

Proposed Principles for Rowing Event Programmes [Draft 6 at 220216]

Context: In 2013, the Olympic Movement entered a new era with significant changes for the future. The 2012 Olympic Programme Commission Report and Agenda2020 have modified the general landscape and brought more flexibility, notably for the Olympic Programme. The IOC, from now on, will evaluate not only the sports at the Olympic Games but each of the events. The IOC Executive Board will ultimately make the decision on which events will be on the Programme.

The Olympic Games is the pinnacle of the sport. There are no professional leagues and almost no prize money opportunities. Rowing is true to the traditions of de Coubertin and Olympism. It is a clean and fair competition.

Our challenge now is to provide strong background explanations about why each of our boat classes are unique. All events in Olympic and FISA event programmes should be reviewed against principles as well so that the pyramid of participation through FISA age groups correctly leads to the Olympic Games event programme.

As well, the Olympic venues for each sport now ideally are existing or temporary with minimal new construction projects in order to reduce the costs of staging the games. It is important now for FISA to fully review all events against principles and all elements that influence the size and complexity of a rowing venue. This paper attempts to identify and address the principles that should be considered when establishing a rowing event programme.

General Principles of a Rowing Event

1. **Endurance/Strength Sport** : The race distance for rowing should reflect that rowing is a sport that demands not only exceptional endurance capacity but also strength in its athletes.
 - 1.1. The minimum race distance should not change the endurance profile of the sport.
 - 1.2. The minimum time for racing should not go under the scientific definition of endurance exercise.
 - 1.3. Therefore, the Olympic regatta distance could vary as long as the above principles are met.
 - 1.4. For other multi-sport games, different distances are possible as this can provide differentiation to the event and also allow use of non-standard courses, if necessary.
2. **Equality of Chance / Fairness**
 - 2.1. The number of racing lanes should allow fair and equal conditions to the crews – eight lanes offer the most flexibility for selecting six lanes that offer equal conditions.
 - 2.2. Parallel racing in six lanes provides exciting races for competitors and spectators.
 - 2.3. The number of racing lanes could change depending on the level of the event provided equality of conditions across all lanes is provided.
3. **Gender Equality as a model for society**
 - 3.1. Sport has developed as a model to break down barriers and reduce gender discrimination.
 - 3.2. Equality applies to the number of rowers and the number of boat classes offered.

4. Excellence vs. Universality Balance

- 4.1. The Olympic regatta must include the best rowers in the world (for Excellence)
- 4.2. The Olympic regatta must include rowers from all continents (for Universality)
- 4.3. The best rowers in every country should take part in the qualification journey (for Universality)
- 4.4. A percentage of places should be established based on excellence vs. universality (currently 12% of all rowers and 24% of all boats come from the continental qualification events)
- 4.5. Small boats provide more opportunities for excellence for smaller nations in all continents.

Racing Structure and Programme

5. Attractive Programme over an established number of days

- 5.1. The number of days on the racing programme should reflect the level of the event; more days, higher level of importance of the event.
- 5.2. Being an outdoor sport open to the effects of nature, the number of days should provide contingency options to ensure opportunities are available for completion of the competition under the best conditions possible.
- 5.3. As athletes prepare for their absolute pinnacle of optimal performance at the Olympic Games, the number of days should also allow for peak performances – one recovery day between rounds and one race each day,
- 5.4. The number of finals days should correspond with the interest and attractiveness for television, spectators, budgets for teams and OCs
- 5.5. The number of days helps to create income from spectator ticket sales and supports television rights investments.
- 5.6. Contingency measures in cases of adverse weather conditions may compress and change the programme.

6. Balance of the different boat classes reflects the history of the sport development

- 6.1. Through history rowing developed in different ways in different countries. The classes of boat also developed in different ways; some very individual (singles), some requiring absolute partnership between two rowers (pairs/doubles) and some requiring special team work (fours, quads and eights).
- 6.2. There should be a mix of crew boats (eights/quads/fours), partner boats (pairs/doubles) and the boats for the individual (singles). These different boat classes and the dynamics of perfectly synchronized team work is unique in the Olympic movement and present values that are unique for rowing.

- 6.3. The mixture of boat classes allows for different heights and weights of athletes, different personalities and characters, differences of percentages of fast-twitch versus slow-twitch muscle fibres, body types and traditions.
- 6.4. For the spectator, watching rowers coordinated in six boats, in six lanes is an exceptional, unique and attractive experience.

7. Presence of sculling and sweep rowing reflects different development trends

- 7.1. Rowing is one of the few sports that offers different pathways for skill and endurance capacity development.
- 7.2. A mix between the two main disciplines of the sport – sculling and sweep rowing, is part of the tradition, skill sets or body types/height or weight
- 7.3. The variety of boat classes is a reflection of the local conditions facing the individual clubs and their access to water. This is based on the type of water body and the club size, available facilities and, of course, traditions.

8. Balance of Open and Light weight

- 8.1 Rowing should offer opportunities for rowers of different body types to participate.
- 8.2 The lightweight category has sporting and a political justification for true universality.
- 8.3 Many of the new rowing nations are able to enter lightweight singles and doubles but do not yet have the depth of talent to enter fours, or eights.

Additional Factors

9. Inclusiveness

- 9.1. The different parts of the rowing family should be included as much as possible in events

10. Integrity/rowing values

- 10.1. The events offered should match our values – clean, endurance, etc

11. Spectator Experience

- 11.1. The event programme should provide an attractive experience for spectators, regardless of nationality.

12. Image production

- 12.1. The racing should provide an attractive experience for viewers with relevance for all countries and audiences as well as presenting the health, fitness and beauty of the sport.

Venue requirements – Water Sports Centre

The venue should always be designed and planned for multiple use by many different water and water-related sports. There are many examples of world class, fully sustainable water sports centres based on international rowing courses providing valuable assets to the local community. New venues should be planned with sufficient land/water space to ensure legacy use for multiple sports events and related community use.