Oceanic and Offshore Committee (OOC) Report 2026

Chair: Matt Allen AM (AUS)

Vice Chair: Dee Caffari MBE (GBR)

Oceanic and offshore sailing continues to provide some of the most challenging and exciting sail racing in the world.

Offshore capable keel boat sailing accounts for over half of global sailing participation. There are opportunities to increase this participation and there are also risks to significantly decrease the participation of sailors in the near term.

Greater variation in yacht performance and available technologies have created increased challenges for rating offices, organising authorities (OA) and Offshore Special Regulations (OSR) and World Sailing.

Increasing available and developing technologies have created a debate on how the sport should look like into the future. Is it a sport to compare human judgement, decision making, seamanship, boat handling and sail trim or is it headed towards software engineering and development and predominantly computer-controlled sailing?

Will we outsource most of our decision making and sailing functions to the computer in the not-too-distant future? The technology to be superior to human function is here and continuing to evolve for the foreseeable future.

What should we or can we control? What should we regulate or leave to the exploding technologies? If we regulate should this be done locally or globally?

What impacts on new yacht construction or retrofit of the existing fleet will these decisions have? Is the yacht owner ready for the capital expenditure involved and are they in the decision-making process at the current time?

What if we make the current fleet of yachts redundant, who wants this outcome?

The decision is upon us. In a short period of time the opportunity to make this decision will be lost.

New technology has always been an exciting part of the sport. We are, however, on the precipice of replacing the sailor. F1, chess, America's cup and other pursuits have resisted this temptation; we are yet to decide.

I would also encourage Clubs to focus on participation in the sport. That is the number of sailors, not the number of yachts as a measure of success or otherwise.

Technology Working Group & Offshore Racing Survey

After nearly two years of meetings, and the offshore organisers forum held in 2025, the Technology Working Group decided to write a proposal to limit the ability to changes to RRS 52 for fully crewed offshore racing.

Having put the proposal into the portal we received considerable feedback from Clubs/OAs. To date there is little formal feedback from the critical stakeholders, namely offshore crews and yacht owners. If the sport is to fully embrace all forms of technologies and the associated costs, it's essential that the yacht owners are ready to also fund the capital cost of these technologies.

It is possible that an "arms race" of technologies and the associated costs could impact participation.

Costs will depend on the technologies allowed and the yacht involved. It is also important to consider the costs associated with making the current fleet redundant in terms of competitiveness. The capital cost of making the current fleet of yachts uncompetitive, and replacing them, is a worrying time for the sport we love.

We are embarking on a global survey, especially focussed on offshore sailors and yacht owners to seek their opinions. This has been a major focus and there is much more to come in this space.

Navigating Offshore

Led by the Technical and Offshore Department of the Executive Office, the Oceanic and Offshore Committee supported the development of Navigating Offshore 2025-2028 - World Sailings plan to develop offshore sailing. This included regular consultation during the development process which helped shape the document.

The OOC has implemented in adding OOC representation to the Race Rules Committee and the Growth of Sailing Committee. I want to thank both Committees in welcoming our involvement.

Other initiatives activated this year include:

- Establish an email notification system to inform stakeholders of proposed changes to the Offshore Special Regulations. This has been welcomed by stakeholders and already proving valuable in encouraging more engagement from the offshore community.
- The ongoing review into existing governance structures to ensure they are fit for purpose, including recognizing the Rating Systems.
- Awarded the rights for the 2027-2029 Offshore Double Handed World Championships, soon to be referred to as the Mixed Offshore World Championship.

- Creation of an Offshore Hub on the World Sailing Academy to showcase offshore racing and centralize resources.
- Building closer relationships with Classes including IMOCA by awarding the right for the use of a series to award the IMOCA Class World Champion title in 2027.

Looking ahead, areas identified for further action include relationships with event organizers, including Special Events.

Offshore Double Handed World Championships.

The 2026 Offshore Double Handed World Championship was held in Marseille, France, from 23 September to 2 October 2026. Seventeen teams representing 13 MNAs across five continents competed in two qualification races, a repechage and a final.

The event delivered close racing, with post-event feedback showing that 85% of teams intend to request an entry for 2027. Key criteria relating to equipment equalization and overall participant satisfaction were also met, reflecting the successful delivery of the event.

Alongside the 2026 event, the bid process for the 2027–2029 Championships was completed. Following review by the Board-appointed Selection Panel, the complexity of the event and associated requirements were identified as deterrents for potential bidders, and the requirements were subsequently reviewed to provide a more deliverable framework while retaining defined minimum criteria. As a result of the process, Cap Regatta was awarded the rights to the 2027–2029 events, subject to meeting the defined minimum requirements for each edition and completion of the necessary hosting agreements.

The 2027 event will take place in Cannes, France, with the Notice of Race to be published as soon as possible after the hosting agreements are finalized.

Offshore Special Regulations Sub-Committee (SRSC)

I encourage you to read the Chair of the SRSC, James Dadd's report. I wish to thank the members of SRSC for their work during the year. The issues surrounding maintaining regulations with an ever more increasing diverse fleet of yachts is challenging.

Safety reporting

In collaboration with the safety commission, we have updated the incident reporting portal and revised the criteria for reportable incidents, now also covering activities during training, preparation, or travel related to a race. This has been successfully completed.

Stability Working Group

Stability Screening

The Stability Screening WG, chaired by Dan Nowlan with Andy Claughton, Richard Hinterhoeller and Katrina Ham (WS) as members, was established in 2024 to review Offshore Special Regulation 3.04 Stability – Monohulls, to and report to the Oceanic and Offshore Committee and, if deemed beneficial, draft a submission to the chair of the Oceanic and Offshore Committee and the Special Regulations Sub-Committee. The final submission was OOC-2025-011.

At the 12 March 2026 Special Regulations Sub-Committee meeting, the committee voted in favour of recommending that OOC-2025-011 be approved by the Oceanic and Offshore Committee.

Stability Database

The Stability Database WG, chaired by Richard Hinterhoeller with Jenny Howells (RORC), Zoran Grubisa (ORC), Jason Smithwick (RORC) and Katrina Ham (WS) as members, and Andy Claughton (ORC) and Dan Nowlan (USA) as guests, was spun off from the Stability Screening WG in 2025. Its main purpose is to publish available stability screening data in a publicly available list.

The first phase is to create a universal model list so that the various rating authorities have a common way of identifying boat designs. The draft list includes almost 5,000 unique designs. We're in the process of refining this list to catch any duplications and to clean up designer and builder information. This is a formidable task.

Whereas the universal model list is the core of the stability database, the stability information can be added even as it is refined. The plan is to start populating the database over the northern winter when demands on the rating offices is a bit lower.

Offshore Event Organisers Forum

We hosted a meeting of Offshore Event Organisers Forum during the 2025 annual conference. This was a first for World Sailing to seek the views of clubs who regularly run offshore and oceanic races. Observers were allowed to attend and encouraged to speak.

A focus was on the development of technology in sailing, and the question of human endeavour was covered and responses requested.

Topics that were covered included:

- Offshore Special Regulations.
- World Sailing's plan to support offshore sailing
- Offshore Special Regulations

- Technology and its impact on offshore sailing, especially related to RRS 52.
- Outside assistance rules and interpretations.
- Mega-Fauna guidance and status update.

Advocacy Working Group

Remit – Ready for the Future – Governance

The advocacy objective aligned with WS Governance Strategy to "Promote Awareness and Best Practice" by raising awareness on major topics concerning offshore racing. By coving topics such to rise of inadvertent cheating due to changes in technology, it also works to safeguard the integrity of the sport.

Despite a couple of emails sent by the working group lead, during the year, no one in the working group came back.

For this conference the following questions should be asked;

- Articles from 2025 were never published anywhere or used. So how do we circulate this information.
- Is this working group needed?
- If it is, then do we have the right people on the working group?
- Also, as a committee, then we should decide the topics to be covered by the working group each year.
- These topics could be to help explain some of the decisions we make as a committee

Conclusion

We have much to do in the coming months to build a consensus of how our sport will proceed into the future following receiving the results of the survey. I ask for everyone's respect when dealing with these issues. These are complex issues and need to be dealt with globally. All stakeholders, including the yacht owners, and crews, need to be heard in this process.

I'm happy to report that almost all feedback agreed that an issue exists and needs to be dealt within the next year. I make no apology that OOC is leading this issue globally: that is our role.

Thank you to the OOC and SRSC for their support during the year.

I wish to thank Katrina Ham for all her enthusiasm and support. In addition, my thanks to Vice Chair Dee Cafari, and Vice President's Corinne Migraine & Josep Pla for their support and guidance.

Title: Special Regulations Sub-Committee Annual Report
Date: 03 November 2026
By: James Dadd – Chair

Since the Annual Conference in 2025, the sub-committee has held virtual meetings on the 23rd March 2026 and on the 16th September 2026. Recommendations were provided on proposals received in this time to the Oceanic & Offshore Committee for their consideration.

Work continued on the work plan and the Offshore Special Regulations Policy Development was considered and the OSR Feedback initiative has been implemented as agreed. This will be tested fully in the coming months, but initial results suggest that this will be a highly valuable piece of work and the staff are commended for the work done in this area, with specific thanks to Katrina.

The Vice Chair, Richard has continued working with the staff on the document itself and ensuring that it remains updated and is of a format where updates are more efficiently integrated. This work is fundamental to the continued development of OSR and the long hours and hard work is greatly appreciated.

The members are looking to expand the work plan into the second half of the quad and a number of areas in the document are seen to need an update, including, but not limited to hatches & companionways, storm sails and gender equality.

The work of the O&OC Technology Group is also being monitored and discussed with an understanding that this is a pivotal time in our sport with regards to controlling and ensuring human endeavour in our sport that this sub-committee should be involved in discussing.

During the annual conference in China, we are expecting a quorum of be met at the table and as such, and to ensure the conversation flows, it has been agreed amongst the members that we will not host virtual attendance at the conference this year.

Many thanks,

James Dadd