Hodge as 'astonishingly fast'. Three of the British crew took gold in Beijing four years ago. Greece, with its unchanged line-up, will be the boat to test Great Britain.

Germany and the Netherlands will also put up solid challenges. Both of these boats were in the final at last year's World Rowing Championships and both have been tweaked to improve boat speed as they move towards London.

M4-: Major results since 2008

Place	OG 08	WRCh 09	WRCh 10	WRCh 11
1	GBR	GBR	FRA	GBR
2	AUS	AUS	GRE	GRE
3	FRA	SLO	NZL	AUS
4	SLO	CZE	GBR	USA
5	CZE	FRA	USA	GER
6	GER	BLR	ITA	NED
7	NZL	GER	AUS	CAN
8	NED	ESP	GER	NZL
9	USA	NZL	CHN	BLR
10	IRL	GRE	ESP	ITA
11	ITA	POL	NED	SRB
12	BLR	CRO	CAN	CZE

Lightweight Women's Double Sculls (LW2x)

When Christina Giazitzidou and Alexandra Tsiavou of Greece crossed the finish line nearly four seconds ahead of the next boat it looked as if the Greek duo were in a class of their own. Tsiavou and Giazitzidou have taken World Championship status two out of the three times since joining together in 2009 and they have their sights firmly set on remaining at the top.

To do this Tsiavou and Giazitzidou will need to hold off the new British combination of Sophie Hosking and Katherine Copeland. Hosking rowed to third at last year's World Rowing Championships and she joins Katherine Copeland, world under-23 champion in the lightweight single, to form what British Rowing has selected as the fastest combination.

The Greeks will also need to be aware of Kristin Hedstrom and Julie Nichols of the United States. Hedstrom and Nichols come to Belgrade almost directly from winning US selection trials and their mission is to finish in the top four in Belgrade to secure their position on the US Olympic rowing team.

LW2x: Major results since 2008

Place	OG 08	WRCh 09	WRCh 10	WRCh 11
1	NED	GRE	CAN	GRE
2	FIN	POL	GER	CAN
3	CAN	GBR	GRE	GBR
4	GER	GER	AUS	USA
5	CHN	AUS	GBR	AUS
6	GRE	CAN	NZL	NZL
7	DEN	CUB	CHN	CHN
8	AUS	HUN	USA	DEN
9	JPN	NED	ITA	NED
10	USA	DEN	BEL	ITA
11	GBR	USA	AUT	GER
12	CUB	SWE	ESP	BEL

Lightweight Men's Double Sculls (LM2x)

As reigning World and Olympic Champions, Zac Purchase and Mark Hunter of Great Britain may be feeling the pressure. But in Belgrade they may feel a little bit of breathing space as their closest rivals, New Zealand, will not be racing. Instead it will be up to Italy's Lorenzo Bertini and Elia Luini to keep the British duo honest.

Bertini and Luini raced at the Memorial d'Aloja in early April and finished a respectable fourth in the heavy-weight double division which marked a good opening for their racing season.

Likely to be entering into the medal mix is the Danish double of Mads Rasmussen and Rasmus Quist. Rasmussen and Quist medalled at the Beijing Olympics but took a break from this event before reuniting last year to go after gold in London. The current World Best Time holders, Rasmussen and Quist, are likely to show improvements of training together when they race in Belgrade.

Keep an eye out too for China's Chongkui Wu and Fangbing Zhang. Zhang was a finalist in this event last year and with new partner, Wu, there could be an element of surprise in their speed.

LM2x: Major results since 2008

Place	OG 08	WRCh 09	WRCh 10	WRCh 11
1	GBR	NZL	GBR	GBR
2	GRE	FRA	ITA	NZL
3	DEN	ITA	NZL	ITA
4	ITA	GER	CAN	GER
5	CHN	CAN	CHN	DEN
6	CUB	GBR	POR	CHN
7	NZL	GRE	GER	FRA
8	POR	DEN	FRA	GRE
9	GER	SRB	GRE	NOR
10	AUS	POR	NOR	POR
11	FRA	CUB	USA	CAN
12	CAN	RSA	SLO	POL

Lightweight Men's Four (LM4-)

There has been no real dominating boat in the lightweight four over the last three years but there are some familiar countries that always make a good showing. Italy is one of these countries. The Italians have retained the same crew that finished second at last year's World Rowing Championships and they will be up against 2011 third-placed crew in the world Great Britain as the top two favourite crews when they race in Belgrade.

The British boat has one change to last year's bronze medal boat. Youthful Peter Chambers comes in and will join his brother Richard who has been in the four since 2007. Rob Williams and Chris Bartley make up the remaining two spots.

It would be unwise to ever look past Denmark when it comes to the lightweight four. The Danes have won three out of the four Olympic Games that this boat class has been part of and rowing at all four of those Games in the lightweight four was Eskild Ebbesen. Ebbesen came out of retirement a year ago to go after Olympics number five. Last year the Danes finished fifth, but there is every indication they have the experience to step up into the top medals. Belgrade will reveal this potential.

LM4-: Major results since 2008

Place	OG 08	WRCh 09	WRCh 10	WRCh 11
1	DEN	GER	GBR	AUS
2	POL	DEN	AUS	ITA
3	CAN	POL	CHN	GBR
4	FRA	FRA	GER	CHN
5	GBR	ITA	NED	DEN
6	NED	NED	ITA	SUI
7	ITA	ESP	FRA	POL
8	CHN	CZE	SUI	CZE
9	AUS	SUI	DEN	GER
10	IRL	JPN	USA	FRA
11	USA	CAN	RSA	RSA
12	EGY	USA	JPN	SRB

Women's Quadruple Sculls (W4x)

There seems to have been a reasonable amount of reshuffling by countries in their women's quad. The 2011 gold medal German crew has brought in Carina Baer to replace Britta Oppelt who is now in the double. The silver medal USA boat is quite different in appearance, having only retained Stesha Carle from 2011. Both China and Ukraine, who were in the final last year, have made line-up changes with Ukraine keeping only Kateryna Tarasenko in the boat. China, meanwhile, has changed one crew member.

This opens the event to potentially some unexpected results although Germany is still looking solid with their crew of Julia Richter, Tina Manker, Stephanie Schiller and Carina Baer. But watch out for Great Britain. They were bitterly disappointed to finish seventh in 2011 after being World Champions the previous year. The British have two new crew members including Victoria Thornley who has moved from the eight into stroking the quad.

Romania have added themselves to the mix with the goal of testing the waters for late Olympic qualification in mind. They have put together a boat that includes accomplished rower in the pair and in the eight, Nicoleta Albu.

W4x: Major results since 2008

Place	OG 08	WRCh 09	WRCh 10	WRCh 11
1	CHN	UKR	GBR	GER
2	GBR	USA	UKR	USA
3	GER	GER	GER	NZL
4	UKR	ITA	AUS	AUS
5	USA	GBR	USA	CHN
6	AUS	RUS	NZL	UKR
7	RUS	NZL	CHN	GBR
8	CAN	BLR	CAN	POL
9			SUI	ITA
10			RUS	ROU
11			ROU	VIE

Men's Quadruple Sculls (M4x)

The line up in Belgrade is impressive. Reigning World Champions Australia may be absent but all other finalists from last year's World Rowing Championships will be racing. Germany comes with the same crew that finished second at the worlds in 2011 and it is likely Karl Schulze, Philipp Wende, Lauritz Schoof and Tim Grohmann are the ones that will keep Croatia and Poland at bay.

Poland dominated this event for an astounding five seasons, from 2005 until 2009. But then Croatia shook up the Poles making 2010 Croatia's year. The 2011 season was another story with both Germany and Australia stepping into the picture and Croatia finishing with bronze at the World Rowing Championships.

Croatia and Poland have retained their same, very stable, crews with the aim of coming back into the gold medal spot. At last year's World Rowing Championships Poland's Adam Korol did not race due to injury and his return to the boat will surely be a boost. With Marcus Bateman and Matthew Wells of Great Britain moving from the double into the men's quadruple sculls, it will be worth watching out for the renewed strength brought into this crew as well.

M4x: Major results since 2008

Place	OG 08	WRCh 09	WRCh 10	WRCh 11
1	POL	POL	CRO	AUS
2	ITA	AUS	ITA	GER
3	FRA	GER	AUS	CRO
4	AUS	CRO	GER	POL
5	USA	FRA	GBR	RUS
6	GER	ITA	RUS	ITA
7	RUS	SLO	NZL	GBR
8	UKR	UKR	USA	USA
9	EST	RUS	CHN	SUI
10	CZE	EST	UKR	NZL
11	BLR	CZE		UKR
12	CUB	USA		CUB

Women's Eight (W8+)

Before the United States began their winning streak in 2006, Romania had enjoyed infinite success in the eight, taking gold at the 1996, 2000 and 2004 Olympic Games. Romania finished third at the Games in 2008 and they will desperately want to get back into the gold medal spot. Is this the reason Viorica Susanu has come out of retirement for 2012? The incredible Susanu has four Olympic gold medals, two in the eight and two in the pair. But, after Beijing, Susanu retired. She has reappeared in six seat of the Romanian eight and will no doubt give a huge boost to this crew that finished fourth last year.

Romania have their work cut out for them as the British, who won world bronze in 2011, have just gone through a rigorous selection process to pick their eight which sees four new members. With this number of changes selectors must believe that this is the faster crew.

Keep an eye out too for the Netherlands. They have an uncanny habit of putting it all together when it really matters.

W8+: Major results since 2008

Place	OG 08	WRCh 09	WRCh 10	WRCh 11
1	USA	USA	USA	USA
2	NED	ROU	CAN	CAN
3	ROU	NED	ROU	GBR
4	CAN	GER	GBR	ROU
5	GBR	GBR	NED	NED
6	AUS	CAN	CHN	CHN
7	GER	POL	GER	UKR
8		BLR	NZL	GER
9			RUS	

Men's Single Sculls (M1x)

This event always attracts a large number of entries in Belgrade is no exception. But not only is the entry list large, it is also impressive in the calibre of the field. Leading the list is 2010 World Champion Ondrej Synek of the Czech Republic. Synek finished with world silver last year. In Belgrade, he will be up against his perennial rivals Olympic Champion, Olaf Tufte of Norway, Alan Campbell of Great Britain and Sweden's Lassi Karonen.

Karonen was fifth in 2011 and comes to Belgrade after a winter training season which has seen him hit personal bests on the indoor rowing machine. Tufte is the master of peaking just at the right time for the Olympics and Campbell continues to dominate the single amongst the British squad with his powerful sprinting abilities.

Added in the mix you will find the formidable Olympic finalist Tim Maeyens of Belgium and the lightweight World Champion Henrik Stephansen of Denmark. Maeyens and Stephansen are both aiming for Olympic qualification later in May and will be using Belgrade to fine-tune their racing prowess.

M1x: Major results since 2008

Place	OG 08	WRCh 09	WRCh 10	WRCh 11
1	NOR	NZL	CZE	NZL
2	CZE	GBR	NZL	CZE
3	NZL	CZE	GBR	GBR
4	BEL	BEL	NOR	GER
5	GBR	GER	CHN	SWE
6	SWE	NOR	SLO	NOR
7	GER	LTU	SWE	LTU
8	LTU	GRE	LTU	CUB
9	SUI	SWE	EST	AZE
10	GRE	CUB	GER	CHN
11	USA	ARG	BEL	USA
12	AUS	USA	USA	BUL

Women's Single Sculls (W1x)

Racing at Belgrade is a chance to reveal how beneficial winter training has been. In the women's single this will be apparent when World Champion Mirka Knapkova lines up against Sweden's Frida Svensson and Xiuyun Zhang of China. All three of these single scullers are incredibly accomplished with years of international rowing experience behind them. Svensson was the World Champion in 2010 and Zhang won an Olympic medal back in 1996.

Last year Zhang finished fourth and Svensson took fifth while Knapkova won gold by beating multiple World and Olympic Champion Ekaterina Karsten of Belarus, who will be absent in Belgrade.

The final is likely to be a race between these three scullers with Estonia's Kaisa Pajusalu, Iva Obradovic of Serbia and Rachel Gamble-Flint of Great Britain hoping to show their boat speed ahead of their aim to qualify for London at the Final Olympic Qualification Regatta later in May.

W1x: Major results since 2008

Place	OG 08	WRCh 09	WRCh 10	WRCh 11
1	BUL	BLR	SWE	CZE
2	USA	GBR	BLR	BLR
3	BLR	CZE	NZL	NZL
4	CHN	NZL	CZE	CHN
5	CZE	CHN	RUS	SWE
6	POL	RUS	SRB	GER
7	SWE	SRB	GER	AZE
8	ITA	GER	CHN	RUS
9	NZL	SWE	GBR	LTU
10	AUS	POL	USA	GBR
11	SRB	EST	UKR	USA
12	FRA	BEL	ESP	EST

Men's Eight (M8+)

Will Belgrade be a shake-up for the dominating Germans? The first major race of the season is always an opportunity for coaches to see how winter training went and for selectors to see if their choice of crew make-ups is making sense. For the men's eight, three-time consecutive World Champions Germany will get to test themselves against 2011 silver medallists Great Britain.

The Germans remain relatively stable with only one change from last year's line-up – Filip Adamski moves into bow seat. The British have three changes in their boat with perhaps the most significant change being 20-year-old Constantine Louloudis. Louloudis comes into this very experienced eight directly from the under-23 level where he won the men's pair. Even more remarkable is that Louloudis goes straight into stroke seat, sitting a couple of seats in front of 1992 Olympic Champion Greg Searle.

Hoping to push into the medals will be the Netherlands. The Dutch boat has made three changes from the one that finished sixth last year including 2008 Olympian Mitchel Steenman coming into stroke seat.

M8+: Major results since 2008

Place	OG 08	WRCh 09	WRCh 10	WRCh 11
1	CAN	GER	GER	GER
2	GBR	CAN	GBR	GBR
3	USA	NED	AUS	CAN
4	NED	POL	NED	AUS
5	POL	GBR	NZL	POL
6	AUS	ITA	USA	NED
7	CHN	AUS	CAN	UKR
8	GER	UKR	POL	USA
9		USA	CHN	CZE
10		RUS	UKR	NZL
11			RUS	CHN
12				FRA

