2024 Olympic Sailing Competition

Olympic Events & Equipment

A submission from South Africa Sailing

Purpose or Objective

The Objective of this proposal, responding to the challenges of the IOC, is to provide leadership on the evolution of the sport of sailing as an anchor participant in the Modern Olympics.

The classic imagery of the Olympics is about Athleticism, Endurance and Grace. The athleticism of the sprinter, the endurance of the marathon runner and the grace of the discus thrower are our marbled memories of what the ancient Games must have been like. These iconic figures of the original Olympics define our mental pictures of the modern Games.

To be relevant in the Olympics Sailing must lay on Events that encompass Athleticism, Endurance and Grace. The ten Events below are a credible response to that challenge. Three Events on the list in particular are on point. Power Sailing Men speaks to Athleticism, Endurance is covered by the Mixed Marathon and Grace by the balletic figures of Foiling Women.

Proposal

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* Note the equipment for this event is under antitrust review

- For both Men’s and Women’s Windsurfer – RS:X: Propose evolving towards a foiling board.
- For Heavyweight Men’s One Person Dinghy – Finn: Only propose the change of name of the Event.
- For Foiling Women: Propose the WASZP or something similar as a one design Foiling Moth.
- For the Mixed Marathon: Propose a Keel boat and a crew complement as per the dictates of the Equipment Committee

Current Position

As above.

Reasons

MEN’S and WOMEN’S WINDSURFER

The RSX Class is as ubiquitous as the Laser and so fulfils a double contribution of being an exciting innovative class to watch which is also universal given it’s widespread fleets. There is a demand for a modern board hence the evolution to Foiling

POWER SAILING MEN - THE FINN

- Top level Finn sailors exhibit physical fitness indicators comparable with professional rowers, sprinters and cyclists. Free pumping has transformed the physiques of the sailors. The increased athleticism of modern Finn sailors is because of the power, fitness and strength required to drive the boat hard. On the podium they look like Olympians.
- The average age of people joining the fleet is dropping as the average weight of younger people is increasing. As body mass increases around the world the age at which young Finn sailors first reach 80kgs is now 18. This leaves a fit young sailor with a bigger build little option other than the Finn for an Olympic campaign.
- Looking at weight distribution, there is a huge gulf between Finn sailors and the current other four male classes, which all cater for a similar sized athlete. There is just a 2 per cent overlap at the top of the quite narrow Laser weight range with the bottom of the Finn weight range.
- An independent study carried out at the 2015 European Championships concluded that U23 Finn sailors are morphologically more similar to elite rowers than sailors in the Laser Standard class.
- People weighing more than 83-85 kg have practically no chance to compete as sailors at the Olympics, which means you exclude a lot of sailors.
FOILING WOMEN- INTERNATIONAL MOTH/WASZP

- The 2017 International Moth World Championships at Lake Garda attracted an entry of 240 sailors from 25 countries. More important was the quality of the fleet. The high calibre of competition included skippers from the most recent Americas Cup and sailors with more Olympic medals round their necks than any other regatta with the exception of the Olympic Games itself. Peter Burlington flew directly from Americas Cup celebrations in New Zealand to compete. Nathan Outeridge Americas Cup skipper of Artemis, 49er Gold Medallist and Moth World Champion was there as were Laser Silver Medallist Annalise Murphy from Ireland and defending women’s World Champion Wakao Tabata from Japan. Wakao is now campaigning a Nacra 17 which is on foils of course.
- Sailing has this phenomenally exciting Class which is both Innovative and Universal ready for a " Plug and Play" as a brand new Olympic Class. AND the exciting thing is Women will be in the limelight in their very own showcase Event. They will for the first time be leaders rather than followers.
- Admittedly, women’s participation in the Class is currently low but so was their participation in the Nacra when female participation became mandatory.

MARATHON MIXED- CLASS TO BE DETERMINED

- We can create an Event for Offshore Endurance, the sailing equivalent of the Olympic icon, the Marathon. Imagine the spectacle of having a Vendee Globe sized audience at the finish line in France for the 2024 Olympics. The Olympics could be bookmarked with the sailing Marathon as the first event at the beginning of the Olympics and the running Marathon in its traditional slot at the end. The sailing Marathon could be timed to start when the Olympic flame begins its journey and finish at the same time as the Opening Event.
- The Marathon could be sailed on the Brittany Coast of France. This would be windier than the Mediterranean at the relevant time of year and bring sailing closer to Paris than the Marseilles sailing venue.
- The PWC Report presented to Council in Singapore in May 2017 indicated that 60% of the global sailing community sailed keelboats recreationally. Sailing in its Events needs to provide a link emotionally for both the public and sailors to its Olympians in the same way that skiers and the general public follow the Winter Olympics. Given the amazing active public viewership of the Volvo Ocean Race an event such as this could ignite an avalanche of interest in sailing as a sport worldwide.

NOTE: In conclusion we are conscious that Kite Boarding has been omitted. This is concerning given the inclusion of Kite Boards in the Youth Olympics and the expectations this might raise. However, the prospect of Kite Boarding being a disappointment in a light weather venue and the enormous opportunity that a keel boat offers in France is too good to be missed.