2024 Olympic Sailing Competition

Format

A submission from the Swedish Sailing Federation

Purpose or Objective

To make Olympic sailing more attractive to fans of sailing and sport in general. The 2024 Olympic regatta should be sailed in a format which will add intensity and excitement through the hole regatta. Not letting the random factors play a major role and in a format that is possible to conduct on an Olympic final day.

Proposal

• Have a decisive final day but minimize random factors
• Have as many nations as possible who have the chance to win a medal as late as possible, in order to get increased media interest.
• More excitement earlier in the week (every race counts and crews are knocked out).
• Simple format that is easy to explain and understand.
• Not have too many races on the final day as it is a risk with wind conditions.

Example: Format with 40 boats (The format could be adapted to other number of boats. The principle will be the same, but without quarter final in smaller fleets.)

Qualification round

• 4-9 qualification heats. (to simplify and distinguish from previous format we call them “heats”)
• No discard (could be an option with 1 discount)
• The last eight boats are knocked out.
• The overall result in the qualification round is brought forward to the quarterfinal and semifinal and final. The qualification result will also seed the sailors into equal groups in the quarterfinal.

Quarterfinal

• Four quarterfinal fleets with eight boats in each.
• The boats relative overall positions in the qualification series is brought forward as first heat result.
• Two heats sailed on quarterfinal day
• No discard
• The first four from each quarterfinal to qualify to the semifinal

Semifinal

• Two semifinal fleet with eight boats in each.
• The boats relative overall positions in the qualification series is brought forward as first heat result.
• Two heats sailed on semi-final day
• No discard
• The first four from each semi-final to qualify to the final
Final
- Eight boats in the final.
- The boats relative overall positions in the qualification series is brought forward as first heat result.
- Two heats sailed on final day
- No discard

Current Position

The format used at the Rio Olympics does not deliver excitement during the qualification series and sometimes the medals are already distributed before final day

Reasons

1. Keep it simple

   The format will simplify for sailing journalists to report and for the non-sailing public to be able to follow the racing and enjoy the excitement of Olympic sailing. It’s crucial to have the same logic through the whole Olympic regatta so fans and media easily can follow any of the Olympic Sailing events at any stage.

   By saying “quarterfinals” fans and media will instantly understand that it will be a semi-final later and will ask themselves how many boats that will go to the semifinals. We make our sport accessible to the big audiences and simple to follow.
2. The final day is the most important one…

Many countries will only broadcast the final day at the Olympics. Therefore we should have as many countries as possible that have the chance on the final day. Sailing nations (like Denmark) will certainly broadcast both semi-finals and quarter-finals.

There is a problem with the directly decisive final as the sport of sailing has a random factor in the game. And if you run the final with only four boats is too few nations.

3. …but delivering excitement during other days will give us more opportunities

By having stages that people understand like quarter-final, semi-final we will deliver excitement to the audience that are watching from the shore and countries that are broadcasting. By using QF and SF it’s also easier for countries to explain “some” success. They can say that they have reached a certain stage. For example: Sweden is really happy when we reach 1/8-final at the World Cup in soccer.