

Olympic Kiteboard Equipment - Cost Control

Cost Control – New Regulation 23.1.9

A submission from the Royal Yachting Association

Purpose or Objective

To ensure the Equipment for Olympic kite-boarding:

1. remains low cost;
2. is equal in performance and commercially available;
3. provides a clear and level path for all sailors and MNAs looking to participate in kite-boarding;
4. includes the option of supplied equipment for kite-boarding at the 2016 Olympic Games.

Proposal

1. ISAF should not adopt IKA's current unrestricted box rule for Olympic Equipment as it will produce an expensive arms race where only MNAs with the resources to develop the equipment will be able to participate competitively.
2. ISAF should adopt a new regulation

23.1.9 Notwithstanding ISAF Regulations 23.1.3(c) and 23.1.7, Council shall select the Equipment to be used for kite-boarding at the 2016 Olympic Sailing Competition at its 2013 Mid-Year Meeting."

3. ISAF should establish a Working Party to review kite-boarding equipment including kites, boards and appendages and make its recommendations for 2016 Olympic Equipment to the 2013 ISAF mid-year meeting.
 4. The Working Party should consider the following options:
 - a. **Supplied Equipment**
Use current IKA Class Rules for Sailing World Cup and other major events with ISAF deciding to provide supplied equipment for Olympic Qualification events and the Olympic Games.
OR
 - b. **Manufacturer Controlled Class**
To select a manufacturer controlled design compatible with the existing IKA Class Rules with the option of negotiation of supplied equipment for Olympic Qualification events and the Olympic Games.
(Further details available within Appendix A of this submission)
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Current Position

IKA Class Rules - which is an open box rule with very few limitations on design, materials or use of equipment

ISAF Regulations – As above

Reasons

The introduction to the IKA Class Rules (2012 Edition) states;

“The International Kiteboarding Class rules are meant to regulate the equipment used in kiteboarding events. The aim of the rules is to enable sailing crafts that are regarded as kiteboards to participate regardless if they are factory made or custom made with certain restraints. Development of equipment is encouraged. The rig/kite configuration is not limited in size and it is one unit. It can be solid, but it should be operated in a kiteboarding manner.”

The Olympic Games and their history have consistently shown that in those sports that allow development of equipment, nations who spend the most money on optimising the equipment for a specific venue, condition or user is most likely to benefit from any performance gain.

It should also be recognised that a large majority of today's Athletes are full time sailors and will spend significantly more time training and developing equipment than they would actually racing on it. This will lead to significant equipment development options prior to any item being “brought to market”.

There are 3 main areas of concern:

- Fins – from RS:X experience, almost immeasurable differences in the thickness can make big difference to performance. Commercially available fins costing in excess of \$1000 EACH are available at present. High quality fins that are IDENTICAL will eliminate much of the need for R & D here.
- Kites – Expensive R & D programmes will explore ways of making the best kites using the best materials.
- Boards – allowing a range of boards will undoubtedly widen the weights of riders. However, the costs of developing boards for different wave and weights of sailors will take place and increase the requirement for sailors to own most items to ensure they have the fastest equipment. The number of commercially available boards should be limited.

Noting the above concerns and in line with its own Regulations and Requirements for Olympic Equipment, ISAF should reject the box rule within the current IKA Class Rules and consider alternatives which instead maximise participation whilst avoiding unnecessary and excessive equipment costs. These alternatives should be considered, and decisions made, by May 2013 to minimise the impact of the delay.

In the event of an arms race occurring under a box rule it will quickly become an elitist arena where only those countries able to develop the full potential from the box rule will be able to compete at the top level. This will inevitably undermine the potential the Event has for increasing universality. There are also a number of patents outstanding with regards to kites which could further

complicate development matters as well as potentially lead to further advantages for individual MNAs.

APPENDIX A – Development of a Manufacturer Controlled class

- Identify a set of kiteboarding equipment which retains a wide range of sailor height/weight. A set of equipment should include board, kite and fin – other parts are considered to be open.
- Work with manufacturers and distributors to have a clear build specification and distribution map
- Propose an introduction timeframe for the new equipment and how it will be incorporated into key ISAF events during 2013-2016 cycle.
- Produce a set of class rules which limits modifications to equipment and defines and controls their use.

Manufacturing Plants

Wherever possible a single manufacturing facility for each item of equipment should be considered to ensure a high level of consistency in the equipment. If available, a neutral manufacturing facility should be selected such that it is not selecting a monopoly.

ISAF should look to control the build specifications, material specifications and permitted manufacturing tolerances. Any facility selected should be able to demonstrate to ISAF a high level of effective internal quality control.

Wherever possible, a “white” option should be considered which is offered to sale to any distributor for their own styling and onward sale.

Equipment Specifications

Designs should reflect the latest trends within the kiteboarding class and should include a variety of options to ensure that a wide range of sailors' physiques can be catered for.

The maximum equipment proposed should be;

- 2 boards (same design concept but differing volumes),
- 5 kites (each a different area),
- 5 fins (different fins which are interchangeable between any board(s) proposed).

Methods of identifying the different kites should be considered to increase the visual appeal and understanding.



Example of potential look of kites with distinctive colours and area reserved for each brands logo.

Distribution

Wherever possible, a “white” option should be considered which is offered to sale to any distributor for their own styling and onward sale.

For the boards, consideration should be given to distributors being able to design their own graphics and have them applied at manufacture source.

For kites, sections could be reserved for distributors to apply their own graphics at manufacture source.

The above considerations would allow for a wider range of distributors to sell the equipment and therefore utilise more distribution networks.

Limitations

Limitations of one board and three kites per event per competitor would still be applicable. Fins would be interchangeable per conditions but will be limited to those as provided by the chosen manufacturer.

Selection and Implementation Process

WP to propose a set/design of equipment along with a set of proposed manufacturing facilities. Designs should be as current as possible to ensure longevity within the IKA production series.

ISAF should retain the possibility of looking to re-evaluate the selected design of the board and/or the kite at its Annual Conference in 2014 with the potential to update the design to ensure the equipment is current at the 2016 Olympic Games.