



9 April 2021
By email

Dear IRF Members

Along with my greetings, I send each of you my best wishes for your continued health and safety during these difficult times, and for the health and safety of your families, friends, communities, and the members of your rafting organisations. Please know that should the need arise, the IRF stands ready to help you in any way that we are able.

Update on the status of 2021 IRF World Rafting Championship

As you are aware, in the last weeks many IRF member nations around the world have re-imposed travel restrictions and lockdown measures due to rapidly growing cases of Covid-19. Several effective vaccines have been developed to combat the SARS-CoV-2 virus and are beginning to have a positive effect. However, mutations of the virus have emerged that are continuing to pose challenges to getting the pandemic under control.

According to the latest figures from the [World Health Organisation \(WHO\)](https://www.who.int) published on 06 April, *“Globally, new COVID-19 cases rose for a sixth consecutive week, with over 4 million new cases reported in the last week. The number of new deaths also increased by 11% compared to last week, with over 71 000 new deaths reported.”*

This unprecedented situation has once again put in jeopardy, the IRF World Rafting Championships (WRC), rescheduled to be held August 2021 in Ziyuan, China. The IRF Administration has remained in regular contact with our IRF member organisation in China, and officials in Ziyuan County, as these extraordinary events continue to develop. Together, we have continued to monitor and assess the probability of whether we can safely and effectively hold the WRC in China this year as planned.

With the pandemic continuing unabated, our China hosts have informed the IRF Administration that their government will continue to impose restrictions and lengthy quarantines on foreigners entering China for the foreseeable future. Ziyuan County officials are also understandably concerned that the WRC could put their citizens at risk of exposure to the virus. To ensure the safety of the athletes, officials, organisers, participants, and spectators, they have requested that their hosting of the WRC be postponed to 2022.

To facilitate this request, we have contacted Rafting Club Kanyon of BiH, our scheduled host of WRC 2022, and they have graciously agreed to move their event to 2023. Thus releasing the 2022 WRC for Ziyuan. After receiving these assurances, the IRF Board of Directors have voted to approve both of these changes. Therefore, WRC China 2021 is officially postponed to 2022, and WRC Bosnia 2022 will be moved to 2023.

I am saddened by the need to pass you this unfortunate news, however all involved parties agree that this difficult decision is the best option under the present circumstances.

We will continue to explore the possibility of safe options for hosting a 2021 WRC in a different location toward the end of this year. However, the reality of this occurring is unlikely unless the pandemic improves dramatically in the next months. This decision will also reflect the reality that our athletes and member organisations will need to be informed many months ahead of the event to prepare their teams, book flights, organise visas, and arrange time away from work and families, among other important considerations.

Be assured that we will continue to make all such decisions responsibly and ethically. As always, the IRF will put the health and safety of our events, our athletes and supporters, and our sport ahead of all other considerations.

I wish to take this opportunity to thank the IRF member nations of China and BiH for the patience they've displayed during this uncertain process, and for their willingness to work closely with the IRF and each other to support our wonderful sport and our large and growing family of athletes and member federations.

As we find our way together through the uncertainty caused by the pandemic, the IRF will continue to keep you informed, and keep the spirit of rafting alive. Like all of you, we look forward to the day when we can put these difficult times behind us and once again gather together to enjoy our great sport of rafting in the safe and professional setting that it deserves.

Respectfully yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'JW Jones', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Joseph Willis Jones
International Rafting Federation - President
www.internationalrafting.com

