

ISAF Events Strategy
Briefing Document for ISAF Committees
September 2006

1. INTRODUCTION

ISAF is defining its Strategic Plan embodying the following two principles:

- ISAF's Strategic Plan sees the lifetime sport of sailing as an attractive, united and globally thriving participation sport offering current and future generations a wide diversity of accessible challenges and opportunities throughout their lives.
- ISAF seeks to promote and continually improve the sport globally, without discrimination, and with a commitment to the participation of women.

The **ISAF Events Strategy** is the section of the Plan that defines how ISAF will ***enhance the quality and appeal of sailing events***. The definition, and continual review, of this strategy is the primary task and responsibility of the Events Committee.

Within the strategy are a number of core components. The initial draft of these components is the responsibility of the appropriate ISAF committee identified below, and their initial recommendations should be delivered to the Events Committee in November 2006. The Events Committee is responsible for aligning and integrating components into the ISAF Events Strategy.

2. GUIDELINES FOR THE EVENTS STRATEGY

Sailing is a diverse, lifetime participation sport appealing to all ages and nationalities. It is both a competitive and a recreational sport; it appeals to volunteer officials; it uses traditional and modern equipment; and it is environmentally sustainable.

Sailing is a successful sport and the Events Strategy should build on its merits. While sailing should learn from other sports, it should remain true to its values and characteristics.

The ISAF Events Strategy therefore has to:

- promote the diversity and strength of sailing as a participation sport, and grow participation in terms of number of countries and number of sailors;
- promote the elite element of the sport of sailing to elite athletes, the media and public, and sponsors;
- welcome people into the sport at all ages, and, for elite young sailors, give them a pathway to international success;
- improve the quality of (and recognise appropriately) the work of volunteers and race management, for the benefit of sailors, volunteers, the media and the public;
- ensure that major events are co-ordinated and marketed effectively while facilitating simple organisation of grass-roots events;
- embrace, involve and assist other organisations such as class associations, the marine industry, and event organisers whose businesses depend on the success of the sport;
- promote the environmental and international goodwill qualities of the sport.

3. CORE COMPONENTS OF THE ISAF EVENTS STRATEGY

The specialist committees responsible for the core components of the Events Strategy are:

	Component	ISAF Committee Responsible
Define the elite strategy & events		
1	Olympic & supporting Elite Events strategy	Events Committee
2	Match Racing strategy	Match Racing Committee
3	Offshore Events strategy	Offshore Committee
Define the strategy & events for junior and youth		
4	Junior and Youth Events strategy	Youth Championships Sub-committee
Ensure there is world-wide growth through participation events		
5	Regional Games strategy	Regional Games Committee
6	Team Racing strategy	Team Racing Sub-committee
7	World Sailing Games strategy	Events Committee
Ensure ISAF is managing the sport optimally		
8	ISAF Calendar of Events	ISAF Secretariat
9	“World Champion” title policy	Events Committee
10	ISAF World Rankings System	Events Committee Rankings WP
11	Event Management	ISAF Secretariat

3.1 Elite Events: Guiding Principles

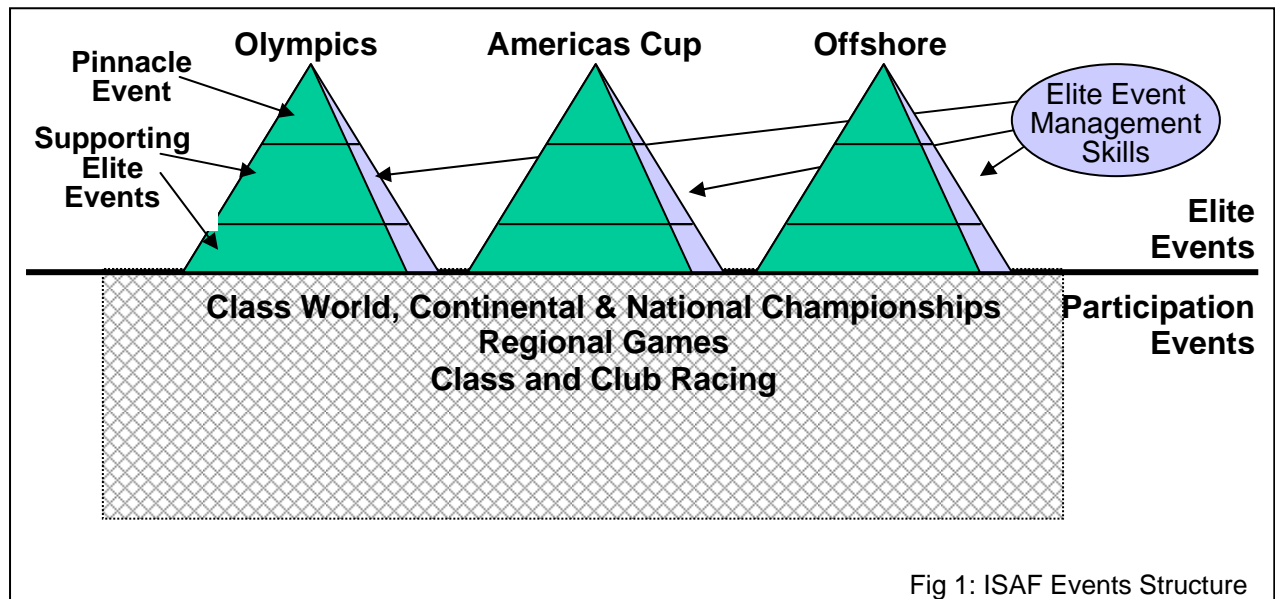
The purpose of the Elite Events section of the ISAF Strategic Plan is to provide:

- a clear events structure and hierarchy for sailors wishing to succeed at the sport's highest competitive level;
- a structure and hierarchy that is complementary to, and under-pinned by:
 - the range of non-elite Participation Events;
 - youth and junior competitions and squads;
- marketing and other promotional support that attracts and rewards sponsorship, and enables the most successful sailors to become sporting heroes.

Currently there seem to be three “Pinnacles” for the range of Elite Events in sailing: the Olympic Games; the Americas Cup; and Offshore (although today there is no clear single pinnacle in offshore racing) – see figure 1 overleaf.

The following **principles for Pinnacle Events and Elite Events** should apply:

1. Pinnacle Events are held less frequently than annually.
2. Each Pinnacle Event is supported by a hierarchy of ISAF-graded Elite Events which allows the sport, and its finest competitors, to promote themselves between Pinnacle Events.
3. Entry to Pinnacle Events, and the Elite Events which support them, is not open to all, but is based on some ISAF ranking system, with appropriate wild-cards.



4. The more that Pinnacle and Elite Events can be represented as competition between nations, the greater will be the publicity they generate.
5. The format, location, equipment and race management of Elite Events should be consistent with the participation sport of sailing, but optimised for visual impact, excitement and media appeal. Umpiring should be used where appropriate.
6. Given the wide range of events in sailing, for any event included in the Olympic regatta, the Olympic regatta must truly be the pinnacle for that event (unlike, for instance, tennis).
7. Normal class world championships are considered "Participation Events", with entry criteria determined by the class or OA. However Olympic class world and continental championships should be integrated into the hierarchy of elite events, and their results reflected in the ranking systems.

3.2 Elite Event Strategies

Separate components to the Events Strategy, each consistent with the above principles, are to be developed for the three groups of Pinnacle and Elite Events in figure 1:

1. ISAF Elite Events: Olympic Events *(responsibility: Events Committee)*

- a) Define the purpose of Olympic participation for the sport of sailing, and recommend the Olympic Events strategy which best delivers that purpose (this strategy should also consider Equipment and format if these are material to delivering the purpose).
- b) Recommend the supporting Elite Events Strategy to promote the Olympic Events and the sport's heroes (and their nations), and retain and build media appeal, between Olympic Games. These could include:
 - the four-yearly Combined Olympic Classes World Championships
 - the annual World Championships of Olympic Classes
 - an annual "World Cup for Olympic Classes / Events" or similar

The format of any elite circuit event should, as far as practicable, be consistent with that event at the Olympic Regatta.

- c) Within (b) above, recommend:
 - which year in the 4-year cycle the Combined Olympic Classes World Championships should take place;
 - how the winners of the World Cup series should be decided;
 - how, if, and on what basis existing Grade 1 events are included in the elite circuit;
 - what titles the winners of elite events should receive – titles should be clear and simple, and differentiated from class world champions;
 - any policy towards the awarding of prize money.
- d) Define a structure and process for Elite Events, Class World Championships and other ISAF graded events to feed the ISAF World Rankings. Recommend on what basis Regional Games would become part of this structure.
- e) Recommend a qualification system, based on the ISAF World Rankings but optionally including qualification regattas, and local and emerging nation “wild-cards”, for entry to Elite Events and the Olympic Regatta.

2. ISAF Elite Events: Match Racing Strategy *(responsibility: Match Racing Committee)*

- a) Define the ISAF Match Racing Strategy from entry level events to Americas Cup, addressing male, female and (as appropriate) youth competitions. Include as appropriate:
 - an annual elite Match Racing programme to promote Match Racing, and the sport’s heroes, within the ISAF events structure.
 - a global event structure to promote the discipline globally, to attract new sailors, MNAs and sponsorship, and to feed the ISAF World Rankings.

3. ISAF Elite Events: Offshore Events *(responsibility: Offshore Committee)*

- a) Define the ISAF Offshore Events Strategy and recommend the roles of ISAF and other organisations in the delivery of the strategy

3.3 Youth and Junior Events

The sport of sailing should continue to play a pivotal and highly beneficial role in the development of young people. Most sailors first join the sport at junior or youth age, and it is at this time that the love of sailing is likely to be instilled. However many sailors, in particular female sailors, leave the sport between 18 and 25, and ISAF should have a strategy for minimising this loss.

The current annual ISAF Youth World Championships is an extremely successful event, attracting over 60 countries and 250 sailors aged between 15 and 18. It is well supported by a hierarchy of MNA squad activities and youth and junior class world, continental and national championships. The Championships takes every opportunity to encourage participation and development of sailors, and to pass back to emerging sailing nations best practices for developing sailors and sailing.

It is appropriate that the ISAF Youth World Championships be held annually. However rather than having a stand-alone strategy, it should be the pinnacle of an ISAF Junior and Youth Events Strategy.

4. ISAF Junior and Youth Events Strategy (responsibility: Youth Championships Sub-committee)

- a) Define the ISAF Youth World Championships objectives and strategy within the context of an ISAF Junior and Youth Events strategy, including:
 - the event and equipment strategy for the Championships
 - the strategy for raising the quality of youth sailing in emerging sailing nations.
- b) Review the scope and value of other initiatives in international junior and youth competition including:
 - pathway from junior to youth events
 - pathway from youth to senior events, for both those that are of Olympic calibre and those that are not
 - whether youth events should be co-located with senior events (as in tennis)
 - mixed boy / girl junior and youth events
 - additional skills and roles (e.g. mentoring) for ROs at youth and junior events.

3.4 Participation Events

Sailing is primarily a participation sport. The richness and diversity of sailing events, driven by local clubs and classes, is to be encouraged. Any control over these events is for MNAs within their jurisdiction, within the framework of ISAF's Rules and Regulations.

Elite and Participation Events have different purposes, and therefore require different strategies. Participation Events must enable and encourage participation, be fun to take part in, and encourage friendships and learning. Whereas Elite Events are about promoting the elite: winning is important; eliminating a portion of the fleet before the end of the event is acceptable; and the highest standard of race management is mandatory.

World and Continental Championships for Classes should be promote participation and enhance the participation experience, subject to the class meeting ISAF criteria for being an International Class, and any requirements of the ISAF Calendar. Any entry criteria for such championships should normally be a matter for the Organising Authority.

When a participation event also forms part of the ISAF Elite Events Strategy, ISAF may specify additional criteria to apply to such an event.

5. Regional Games Strategy (responsibility: Regional Games Committee)

Regional Games provide an opportunity to raise regional participation, and feed regional sailors into the global Elite Events. This should be the primary purpose of such events; however, if of sufficient quality, a Regional Games regatta may become an Elite Event with its own separate ranking lists, qualification criteria and feeder regattas.

- a) Define ISAF's Regional Games objectives and strategy, including recommendations for Events, Equipment and qualification criteria that best drive regional participation.

6. Team Racing Strategy (responsibility: Team Racing Sub-committee)

Team Racing as it is practised today is a participation event. While popular with all age groups, it is of particular value and suitability to school and university aged sailors.

- a) Define the ISAF Team Racing Championships objectives and strategy, including recommendation for frequency of event and encouragement of participation of school and university-aged sailors
- b) Define a strategy for raising the level of global team racing participation, including the inclusion of team racing in other global sailing events such as Regional Games.

7. ISAF World Sailing Games Strategy (*responsibility: Events Committee*)

The World Sailing Games provides ISAF with an opportunity to increase the participation and popularity of the sport of sailing in emerging and non-Olympic nations. However ISAF currently has no clear objectives and strategy behind this event.

- a) Define the ISAF World Sailing Games objectives and strategy, including recommendation for frequency, location and structure of the event to maximise participation.

3.5 Global Management and Co-ordination of the Sport of Sailing by ISAF

ISAF has responsibility to ensure proper management and co-ordination of the sport of sailing. For events within the jurisdiction of MNAs, this responsibility should be delivered through MNAs. However for Elite Events, ISAF should take a leading and pro-active role. Included in this is responsibility for:

- the International Calendar of Sailing Events, and the grading of events within it;
- the allocation of "World" titles;
- the ranking system, and its use in qualification for ISAF graded events;
- the quality of all aspects of event management at ISAF graded events.

8. ISAF Calendar of Events (*responsibility: ISAF Secretariat*)

ISAF should manage and publish a single global calendar for the sport. It should include all ISAF graded events, and all world, continental and regional class championships for all sailing events including Offshore.

- a) Define which grades of events must have their dates approved by ISAF, and how and when that approval is requested and granted
- b) Define (*in consultation with Race Officials*) the criteria for initial approval of such an event, for continuation of such approval, and for any sanctions or removal of approval.
- c) Propose an outline 4-year calendar for such events (finishing with the Olympic Games), taking into account all Pinnacle, Elite and other ISAF events.
- d) Propose any restrictions on dates of events.
- e) Define the event data that should be included in the calendar.
- f) Recommend what other events should be included in the calendar, any criteria for inclusion, and by when the event data should be received.
- g) Propose to the Executive options for charging fees for events listed in the calendar.

In making these recommendations, the Secretariat should research the practices of other international sports governing bodies, and the opinions of major sailing event organisers.

9. “World Champion” Title Policy (*responsibility: Events Committee*)

Sailing is primarily a diverse participation sport, and the capability to crown a sailor as “World Champion” within his or her particular niche of the sport is an asset that encourages this very participation and diversity.

However:

- the granting of this capability should be used by ISAF as a lever to promote good organisational practices that improve sailors’ and volunteers’ enjoyment of the sport;
- this capability should not have the effect of diluting the achievement of our sailing heroes or the appeal of the elite element of the sport to the media and the public.

Therefore (see **1. ISAF Elite Events: Olympic Events**) a separate and superior title should be recommended for winners of Elite Olympic Events.

- a) Define and monitor the minimum criteria that an international class must meet before it can award World Champion status to its champion; these criteria should be achievable by all flourishing and well-managed International Classes.

10. ISAF World Rankings System (*responsibility: Events Committee Rankings WP*)

- a) Review the current ISAF World Ranking system in light of the recommendations above, and in particular the need to use the system as the basis for entry to Elite Events worldwide.

11. Event Management (*responsibility: ISAF Secretariat*)

- a) Evaluate the opportunity provided by specialist event organisers, and recommend how ISAF should interface with them.
- b) Review how to make events more innovative and media- and sponsor-friendly.
- c) Recommend event management best practices, including the role of Event Director at Elite Events, and mentoring and buddying systems at Participation Events.
- d) Expand the use of on-the-water umpiring.
- e) Recommend how to recruit sailors into event management, and recruitment, recognition and reward policies.
- f) Investigate whether changes to the Advertising Code could be beneficial to sponsors, and to the visual appeal of the sport, at Elite Events.

Events Strategy Working Party
September 2006