

## **FISA Council Comment on Two Days of Finals at the World Juniors and Under 23 Championships**

In 2010, the FISA Council made the decision to adjust the Olympic regatta schedule to hold finals over four days instead of two, in order to meet one of their objective for rowing, that is to attract more media attention to rowing. This new principle was applied first to the World Championships in 2010 and now, at the 2011 World Rowing Championships in Bled, the Olympic programme will be replicated so rowers and coaches can experience it before the Olympics. Olympic and non-Olympic finals will take place over four days with one Paralympic final each day just before the Olympic finals.

This approach was also applied to the World Under 23 and Junior Championships in 2010 and 2011, again with the objective of increasing the number of “finals” days that would attract spectators and the media. In 2010, the allocation of events between Saturday and Sunday was based on the principle that crews should only race once on any day, and was therefore decided by the number of entries in each event. This had two main negative consequences: the late stage that the programme was finalised (after the entry deadline) and an uneven gender spread of events across the two days. In 2011, the FISA Council made some changes to address these issues:

1. The allocation of events that would have finals on Saturday was fixed in advance;
2. The progression system was adjusted to ensure a maximum of four rounds for any number of entries, to guarantee athletes a maximum of one race per day.

A consequence of these changes was an extra session of racing on the Wednesday afternoon for those boat classes having finals on Saturday and with more than 12 entries

Bearing in mind its undertaking to the Congress to discuss the new competition programme for the Under 23s and Junior Championships at the 2011 Congress, the FISA Council presents a listing of positive and negative observations to prepare for the Congress discussion:

### **Positive effects**

- Finals, implying medals, flags and anthems, attract the attention of spectators and media and generate increased publicity and media exposure for the event.
- Potential increase in ticketing income for the OC as a result of the longer event and the likelihood that some spectators will attend on Saturday and Sunday instead of just Sunday.
- Exciting ‘finals’ atmosphere for the spectators on both weekend days instead of just one.
- The opportunity for team members to cheer for each other that they would not have when all finals are on one day (comment from coaches).
- Programme potentially allows athletes to compete in more than one event.
- The shorter daily programme allows for more flexibility in the case of adverse weather conditions in the last few days of the event.
- The shorter daily programme results in shorter working days for volunteers.

### **Negative effects**

- The extra session of racing has implications for venue operations and certain permissions e.g. road controls.
- Potential increase in costs for the OC as a result of the additional afternoon of racing. These have however been calculated as minimal in the case of Eton and Amsterdam.
- Potential increase in costs for teams that wish to arrive a day earlier.
- Potential team management challenges relating to supervision of athletes that finish racing on Saturday.