OLYMPIC SAILING COMPETITION

To note some published comments regarding future Olympic Sailing Competitions and Offshore Sailing:

Scuttlebutt Sailing News - Rio Olympics and Beyond

Published on August 22nd, 2016

Andy Hunt, who was appointed as Chief Executive Officer of World Sailing in January, had a full schedule at the Rio 2016 Olympic Games. Scuttlebutt editor Craig Leweck caught up with Andy during the second week of competition for an update…

Extract…

“ What does moving forward mean? 
Currently, I don’t think all our [Olympic] events fully reflect the whole of our sport. Let’s not forget, the whole of our sport goes from boards and kites to Moths to dinghies to keel boats to superyachts to America’s Cup to offshore around-the-world races. And my feeling is actually what we probably need to be doing over time is thinking about how the Olympic Games is the showcase for our entire sport end to end.

If I was a particular enthusiast around – I don’t know – offshore, I might just want to see the connection back to the Games what I’m seeing there. If I’m an enthusiast about the America’s Cup and the foiling world, actually I can see the connection back to what’s happening in the Games.

I believe the Olympic Games is absolutely the pinnacle of our sport, but it also needs to provide pathways. You need to naturally understand how sailors have got to connect from what they do here to what they might go on to do in the full spectrum of our sport. “

Published on August 23rd, 2016

Carlo Croce (ITA), President of World Sailing since 2012, spoke with Scuttlebutt editor Craig Leweck during the final week of the Rio 2016 Olympic Games…

Extract:

“ And what about the events for the 2020 Games? 

I think in November we will be able to announce good news to the Council, but at the moment we’re still confidential because the IOC has not yet formally decided. Maybe kiteboard, maybe foiling boat… I don’t know. Perhaps an old hobby of mine – a long distance race with very simple and basic one design boats with no extreme equipment.

We could pick up one man and a girl and put them in an offshore boat… just a personal thought. I am completely convinced we’d find someone who can find provide the boats to the Olympics free of charge. It could also be a way for people competing in a dinghy class to
also participate in the offshore race and compete for two medals, which our sport never had. That could be interesting.

But nothing is decided. It’s not me who will decide; it will be the Council. Certainly there will be changes, but what I want to really say is we will do absolutely the minimum changes we can not to have people throwing away all of their boats and our member nations being in trouble. So the changes yes, but just the minimum we need to. Our member nations have to design a program of four years, so we need to be quick.”

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Bruno Trouble: Sailing Marathon Provides Olympic Solution

The Sailing events for the Tokyo 2020 Olympic are under review. While the 10 events in Rio 2016 filled many niches, from 10,000 feet they looked too similar. This is the current conversation, but it is hardly a new topic.

A distance race is one of the events being discussed, which was the focus of this commentary we published nearly six years ago by Bruno Troublé, 2-time Olympian, America’s Cup skipper and organizer:

I am just back from the World Yacht Racing Forum 2010 in Estoril, Portugal. We talked about the Olympics and the need to bring variety to the sailing events so as to prevent the possible exclusion of our sport from the Games. ISAF Secretary General Jerome Pels rightly explained the need for change regarding the classes chosen for the Olympics.

I too have been concerned about this, and have given much thought as to how our sport can best proceed with its Olympic vision. At the Forum I presented my conclusion, which I share here in Scuttlebutt:

Facts:
• The Olympic classes do not reflect the real world of sailing. They are all dinghies or boards (except for the Elliot!).
• A huge chunk of our sport is about offshore racing such as IRC (over 8,000 certificates I heard!), ORC, IMOCA, Figaro, Farr 40s, and offshore classics (Sydney-Hobart, Bermuda, Transpac, Hong Kong to Philippines, Fastnet, etc.). There are hundreds of them!
• Even small countries have a lot of offshore sailors (Hong Kong, Monaco, Dubai, Oman, Caribbean….many!).
• A century ago (not that far back!) the only way to transport a love letter or a Declaration of War from a continent was to put it on a sailboat! Sailing offshore is part of our souls as humans!

Conclusion:
• The Olympics are looking for diversity. Including an offshore events a great way to attract a new audience.
• It can be a singlehanded, doublehanded, or mixed crew.
• The race would start the day of the opening ceremony – or the next day and will go for 5 or 6 days.
• It would be the ONLY Olympic event you could watch 24 hours a day wherever you are in the world!
• It would be a great TV/Internet product that would generate a huge media attention worldwide. It would be very easy to understand for the general public.

We want to create sailing heroes; the winner after a 5 or 6 day race out at sea would be a star! You can anticipate the time of finish by adding short laps at the end of the main course or use virtual marks. The boats will not be a problem. We will find a boat builder able to provide 20 to 30 similar boats for the event at no cost (I promise!) Size? Around 30-35 feet. Catamaran? Why not.

This idea would be a good way to reconcile the “virtual” Olympic present family and the core of our sport. I sailed twice in the Olympics for France and I know how isolated we were – and still are – as Olympics sailors.

Not everybody can appreciate the challenge of competing in dinghy one designs on a windward leeward course, but people need not be sailors to appreciate the adventurous challenge that an offshore event would present. Rather than ISAF seeking the solution through changes to format or class type, let sailing take a page out of Olympic history by presenting our own marathon – the offshore distance race.