



INTERNATIONAL CANOE FEDERATION Slalom Racing Committee

2007-2008 Chairman's Moral Report

If you have look at the detailed activity report of the past two years attached to this report, you will be convinced that being SLR chairman is a full time occupation. As I am writing this report, I would like to thank the French Sport ministry and the French C/K federation to allow me to dedicate most of my working time to this chairman duty. Because(thanks to) of this special position, I have been able to follow all the aspects of the Slalom activity at the international level and the SLR committee members have supported me as much as their "volunteer status" could let them involved. We have organized the SLC meetings twice a year and will finalize the Olympic period and term of our mandate with a prospective meeting beginning of November in Seo de Urgell (ESP).

I want to thank all of them for their dedication and the team spirit they have shown in all circumstances. This excellent team work has allowed us to deliver an excellent Technical Committee balance in term of event organization, especially at the Beijing Olympic Games.

Bellow, I would like to highlight the major items of the SLC activity for the 2007/2008 seasons.

SLR Olympic Qualification System Principles & Comments

ICF Slalom Racing committee believe that being an Olympic Discipline must be a very efficient arm lever for a better development of Slalom Racing if all NOC involved have a hope to qualify once. On the other hand, the bottom line of the 2008 Flat water Racing and Slalom Racing Olympic Games qualification system evolution has been the 2004 IOC Evaluation Questionnaire contents. These have underlined the directions our sport must improve in the coming years.

With 70 boat's quota places for 4 SLR events, the strategy to guarantee both Sport Universality and the best athlete's level of paddling is really hard to work out.

Then, for 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, an evolution to the principle "An NOC may qualify 1 boat per event maximum ", was the only opportunity to increase the number of NOC participating to the Olympic Qualification events and further to the Olympic Games. We have augmented the number of Boat's Quota places to be earned by not having a second boat quota for the best NOC. We can then, offer 14 Boat's Quota places more for the 4 SLR events together. ICF has increased the number of participating NOC from 20 in 2004 to 29 in 2008, welcoming at the Olympic Games 9 new NOC's :

Andorra, Brazil (½ Final), Chile, Japan (Finalist), Kazakhstan (½ Final), New Zealand, Former Republic of Macedonia*, Russia (Final & Medallist), South Africa.

* This NOC was selected in 2004 thanks to the tri partite commission quotas.

Sport's Universality is one key point regarding IOC evaluation. The Continental organization and participation is really spotted in the IOC 2004 questionnaire and can be improved for ICF. Regarding 2008 Olympic Qualification system, SLC have introduced Qualification event at the Continental level for the first time. The Continental level qualification is proposed to increase the participation of NOC's at this stage and by the way to increase the development of Continental Confederation activity in the discipline. This is especially effective by:

- Organizing and promoting a consistent qualification event in the area
- Making more accessible the participation of all affiliated NF of the considered Confederation

In the future, if we want this Continental qualification even more attractive, it must offer a greater possibility of qualification for the best "developing" NOC's in this area by increasing the number of Boats Quotas places to be earned at this particular event.

The SLR Olympic Qualification system format is made to increase the participation to Olympic qualification stage; this is a very important motivation for both NOC's and National Federations. The Olympic qualification system is one of the most important "arm lever" we can set to improve the global participation at the different stages of the discipline development.



Olympic Qualification Events balance

Because the Olympic quotas were distributed during these competitions, 2007 SLR world championships and 2008 Continental Olympic qualification events have particularly focused the attention of the SLR committee. SLC has been involved deeply in all organizations.

In Foz do Iguassu, Brazil, Nuria Vilarrubla has even dedicated a total of five months, moving to Foz and working daily with the organizing committee with another committee member André Behs, belonging to the organizing federation. The success of the championship technically, in term of consistency and fairness will left a positive impression to all septic commentators in the previous months to the competition.

The originality of the 2008 Olympic qualification system was to introduce a Continental level for Olympic qualification. The Continental Confederations had selected their organizing federation for this key event. ICF was responsible to guarantee the quality and fairness of the Olympic qualification competitions. This means that at least the Technical Delegate at all events has been the SLC chairman. For African and Asian qualifications, ICF was involved through technical staff, development program funding and monitoring of the organizing committee.

This very demanding policy for Olympic qualification procedure has been rewarded by the successful organization of all events without any incident leading to controversy and appeal of the field of play's decision.

This was crucial for a first edition of the Continental qualification stage but SLR would advise for the future, a better selection process of the organizing bid for such event to avoid stressful situation and time consuming monitoring.

SLR world championships Development Programme training camps

In all World championships of the Olympic period, the Development Programme training camp organised previous to the competition in cooperation with the organizing federations was successful. This training camp is now part of the services that the organizers propose to the ICF and developing federations. Four to five coaches and one coordinator take care of an average of 25 national federations, participating with 30 athletes to the training camp under the so called "one team" programme. This camp is not only a very efficient technical preparation to the world championships slalom course but allow the participants to increase their knowledge for high level slalom paddling procedures. Athletes belonging to this programme have successfully participated to the Olympic qualifications events and earned a spot for their NOC's. Four of them have participated to the Beijing Olympic Games

ICF Slalom Racing Committee is happy with the evolution of this crucial operation for securing the participation and increasing the level of paddling because all World championships bidding federations are now including this operation within their bid file as a service to the international canoeing community and a contribution to the international Development Programme.

International slalom Development Programme

Guide lines for actions 2004-2008

The ICF is in charge to built and coordinate the strategic plan for development of the sport with a priority for the two Olympic disciplines.

A specific and detailed report is prepared by the First Vice President and the ICF Technical Director about the contents and balance of the Development Programme in the past four years. However I would like to give the Slalom committee valuation for this programme and possible development in the future. The orientations and application of the programme must be conducted in close cooperation with the Continental associations.

In the past four years, SLC has work out a development programme with missionary coaches dedicated to a region or subcontinent. These ICF development agents have established a working relationship with certain federations spotted by the Continental Association and ICF Technical director. This strategy is particularly efficient when this expert is working consistently for several months with different federations. Asian Confederation and particularly South East region is a very good example of this strategy. Pierrick Gosselin (FRA) is now the interlocutor of the federations since 2007 and under the Technical Director and SLC guidance has developed the organisation capacity for national championship and international SLR events,



established education and training programmes for both athletes and coaches. The federations became familiar with this expert and this way of working; this is improving globally their reactivity for all development activity and motivating the neighbour federations to apply for development programme actions.

For the next Olympic period, ICF SLC is willing to continue this strategy for other regions of Asia but also extend this kind of organisation to Africa and Central and South America.

Other possibility we would like to promote is the so called “partnership programmes”. The most developed federation’s will help the development operations to be organized and to secure activity thank to a special relationship established between a partner and foster federation. In the past years we have experienced this solidarity when Slalom Racing was in an emergency situation, we still need similar solidarity to guarantee the consistency and success of the Slalom Racing development programme world wide.

One other structure we have tried to promote is the Continental training centre. The location and settlement has been chosen by ICF with the Continental Association. The hosting federation is ready to offer support to this project either because they have already a good infrastructure (Europe, Australia, Brazil) or they are ready to establish this facility for their federation itself to improve their slalom racing level (South Africa, Lebanon, India, Thailand) Furthermore ICF was willing to use this platform to coordinate and conduct slalom development in the all area with the help of the responsible expert in charge of the centre. So far this development tool is not successful; ICF must study the reasons of the failure and implement this disposal on new basis in the frame work of the Strategic development Programme 2008 – 2012

The promotional and educational material for spreading Slalom expertise is still our weak point. However ICF has funded this past two years, the production of 3 DVD’s, one dedicated to Canoe technique, a second for kayak technique and the third one presenting Slalom Racing in a development and organisation perspective. This material is available at the Congress and could be downloaded from the ICF web site. Other DVD, Canoe Slalom Library, produced by the BCU and purchased by the SLR development programme is available with an interesting approach through three different levels, of the key trajectories and skills in Slalom.

The ICF web site must activate a dedicated page for SLR where can be found all material and information for Slalom fans and coaches.

The production of the different ICF technical manuals is a priority and could not be delayed any longer. This is a task that could be lead by the technical committee but produce within the Head quarter with our permanent staff.

Development by introducing SLR in the Continental and Regional Games

Since the Olympic Games will remain a limited access competition because of the quotas policy, ICF and the SLC has develop a strategy to promote and obtain the SLR discipline introduction within the programme of the different Regional and Continental Games.

Thank to the support of the Chinese Canoe association and Asian Confederation we are able to announce that the 2010 Asian Games, organised in Guangdong, will receive both Canoe disciplines and Slalom Racing for the first time. This is an important achievement for the development of this discipline in a Continent already well engaged in the promotion of the white water activities and particularly slalom racing. For Asia the South East Games, regional Games are also ready to hold a Slalom event with an amended format inspire from he Youth Olympic Games canoe event.

Further more ICF, Continental associations and the Technical committee are working on the introduction of slalom discipline in 2011 Pan American Games and 2011 African Games. We are also close to organize the Slalom event in the 2010 ODESUR regional Games hosted by Colombia, in Medellin with the close cooperation of the national federation.

The aim of this strategy is to give an opportunity to all NOC to get involved in the Sport because of an accessible event, a possibility to defend their chance at the regional or continental level with a consistent policy of funding from part of their sport authorities.

Slalom Rules evolution: making the sport more understandable and marketable

It is the feeling of the SLC that the proposals for Rules evolution will move the sport in a positive direction, and we have been really well inspired, in a first stage, in sharing these proposals with Federations, Athletes and Coaches. The feed back received from them have leded the Committee to tune the Rules evolution. During the decision process, the following factors have been taken into account; Any rule change should:

- Increase the excitement of the sport for both competitors and spectators.



- Simplify events for organizers, make the sport easier to understand for spectators, and, where possible, make the event fairer for competitors.
- Increase the opportunity for athletes to compete in high-level international competitions.
- Be conducive to increasing participation in the sport of slalom at both national and international levels
- And last but not least, advance the sport in the Olympic Games programme

The main rules changes affect the race format and progression through the different phases (heats, semi final and final) The new rule for Heat phase, best of two runs count, is increasing the challenge for going through the semi final(20 boats qualify) but also giving two chances to the competitors in case of failure. The ICF World ranking point system is now consolidate thanks to a wider selection of events, the ICF world ranking races, selected from the best events organized worldwide and following the ICF minimum technical and promotional requirements . This ranking will be use for entry policy at the SLR World cup, from 2010 and further ahead to give access at the different level of international competitions.

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This four years mandate has been full of activities, projects and sometime delicate situations too. During this term, I have discovered the sport organisation at the ICF level, established working relationship with new people; developed my knowledge of the Olympic Movement and international network of National federations.

The SLC, the ICF Head quarter Staff and the ICF Board of Directors have initiated a fruitful cooperation to secure and improve the Slalom discipline world wide. For all these reasons I would be happy and motivated to serve, , according to ICF Statutes, working closely to the Board of Directors and Executive Committee as the Chairman of the Canoe Slalom Committee for the next Olympic term.

Jean-Michel PRONO

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This report is completed by the half term report edited for the 2006 ICF Congress held in Hong Kong and the Activity reports summary.