

Venue - Quarantine, Pit and Mixed Zones

All major events for all sports, including the Olympic and Paralympic Games feature a Mixed Zone, where the athletes leave the Field of Play and are met by anti-doping and the media. In the case of sailing this is via a slipway and access to this area is carefully controlled by the relevant accreditation. All positions within the mixed zone will be defined by a document, with at the Olympic Games the mixed zone primary position being held by Olympic Broadcast Services (OBS).

Sailing also has an additional media challenge, that within major events since 2006, it has introduced a pit lane, in effect a mixed zone that is live prior to the boats leaving for the Field of Play (FOP). In addition to this media call (equivalent to the camera introducing each athlete at the start of a athletics track race), we also have to make sure that the boats comply with the measurement rules which are undertaken within a quarantine area.

For London 2012, we created a mixed zone that started at the side of the top of the slipway and took the sailors (they go through the mixed zone without their boats) around a large area that house at least ten boat parking spaces. At 1800 hours the night before a medal race the ten sailors in the medal race had to park their boats in the ten boat berths - these being numbered in the current overall positions. This area is surrounded by a double barrier route, with the athletes in mixed zone mode walking between them and the media outside. Consequently it was very easy to close this area with temporary barriers or webbing to turn it into a quarantine zone until a certain time before the race when it became a pit lane for interviews prior to the start of the race and leaving the dock (In the same way that the Americas Cup now runs a dock out show).

The sailing instructions and athlete media guide define the times of all of these events and how the athlete needs to comply.

London 2012

The challenges for London 2012 within these parameters were as follows:

We had two slipways close to each other and for safety allowed the RSX to launch from the slipway with no Mixed Zone for all qualification rounds. This meant we needed mixed zone marshals asking sailors to go through the mixed zone (we ticked people off a list as it was a compulsory action - talking to the media was not compulsory but entering the mixed zone was)

For the finals the RSX used the Pit lane like everyone else, although the quarantine for the RSX was a separate area within their rigging / storage tent.

We had keelboats (Star and Women's Match racing), who were berthed in the marina all the time (no lifting during the regatta) - again very close to the mixed zone but we used marshals to make sure we had compliance. Keelboat teams still had to present themselves to the Pit Lane, their boats stayed in the marina.