

The Strategy for the Changes proposed by the Council

1. Background

The very wide-ranging survey in 2010 that formed part of our Strategic Re-Assessment Exercise delivered confirmation from our rowers and our officials of the core values of our sport and our organisation.

Rowers are: Balanced, Dedicated, Focused and Determined

Rowing is about: Teamwork, Inclusiveness, Nature, Endurance and Fairness.

Since that Strategic Review, we been working to ensure our core values are incorporated into every aspect of our work and activities.

Therefore, the approach taken by the Council for this year's Extraordinary Congress has been to consider what alterations we need to make to our Statutes and Rules of Racing to align them to the core values of our sport and participants.

2. Changes proposed

The changes proposed are designed to ensure our rules reflect what we have agreed is at the centre of our sport.

a. Ethics / Autonomy

There are many threats to the world of sport from inside and outside sport. Rowing is not immune to such potential problems and we need to continue to be vigilant, to monitor international events and to prepare carefully strategies to combat these influences. Rowing was and remains in a leading position in the field of anti-doping, but needs to reinforce its Statutes and Rules to address other potential problems such as attempts to manipulate our competitions, attempts to interfere in the leadership of our national federations and attempts to unduly influence our international federation.

Several alterations are proposed to deal with these threats.

- Clear policies for ethical issues and reference to the IOC Code of Ethics
- Clear policies to prevent and deal with attempts to manipulate competitions
- Clear policies to deal with attempts by governments and outside influences on our sport
- Policies to ensure that only those truly involved in our sport are making decisions about rowing at all levels

b. Health of our Athletes

Generally, our sport is practiced in a healthy way and offers long term benefits for those who participate in it. When we are made aware of health-related problems in our sport we must act. For example, our Medical Commission developed a "No Needle" policy which has been taken up by others in the international sport community. We have also been proactive in investigating cases of Sudden Cardiovascular Death over the last ten years and propose the following to minimize the risks of such cases in future:

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- Pre-competition Health Screening to reduce the risk of Sudden Cardiovascular Death in Sport
- Elimination of averaging in lightweight rowing. We feel strongly that we should minimise unnatural weight loss. We believe that it is necessary to establish a system where each athlete is only responsible for his or her own weight, rather than to be put in a position to lose weight for another athlete just before a race.

c. Inclusion

Rowing can be very proud of the example it has set for other sports and for the world community, and the progress it has made in terms of rowing for those with a disability.

The next step for inclusion is to extend the racing distance to 2'000 metres so that the "field of play" is the same for all rowers and only the equipment is slightly adapted.

This recommendation is consistent with the history of the Paralympic movement. The founding athletes – the wheelchair basketball players – insisted on competing under the same conditions (the same basketball court with the same height of basket) as the basketball players. Likewise the marathon wheelchair athletes race over the same distance as marathon runners.

We have assessed the medical consequences and we are satisfied that a careful evaluation of possible health issues have been completed. There are many practical advantages for the sport but the overriding consideration must always be for our adaptive athletes to participate in the same sport.

We propose to:

- Change the adaptive racing distance to 2'000 metres so that the "field of play" is the same for all rowers;
- Add the LTA Mixed 2x to the programme to offer an additional boat for countries that might be better able to compete with only two athletes from these classification categories;
- Change the name to "Para Rowing" (Para was originally coined as a shortened version of Parallel Games") which we consider to be a better descriptor of the sport.

d. Equality

Rowing is also a global sports leader in terms of the gender make-up of the FISA Council and Commissions. FISA has been proactive in encouraging talented and dedicated women and men to serve our sport. As a result, we benefit from so many talented women involved at every level of our sport's governance. However, the loss of the women's four from the World Rowing Championships programme was a shock that has caused us to take stock and see if there is more that FISA should do.

A Working Group was established and has found that our participation at international level, particularly in the senior category, still needs work. There are nations with relatively strong men's rowing programmes which fail to have equally strong women's programmes. Our FISA development programme policies emphasize equal participation from the outset and this has had a positive effect in many countries. But work is needed to introduce

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women equally at the club level and nurture them through to senior level, then support them at senior level. The Council has identified a number of possible strategies to encourage federations to create programmes and to hold federations accountable to work towards this important core value of our sport.

- A new targeted development programme to help national federations and clubs develop women's rowing
- Re-introduction of the women's four to the programme of the World Championships to create an opportunity to increase the proportion of women athletes combined with development strategies utilizing this boat type to encourage and ensure a strong, sustainable entry
- Support for the Canadian proposal to introduce the women's lightweight 1x to the Olympic Games, subject to IOC approval of an additional event

e. Universality

Rowing has made great progress in terms of universality of participation over the past twenty years and we can be proud of this. The next step in growing the universality of our sport is to ensure our events take place all around the world, not just in certain continents. We are proud that two of our major competitions in 2013 will take place outside Europe; the first World Rowing Cup in Sydney and the World Rowing Championships in Chungju.

The Council proposes that now is the time to continue our work towards universality (after the Senior Championships in Gifu, Karapiro and Chungju) by extending the footprint of the Junior and the Under 23 Championships. The Council proposes to stage these events outside Europe in every four year period, Our latest experiences with events outside Europe have been positive ones for our sport and Council expects to receive continued quality bids for our major events from countries outside Europe.

This proposal does not require a rule alteration, but we want to make this broader interpretation of the second paragraph of Rule 5 very clear and to encourage bids from countries outside Europe during each four year period.

Please carefully read through our proposed changes with our core values in mind before taking final positions. We are proud of the progress that has been made and believe the Council recommendations will strengthen the focus on what our sport is about.

Thank you.