

## RA Cardiac Screening Guidelines

FISA has recently adopted Bye-Laws to Rule 99 of the Rules of Racing regarding Health of Rowers. The Bye-Law provides:

1. *Pre-competition Health Screening*
  - 1.1. *From 2015, all athletes competing in the World Rowing Junior, Under 23 or Senior Championship regattas must have completed a pre-competition health screening which includes a questionnaire, a physical examination and an ECG following the IOC's recommended procedure. It is the responsibility of the national federation to ensure and certify that these Pre-competition Health Screening procedures have been performed.*
  - 1.2. *Thereafter, all athletes competing in the World Rowing Junior, Under 23 and Senior World Championship regattas must complete the medical questionnaire and undergo a medical examination each year, and, in addition, must undergo a resting ECG every three years up to the age of 23, and every five years after the age of 23.*
  - 1.3. *For all other events, including the World Rowing Coastal Championships and World Rowing Masters Regattas, it is strongly recommended that rowers competing in these events undergo this Pre-competition Health Screening.*

Rowing is a sport for life that is accessible to people of all ages, genders, fitness and skill levels, and is enjoyed by participants ranging from young rowers at school through to those at universities and in the wider club community through to masters rowing. Rowing is an excellent way for individuals to stay active and to experience the health benefits of physical activity in an enjoyable and social environment. Rowing Australia (RA), its Member Associations and clubs are committed to the health and wellbeing of its participants, whilst also ensuring that the sport remains accessible and that barriers to participation in the sport are minimised.

Consistent with this position, Rowing Australia provides the following guidelines to ensure that the sport remains a safe, healthy, accessible and enjoyable experience for all participants:

1. RA shall conduct pre-competition health screening protocols which comply with the FISA Rules of Racing for all members of Australian Junior, Under 21, Under 23 and Senior Teams. In the normal course of events this health screening will be conducted as follows:
  - a. The Team (or SIS/SAS) Doctor should perform the physical examination
  - b. A Sports Physician or Sports Cardiologist trained specifically in athlete ECG interpretation should report the ECG
  - c. Education should be provided to athletes prior to the health screening regarding the process and its implications
2. Whilst not mandatory, it is prudent that participants at all levels of Australian rowing should ensure that they are physically fit to compete in rowing training and competition by undertaking regular physical checkups and discussing their health with their personal General Practitioner.
3. Australian rowing clubs should consider implementing an AED (automatic external defibrillator) device and protocol within the club environment for all training sessions, including guidelines for administering first aid to a collapsed athlete, and training key club members (particularly coaches) in the use of the AED. Whilst the ideal situation is an AED device and protocol in each rowing club, it is recognised that this has cost implications which may affect clubs' abilities to implement this guideline.