To: World Sailing Council
From: Para World Sailing Committee
Subject: 2027 World Sailing Para Classification Rules process
Date: 4 November 2026

PURPOSE

1.1 This proposal seeks the endorsement of Council for the adoption of the 2027 World Sailing Para Classification Rules and the continued development of those Rules towards final implementation on January 1, 2027.

1.2 The 2027 World Sailing Para Classification Rules have been developed to modernise World Sailing's existing Para Sailing classification framework and to bring World Sailing's classification system into alignment with the International Paralympic Committee's 2025 Classification Code and applicable International Standards (the “2025 IPC Code”).

1.3 The 2025 IPC Code is the fundamental framework governing Classification within the Paralympic Movement. International Federations are required to comply with the Code and International Standards in respect of disciplines on the Paralympic Games Sport Programme, and are required to apply the Code at specified Covered Competitions.

1.4 The 2027 World Sailing Para Classification Rules were published in June 2026 and are expressly provisional. They are currently subject to consultation, live testing and further review. The proposed Council decision is therefore not a final approval of an immutable set of Classification Rules, but an adoption of the Rules as the appropriate basis for continued testing, consultation and finalisation.

1.5 Council is accordingly asked to:

(a) adopt the 2027 World Sailing Para Classification Rules as the basis for continued testing, consultation and further development;

(b) acknowledge that the 2027 World Sailing Para Classification Rules remain subject to amendment following the results of testing, consultation, research and engagement with the IPC and other relevant stakeholders;

(c) authorise the World Sailing Board, following completion of the relevant testing and consultation, to approve further amendments to the 2027 World Sailing Para Classification Rules where the Board considers such amendments necessary or appropriate to achieve compliance, improve the operation of the classification system or address evidence arising from the testing and consultation process; and

(d) acknowledge that Council retains the ability to request further changes following adoption.

BACKGROUND

2.1 Classification is a fundamental component of Para sport. It establishes the framework through which athletes with eligible impairments compete in a manner intended to ensure that sporting performance, rather than the impact of impairment, determines competitive outcomes.

2.2 A robust, transparent and IPC Code-compliant classification system is therefore fundamental to World Sailing's responsibilities as an International Federation and to the integrity and credibility of Para Sailing.

2.3 The IPC describes the Classification Code as the fundamental document upon which Classification in the Paralympic Movement is based. The 2025 Code was developed following a multi-year review and consultation process and is supplemented by International Standards addressing, amongst other matters, classification personnel and training, intentional misrepresentation and classification data protection.

2.4 The IPC states that International Federations are required to comply with the 2025 Code and International Standards in relation to disciplines on the Paralympic Games Sport Programme, and that the Code applies at specified Covered Competitions, including the Paralympic Games, World Championships and competitions forming part of the direct qualification pathway to the Paralympic Games.

2.5 World Sailing's existing Para Sailing Classification Rules date from 2019. The review of those Rules has therefore been undertaken both to modernise the classification framework and to ensure that World Sailing's system reflects the requirements and principles of the 2025 IPC Code.

2.6 World Sailing established a dedicated Classification Sub-Committee in 2026 to oversee the global integrity and governance of the athlete classification system. The Sub-Committee operates under the direction of the Para World Sailing Committee. World Sailing has stated that the classification system is being revised during 2026 to align with the 2025 IPC Classification Code.

2.7 The provisional 2027 World Sailing Para Classification Rules were published in June 2026, commencing the first formal consultation period with athletes, classifiers, Member National Authorities and the wider Para Sailing community.

2.8 The 2027 World Sailing Para Classification Rules modernise the existing framework and incorporate the 2025 IPC Classification Code and International Standards. World Sailing's published consultation material makes clear that the Rules are provisional and that the consultation and testing process is intended to inform further refinement before implementation.

2.9 In October 2026 the World Sailing Para Committee approved the process set out herein and requests that the Board and Council also approve the process, for the Board to be able to finalise the Rules in due course, after the consultation has closed. This is likely to be in early 2027.

CONSULTATION AND TESTING

3.1 The development of the 2027 World Sailing Para Classification Rules has deliberately adopted an evidence-led approach. Consultation and practical testing are being undertaken

before final implementation so that the Rules can be assessed not only against their intended legal and regulatory framework but also against their operation in practice.

3.2 The programme of testing and consultation includes:

(a) **16–21 July 2026:** initial system testing at the RS Games, Germany;

(b) **25–31 August 2026:** further system testing in India;

(c) **11-19 September 2026**: Hansa Class European Championships in Spain;

(d) **1–10 October 2026:** major system pilot at the World Sailing Inclusion Championships, Portugal;

(e) **9 September–9 December 2026:** second consultation period; and

(f) **January 2027:** final adoption and implementation.

3.3 The testing programme is intended to provide practical evidence concerning the operation of the proposed classification system, including the classification process, assessment procedures, athlete pathways, administration and associated decision-making processes.

3.4 Consultation is intended to provide an opportunity for athletes, classifiers, MNAs, coaches, organisers, classes and other relevant stakeholders to identify issues arising from the 2027 World Sailing Para Classification Rules and to propose improvements. World Sailing's first consultation process expressly invited these stakeholders to contribute to the development of the provisional Rules.

3.5 The consultation and testing process should therefore be regarded as an integral part of the development of the 2027 World Sailing Para Rules and not as a process which occurs after the Rules have been finally adopted.

REGULATORY POSITION

4.1 World Sailing, as the International Federation responsible for sailing, must maintain a classification system which is consistent with the requirements applicable to Para sport under the 2025 IPC Code and relevant International Standards.

4.2 The IPC states that compliance extends beyond the inclusion of Code-compliant provisions within classification rules and includes the manner in which those rules and associated processes are implemented in practice. The IPC's Compliance Strategy expressly contemplates ongoing dialogue and collaboration between the IPC and International Federations in achieving and maintaining compliance.

4.3 The 2027 World Sailing Para Classification Rules have therefore been prepared as the framework through which World Sailing intends to meet those requirements. Further testing, consultation and research, may require further refinement and adjustment of the rules.

4.4 In particular, practical testing may identify circumstances in which:

(a) provisions require clarification;

(b) administrative or procedural arrangements require amendment;

(c) classification processes operate differently in practice from their intended operation;

(d) evidence-based research supports a modification to a proposed provision;

(e) further alignment with IPC requirements or International Standards is necessary; or

(f) amendments are required to ensure that the Rules are workable, transparent and capable of consistent implementation across World Sailing's events and classification processes.

4.5 It is therefore proposed that Council's decision expressly recognise the provisional nature of the 2027 World Sailing Para Classification Rules and permit their continued development following the evidence obtained through testing and consultation.

4.6 This approach is consistent with the approach adopted by the IPC itself in the development of the 2025 Classification Code, which followed an extensive review and consultation process involving IPC Members, athletes, classifiers and other relevant stakeholders.

GOVERNANCE / DELEGATION

5.1 Council is not being asked at this stage to approve an unalterable version of the 2027 World Sailing Para Classification Rules.

5.2 Council is instead asked to endorse the 2027 World Sailing Para Classification Rules as the framework for the completion of the classification reform programme and to authorise the Board to make such further amendments as may reasonably be required as a result of:

(a) live testing;

(b) consultation responses;

(c) research and evidence;

(d) feedback from athletes, classifiers, MNAs and other stakeholders;

(e) engagement with the IPC; and

(f) further legal or regulatory review.

5.3 Any such amendments should remain consistent with the purpose and principles of the 2027 World Sailing Para Classification Rules and with World Sailing's obligations under the 2025 IPC Code and applicable International Standards.

5.4 The proposed delegation is intended to allow World Sailing to respond promptly and appropriately to evidence arising during the remaining development period without requiring Council to reconvene for every technical or consequential amendment.

5.5 The delegation does not prevent Council from requiring further changes to the 2027 World Sailing Para Classification Rules.

5.6 The proposed approach therefore provides an appropriate balance between:

(a) giving World Sailing a clear and timely pathway towards compliance with the 2025 IPC Code;

(b) ensuring that the Rules are tested in real competition environments;

(c) maintaining meaningful consultation with affected stakeholders; and

(d) retaining appropriate Council oversight of the final classification framework.

RATIONALE FOR COUNCIL ENDORSEMENT

6.1 Classification is an area in which rules must be capable of operating effectively in practice. The development of the 2027 World Sailing Para Classification Rules through consultation and live testing is therefore intended to reduce the risk that provisions which appear appropriate on paper produce unintended consequences when applied to athletes and competitions.

6.2 The proposed approach also recognises that classification is an evolving area of Para sport. The IPC itself describes Classification as an area which is continually developing and emphasises the importance of maintaining Code compliance and following best practice.

6.3 Endorsement should not therefore be understood as confirmation that no further amendments are required. Rather, it provides Council with an opportunity to confirm that the overall direction of the classification reform is appropriate while allowing the technical detail to continue to be informed by evidence.

6.4 This distinction is particularly important because the remaining testing and consultation programme is expected to provide material evidence before the intended January 1, 2027 implementation.

6.5 The proposed decision accordingly preserves the ability of World Sailing to refine the Rules where necessary while maintaining a clear objective of finalising and implementing a modern, transparent and Code-compliant classification system.

PROPOSED COUNCIL DECISION

7.1 Council is requested to:

RESOLVE THAT:

7.1.1 Council endorses the process for finalising the adoption of the 2027 World Sailing Para Classification Rules as the basis for the continued development and implementation of the World Sailing Para Sailing classification system;

7.1.2 Council acknowledges that the World Sailing Para Classification Rules remain subject to further testing, consultation, research and engagement with the International Paralympic Committee and other relevant stakeholders;

7.1.3 Council authorises the World Sailing Board to approve such further amendments to the World Sailing Para Classification Rules as the Board considers necessary or appropriate as a result of the testing, consultation, research, stakeholder engagement or further IPC engagement, provided that such amendments remain consistent with the purpose of the

World Sailing Para Classification Rules and World Sailing's obligations under the 2025 IPC Classification Code and applicable International Standards;

7.1.4 Council may, at any stage, request that further changes be made to the World Sailing Para Classification Rules.

CONCLUSION

8.1 Finalising the World Sailing Para Classification Rules represent the next stage in the modernisation of World Sailing's Para classification framework and are intended to bring the system into alignment with the 2025 IPC Classification Code and International Standards.

8.2 The Rules have deliberately been presented as subject to further change because classification must be evidence-led and because the remaining testing and consultation programme is intended to identify any matters requiring further refinement.

8.3 Council endorsement at this stage will provide a clear governance mandate for the continued development of the Rules while preserving appropriate safeguards through ongoing consultation, live testing, Board oversight and Council's ability to request further changes before final adoption.

8.4 It is therefore recommended that Council approve the resolutions set out in paragraph 7 above.

Para World Sailing Committee
4 November 2026