2016 Olympic Sailing Competition

Continental Qualifiers

A submission from the International 49er Class Association

Purpose or Objective

To maximise the opportunity for participation and fairness in the qualification process for 2016 Olympic Games.

Proposal

The following regattas to be used as continental qualifiers for the 49er and 49erFX events at the 2016 Olympic Games:

- **North America**: 2016 World Championship, Clearwater, FL, USA, Feb 2016
- **South America**: 2016 World Championship, Clearwater, FL, USA, Feb 2016
- **Europe**: 2016 European Championship, TBD, May 2016
- **Asia and Africa**: 2016 African & Asian Championship, TBD (Asia), March 2016
- **Oceania**: 2016 Oceania Championship, TBD, Jan 2016

Current Position

No decision has yet been made with respect to the events that will be the continental qualifying events.

Reasons

1. The Olympic Continental Qualification system has been designed to maximise participation in the Olympic qualifying process by creating a series of events local to the world’s sailors.

2. ISAF Sailing World Cup regattas are aimed to be elite performance events and have participation quotas (in the case of the 49er and 49erFX - 25 boats), and are therefore unsuitable to attract broad participation. With the ISAF Sailing World Cup aimed at elite sailing, it is vital for a great participation series to emerge so that developing teams can find great regattas to compete in.

3. 49er and 49erFX World and Continental championships are open events and can maximise the participation of teams in the qualification system. Including Olympic Qualification spots into these events supports the secondary circuit of events under the ISAF World Cup which will strengthen sailing.
4. Specifically with regard to South America, the 49er and 49erFX are hosting the World Championship in Buenos Aires in 2015, an event that maximises the number of countries participating in the Olympic qualifying process from South America. Further, to clarify, each of the North and South American Continental spots would go only to teams from that continent, so that is not materially changed.

5. The main reason to have the South American Continental Qualifier at the World Championship in 2016 is to maximise the opportunity for fairness. There is one South American Country that has a large number of teams sailing and the other South American countries only have 1 or 2 teams. At a small regatta with only South American teams there is a greater chance of incidents between countries negatively contributing to the selection process when compared to a World Championship, where teams race in large multi-national fleets.

6. Specifically with regard to the combined African and Asian Championship, it is expected that only a single African team will participate, with a number of Asian countries. It is unlikely that the African MNA would select for their Olympic Team, a sailing team that qualifies unopposed for the Olympic Games. Such an outcome undermines the very reason the Continental Qualification system has been implemented.

7. In creating a multi-continental event, and combining the two (2) separate continental qualification berths into two (2) combined continental berths, it increases the number of countries and teams participating in the qualification regatta, giving greater credence to the qualifiers.

8. Having all of the final qualification events in 2016 maximises the amount of time teams have to develop toward their Olympic goals and minimises the amount of time the Olympic cycle stalls between the final qualification for 2016 and the beginning of the push to 2020.