

**The IFDS Development Seminar took place at 0900-1330 hours on Monday 8 November 2010 in the Olympia Meeting Room at the Divani Caravel Hotel, Athens, Greece.**

**Present:**

Emma Hallen, Acting Chair, IFDS Development Committee

Linda Merkle, IFDS President

Wilfried Klein, IFDS Vice-President

David Staley, IFDS Vice-President; Chair, IFDS Governance & Procedures Committee

Costas Tsantilis, IFDS Vice-President, Technical Delegate, 2012 Paralympic Sailing Competition

John Twomey, IFDS Vice-President, Chair, IFDS Equipment Evaluation Commission

Henry Sleutel, IFDS Vice-President; IFDS Technical Committee

Betsy Alison, Chair, IFDS Coaches Commission

Micky Ayalon, IFDS Technical Committee, IFDS Governance & Procedures Committee, IFDS Events & Scheduling Commission

Bernard Destrubé, Chair, IFDS Medical Committee

Caterina Gouleliou-Tsantilis (GRE), IFDS Development Committee

Brian Todd, IFDS Equipment Evaluation Commission

Thodoris Alexas GRE

Nici Anastasiou GRE

Lynne Beal CAN

Debbie Blachford GBR

Vassilis Christoforou GRE

Tim Coventry GBR

George Delifoukas GRE

Rob Holden RSA

Aggelos Lemanis GRE

Maja Lesny POL

James Lund-Lack, GBR

David Newton GBR

Argiris Notaroglou GRE

Rich Percy GBR

Panayotis Tsinganos GRE

Atzemian Vagelis GRE

Maria Vlachou GRE

Pip Woods GBR

The IFDS Development Committee Chair Emma Hallen welcomed all participants and opened the meeting.

IFDS President Linda Merkle provided a background about IFDS, its relationship with ISAF, its Committee Structure and its responsibilities for high performance and Paralympic Sailing. Linda highlighted the importance of growing participation and development opportunities in sailing for people with a disability. The video from the 2010 IFDS Disabled Sailing World Championships, Medemblik, Netherlands was shown.

IFDS Medical Committee Chair, Bernard Destrubé outlined the role of IFDS International Classification used for IFDS Events and the Paralympic Sailing Competition.

Emma Hallen provided a background to including people with a disability in sailing, describing the variety of equipment and classes that are available and use of adaptations. There is some very good equipment available but you can get started just using the boats which are readily available. It was also noted that some people like to sail alone and other as part of a crew, with other people with a disability or able-bodied.

The steps of development include training programs and coaching, leading to events and racing, but many people may just like to participate recreationally or try yacht cruising.

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Venue access is also an important aspect, including transport to the venue, physical access for wheelchairs and people with limited mobility, access to docks (preferably floating pontoons with a lifting device), toilets showers and social areas. But the most important aspect is attitudes, that clubs are welcoming and inclusive of people with a disability even if the facilities aren't perfect.

Attitudinal problems often stem from ignorance or fear, insecurity and lack of experience or knowledge of disability. This can be addressed with disability awareness training.

Brian Todd provided a description of the programs for sailors with a disability in Canada. There are three layers – Disabled Sailing Associations, Sail-Able Programs and Yacht Clubs where sailors are more interested in high performance sailing participation. It is important that these groups work together and there is a good understanding of the sailor pathways.

8 of the 10 provincial sailing associations have a mobile program with a trailer of Access and Optimist class boats to extend programs to remote locations. These are often sponsored and coordinated through provincial recreation departments who meet the costs. In some cases, permanent programs are established where the mobile program has visited, often buying the Access boats and enabling the sailing association to renew its equipment.

Disability awareness training is included in CYA Instructor training and there are professional development modules available.

The CYA has started to run regional camps for sailors with a disability with expert coaches and supported travel. The Canada Games is a multi-sport event every four years and the 2.4mR will now be included in the sailing competition that has single and two-person dinghy competition, enabling sailors with a disability to compete in an open national level regatta competing alongside able-bodied sailors. This has stimulated the provincial programs who are working to develop the skills of more sailors with a disability.

Canadian Paralympic Champion Paul Tingley has recently won the Open 2.4mR World Championships against a strong fleet of sailors with a disability and able-bodied. It takes an enormous amount of personal effort to achieve this level of success, but the sport can make its pathways clear and put programs in place that make it easier for people to progress through the sport.

It was noted that it is important for sailors with a disability to be sailing against skilled able bodied sailors to help hone their skills. The fact that the 2.4mR, SKUD18 and Sonar have been selected for Paralympic Sailing Competition has had a negative impact on involving able-bodied sailors. It is important to create opportunities for able-bodied people to try and enjoy and get involved in these classes. The Italian 2.4mR class is about 50/50 able bodied and disabled and they conduct a series of 15 events around Italy.

Dan Jaspers, ISAF Training Manager addressed the meeting. The ISAF Training and Coaching syllabus is as applicable to people with a disability. Input via Emma Little would be appreciated to help guide the development of the training materials produced by ISAF. These materials will be distributed to all emerging and developing nations. Training pages are available via the ISAF website. Connect to Sailing has developed into more of an umbrella rather than a single initiative and encompasses scholarships, training programs and a variety of activities and is supported by a variety of boat manufacturers.

Debbie Blachford, Royal Yachting Association (RYA) Sailability Manager spoke about grass roots and sub high performance levels of disabled sailing. RYA is focused on integrating people with a

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disability and 25,000 people are now sailing through the 150 Sailability groups. One program has 300 regular sailors with have several thousand casual participants. Some programs are at clubs affiliated to the RYA, others are independent but recognized as training centres. All of which are run by volunteers. Some Centres of Excellence have been established and regional coordinators are partly supported by RYA Sailability to assist regional programs.

Programs often are started at existing clubs who see the opportunity to include people with a disability. Each of the groups own their own boats and raise funds for equipment. There is strong support from service clubs, corporate sponsors and the government.

There is a strong focus on volunteer training and development, with many coming from a non sailing background. There is a detailed volunteer training syllabus and rewards scheme to recognize the commitment of volunteers to training and taking on greater responsibility. Disability awareness training is an important part of the volunteer training program.

Sailor training programs are well documented and link in to the standard RYA training schemes.

RYA Sailability publishes a 'Where to Go Sailing' booklet to inform people which clubs and centres are accessible and offer suitable programs. The aim is providing a wide variety of programs and opportunities.

RYA Sailability is now using new technologies to bring best practice alive and make information available to a wider range of people – Sailability TV, Facebook and a Sailability iPhone app.

New projects – Young Sailability, Windsurfing, Intellectual Disabilities, Cruising & Inland Waterways. The Beginner to Winner program is designed to show a clear pathway through the competitive levels and focus on introducing people to racing.

The Sailability Multi-Class Regatta is an annual event that includes coaching and enabling people to see and sail in a variety of classes and having fun in providing a supportive introduction to competitive sailing.

Emma Hallen introduced the concept of promoting mainstream inclusion.

David Staley noted that sailing is almost uniquely positioned to include people with a disability within the mainstream sport. Sailing has made some significant steps forward, especially since the introduction of sailing into the Paralympic competition. Through Sailability and other accessible sailing programs, there are a growing number of participation opportunities worldwide. People with a disability represent 10-20% of most national populations but are under represented in active sport and recreation.

The sport has progressed from no specific programs to segregated programs to greater integration within clubs and programs, but the focus should now be on making the mainstream sport more inclusive – in participation, training, competition, officiating and administration. Sailors with a disability are sailors first, with the same interests and aspirations as the wider sailor group.

IFDS is working in close cooperation with ISAF to progress mainstream inclusion, e.g. the Paralympic Classes are included within the ISAF Sailing World Cup.

David noted that Yachting Australia had developed and is implementing a Disability Education Program so that all nationally accredited instructors, coaches, race officials and also club committees receive disability awareness training. He encouraged all nations to consider what opportunities they have to include people with a disability within the mainstream sport.

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Betsy Allison noted that there is over 50 Million people in the USA who have a disability but few are involved in active sport. Many of the programs provide basic participation opportunities but do not link people effectively into the sport.

US Sailing Team includes the Olympic & Paralympic competitors and enables regular exchange between the sailors. It has been easier to achieve this at the high performance level than at the participation level.

Background in coaching – don't coach any differently. Just be aware of the physical and intellectual abilities of the athlete. Need to be creative and adapt to giving different cues and communicate differently, otherwise the messages are the same.

It was asked - what is the best age to target to get people with a disability involved in sailing. As many disabilities are late (adult) onset conditions or a product of trauma, most people with a disability get involved later than able-bodied sailors.

There was a broad discussion about how to link with schools and organizations and establish successful programs that involve participants' longer term in the sport.

Betsy Alison made a slide presentation about adaptations, noting that they don't need to be complex or expensive – just appropriate for the individual and enable them to function well in the boat. The adaptation can also be removable. These mostly address stability and movement within the boat – seats, transfer benches, non-skid, grab bars and handles. Hand function can be assisted by additional purchase or modified tiller extensions, tractor (push-pull lever) steering. Complex articulated transferring seats are also possible. Different adaptations and approaches are needed for vision impaired sailors.

There was a question about ocean passage making and noted there are a variety of opportunities is a whole range of areas within sailing.

Wilfried Klein described the IFDS Website platform [www.ifds.org](http://www.ifds.org) that has been developed through a grant from METS Dame. The aim is to share information relevant to sailors and coaches in particular and make information easier to locate. There are links to a variety of other sites and the development of the site relies upon contributions from around the world and a working group. It is certainly not a closed shop and IFDS would welcome additional material in the form of photos, videos, documents and participation in the discussion groups.

Emma Hallen thanked all the presenters and participants and welcomed feedback to inform next year's seminar.

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