the boat the world sails

President

470 Internationale

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Dear Members of the Events Committee, Equipment Committee and Joint Working Group,

Subject: Response to the Joint Working Group Assessment of the 470

The International 470 Class has reviewed the Joint Working Group report on the Olympic Events and Equipment for Brisbane 2032.

We do not intend to repeat the positive qualities of the 470 already recognised in the report. Instead, we wish to respond directly to several negative findings that we believe are not supported by evidence, incomplete or incorrect.

This distinction is important because the report uses expressions such as *arguably* and *sometimes perceived* when describing some of the main concerns about the 470. These are perceptions, not proven facts. They may need to be examined further, but they should not be treated as evidence for removing an Olympic Event.

Visual appeal and athlete interest

The report describes the 470 as the slowest and least visually exciting of the four two-person Olympic Events, and suggests that it may be less attractive to athletes. No audience comparison or athlete survey is provided to support this conclusion.

Speed alone should not determine the value or appeal of an Olympic sailing Event. The current programme already contains several high-speed foiling Events. Different Events should be assessed on the quality and clarity of their competition, not only their maximum speed.

The reference to traditional white sails is also outdated. Since 2017, 470 sails have not been restricted to white. Colours, national flags, athlete names and other graphics can be printed directly onto the sail panels. The appearance of the sails can therefore be improved without replacing the equipment.

The suggestion that the Class has limited appeal to young sailors also requires evidence. The 2026 Junior World Championship had 55 boats from 18 countries, while our recent World Championship also achieved strong livestream and social media results. These figures should be considered before drawing conclusions about athlete or media appeal.

Competitive life of the equipment

The report states that the 470 hull has a relatively short competitive life at the highest level. This does not reflect the evidence from Olympic competition.

At the Tokyo Olympic Games, both the gold and silver medal-winning boats were three and a half years old. No comparison is provided with the competitive life of equipment in other Olympic Classes, where top teams also renew equipment regularly.

Increasing hull stiffness or tightening measurement tolerances may bring benefits, but it could also increase costs and make existing boats no longer competitive. Any proposal requires a proper analysis of the costs and the impact on existing boats. Olympic boats are commonly passed to younger teams and later to recreational and Masters sailors. This keeps the pathway affordable and gives the equipment a long useful life.

Supplied equipment

The conclusion that rig customisation makes supplied equipment less practical is incomplete. The 470 successfully used supplied boats at the 1994, 1998, 2002 and 2006 IYRU and ISAF Sailing World Championships.

A standard control-system layout can be provided while allowing crews to adjust the boat for different weights and conditions. Sailors could also bring their own sails and limited personal items, or choose between pre-tested mast and centreboard options.

However, supplied equipment should not automatically be presented as a way to reduce costs. The 470 is a multi-builder Class. Selecting one builder to supply the Olympic fleet could put the other builders at a disadvantage and unfairly affect the market.

The full cost of producing, transporting and later managing the fleet and spare equipment must also be calculated. The Class is ready to discuss supplied equipment, but any decision must follow a full assessment of the technical issues and costs.

Oscar flag

The report presents the use of the Oscar flag at lower wind speeds as an opportunity. We disagree that this would automatically improve the Event.

The wind speed limit was increased from eight to ten knots after Tokyo because some actions used under the previous limit damaged equipment, created greater physical differences between sailors and were not always visually attractive.

The current limit provides a better balance between performance, equipment life and gender equality. At the 2026 World Championship, the top ten included six female helms and four male helms, showing a strong competitive balance between both genders.

The 470 is already the only current Olympic Class using a visible relaxation of Racing Rule 42. Lowering the wind speed limit could damage the competitive balance achieved without providing any proven media benefit.

Ageing equipment and mixed competition

The report states that the 470 is sometimes perceived as ageing or traditional. The age of a design is not in itself a valid reason to think about removing it. The important questions are whether the equipment produces fair competition, suits the required athlete profile and can continue to develop.

The report also lists opposition from some stakeholders to mixed-gender competition as a threat. World Sailing and the IOC have made gender equality a clear strategic direction. The views of unnamed stakeholders should not be treated as evidence against an Event that has successfully completed its first Olympic Games in the mixed format.

Finally, the report states that there is no obvious alternative equipment ready to replace the 470. This is not a weakness of the 470. Replacing proven equipment with an untested alternative would raise new questions about cost, manufacturing, athlete weight, durability and delivery before Brisbane 2032.

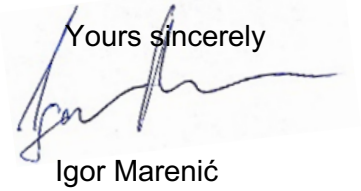
We also ask that the same standards are applied to existing and proposed equipment. Problems with the 470 that are known and can be fixed should not be compared with the claimed benefits of alternatives that have not yet been selected, tested or used at Olympic level.

We ask the Joint Working Group, Events Committee and Equipment Committee to correct or reconsider these parts of the assessment before making their final recommendations.

The 470 Class is ready to discuss realistic improvements. However, decisions should be based on evidence and a full analysis of the technical issues and costs, not on unsupported perceptions.

For these reasons, the International 470 Class calls on World Sailing to retain the Mixed Dinghy Event and the International 470 equipment for the Brisbane 2032 Olympic Games.

Yours sincerely



Igor Marenić
President