

Discussion Paper on the Adaptive Rowing Racing Distance From the Adaptive Rowing Commission

In response to the increased difficulty of providing a fair and reliable start at 1000m for adaptive events at World Rowing Cup regattas and World Championships, FISA would like to consider a standard 2000m course length for all 5 adaptive events. Through discussions of this proposal both within the Adaptive Commission and with adaptive team managers at the 2010 World Cup in Bled and World Championships in Karapiro, the following arguments both in support of and in opposition to the proposal have emerged:

Arguments in favor of a standard 2000m start for all adaptive events:

1. Provides a fully integrated approach to adaptive rowing with all competitors, mainstream and adaptive, racing the same course length
2. Ensures a fair, accurate, and reliable start and finish to adaptive events at all venues.
3. Allows adaptive events to proceed without a gap in the program to install a start bridge, increasing integration of the competition and the training program, spectator interest and television coverage.
4. World Championship and World Cup venues can be awarded as universally as possible without adaptive events being restricted to venues which can reasonably install a start bridge at 1'000m. Venues need not bear significant additional costs for providing an additional 1'000m start bridge, nor be excluded in the case of deep-water venues where installing a 1000m start bridge is impossible.
5. Restores LTAMix4+ to its original 2000m distance which was changed only to meet the requirement of standardized race length for the Paralympic Games.
6. Ensures continued inclusion of Paralympic events in the World Championships and World Cups, which inspires adaptive athletes and serves as a model for other sport federations.

Arguments in opposition to 2000m start

1. The increased distance proves most problematic for AS athletes. Training for and competing at a 2000m distance may potentially have a negative physical impact on AS and TA rowers, notably upper body and rib injury to AS athletes and low back injuries to TA rowers. Note that this has not been researched or tested.
2. AS1x event finish times may increase to 8-10 minutes with the potential, at least initially, of wide gaps between competitors. This may decrease spectator interest and television coverage. It is believed, however, that these gaps would decrease over time as has been shown in AS1x race since 2002 when there were also large gaps between competitors.

Other Comments: If move to 2000m is implemented, adaptive athletes will require access to full length of course for training, not just warm-up and cool-down lanes.

Adaptive Rowing Commission

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