



Date: 15 February 2026

ROWING SOUTH AFRICA (RowSA)

UNDER 23 PATHWAY DOCUMENT 2026

1. FOREWARD

1.1. This policy outlines the selection process, expectations, and key requirements for athletes aiming to represent South Africa at the **2026 World Rowing U23 Championships, Duisburg, Germany**. The process is performance-based and should be read in conjunction with the RowSA Selection document and Important dates as published on the RowSA Website. This document replaces all previous communications on this subject.

2. SELECTION PHILOSOPHY

2.1 The selection process is based on the following principles:

2.1.1. The Good Faith Principle: Athletes and coaches must uphold integrity, commitment, and transparency.

2.1.2. IC Mission and Vision: Maintain South African rowing's elite competitiveness and foster a fair, structured selection pathway to develop the future pool of elite athletes.

2.2. Target Range:

2.2.1. Primary Objective: Qualify athletes for the 2026 World Rowing U23 Championships based on competitive international standards.

2.2.2. Secondary Objective: Identify athletes with the potential to transition into the Senior National Team during this Olympic cycle, focusing on those who can contribute to podium performances at the Los Angeles 2028 and Brisbane 2032 Olympic Games.

3. PURPOSE OF DOCUMENT

3.1 To provide a clear, structured framework for selecting the U23 National Team, ensuring all athletes, including International Based Athletes (IBAs), are evaluated fairly and consistently.

4. DEFINITIONS

4.1. **RowSA IC:** Rowing South Africa International Commission.

4.2. **IBA:** International Based Athlete, training or competing in an approved overseas club or university programme.

4.3. **Selection Regatta:** Designated regattas for athlete evaluation.

4.4 **Performance Testing:** A combination of ergometer trials, water assessments, and race performances.

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5. SELECTION PRINCIPLES

5.1 Eligibility for Selection. As per important dates

- 5.1.1. Must register intent by 28th Feb 2026 <https://forms.gle/4fUs4834CLrL6X579>.
- 5.1.2. March Assessment Block - As laid out in the RowSA Important dates publication.
- 5.1.3. South African National Championships, Roodeplaat, racing in single or pair, heavyweight.
- 5.1.4. May Assessment Block - As laid out in the RowSA Important dates publication.
- 5.1.5. Must race in the **May National Selection Regatta** in an U23-compatible boat class (as per the World Rowing U23 Championships events).
- 5.1.6. June National Performance Assessment, Roodeplaat Dam
- 5.1.7. Ineligibility applies if an athlete does not compete in the May National Selection Regatta, unless exceptional circumstances apply

5.2 Assessment Boat classes

5.2.1 Any boat classes offered at the U23 World Championship may be presented at the May Selection regatta with the exception of the M4- and W4- which are reserved for alternative pathways (See point 6).

5.2.1.1 The IC may change the available boat classes at its discretion.

5.3 Selection Panel

The main policy requires the selection panel to be named in the pathway document.

5.3.1. **Selection Panel** Pursuant to the RowSA Selection Policy, the U23 Selection Panel consists of:

- **Chairperson:** IC Lead member- James Thompson
- **Lead Coach:** Thato Makoena
- **Additional Selector:** Sean Kerr
- **Additional Selector:** Shaun Keeling

5.4 Selection Process

5.4.1 Athlete Performance Criteria

- 5.4.1.1. The Selection Panel will assess athletes on:
- 5.4.1.2. Seasonal performances and results, including water and ergometer assessments in as per the "International Commission: Important Dates" publication.
- 5.4.1.3. Performance at water assessments, particularly the May National Selection Regatta.
- 5.4.1.4. Ability to meet U23 National Team expectations and requirements.
- 5.4.1.5. Qualification Standard: To qualify for the 2026 World Rowing U23 Championships, an athlete or crew must finish within **2.5 percent of the fastest boat class** in two of the 3 races at the May National Selection Regatta (across all age categories: U19, students, U23, and senior athletes).

5.4.2 The May National Selection Regatta

- 5.4.2.1. This is seen as the Primary Selection Event for U23 athletes. The Selection panel will invite candidate athletes to complete the May Selection Regatta.
- 5.4.2.2. Athletes must complete three 2000m races.
- 5.4.2.3. Race Schedule: One race on Friday, two on Saturday, and a possible fourth on Sunday.
- 5.4.2.4. Attendance is mandatory with the belief that the athlete meets the standards to qualify their

crew/boat.

5.4.2.5. Participation acknowledges readiness and suitability for qualification.

5.4.2.6. Equipment: Each athlete is responsible for arranging their own boats and oars; RowSA may on occasion allow use of the National Team Boats when it falls within the parameters RowSA Equipment usage policy.

5.4.2.7. The selection panel may request any athlete to race in any boat class or crew to find the best combinations.

5.4.3 The June National Performance Regatta

5.4.3.1. All athletes who qualify in May must race at the June Selection for a **progress assessment**.

5.4.3.2. Crews and coaches will be evaluated by the selection panel.

5.4.3.3. The selection panel may request any athlete to race in any boat class or crew to find the best combinations.

5.4.4. Appeals

5.4.4.1. Any appeals against a selection decision need to be considered and submitted as per the IC appeals published on the RowSA Website.

5.4.4.2. Athletes are reminded of the strict timelines laid out in this document.

5.4.5 Additional Assessments

5.4.5.1. The Head Coach, with approval from the selection panel, reserves the right to organize additional compulsory assessments, ad hoc trials, or crew formation races with reasonable notice.

5.4.5.2. The selection panel also retains the right to make unilateral changes to crew compositions if international racing results or internal testing suggest a faster combination can be formed.

5.4.6 Expectations & Requirements

5.4.6.1. Commitment to Excellence: Consistent high performance in training, testing, and racing.

5.4.6.2. Performance Data Submission: Complete all required ergometer and water trials within deadlines.

5.4.6.3. Attendance: Required at key selection regattas and subsequent training camps.

5.4.6.4. Coachability & Adaptability: Must work within the integrated system under the guidance of the U23 National Coach and RowSA IC.

5.4.6.5. Teamwork & Sportsmanship: Essential collaboration, mutual respect, and alignment with team goals.

5.4.6.6. Ethics: Must be available for drug testing in accordance with WADA guidelines.

5.4.6.7. Health Management: Must submit a medical certificate confirming fitness to the U23 National Coach by 1 May 2026.

5.4.6.8. Financial Responsibility: The athlete is responsible for all costs associated with the U23 World Championship tour (travel, accommodation, etc.).

5.4.7 Attendance and Absence Reporting

5.4.7.1. If an athlete cannot participate in a trial, assessment, or race due to medical or other exceptional reasons, they must submit their case in writing to the U23 National Head Coach.

5.4.7.2. Deadline: This representation must be received at least 12 hours before the selection event begins.

5.4.7.3. Requirement: No representations will be considered if made after the event has commenced.

5.4.7.4. Medical Evidence: A medical certificate from a doctor nominated or approved by the Head Coach must be provided for all illness/injury claims.

5.5 INTERNATIONAL BASED ATHLETE (IBA) CONSIDERATIONS

5.5.1 Continuous Communication & Data Sharing

5.5.1.1 IBAs must remain in regular contact with the U23 National Coach (or their nominee).

5.5.5.2. Performance data (ergometer scores, water trial results, race performances) must be submitted as per RowSA's requirements.

5.5.2 Participation in Selection Events

5.5.2.1. IBAs are expected to race in the May National Selection Regatta. It is noted that candidates for the alternative pathway are not required to attend the May Selection regatta.

5.5.2.2. Formal Exemption Request: If unable to attend, an IBA must submit a formal exemption request to the U23 National Coach at least three weeks before the event. The RowSA IC makes the final decision.

5.5.3 Extraordinary Exemptions

5.5.3.1. Granted in rare cases to an IBA competing at an internationally recognized elite level who meets high-performance benchmarks (as determined by the selection panel).

5.5.3.2. The athlete may still be required to race at the **June Performance Regatta** under specific conditions.

5.5.3.3. The final decision rests with the selection panel

5.6 General Exemptions

5.6.1. If an athlete cannot comply with a requirement and no specific exemption is noted, they may apply for a general exemption.

5.6.2. A formal written request must be submitted with full motivation to the U23 National Head Coach (u23nationalcoach@rowsa.co.za) no less than **three weeks** ahead of the regatta.

5.7 Selection Criteria for Coxswains

5.7.1. Coxswains will be assessed on the following factors in addition to standard athlete requirements:

5.7.1.1. Body Mass: Ability to meet and maintain weight targets.

5.7.1.2. Technical Skill: Evaluation of steering accuracy and on-water command during racing or training.

5.7.1.3. Coaching/Leadership: Interaction with the crew and ability to assist the coach with briefing and debriefing sessions

6. Alternative PATHWAY FOR U23 WOMEN'S AND MEN'S COXLESS FOURS

6.1 Purpose

6.1.1. The International Commission (IC) has created an alternative selection pathway for the U23 Men's (BM4-) and Women's Coxless Four (BW4-), a pilot program aimed at leveraging the growing talent pool of International Based Athletes (IBAs). The crew selected through this pathway will not be required to return to South Africa for the May National Selection Regatta. Furthermore, the W4- and M4- boat class will not be available for selection via the standard domestic selection.

6.2. Eligibility and Assessment Criteria

6.2.1. **This pathway is available to both locally based and IBAs.** To be eligible for consideration, athletes must meet the following criteria:

6.2.2. **Ergometer Performance:** The athlete must achieve a 2000m ergometer score of 7:10 or faster for women and 6:10 for men or faster on a static Concept2 Model C. This score must be achieved and submitted between 1st January and 31 April 2026.

6.2.3. **Ergo data:** Athletes must submit all 2, 5 and 6km ergometer scores completed within their club / university training programs.

6.2.4. **Performance Documentation:** It is the Athlete's responsibility to submit their results from club or university programs to program coordinator. Both water based and ergo based results will be used to determine final selection.

6.2.5. **Availability:** Athletes must be available in Europe or host country for a mandatory 15-day training camp immediately preceding the U23 World Championships to train with the crew.

6.2.6. **Engagement:** Athletes must demonstrate a consistent and proactive engagement with the U23 National Coach

and the selection process. This includes maintaining regular communication and data sharing.

6.3. Selection Process

6.3.1. The selection of this crew will be based on a holistic assessment of all criteria outlined in Section

6.3.2. The U23 Selection panel will review all submitted data and reserve the right to make the final selection that it believes will create the best and fastest crew.

6.3.3 The Selection Panel may require validation of certain data submissions from the club/ University coaches.

6.3.4. Athletes wishing to be considered for this pathway are requested to apply on the following link by **28 February 2026**

7. IMPORTANT DATES AND DOCUMENTS

7.1. RowSA General Procedures & Important Dates: <https://rowsa.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/2026-IC-Important-dates.pdf>

8. FINAL NOTE

8.1. All selection dates are subject to change at the discretion of the RowSA IC, subject to exigencies and due notice to all registered athletes.