



2nd June 2021

Dear Athletes, Coaches and Members of the Rowing Community,

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE ROWING ASSOCIATION OF ZIMBABWE THAT PETER PURCELL – GILPIN WILL REPRESENT ZIMBABWE IN THE MEN’S SINGLE SCULL EVENT AT THE TOKYO 2020 OLYMPICS BETWEEN 24TH AND 31ST JULY 2021

I am pleased to advise that in accordance with the selection criteria set by the Rowing Association of Zimbabwe (“RAZ”) Technical Committee, Mr Peter Purcell – Gilpin has been selected to represent Zimbabwe in the Men’s Single Scull (“M1x”) event at the Tokyo 2020 Summer Olympics in Japan between 24th and 31st July 2021. Reverend James Stephenson, a former international Great Britain rower and triathlete, has been selected to coach Peter at Tokyo 2020.

Peter’s selection to represent Zimbabwe at the Tokyo 2020 Olympics is the culmination of four years of hard and intensive training by Peter in Zimbabwe, Australia, England, South Africa and Zambia. Much of Peter’s time has been spent training at Molesey Boat Club in the UK alongside members of the Great Britain rowing squad. Between January and March 2020, Peter attended a high performance rowing training camp in Australia with some of the best rowers in Australia, all hoping to qualify for the Tokyo 2020 Olympics. During the intense Covid 19 lockdown periods experienced in the UK during 2020, when Peter was unable to row and train on the water, he switched to training on the indoor rowing machine and on a bike, and set himself hard physical challenges to maximize his fitness and develop his mental toughness. These challenges included a marathon on the indoor rowing machine (42.2 km) (in a time only 7 seconds off the British record for his age bracket), cycling 1,700km in 10 days, and climbing 9,000m up and down repeatedly on a single hill on his bike in 15 hours (an event called “Everesting” as it is the equivalent to climbing to the summit of Mt Everest and back down). Because of the tough lock down restrictions again in place in the UK early this year, Peter trained in Solwezi, Zambia with James Stephenson, between January and early April 2021, rowing 200 km per week on the water and doing regular work outs on the rowing machine, in hot and humid conditions similar to those found in Tokyo and at an altitude of 1,500 metres.

In international rowing competition Peter qualified Zimbabwe for a place in the M1x event at Tokyo 2020, by winning a silver medal at the African Olympic Qualification Regatta in Tunisia, in October 2019. In November 2020, Peter came second in the African Indoor Rowing Championships against stiff competition from 18 countries in Africa. This gave Peter an automatic entry to the inaugural World Virtual Indoor Rowing Championships in February 2021. In this event, Peter finished in a very commendable 9th place out of 20 competitors from around the world, achieving a world class time of 5 minutes 57 seconds, despite competing from Zambia, at an altitude of 1,500 metres, with a significant disadvantage to most athletes who were competing at sea level. During April 2021, Peter competed at the Italian Memorial Regatta in Piediluco, Italy against international athletes from eight countries and won a silver medal in the M1x A final event. In the Rowing World Cup 2 championships in Lucerne, Switzerland in May 2021, Peter came 4th in the C Final against 29 international athletes from 20 countries.

I would like to congratulate and thank Peter for his efforts and wish him the best of success at Tokyo 2020. I would also like to thank Peter’s current coach, James Stephenson, and Peter’s wife, Micheen (who represented Zimbabwe in the Woman’s Single Scull event at the London 2012 Olympics and at the Rio 2016 Olympics) for the tremendous support they have given to Peter.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "A.L.", is written over a light blue circular stamp.

**ANDREW LORIMER
PRESIDENT
ROWING ASSOCIATION OF ZIMBABWE**

OUR MISSION is to excite, inspire and encourage Zimbabweans to enjoy the benefits and rewards of participation in all aspects of rowing across all levels and extend this to the Southern African region.

