

PRESS RELEASE

Launch of a new global era for the Sport and announcement of major upcoming events

The merger project between the International Rafting Federation (IRF) and the World Rafting Federation (WRF) marks the beginning of a new chapter for the global rafting community. The unified body envisions a thriving international movement where rafting stands as a symbol of unity, inclusivity, sustainability, and innovation. By establishing a single, authoritative global voice, WRF and IRF seek to strengthen the sport's international visibility and secure its future inclusion in the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

A core principle of the merger is the recognition that the two event models historically developed by IRF and WRF are **not competing alternatives**, but rather **complementary formats** that together offer a complete and forward-looking vision for the sport. The new worldwide organisation will integrate both approaches into a unified global competition framework based on two distinct sport formats:

- **Classic Format**

Held primarily on purpose-built or enhanced artificial and semi-artificial courses, the Classic Format focuses on high-performance racing that meets strict international standards. At the highest levels (such as World and Continental Championships) competitions feature National Federation Teams selected through official national qualification events. Disciplines include **Sprint** (two runs), **RX and Slalom** (with the awarding of titles only by discipline).

- **Adventure Format**

The Adventure Format embraces natural whitewater environments and promotes competition on challenging, culturally rich river settings. International events are contested by **teams**, composed of athletes who may also be of different nationalities: adventure, exploration, culture and elite performance in extreme environments. Disciplines include **Sprint, H2H, Slalom and Downriver** (with the awarding of titles only by overall).

Major events announced

- **2026 Classic Junior & U23 World Championships – Pau, France (23–25 April 2026)**

The world championship event will take place in Pau. The competition will be preceded by the **Elective Congress** (21 April 2026 – provisional date) of the new international organisation, during which the new governing bodies will be formally elected. More administrative information will be published soon.

- **2026 Adventure Team World Championships (late august/early September – *Location & date to be confirmed*)**

A global event for freely composed teams, showcasing the Adventure Format in a high-profile natural setting. Final details will be announced shortly.

- **2026 World Cup 1 – Pau, France (23 - 25 April 2026)**
Held concurrently with the 2026 Classic Junior & U23 World Championships.
- **2026 World Cup 2 – Val di Sole, Italy (26 - 28 June 2026)**
Organized in collaboration with the ICF Wildwater event.
- **2026 World Cup 3 – Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (20-22 November 2026)**
Held concurrently with the Pan-American Championships.

Continental Championships (Classic format)

Dates will be confirmed in the coming months for the following continental competitions:

- **2026 European Championships – Banja Luka, Bosnia and Herzegovina (29-31 May 2026)**
- **2026 African Championships – Kenya (10-12 July 2026)**
- **2026 Pan American Championships – Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (20-22 November 2026)**
- **2026 Asian Championships – *Location & date to be confirmed***

With these initiatives, the rafting community affirms its commitment to building a unified global pathway for athletes, strengthening international cooperation, and elevating rafting to new competitive and cultural horizons.

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