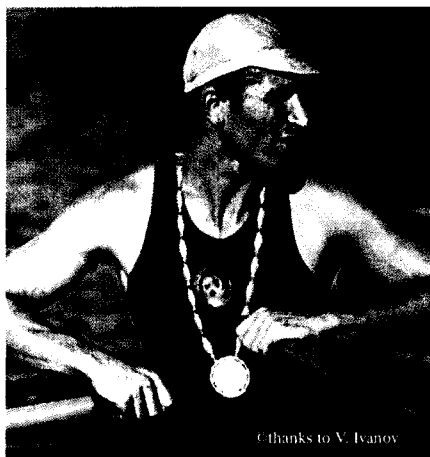


Legendary rower, three-time Olympic champion Viacheslav Ivanov to be honoured by FISA



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The legendary Viacheslav Ivanov (RUS) shall be present at the Rotsee, this week-end, 49 years after becoming the first ever world champion in the single scull here, in Lucerne. He shall be awarded a medal of honour to commemorate his legendary career and exemplary rowing technique. The ceremony will take place on the medal ceremony pontoon shortly before the start of the afternoon racing session on Sunday 10 July. The medal shall be presented by Mr Denis Oswald, President of FISA.

VIACHESLAV IVANOV – by Michiel Jonkman

Viacheslav Ivanov was barely eighteen years old when he won Olympic gold in the single scull for the first time. His victory came out of nowhere. The Australian Stuart Mackenzie was expected to win. However, Ivanov was the best sprinter on Lake Wentouree near Melbourne in 1956, overtaking his rivals one by one in the final 300 metres of the race. This was just the start of Ivanov's rise to fame in the single scull. During the next two Olympic Games the Soviet rower dominated in his field, earning a place in the history books as the first rower to win the premier event in rowing three times in a row.

Viacheslav Ivanov is an icon in the world of rowing. With very little coaching, he intuitively perfected the rowing technique. He introduced a smooth, flowing rowing style which was a major improvement upon the wooden manner used by all the others in that era. In 1959 this technique allowed him to become the first single sculler to break the magic 7 minute barrier. Ivanov set a record (6:58.8 minutes) at the European Championships that remained unbroken for decades.

The Soviet single sculler was not only in a class of his own as far as his technique was concerned but was also headstrong and obstinate enough to stand up to the powerful Soviet system, and go his own way. He played the mind game that goes with single sculling to perfection. The single sculler not only plays the boat and the oars, but also the opponent; Ivanov was a master player.

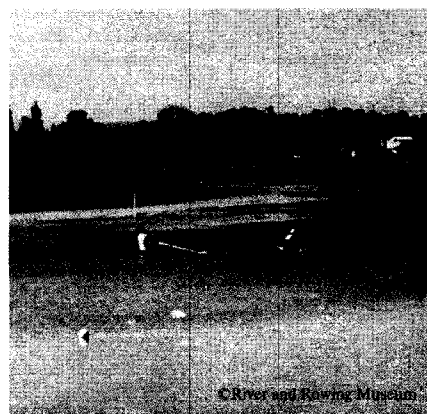
His bouts with Australian rower Stuart Mackenzie are legendary. A year ago, both athletes met face to face at Henley Royal Regatta for the first time since the 1960's. Within minutes the differences that caused their rivalry were once again apparent; Ivanov, the strong silent type whose actions speak louder than words and Mackenzie, the vocal type who revels in the attention that comes with stardom. But the Olympics allow for only one single sculler to shine, and that rower, unmistakably, was Viacheslav Ivanov.

“Viacheslav Ivanov is a legendary athlete of our sport whose rowing technique was far ahead of its time”, says Denis Oswald, FISA President. “His amazing tactical skill was legendary and his physiological talent exceptional. FISA has decided to start a new honour for these exceptional rowers, our ‘Legends of Rowing’, as a means to recognize these heroes from our past. It is wonderful that we start now with one of the greatest athletes our sport has ever seen.”

What better location at which to honour Viacheslav Ivanov than the Rotsee, where he became the first World Champion? Almost fifty years later, the Russian legend returns to Switzerland to receive the accolade befitting his impressive achievements.



Viacheslav Ivanov receiving the Olympic medal from IOC President Avery Brundage, Melbourne 1956



Viacheslav Ivanov beating Stuart Mackenzie at the Melbourne Olympics in 1956