

2016 Olympic Qualification System for Rowing

FISA Rules empower the FISA Council to prepare and propose the Olympic Qualification System for Rowing to the International Olympic Committee (IOC). The Olympic Qualification System needs to balance the current situation in the sport, FISA's goals for the sport as well as the objectives and principles of the IOC for the Olympic Games.

Process

The IOC requested that FISA submit its Proposed 2016 Olympic Qualification System by October. FISA requested and received an extension of time to December so that it could receive feedback from its member National Federations and individuals for consideration by the Council at its year end meeting held in Lima, Peru at the end of November 2013.

FISA advised the member national federations at the FISA Congress in Chungju that the IOC had confirmed the same number of events (14) and the same number of athletes (550) for rowing as in London. At that stage FISA asked for and received submissions from National Federations and individuals on that basis.

Following the Congress, FISA received the IOC Olympic Programme Commission report which presented the statistics on all the summer Olympic sports at the 2012 Olympic Games. From our analysis of that report it became apparent that there were a few areas that rowing needed to address to ensure that it was meeting the expectations of the IOC. Areas of rowing requiring particular attention by FISA were universality (as measured by the number of nations competing in rowing at the Olympic Games) and gender equity (as measured by the number of male / female rowers at the Olympic Games). Our circular sent to national federations on November 12th provided FISA's initial thoughts on these matters.

We received submissions from several individuals within the FISA Council and Commissions, and several letters from national federations. We greatly appreciate these submissions and opinions which the Council has been able to take into account in arriving at its submission to the IOC.

Principles

The Council took the following major principles as the basis for its deliberations. The resulting qualification system represents a balance between these principles.

1. Excellence

The Olympic Games continues to be the event where the world's best athletes compete. Excellence is addressed by using the 2015 World Rowing Championships as the primary qualification event and the final qualification regatta for ten of the events without limitation for the 2016 Olympic Games.

2. Universality

It is a strong principle of both the IOC and of FISA that the opportunity to compete at the Olympic Games should be afforded to the best athletes from as many countries in the world as possible, including those countries from continents where rowing is still developing both in numbers of rowers and in the standard of rowing. The Continental Qualification Regattas provide the opportunity for the best rowers of the countries from those continents to qualify for the Games in four selected events (M1x, W1x, LM2x and LW2x).

The IOC's measure of universality is the number of nations that compete at the Olympic Games as well as those attempting to qualify. Therefore, the system presented has been created to ensure that there will be more than 101 nations attempting to qualify for and 58 nations competing in Rio 2016.

To help achieve this, the number of boats which a country can qualify through Continental Qualification Regattas will be limited to one women's boat and one men's boat from among the M1x, W1x, LM2x and LW2x, so that more countries from those continents may qualify for Rio 2016. The same restriction will apply to these four events at the European Qualification Regatta in Lucerne.

In addition, the member federations of Oceania (other than New Zealand and Australia) may seek qualification through the Asia/Oceania Continental Qualification Regatta. As a consequence, the number of boats qualifying in both the M1x and W1x at Asia/Oceania regatta has been increased by one (1) in recognition of the addition of Oceania and of the number of Asian nations which entered those events in 2012.

FISA's view of universality is that it extends beyond the measure of the number of nations competing at the Olympic Games, and for that reason FISA continues to expand its development programme to ensure that more rowers are rowing in more countries of the world, and that the standard of rowing in all countries continues to improve. FISA will therefore also aim to increase the number of countries competing in World Championships and Continental events.

3. Gender Equity

At the London Olympic Games, 64% of the rowers were male and 36% were female. FISA had already recognised that steps needed to be taken to ensure that the percentage of female rowers at the Olympic Games increases. The Council has decided unanimously that the qualification system for Rio 2016 will guarantee that the number of females participating will increase to 40%, with the objective beyond Rio to continue to increase the female participation both in the sport and also in the Olympic Games. To achieve the figure of 40% female participants, the number of boats for women has been increased in four of the six classes (W1x, W2-, W2x, LW2x). To accommodate these increases, the number of boats for men has been reduced in three of the eight classes (M1x, M4x, M8+).

FISA recognises that increasing the number of female rowers participating in the Olympic Games is only one aspect of growing women's rowing, albeit a very important aspect. Therefore, FISA is developing a broad ranging Strategic Plan for the increased participation of women in the sport, so that this objective can be reached at all levels of the sport. The Plan will be completed in 2014 and its implementation will commence immediately.

Other Considerations

Additional to these main principles, the Council has taken into account the following other considerations in developing its submission:

1. Attractiveness of the Olympic Regatta

It is important that the Olympic Regatta is attractive to spectators and television viewers on all eight days of competition. To this end it is important that there is a significant number of events with more than 12 boats racing to ensure that there are semi-finals. As a result, the system proposed has semi-finals in 10 of the 14 events. This is an increase from nine events with semi-finals in London.

2. Balance between Sweep Rowing and Sculling

The Council wishes to ensure that both sculling and sweep rowing are preserved and developed at the top level and, in particular, that sweep rowing for women is encouraged in more countries. Therefore the number of boats in the W2- has been increased to 15 in Rio.

3. Representation of Lightweight Women's Rowing

The number of boats in the LW2x is increased from 17 to 20 boats.

FISA's Submission

Attached is the 2016 Olympic Qualification System for Rowing agreed by the Council that FISA will submit to the IOC on 15 December 2013.

Council Decision on 2016 Olympic Qualification System for Rowing										
NUMBER OF CREWS PER EVENT										
The following numbers of crews will obtain a quota place for their NOC to participate in the respective events (subject to the reallocation of unused quota places):										
RIO 2016										
	2015	Continental Qualification Regattas				Final	Total	Total	%	
	World Champs	Asia/Oceania	Africa	Latin America	European (+AUS, NZL, CAN, USA)	Qualif Regatta	Boats	Athletes 2016	Athletes	
Men										
Single Sculls (1x)	9	7	4	6	3		29	29		
Pairs (2-)	11	-	-	-		2	13	26		
Double Sculls (2x)	11	-	-	-		2	13	26		
Fours (4-)	11	-	-	-		2	13	52		
Quadruple Sculls (4x)	8	-	-	-		2	10	40		
Eights (8+)	5	-	-	-		2	7	63		
Men Lightweight										
Double Sculls (2x)	11	3	1	3	2		20	40		
Fours (4-)	11	-	-	-		2	13	52		
Tripartite (2 -M1x) and Host Nation (1 - M1x)							3	3		
Total Men							121	331	60%	
Women										
Single Sculls (1x)	9	7	4	6	3		29	29		
Pairs (2-)	11	-	-	-		4	15	30		
Double Sculls (2x)	11	-	-	-		2	13	26		
Quadruple Sculls (4x)	5	-	-	-		2	7	28		
Eights (8+)	5	-	-	-		2	7	63		
Women Lightweight										
Double Sculls (2x)	11	3	1	3	2		20	40		
Tripartite (2 - W1x) and Host Nation (1 - W1x)							3	3		
Total Women							94	219	40%	
Total Athletes								550		