

2020 racing season - further update

In our statement of 8 June 2020, we sought to provide certainty for athletes – ie that no further ranking races would take place in 2020. We were clear that we would take time to fully review the position and the implication of this decision, rather than making any further statements at that stage.

Following a full review of the rule book and ‘terms of reference’ the committee has decided to extend the current racing season to cover both 2020 and 2021, i.e. having a combined 2020/2021 racing season. As part of our deliberations, we have been clear that we need to apply the rules consistently, specifically in relation to the operation of the season.

Whilst no further ranking races will be held in 2020, it is anticipated that a full quota of races will be held in 2021. Having an extended season allows those who have competed in the early part of 2020 to be recognised for their racing achievements, whilst not detrimentally impacting on those who have not had the opportunity to compete so far. We believe that this approach is in keeping with the spirit and the detail of the rulebook, and allows for a full season of promotions, and potential end of season demotions.

Whilst we usually assume that a season is contained within a calendar year, we have challenged ourselves on this approach. On review, there is no clear definition of ‘season’ within the rulebook; and no rule that could be used to clarify that a season must be completed within a calendar year.

There are however some inconsistencies and areas for further consideration below:

1. Clause 6.6.5 suggests that a season may be limited to a year when considering paddle-up points: *"By way of clarification: points cannot be carried over from one year to the next. All points are lost at the end of the season."* The language is clearly inconsistent which is considered to be a drafting accident rather than a specific intention, as the alternative - with ‘year’ replaced by ‘season’ in the first sentence - equally covers the intention of the ACM motion.
2. Clause 6 further identifies that applications for end of season promotions and demotions must be made by 31st of October of that season.

Trying to interpret the Rule Book as a whole, it is very difficult to argue that either of the points above are persuasive to overcome other key parts of the Rule Book.

3. We will need to resolve (i) age categories for athletes (e.g. Rule 1.1.4, 1.1.5, 2.1), (ii) awarding of certain trophies (e.g. Rule 2.3, 2.6), (iii) reference to start or end of year rankings (e.g. Rule 6.2.2, 6.4.2, 6.5.2).

We know that continuing the season into 2021 will not be without its challenges, but firmly believe that it is the approach that mostly closely fits with the spirit and intent of the rulebook, allowing for a consistent and transparent application of the operation of the season.