

Thor Nilson on.... Coaching with rowing machines

If you start to teach novices on Concept 2 rowing machine the feedback is not there. This is because the load on the body is quite hard on the back and at the catch you bounce. And so as a coach you need to control the athlete all the time. But with Rowperfect the feedback quickly teaches them.

Concept 2 is a fitness machine, and a good one. But if you are a serious rower and sit on C2 all the time it isn't the best way to develop and keep your technique.

On the Rowperfect you must move and check [the accuracy of] the timing between the catch and the leg drive – if you do it wrong you move the seat up and down the bar. The feeling of the movement is so important. As an oarsman if you want to use the ergometer for the rowing movement the Rowperfect is the one to use.

When I first saw the Rowperfect, I was sceptical because it looked like a sliding rigger and FISA didn't want the sliding rigger because it makes the sport more complicated and more expensive. But the Rowperfect isn't a sliding rigger because the seat moves as well. The feeling you get on it is more close to what we are doing in the boat than on other rowing machines.

While using the Rowperfect, if you make mistakes and don't get the co-ordination it shows you as you move up and down the seat. If you don't get the catch and leg drive co-ordinated you quickly lose the stroke. The unbalanced seat gives the feeling of the boat as well.

I have great respect for Concept – but it is not for people who need to know rowing. From a coaching point of view you are better off with Rowperfect.