

Format 2008 Olympic Sailing Competition

Format Proposals

A submission from the President

Proposal:

To create focus on the last race of the Olympic Sailing Competition and ensure continuity from crossing the line through to the Medal Ceremony, that:

- (a) The top 10 placed boats after race 10 (race 15 for 49er) of the Olympic Sailing Competition will proceed through to the final race 11 (race 16 for 49er).
- (b) All of the top 10 placed boats will be required to sail and complete race 11.
- (c) The final race shall not be discarded. In partnership with the IOC, the Executive Committee are considering that there be only one discard in a series, which shall be limited to races 1-5.
- (d) Competitors will carry their points score from the preceding races 1-10 through to race 11, with a weighting re-calculation given to the points achieved to give a preferred weighting to the boat place 1 overall after race 10, and so on through to boat 10, to increase the opportunity of any of the top 10 boats achieving a medal. The final scoring system to be determined by the President in consultation with the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and Olympic Broadcast Services (OBS) before the end of 2005.
- (e) That direct judging be used in the final race, ensuring that as the competitors cross the finish line there can be no further protests which effect the results and that the medallists are confirmed at the moment of crossing the line.
- (f) That the medal ceremony takes place on the same day as the final race and as close as possible after the medal race concluding to maintain the momentum of the event.
- (g) That the Executive Committee finalizes all proposals with the IOC Sports Department by the end of 2005.

Reason:

1. After recent formal meetings in October 2005 between ISAF and the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and Olympic Broadcast Services (OBS), ISAF has received very clear guidance on the changes appropriate to the sport to ensure it adapts for television. The IOC has also advised that the "heart and soul of sailing" must not be changed.
2. The IOC and OBS are not in favour of a series staged knockout. Having discussed a wide range of finals, the above proposal which has been developed in partnership is supported by both the IOC and OBS and is what they believe is necessary for television.

3. The very clear indication to ISAF is to avoid the medals being determined before the last race.
4. This Submission is open for debate as to whether it applies to all eleven events at the Olympic Sailing Competition, or selected events.
5. Both the IOC and OBS have advised that the current system of discards is confusing for the media and makes it very difficult to predict the outcome due to the extensive number of calculations and variables required to determine those in medal contention. They are supportive of only one discard, which is limited to early in the series, for example races 1-5, with all other results counting.
6. The IOC and OBS have very clearly advised that sailing is expensive to televise and the “cost per hour of output” is the most expensive on the Olympic Programme. The IOC is happy with this situation and willing to help ISAF, but require our co-operation to improve the efficiency of the production and excitement from the race course.
7. Alongside the above proposal, ISAF is working with the IOC and OBS on the concept of a “centre course” which will be immediately adjacent to the Olympic harbour and will be used for the live broadcast. This will enable an increased use of fixed television equipment, alongside water and aerial cameras, to enhance the production, and increase the opportunity for spectators on the harbour wall and on the race course providing the much needed atmosphere and “fan environment” preferred of Olympic Sports. It is planned that a medal plaza be created which during racing will provide big screens and commentary from the race course and which will maximise spectator participation in the medal ceremony.
8. The Executive Committee are also working with the IOC, OBS and Swiss Timing on the following proposals:
 - Increased use of “virtual reality” tracking;
 - Use of audio on all competitors’ boats and some race committee boats;
 - Increase number of boats with Onboard cameras;
 - “Look of the Boats” - increased use of graphics on sails and decks, and names on bibs to make boats more easily identifiable;
 - Revision of events names to make more media friendly , and possible use of “equipment” name for broadcast to increase understanding;
 - Partnership with OBS to maximise the scheduling of the sailing competition in the Olympic programme to increase broadcast potential;
 - Increased attractiveness of “athlete uniform” / personal equipment.