

Fairness Committee Protocol (200613)

Context

Weather can have a major influence on the conditions for the athletes at rowing regattas. This applies to any rowing course in the world, whether on a natural lake or on a custom built regatta course.

When weather creates unfair conditions for the rowers, the FISA rules call for a means to attempt to restore, as much as possible, the fairness of the competition. For each FISA world-level event, the FISA Executive Committee establishes a Fairness Committee according to Rule 71. This Committee consists of three people with appropriate experience and ability to take the appropriate measures if the weather creates unfair or unrowable racing conditions. It has the duty to determine if the weather has created, or is about to create, unfair or unrowable conditions. It is then their responsibility to identify and adopt what they determine to be the most appropriate action among several alternatives listed in the Bye-Law to Rule 71.

The Fairness Committee studies carefully how wind effects the racing course. They may identify and use a range of tools and information to carry out their role effectively.

Principles

The Fairness Committee consists of “three persons with appropriate experience and ability” (Rule 71).

Duties: In principle:

- One member will be appointed as the spokesperson of the Committee and will represent the Committee in responding to questions or giving explanations. This member should communicate decisions and is responsible for discussing with other affected parties (FISA Executive Director, FISA Technical Delegates, etc.).
- The committee members will divide their tasks as appropriate. These tasks include:
 - Observe racing from a car, bicycle or catamaran. If this is not possible they will observe racing from the best possible position;
 - Monitor the race results for any trends which might be caused by weather conditions;
 - Monitor the weather conditions through forecasts and actual measurement of wind on site and its effect on the course.

At all events committee members will, in principle, be free from other duties and any other responsibilities during racing.

Principles of Decision-making:

- Any decision/proposals of the Fairness Committee as provided under the Rules of Racing shall be made by the Fairness Committee alone, using all the information at their disposal as they see fit. This might include consultation with

outside individuals at their discretion, but this does not change the responsibility of the members for the decision.

- A decision, once made, shall be the decision of the Committee and not of any individual member or members.
- Discussions within the Fairness Committee shall remain confidential between its Members;
- Members' deliberations should take place in a secured space where they will not be disturbed or influenced by non members except when they specifically invite comments from others;

Fairness Committee Operating Procedures

Requirements prior to the event (between bid stage and 3 days before):

- Weather information and forecasts for the course in accordance with an agreed FISA weather protocol.
- A detailed map of the regatta course including a compass to show course orientation;
- Wind roses showing the usual wind patterns on the course for the previous 5 years at the time year of the regatta;
- Information on local weather conditions and how they affect the course, collected from observations during the years leading up to the event in accordance with the FISA weather protocol;
- Access before the event to a person with significant local expertise and experience in the likely effects of different wind conditions on the course;;
- Previous Fairness Committee reports, where they exist, from other FISA events at the same course;

Equipment needed:

- Wind meters for local measurements;
- Walkie-talkies for general information communication;
- Mobile telephones for private communications on fairness;

During the event:

- Access to transportation (a car, or launch) for a course inspection and to follow the races where appropriate (two bicycles should also be reserved for Fairness Committee on courses where cycling is possible);
- Immediate access to results as races finish.
- Access to other data such as a wave model or water movement if available or relevant.

FISA Weather Protocol

- The committee will be provided with detailed weather forecasts by the organising committee in the form of:
 - five day, general area forecasts (each morning at 07:00hrs or 2 hours before racing whichever is earlier)
 - three day, three hourly forecasts (each morning at 07:00hrs or 2 hours before racing whichever is earlier)
 - one day, hourly forecasts (each morning at 0700hrs or 2 hours before racing whichever is earlier, at 13:00 and at 18:00)
- The data to be provided in each forecast will be specified by FISA.
- The above forecasts shall be available beginning at least 3 days before a World Championship regatta and 2 days before a World Rowing Cup regatta.

Timeline of Operations at the Event

Day before racing starts:

1. **First meeting** - The Fairness Committee shall have its first meeting not less than two hours before the Draw and first Team Managers meeting in order to allocate roles, agree on working practices for that event and to ensure all information and equipment is available. They will introduce themselves to the Executive Committee, Technical Delegates, President of the Jury and organising committee persons responsible for providing weather forecasts and confirm venue transport arrangements. They will prepare the template which lists the times of meetings and key times for decisions. This will be available to the team managers and coaches so that they are aware of the actions of the Committee.
2. **Meet with the Executive Director or his nominee and Technical Delegates** before the Draw and Team Managers meeting. The purpose of this meeting is to consider the forecast for all days of the event and any likely scenarios that may occur as well as any external constraints that could affect the implementation of Fairness Committee decisions (host broadcast, venue licenses, windows of time available for racing due to sunset or team departures, etc.). This includes ensuring that the forecasting service and the timing of updates and the equipment and facilities provided meet the requirements stipulated by FISA;
3. **Make a physical inspection** of the regatta venue either by car or launch and view the places where wind is being measured;
4. **Prepare possible scenarios** in advance so as to minimise the reaction time and speed up communication (see attached an example of Lane Allocation Scenarios);
5. **Attend the Team Managers Meeting** to be introduced as the Fairness Committee;

Racing Days

6. **Between 120 to 90 minutes** (depending on event) before the start of each racing session, meet to consider the latest weather report and discuss with other stakeholders possible actions (considering OC scheduling, television, logistics issues, etc.);
7. **No later than 75 minutes before the racing session, make a physical inspection** of the course either by car or catamaran;
8. **At 60 minutes before the racing session and based on the assessment of conditions, announce the decision of the Committee (to the Control Commission) to continue as scheduled, or to delay or postpone the relevant session.** There should be an announcement of the decision of the Committee whether action will be taken or not.
9. **At 30 minutes before the racing session and based on the assessment before the racing session, announce which lanes offer the most equal conditions for racing (shifting lanes) and inform the President of the Jury and OC Competition Manager.**

10. During the course of racing the Committee should **communicate directly with the President of the Jury and OC Competition Manager** if racing lanes need to be shifted as per Bye- law to Rule 71 (1.1). Any such change should be notified to the President of the Jury at least one race before the change is made, to avoid crews already in their lanes at the Start having to change lanes.
11. If determined necessary, make all efforts to **shift lanes before the start of a group of races** for one event so that conditions are the same for all races in a round of an event and, consequently, avoid shifting lanes during a group of races of one event;
12. **Constantly monitor the racing conditions** and be ready to act at any point during the racing session. Members should be in the best position to make decisions but, in principle, should be following the racing, following the trends of the results and maintaining an overview of the weather conditions and impact on racing.
13. If determined necessary, make the decision to **change to “prioritised” lanes (B/L to Rule 71, 1.3) before a racing session** or, if conditions change during racing, before the start of a group of races.
14. While monitoring weather conditions during racing, if it is determined that **racing might need to be suspended**, be sure to include the key stakeholders in planning so that all relevant issues are prepared in advance.
15. While monitoring weather conditions for the following racing days, be ready to **make decisions before 5:00 pm or the daily Team Manager’s Meeting** if racing will need to be advanced on the following racing day. The consultation process will need to include many stakeholders, so careful consideration needs to take place.
16. **Meet at the end of the day’s session** to review the day’s racing and consider any contingencies likely for the following day. At the World Rowing Championships or Olympic and Paralympic Games this should be before the Team Managers Meeting. The Fairness Committee shall make available a written summary of their decisions in the boxes of the Team Managers by the end of the day.

General considerations

17. **If determined necessary, change lanes before the start of a group of races** of a particular boat class, where possible, except in extreme cases (if there is any doubt that all races in that round for a particular boat class might not be able to be rowed, then consideration should be given to stop racing before the first race of that boat class starts);
18. **Be** fully prepared and **ready to act by having** anticipated possible weather conditions;
19. **Consider the time required to communicate** decisions to the teams, if racing is to be advanced, or it is possible that racing needs to be advanced. Except in

extraordinary circumstances teams must be informed the day before the new schedule. Any such scheduling changes will be decided by the FISA Executive Committee at World Championships or the Technical Delegate at World Rowing Cup regattas as per Bye–Law to Rule 71 (2);

20. If the Fairness Committee observes **any issues on the course** before, during or after the regatta that might affect racing in any way they should inform the FISA Technical Delegate.

Principles for Selection of Members

Personal Qualifications

Each member must have the following:

1. Experience in FISA events
2. Credible background as a coach, rower or official;
3. Ability to interpret the likely effects of the weather on the regatta course;
4. Ability to operate independently without personal or team bias;
5. Ability to exercise authority and take decisions under pressure based on evidence when needed;
6. Ability to represent the majority view of the group, even if not their own;
7. Commitment to help FISA improve its knowledge and understanding of the influence of weather on water conditions in order to provide the best possible racing opportunity for all competitors.

Committee members should be selected so that between them they have the following:

1. Ability and credibility to communicate with and explain decisions taken to rowers, coaches, team managers and officials;
2. Ability to interpret data and prepare scenarios that may arise;
3. Ability to collect, collate and interpret data from varying sources including anemometers, weather stations, weather forecasts, wave models, etc.;
4. Ability to write reports that document the decision making process to enable a transfer of knowledge to the next “fairness committee” operating on that course;
5. Ability to liaise with weather professionals, if present.

The following are “desirable elements” in a member:

1. Availability for multiple events during the year to help provide consistency of approach.
2. Commitment to a working group focussed on building and maintaining an archive of weather data and the effects on the rowing courses used by FISA.
3. Access to professionals able to assist FISA in building the necessary knowledge for collation, interpretation and management of weather information and its impact on courses.