

THE TOUR DU LAC A LA RAME, AN OUTSTANDING CHALLENGE

The Tour du Lac rowing racing event is an international competition of endurance organised at the end of September by the rowing section of the Société Nautique de Genève (SNG) and sponsored by the Services Industriels de Genève (SIG). The starting command is given on Saturday morning at nine o'clock from the north pier of Port Noir. The first Tour du Lac took place in 1972, year of the centennials of the organising club. Thanks to in particular the loyalty of its participants coming mainly from Germany, France, Switzerland and Italy but also from Great-Britain, the Netherlands, Hungary and even from Russia, the appreciation it has generated, the beauty of the landscape and the enthusiasm of all the volunteers participating in the organisation, the Tour du Lac, which was originally intended as a single event, has become an international annual event, that some have not hesitated to qualify as « *Königin der Regatten* », well appreciated by long distance rowing lovers. Some have participated more than ten times, others fifteen and one competitor even more than twenty times.



This event is open only to rowing boats capable of facing the weather conditions of the Lake of Geneva, such as wind and waves, and which are intended for four rowers and a coxswain, equipped either for sweep oars or sculling oars. As a rule, the participants use "yolettes". During the Tour, the five crewmembers can alternatively row and cox.

The participants are divided into various classes: senior men and senior women, masters (the average age of the team is at least 40 and the youngest member must have reached the age of 35 the year preceding the Tour), mixed (crew in which at least two members are women) and according to entries, juniors (the youngest crew member must be 16 and the oldest one must have reached the age of 18 the year of the Tour).

To participate to this event, the entry form must be accurately filled out and signed and must be received by the organiser before August 15 of the year of the Tour together with the Declaration and Waiver. In addition, each crew shall have paid its entry fee at the latest the evening before the start of the race.

Because of the danger linked to this event and the physical efforts required to perform the Tour, the participants must, before being authorised to start the race, imperatively be able to swim at least 500 m, have reached the age of 16, be in good physical condition, present no counter-indications to the rowing activity on a competitive level, have undergone the type of training which is compatible with the requirements of the Tour and have the proper safety equipment such as life jackets, scoops etc. as well as sufficient food and drinks and eventually, the necessary visas to be authorised to enter the territories of the Swiss Confederation and/or the French Republic.

For safety reasons and though this shall be the individual duty of each participant, the organiser monitors, as far as possible, the teams on water with a fleet of motor boats and on land by a bus service. Moreover, the course is buoyed with more than ten control marks that each team must reach and where each passage is registered. Finally and for security reasons, it is specified that, under penalty of being excluded from the race, the control mark of the Lausanne-Vidy (approx. 50 km) must be reached within less than six hours and thirty minutes and the control mark of Bouveret (approx. 85 km) in less than nine hours and with a time difference not exceeding three hours with the first team.

For those participants who so desire, dormitories can be put at their disposal in the shelters of the civil defence for the nights of Friday and Saturday.

After the prize giving ceremony, this exceptional sporting event ends on Sunday at noon around a convivial dinner during which the participants happy to have reached their objective share their experience and emotions and, as if bitten by the rowing bug, can't await for the next edition of the Tour.

Experiment this extraordinarily challenging event and don't hesitate to register for the next edition of the Tour !

