

11 December 2009  
Lausanne, Switzerland

**To:** Affiliated Federations  
Council and Commission Members  
Organisers of World Championships  
National Rowing Magazines  
Partners



## **Circular No. 8 of 2009**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

### **This Circular covers the following items:**

- A. Review of World Rowing Events
  - 1. Olympic Games Programme
  - 2. World Rowing Championships Programme
  - 3. Rowing World Cup Programmes
  - 4. World Juniors and Under 23 Championships Programmes

### **Review of World Rowing Events**

#### **A. Event programmes**

The FISA Council has made a comprehensive review of the World Rowing Events and, in particular, the racing programme of the Olympic Games, the World Rowing Championships, the Rowing World Cup and the finals days of the World Championships. We have consulted with several television and media experts to discuss this. Their main points were:

**Medals!** - The media only really become interested when medals are being presented, flags are going up poles and national anthems are played; and

**One Hour!** - The general interest television channels will only show a sport (other than a big football match or Formula 1) for up to one hour. The experts tell us to make the programme strong, intense and emotional for up to one hour or a little bit more.

Based on this feedback and further discussion, the Council has made the following decisions:

1. **Olympic Games Regatta Programme** – Given the tight deadline imposed by the IOC for the confirmation of the racing programme of the 2012 Olympic Regatta in London, the Council looked at this first. Bearing in mind the fact that very few rowers now double up at the Olympics due to the high intensity of the competition, the Council has decided that the racing programme of the London Olympics shall feature four days of finals. The exact configuration of these four days of finals is still under discussion. There are currently two scenarios:
  - a. 3,3,4,4 – This means three finals on the Thursday, three on the Friday, four on the Saturday and four on the Sunday; or
  - b. 2,2,5,5 – Two finals on the Thursday preceded by some exciting semi-finals, two finals on Friday as Thursday, five finals on the Saturday and five finals on the Sunday.

The principle that will be applied is that the athletes in any boat class are treated equally in terms of race days/rest days. The Chairs of the Athletes and Competitive Commissions expressed the wish that there would be a rest day between the repechage round and the next round (quarter final, semi final or final) as a priority and, if possible, a rest day between the semi finals and the finals.

We are presently preparing these two scenarios for consideration by the Council for a decision in January.

2. **World Rowing Championships Programme** – The Council proposes to change the World Championships' programme to include four days of finals instead of the present two. The exact configuration of these four days will remain under consideration until the 2012 Olympic programme is finalised. However, the following scenarios were discussed:
  - a. A, N, O1, O2 – That is Adaptive finals on Thursday, Non-Olympic finals on Friday, seven Olympic finals on Saturday and seven Olympic finals on Sunday; or
  - b. A, O1 and O2, O3, O4 – Based on the new Olympic Regatta programme, Adaptive finals will be on Thursday, events from Olympic finals days 1 and 2 plus some Non-Olympic finals on Friday, events from Olympic finals day 3 plus some non-Olympic finals on Saturday, and events from Olympic finals day 4 plus the remaining non-Olympic events on the Sunday.

The Chairs of the Athletes and Competitive Commissions have asked that the same principles apply here as for the Olympic programme above.

We are presently preparing scenarios for the Council to consider. A final decision will be taken in January and may take effect as early as 2010.

3. **Rowing World Cup programmes** –The Council propose to try an experiment that would allow the general interest television channels to follow a “story” within the World Cup. For the period from 2010 to 2012, the suggestion from the experts is to create a one hour block with the “blue ribbon” events, the singles and the eights. This block would be at the end of the finals programme, perhaps separated by a few extra minutes to allow a special introduction to the event and, at all three World Cups, feature special background information on the singles and eights along with the usual introductions, races and victory ceremonies. It could also feature a live interview on the pontoon.

We will be discussing this idea with the organizers and the prime television partners to see if there is a chance to attract their interest. We have to remember that next year the second and third World Cups will take place at the same time as the Football World Cup so it will be very difficult in any case to get television time from the main channels.

As far as the longer term future of the Rowing World Cup is concerned, some new ideas are being considered and will be communicated in due course.

4. **World Junior Rowing Championships and World Under 23 Rowing Championships programmes** – The Council discussed two aspects here:

The first is to move the Junior Championships final day to the Sunday – that is, to move the competition days from Wednesday – Saturday to Thursday – Sunday. We have had positive feedback from the Congress and a number of national federations on this proposal.

The second idea which will apply to both events is to create two finals days and hence two days when medals, flags and anthems will be seen and heard. For the Under 23 Champs, this would be a big improvement from the current programme of 21 finals one after another that are very difficult to follow. This would still mean up to 11 finals on one day, but that is manageable.

For the Junior Champs, it would mean six finals on the Saturday after some exciting semi-finals, and then seven finals on the Sunday. The split of events across the two days would be made partly based on historical entries (events normally having no semi finals would have their finals on the Saturday), however, once a decision is made, it would need to be possible to run some heats on the Wednesday afternoon following the draw and team manager's meeting, if necessary.

We will be discussing this idea with the organizers as a next step before a final decision in January.

National Federations are welcome to make comments and suggestions by 15 January 2009. These comments will be presented to the Council at their meeting on 22 January 2009 before being finalised.

We thank you for your interest and input and look forward to making some positive changes to the presentation of our sport.

Yours sincerely,



Denis Oswald  
President



Matt Smith  
Executive Director