

Athletes Committee 2019/2020 – candidates

1. Ine Skjørten Wilson – Norway
2. Ales Danek – Czech Republic
3. Kris Kingston – Australia
4. Dragan Babic - BiH
5. Lucas da Silva – Brazil
6. Johana Arguello – Costa Rica
7. Paul Eames – New Zealand

1. Ine Skjørten Wilson



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.

Having read through the opinions voiced about changing the rules this winter, it made me realise how important the voice of the athletes are. We have to balance event organisers concerns, but the athletes' voices must be just as visible and important. I believe we must hold high fair play, a democratic organisation, a keen eye to develop the sport and stay in forever close touch with nature and the care for nature. Our dependence on nature is key not only to race rafting. It is crucial to everything we as humans do, in sport and in everyday life. Race rafting is actually a path to and a showcase of the importance of working with and on the terms of nature as in understanding the powers of moving water to be able to negotiate a section safe and fast. In addition you want the water to be clean to drink, no water - no survival in the bigger picture. And moving our perspective from racing and hydrology to the river as a metaphor - rivers are the veins of earth as well as of humans. Also race rafting discussions and decisions are connected to the attitude we view rivers with.

2. Ales Danek.



I'm 39 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 see as a good opportunity to say opinions and comments from the athlete's side to the IRF. For example, every year on ERC and WRC we 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 maybe 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 think and discuss our opinions and proposals.

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

3. Kris Kingston (Australia):



I currently represent Australia in the master men's division and will be doing so at the Tully WRC. Previous to this I have represented Australia as an Open men's competitor at the Japan world cup in 2008, WRC Bosnia 2009, WRC NZ 2013, WRC Indonesia 2015, and WRC Japan 2017.

I started rafting and living in Australia (Cairns) in 1999 and worked as a commercial river guide for 14 years before becoming a fire fighter.

However I was born in New Zealand and learnt my trade as a river guide there as my father was a river guide and one of the co-founders of River Rats NZ and then sales manager of Incept marine.

Rafting has been in my blood since I was 5 years old. I would like the opportunity to be a voice for athletes from all over the world, and help grow this wonderful sport to give current and future athletes the same and many more opportunities to explore this wonderful world we have, meet many new friends from all walks of life and for the athletes themselves to grow through competitive raft racing.

I currently am also Vice President of the Australian Rafting Federation where I am trying to help build and develop a wider paddling group and help grow raft racing in Australia.

I would like the athlete committee to work with the IRF and help build an athlete and coaches forum where different training techniques and drills can be shared and discussed between teams/ nations. This would give the junior teams and those teams that are new to raft racing new ideas and examples of how some of the best teams from around the world structure their training. This would also be a good forum for coaches to share their views. This may encourage current athletes to progress into coaching after they have finished racing by having a forum where they can discuss and learn the techniques necessary to become a coach.

4. Dragan Babic (Bosnia and Herzegovina):



First of all I am coming from family of paddling people because my father and uncle were one of the best canoe double paddlers in ex-Yugoslavia, so I was meant to be a paddler before anything else. I was born in the city of Banja Luka in the heart of Bosnia and Herzegovina. As many of you know my country had a big civil war and until 2000 we did not have much contact with sports and activities. So my first contact with paddling was in 2000.

My friend's, Boris Potočnik and Srdjan Šušnica in 2002, formed a rafting club named "Argonaut" and invited me to join and start rafting. That was my first contact with a rafting boat but having in mind that in that time I was paddling canoe slalom and downriver and I did not have time to train it seriously.

In 2010 I formed my own club and named it Dayak club. Now you must think I made a spelling error but not Dayak is traditional boat in Banja Luka and it is 7m long and it is completely made from wood and you drive it with wooden stick that is named Dayak. In that club we had 6 people that was in some part involved in paddling sport and then we decided to make a rafting team and to compete in Bosnian rafting league. After that all is history.

My biggest motivation to keep going is my team and the friendships that I have with all other teams.

My achievement in rafting on an international level are 4 medals in ERC in 3 different ERCs, 6 place in WRC in Indonesia and many wins in Euro Cup races.

I want to be a part of the Athlete's Committee because I think that I can help with my experience to improve rafting as sport and to be voice of athletes in the IRF.

5. Lucas da Silva (Core) (Brazil)



My name is Lucas Paulino da Silva, I'm 37 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.

I believe that the committee should focus on the development of new teams to enhance the modality of rafting, increasing the number of teams' participation in the races has made rafting ever stronger. I could help with my knowledge, taking advantage of the championships to do workshops for all teams that have an interest in participating and also for countries that do not yet have teams, besides strengthening existing teams, I would try to bring countries that do not compete yet.

6. Johana Arguello (Costa Rica)



I started my involvement in water activities with my first descent in a river kayak in 1997, and then started to learn about rafting a year later in 1998. My first competition was the Pan-American Champs in Costa Rica in 1999, and since then I have continued to be very involved in rafting, working as a river guide while I finished the university.

My second competition was the Pan-American Champs in Costa Rica again in 2006. The following years I left the competitions to focus on the development of my rafting company together with my partner of life, Pongo Baker, and our partner in business Miguel Andrades.

In 2015, I participated again in raft racing with half of my original team of 1999 and the motivation started again to keep training and paddling in different events. That year was the National Rafting Championship and then the WRC in Indonesia. After that, at the WRC in Dubai I received the title of General Judge from the IRF. I was a Volunteer Judge for the WRC in Japan in 2017 and an international judge for Nationals in Mexico that same year.

Since 2016, I created my R4 rafting team call Black Mambas and we competed in the Nationals in 2018 and won our category for WRC Argentina 2018, last November.

I also a Mountain biker and am an adventure enthusiast!!

I'd like to help the Athletes have a stronger voice in the IRF.

7. Paul Eames (New Zealand)



My name is Paul Eames, a few of you will know me as PaulE. I have been involved in the rafting scene since my father started a rafting company on the Rangitikei River in New Zealand in 1981, also doing a lot a lot of kayaking, playing around in the "Rodeo" scene in the late 90's.

My first foray into the World Rafting Championships was the Camel Challenge in 2001, competing and achieving podium in the Open Men's category. Over the last couple of years I have been paddling with the New Zealand Masters Men Team and having a great time with it! I'm also coaching junior teams.

Keen to give back to the sport now and stoked to be a part of the Athletes committee for 2019.