

## Interview of Newest Umpiring Commission Member Morten Juel Hansen

1. Can you tell us about your background in rowing and how you first got involved in the sport?

I started rowing in 1983. My father was in the sport and was a national umpire.

2. What are some of your most memorable moments from your time as an athlete in rowing?

I think I have many memories, but when I have to choose a few it has to be the time I became national champion, passed my international umpire exam, but the greatest is probably that I have the pleasure of training my son who is U/19 national team rower.

3. How did you transition from being an athlete to becoming an umpire for rowing competitions?

I became a national umpire in 1996, but never really got around to using the training as I immediately started rowing competitively again. From 2000 to 2001 I was part of Denmark's Rocenter. After this, a few years passed where I was team manager for the Danish U/23 national team. At the same time, I started using my national umpire training again and in 2009 I passed my international umpire exam.

4. What are some of the key responsibilities of an umpire in a rowing competition?

I think the most important task for an umpire is to ensure that the athletes have the opportunity to compete on equal terms. It is also very important that they have the best conditions in the final preparation before the race. Of course, safety must be in order and here it is important that the athletes have control of their equipment long before they go on the water so that it does not become a disturbing element at the outgoing pontoon.

5. How has rowing changed over the years since you first became involved in the sport, and what do you see as the future of rowing?

The sport is today very focused on the Olympic Games. Many countries are founded via their results at the Olympic Games. Whether it's good or bad, I don't want to be the judge, but I hope that we will once again get to a place where there will be wider competition in all boat types again. I think the future of rowing looks very bright and I think many developing countries will join more and more and we will soon see them on top of the medal stand. All this because of the good development work that is being done in all parts of the world.

6. What advice would you give to young people who are interested in getting involved in rowing as athletes or officials?

My best advice to new young athletes is that you must really love to train as our sport requires a lot of training. We train much more than we compete.

7. Are there any initiatives or programs that you are currently working on or supporting to help grow and develop rowing in different parts of the world?

As a member of the Umpire Commission, I am currently working on a pilot project in the Baltic region with an umpire development program where we start from "the Nordic umpire education". In the Nordic countries we have a common umpire education which means that we can be umpires in all Nordic countries without being a World rowing umpire. We will try to spread this model beyond the Baltic region as a kind of regional license, so that with the same training program we can function as umpires in all countries in the Baltic region. This education can then be used as a lever to become a World Rowing umpire. we are also trying to get many more female umpires into the program

8. What are some of the biggest misconceptions that people have about rowing, and how do you address these misconceptions?

It's a very difficult question, but when I tell people I row, they always think it's in a kayak. Why is it always the first thing people think of when you say rowing. When I then say that I don't kayaking but that I row backwards, they get even more confused.

9. Finally, what are some of your personal goals and aspirations for your continued involvement in rowing, and how do you plan to achieve them?

What I do for the sport, I do for the love of the sport. Rowing has given me everything in my life and I just try to give something back to the sport that I love and care for.