



**MINUTES OF THE  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING  
HELD ONLINE  
23 September 2025**

**INTERNATIONAL CANOE FEDERATION (ICF)**

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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## **Overview**

This was the fourth meeting of the ICF Board of Directors in 2025, held online on 23 September. A quorum was formed in line with the ICF Statutes, with 27 voting Board members.

## **Agenda**

1. Introduction and Welcome
2. Updates on Olympic Qualifications System
3. Open Discussion
4. Vote
5. Other business
6. Closing Remarks



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**Participants:**

1	Thomas Konietzko	TK	President	GER
2	Richard Pettit	RP	Secretary General	GBR
3	Cecilia Farias	CF	Vice President	ARG
4	Lluis Rabaneda i Caselles	LRC	Vice President	ESP
5	Jean Zoungrana	JZ	European Canoe Association President	FRA
6	Chainarong Charoenruk	CC	Asian Canoe Confederation President	THA
7	Toshi Furuya	TF	Canoe Sprint Committee Chair	JPN
8	Bridgitte Hartley	BH	Athlete Committee Chair	RSA
9	John Edwards	JE	Paracanoe Committee Chair	CAN
10	Ruud Heijsehaar	RH	Canoe Marathon Committee Chair	NED
11	Greg Smale	GS	Canoe Polo Committee Chair	GBR
12	Terry Best	TBE	Canoe Freestyle Committee Chair	GBR
13	Noémi Horváth	NH	SUP Committee Chair	HUN
14	Shao Yaping	SY	Continental Representative - ASI	CHN
15	Jane Gibson	JG	Medical and Anti-Doping Committee Chair	GBR
16	Li Xin	LX	Treasurer	CHN
17	Marian Sârbu	MS	Canoe Ocean Racing Committee Chair	BEL
18	Richard Fox	RF	Canoe Slalom Committee Chair	AUS
19	Sebastian Gomez	SG	Pan American Canoe Federation President	URG
20	Victor G. Ruiz	VR	Continental Representative - PAM	PUR
21	Peter Karai	PK	Continental Representative - EUR	HUN
22	Andrej Jelenc	AJ	Continental Representative - EUR	SLO
23	Manuela Gawechn	MG	Wildwater Canoeing Committee Chair	GER
24	Ahmed Mahamoud Abdoukader	AMA	Continental Representative - AFR	DJI
25	Joao Manual Da Costa Alegre Afonso	JDC	Confederation of African Canoeing President	STP
26	Maree Burnett	MB	Oceania Canoe Association President	NZL
27	Danielle Woordward	DW	Continental Representative - OCA	AUS
	Dr. Luk Wai-Hung (non-voting)	LWH	Dragon Boat Commission Chair	HKG

**Excused:**

28	Olubunmi Ola Oluode	OO	Continental Representative - AFR	NGR
29	Martha Hernandez Sanches	MHS	Continental Representative - PAM	MEX
30	Moira Aston	MA	Continental Representative - EUR	IRL
31	Luciano Buonfiglio	LB	Vice President	ITA
32	Budiman Setiawan	BS	Continental Representative - ASI	INA



## 1. Introduction and Welcome

- TK opened the meeting by welcoming everyone and noted the apologies from Moira Aston, Budiman Setiawan, and Luciano Buonfiglio.
- This meeting is dedicated to discussing and voting on the Sprint Olympic Qualification System (OQS).
- The Slalom OQS will be addressed next week in Penrith during the ICF CSL World Championship, with an in-person session with NFs the Paralympic OQS is still pending and will be discussed later.

## 2. Updates of the Olympic Qualification System

LRG, chair of the working group, presented an overview of the development process of the Olympic Qualification System (OQS), summarising progress and outlined key decisions to be made during the meeting.

### Background and Development

- The process originated with the "Fit for Future" strategy, approved at the 2022 ICF Congress, which called for a comprehensive review of the Olympic Qualification System.
- Following this a working group was established by the President, bringing together members from various regions and perspectives to collaboratively shape the new system for both disciplines.

### Key objectives

The Working group set out to achieve several key goals:

- Increasing participation in competitions.
- Broadening the number and diversity of attendees.
- Supporting national federations and organisers in securing more funding.
- Enhancing the visibility of continental competitions.
- Encouraging federations to compete beyond Europe.

### Consultation and Feedback

*Full information is available in the following.*

- Transparency was a priority throughout the entire process.
- Two surveys were distributed to National Federations (NF) during the consultation phase NFs were actively involved, and their feedback was consistently considered.
- Input was gathered through several online sessions and an in-person meeting in Poznan and Milan.
- The working group held 16 meetings over the course of this process.

### Olympic Qualification System

**The Working Group has proposed two versions for the review of the Board of Directors. One based on Individual Ranking and another focused on National Ranking.**

## Open Discussion

TK opening the floor for questions and comments from the BoD.

JDC asked for clarification on the two different views within the working group and the reason for the division.

- LRC explained that the only distinction between the two documents is whether ranking points are allocated to individual athletes or to national federations.
- This was the sole point of disagreement brought to the BoD for a vote.

TF stated that national federations strongly favored the nation-based ranking system over the individual ranking system, as it provides more flexibility in managing injuries, pregnancy, or emerging talent.

- Emphasised that even with a nation-based system, harmonisation with each federation's selection system is expected.
- Added that introducing a world ranking system into Olympic qualification represents a significant step forward for the ICF.
- Expressed appreciation for the working group's efforts.

AJ asked if the Olympic qualification ranking would include only Olympic disciplines or also non-Olympic disciplines.

- Balint Vekassy, ICF Global Director of Sport, responded that this is clarified in the documents provided to the BoD.

JZ noted that both the nation-based and individual ranking systems have their respective advantages and disadvantages.

- The nation-system allows one athlete to help a country earn multiple quotas, representing a significant change,
- The individual system offers motivation to the athletes.
  - o **Proposal to the OQS working group:** Adopting the nation-based qualification system and maintain an individual ranking. This approach allows athletes to track their global standing and provides additional motivation to compete.
- TK, RP, LRC supported this proposal and agreed that it should be endorsed to the working group.

JG asked for clarification about the distinction between the nation-based and individual-based ranking, highlighting that both ultimately allocate points to the National Olympic Committee (NOC), not directly to athletes.

- Suggested that for small countries with only one or two strong paddlers, an individual-based system could help them accumulate more points, thereby benefiting their NOC.
- Pointed out that for larger nations with many athletes and boats, the choice between individual-based and nation-based ranking might not significantly impact, as their depth allows them to earn points regardless.
- LRC clarified Olympic quotas are always allocated to NOCs, not to individual athletes.



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- He mentioned that many national federations prefer the nation-based system because it allows them to change athletes during the qualification period (e.g., if someone is injured or a new talent emerges), without losing accumulated points. In the individual system, changing athletes would mean losing previously earned points, as points are tied to individuals.

DW pointed out that letters from national federations raised concerns and asked if the BoD could vote to reject the overall policy, rather than choosing between the two-ranking systems.

- RP responded that most of the letters from federations were older.
- Noted that the concerns had been discussed in the working group and during the meeting in Milan.
- Highlighted that there was 90% agreement on the policy.
- The only unresolved issue was the choice of the ranking system, which was brought to the BoD for a decision.

### **3. Vote**

RP presented to the BoD the proposal to adopt either a nation-based or an individual-based ranking approach for the OQS.

- Members were instructed to vote using the provided link.

**Decision:** The ICF BoD voted in favour of a nation-based ranking system.

- 26 votes, 18 in favour of **nation-based** ranking, 6 in favour of **individual-based** ranking and 2 **abstentions**. Motion carried in favour of a nation-based ranking system.

### **4. Other Business**

RP provided updates on the organisational review:

- End of November 2025 – Conclusion of all five working groups.
- Early December 2025 – ICF ExCo Meeting.
- Mid-December 2025 – ICF BoD online Meeting.
- Mid-January 2026 – Towns Halls meeting with National Federations.
- March 2026 – Final review at the ICF BoD meeting.
- July 2025 – Submission proposal to the Congress.

TK mentioned that a date will be proposed to the Board for the BoD meeting in Baku.

### **5. Closing Remarks**

TK thanked all BoD members for their commitment, especially those from Asia and Oceania who participated during their night hours.