

# Competition review update

Right: Single scullers at the 2015 Durham Small Boats Head



PHOTO: AL JOHNSTON



National Competition Committee Chairman **Fiona Dennis** brings you the latest from the Competition Review – including a sneak preview of the new structure

Competition is a key element within our sport, with over 26,000 rowers competing in more than 200 races across the country in 2014.

Impressive as that is, over the past few years it's become clear that we need to update our competition structure to ensure events remain enjoyable, of a good quality and – above all – competitive.

One piece of insight really brings to life why we need to change. As part of the review of our points' structure, we discovered that 85% of women and 71% of men had just two or fewer

British Rowing sweep points, while 90% of both men and women had two or fewer sculling points.

When the overwhelming majority of British Rowing members fit into just two categories – novice and IM3 – it's clear that our ambition of providing fair, close and exciting racing for all levels of ability and experience is greatly compromised.

So we held regional workshops with our clubs, large and small, from across the country, with input from every level of the sport: rowers, event organisers, coaches, umpires and volunteers. From these sessions we

took three key messages.

Firstly, the majority of members wanted to compete at an appropriate level, against rowers of similar ability and expertise.

Secondly, they wanted a system that discouraged the practice of crews and individuals actively trying to avoid gaining points (and by extension, avoiding racing) so they could compete at a low level.

Lastly, there was a consensus that the current system, which awards points solely to the winners of events at regattas and nothing for everyone else, didn't create an accurate profile of a rower's abilities.

## QUOTE OF THE MONTH

Chancellor George Osborne, 25 November 2015

“ I WILL HELP UK SPORT ... WITH A 29% INCREASE IN THEIR BUDGET – WE'RE GOING FOR GOLD IN RIO AND TOKYO. ”



## IN-DEPTH...

### So what's changing?

We're retiring the current point systems, and introducing a new one known as the Ranking Index (RI).

Every time you race at a British Rowing event, you'll have the opportunity to gain Ranking Index points. The more you race, the more potential for your RI to increase. This will provide a more accurate reflection of current

performance, and with crews on comparable RIs competing in the same event, we'll be encouraging fairer, more competitive racing.

### How is this different to the present system?

Currently, you gain points solely by winning the events you compete in. Under the new system, RI points will be awarded

“ THE FINAL YEAR OF THE CURRENT POINTS SYSTEM IS LIKELY TO BE 2016 ”



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at each round at a regatta – so the better you race, the more RI points you'll accumulate.

And here's some big news: Ranking Index points will also be awarded at head races, not just regattas. The higher you place, the more RI points you'll get. Again, these changes will provide a more accurate reflection of current performance.

#### **How will I know what my Ranking Index is?**

Members will be able to view their RI online via their BR membership account. We're also hoping to provide an option to send out an email whenever your RI changes.

#### **When will the new system be implemented?**

Next year – 2016 – is intended to be the final year of the current points system. During 2016 both the current and new systems will run in parallel. An online entry system is being developed to replace BROE (British Rowing Online Entries). This is a key component to getting the Ranking Index system working, so it's essential that it's thoroughly tested and proven before we move completely to the new competition framework.

We will be trialling the new system at a range of events

of different sizes, types and geographical areas in 2016. The outcome of each event will be reviewed and we'll use the opportunity to make any modifications to the software and fine-tune the Ranking Index structure before a full roll-out in 2017.

#### **Will there be detailed information and guidance for event organisers, clubs, coaches and competitors?**

Absolutely. We're confident that the Ranking Index system is the way forward, but completely appreciate that we've only offered you a taste of what's

coming at this point. Long-term we need everyone involved in the sport to understand how the new structure works.

We're currently developing information, support and training tools aimed at the different groups across the sport – and, of course, we'll be offering hands-on support wherever possible.

#### **Where can I find more information?**

Very soon we'll have full FAQs on our website at [www.britishrowing.org/events/competition-review](http://www.britishrowing.org/events/competition-review) – so if you do have questions, please try there first.