

Athletes Committee 2017/2018

Fieke Reijntjes:

I am 30 years old and I live in London. I am Dutch and my first ever rafting competition with the Dutch team was in Korea 2007. I moved to London 4 years ago and I am part of the GBR rafting team since Indonesia.

To pay for all my rafting adventures I work for British Canoeing as the team manager for the canoe slalom team. I am lucky to work and train at the London white water centre (Lee Valley) where I used to work as the events manager.

I love to spread the rafting love. I have worked as a raft guide, I have set up beginners classes at our paddlesport club, set up a girls U19 team and organised competitions.

I think this committee is about making sure that there is a good balance between the needs of the IRF, event organisers and athletes when changes are required to move the sport forwards. To make sure athletes options are heard but also making sure athletes hear about the changes made and reasons behind it.



Ine Skjørten Wilson

Here is my bio. I have been raft guiding since 1987. Raft competing since Project RAFT pre world 1991 in Costa Rica, followed by the Project RAFT worlds in Turkey in 1993 and on Zambezi in 1995 ... and now in Japan was my tenth WRC representing Norway.

I have been kayaking almost just as long, and I am still teach kayaking at Sjoa Kayaksenter, raft guide, train local talents, been on the boards of two paddle clubs.

I work as a psychologist specialist having worked in a variety of fields including Olympic athletes, corporate team building, schools and mental health wards. My husband and I run a small rives based company where we live on the banks of river Sjoa. I am used to speaking English on a daily bases, and I can manage in tourist style Spanish and German. I would like to see all future competition meals with considerably less use of plastic.



Ales Danek.

I'm 38 years old, work as a sales manager for Würth company. I've been rafting since I was sixteen and last 10 years I'm a member of team HIKO as Czech raft team.

This new committee and membership I could see as good opportunity to say opinions and comments from athlete's side to IRF. For example, every year on ERC a WRC we could see a lot of smaller or bigger things that could be solved differently by IRF and organizers. And if these things will be discussed with us, athletes, it may could bring us higher level of rafting. There is also big topic about race rules in general, that can be actualized and revised into actual current time in rafting. I don't expect that voice of new committee will be essential, but it will be positive if IRF will be listening to us and will thing and discuss our opinions and proposals.

I hope that we will be helpful for IRF and for rafting in general.



Nikki Kelly

From the New Zealand Woman's Open Rafting team It is an honour to be invited into the Athletes Committee - to be alongside such esteemed white water paddlers. This is an exciting opportunity for the IRF, a chance for the athletes' voice to be heard and for athletes to contribute to the growth of the sport. Communication is key to any relationship. Athletes' voice is crucial to successful World Championships, and this link will provide instant feed forward to what it feels like for the athletes competing on the ground level. I support all meals less plastic, this is something our team feels very strong about, but save that for later discussions.

I raced my first World Rafting Championships in 1999 on the Orange River and have enjoyed every World Champs since bar one. Our NZ woman's team has podium at every world championships. Nowadays our open team is more like a Masters team, our oldest being 54 years old. Hey, the Japanese Masters men proved that this is a sport with longevity, which is comforting to know as I hope to keep meeting up with everyone for years to come. Most of my white-water career has been along the path of expedition style extreme kayaking and freestyle competing. I enjoy a more sedate lifestyle now as a full time Adventure Tourism tutor and mother of three young boys. Based in Rotorua central North Island, I am still very active in the river community, living in the kayaking and raft racing hub of New Zealand.



at the front with biggest smile, no helmet.

Keita Yagisawa

From the Japanese Men's Masters team. I am happy to be a member of the Athletes Committee.

I used to live in Cairns, Australia from 1996 to 2009. I had been a river guide there in Tully River that will be the place for the next R6 World Rafting Championships as you know. And also I had Australian residency, so I participated in World Rafting Championships in 2007 and 2009 as team Australia open men.

After that I came back to Japan to join the rafting team TEIKEI (Japanese open men's team) in 2009, and I was very lucky to get 1st place in World Champs 2010 and 2011. Then I quit team TEIKEI. Since I left team TEIKEI, I have been away from World Rafting Championships. But I am back again this year as Japanese Masters team. Because I am 43 years old now and lucky again to get 1st in my home country.

My English has been rusted day by day since I left Australia in 2009. Because I use only Japanese in here Japan. So I expect that it is sometimes difficult for me to understand what you guys talk about or maybe you cannot understand what I mean. But I will do my best as a member of the Athletes Committee to help IRF.



I am the right end of team photo.

John Anicito

37 years old and living in Breckenridge, Colorado USA. I starting working on the river as a raft guide in 2001 and ran many rivers across the USA for fun, work and racing. Now i work full time as a snowmaker at the Breckenridge Ski Resort, we just opened yesterday for the winter season.

I competed on the open men's team at the R4 WRC in Brazil and again at this year's R6 race in Japan. Through the many years of racing i have been on the 2nd place US team and know the challenges that all teams go through when attempting to make a run at the WRC.

Currently I'm the president of the US Raft Association which is responsible for organizing our national qualifying race each year and helping to promote and grow the sport throughout our country. This has been a great challenge based on the size and spread of our states. We face many of the same issues the IRF does when trying to grow the sport. In past couple years we have seen some growth and had 15 teams at our R4 National event last year, most ever, and sent 5 teams to the WRC in Japan, also most ever. So things are improving.

I'm looking forward to making some new friends and help make a voice for the teams competing. I'd like to see if we can get each team or country involved in the discussions through the IRF forum, this gives everyone a chance to speak their mind in a way that everyone else can see it. Also, it would be good to work on the schedule of events, lots going on with the pre worlds and worlds plus ERC and national qualifiers, etc. Maybe we could help figure out a way to get an international title sponsor to help cover costs at the WRC's or other international events and lower teams' expenses... just a thought.



Photo from Gore Canyon, Colorado River. I'm back right.

Lucas da Silva

My name is Lucas Paulino da Silva, I'm 36 years old. I am the founder of the Open Men team - Bozo d' Agua do Brasil, I am an athlete and coach of the Team and I am also coach of the U23 men and women teams, U19 men and women team and the Open Women team. My history with Rafting started in 1999, when I started working as an instructor in a Tourism Agency in my city, Brotas, Brazil. My first participation in the World Championship was in the Czech Republic, where we won third place in the competition. I have 7 World Rafting titles, 4 Pan American titles, 4 World Cups and some European titles. I also have 13 world rafting titles as a coach.

I graduated in Physical Education and have a social kayaking project in my city. I do not speak English, but what I can help and contribute to the Rafting committee, you can count on me.

