

Format Working Party

Review of formats used for Paris 2024 Olympic Games

Proposals for the Los Angeles 2028 Olympic Games

Draft report

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1. Summary

The following document was written in consultation with members of the Events Committee Format Working Party following the conclusion of the Paris Olympic Games. It presents the proposed recommendations for Sailing at the Los Angeles 2028 Olympic Games. The foundation of these recommendations is based on the World Sailing Olympic Vision, as well as key insights and experiences gained from the Paris 2024 Olympic Games. In making its recommendations, the WP was conscious that the presentation of the Olympic Sailing Event encompasses a wide range of aspects, from the visual spectacle of the sport to the intricacies of race management. Furthermore, elements such as athlete access to training during the Games also play a significant role in shaping how the sport is delivered and perceived. This document outlines the approach to these diverse factors in order to ensure a cohesive and dynamic presentation of Sailing at LA 2028 which enhances the sailor experience and attracts new fans to the sport.

2. Identified Issue: visual presentation

The Working Party identified that visual presentation was not consistent throughout the Olympic Events. In some cases, Events differentiated by Gender were not always distinguishable and it was agreed that this should be addressed

The WP welcomed the utilization of Olympic and national branding and noted that in particular, the Men and Women Kite could have had greater impact and further raised its profile as a visually attractive Olympic Event with the addition of Country flags in addition to the Country codes. While recognizing the technical challenges, this should be addressed for the LA Games.

Recommendation 1

To help understand who is sailing on each piece of equipment, it is recommended to add visual clues on clothing or equipment to distinguish male and female athletes. This would help spectators, officials, and broadcasters easily identify participants, particularly when male and female fleets race alternatively. It would also help build support for their heroes. Gender-specific colours, patterns, or symbols can enhance the viewer experience and simplify officiating, while respecting athletes' preferences and comfort.

Recommendation 2

All Olympic equipment, particularly for LA2028 and beyond, shall display large country flags and country tri-codes on them. Specifically, in respect of the Kiteboard Men and Women's Event the WP recommends setting a deadline four weeks before the 2025 Mid-Year Meeting, to present the proposed Olympic equipment branding that meets the above criteria on both boards and kites registered for the LA 2028 Quadrennium. This presentation should include the cost of such branding per equipment manufacturer.

3. Identified issue: The communication of Race Management decisions and intentions

The Working Party recognises that working under the environment of the Olympic Games is very different to any other regatta experience:

The overlay of the IOC, broadcasters and other stakeholders add a layer of complexity in excess of any Class or indeed, multiclass Event that takes place throughout each cycle. Consequently, the WP discussed known challenges and recognised that timely communication of all intentions and decisions is critical at all levels of Race Management to allow flexibility in broadcasting and enabling precise commentary of racing. The WP was of the opinion that Race Management, under the conditions of the Olympic Games is extremely challenging balancing many factors not normally experienced in a single fleet regatta and consequently requires training to make sure decisions made are able to be sufficiently dynamic and then be properly communicated to fit the scenario of the Olympic Games and for the benefit of all parties.

Recommendation 3

- i) It is recommended that the Games Race Officials be identified early in the Olympic quadrennial to ensure they have ample opportunity to gain the necessary experience at multiple class and World Sailing events leading up to the Olympic Games.
- ii) The WP also recommends targeted Race Management training and the establishment of policies for communicating all racing-related decisions.

Item 5.3 & 5.4

- iii) Additionally, the WP supports accelerating efforts to implement technology and digital officiating at all World Sailing events.

4. Identified issue: Complexity resulting from the multitude of final formats

The WP acknowledges that having three different formats for sailing at the Olympic Games increased the complexity of its presentation. Additionally, the race points that sailors took forward from the opening series (and in different ways in each format), made it challenging to effectively present the narrative of the Final Races. Going forward, it is important to ensure the message is simple and clear. Following the Mid-Year Meeting and subsequently after the Olympic Games, the WP engaged with the Olympic Classes to gather their insights on potential formats for LA2028. Specific discussions were held with the Kite and Windsurfing Olympic Classes to allow them to present the WP with a mutually agreed-upon format for both disciplines. WP discussions related to the recommendations below refer to the actual process to determine the medal placings. The opening series is addressed in more detail later, however the approach to the Final should align with the principles below.

Recommendation 4

- i) There shall be a maximum of two Olympic Formats.
- ii) The opening/elimination series shall be reduced to minimize the potential point lead sailors bring into the medal/final race and ensure more exciting racing at the highest of stakes with clear, consistent sport presentation. See recommendation 6.
- iii) The Men's Dinghy, Women's Dinghy, Mixed Dinghy, Men's Skiff, Women's Skiff and Mixed Multihull shall sail a double point medal/final race.
- iv) Windsurfing and Kite shall share the same final series format* with the following principles:
 - a. The final series shall be a mini-series
 - b. There shall be four or a maximum of five boards in the final
 - c. It shall be easy to understand from a non-sailing perspective and easy present.
 - d. The winner of the last race shall be the Olympic Champion.
 - e. For ease of race management and effective presentation, the final series should be structured into clearly defined, manageable time segments.

** Report to be updated following Class feedback*

5. Identified issue: The iQFOiL Opening series Marathon Race added complexity

The WP agreed that the opening series should have fewer races in order to allow greater flexibility to the schedule allowing greater opportunity for broadcast and minimise the likelihood of the medals being decided before the Final. Within the iQFOiL opening series there were 3 elements- Course racing, Slalom and a Marathon race. Given the approach above, the WP identified that the Marathon race of the iQFOiL adds complexity to the Olympic Games and multiclass events run by World Sailing and requires extensive resources making it impossible to utilize all fields of play. The goal should be to keep formats simple. The WP supported continued use of both Course racing and Slalom for the iQFOiL .

Recommendation 5

To reduce the complexity and retain flexibility in organising the WS events and Olympic Games the WP recommends not to run the marathon race for the iQFOiL at these events. The Class may run the marathon race at class events.

6. Identified Issue: Limited flexibility due to scheduling of the opening/elimination series

The WP recognise that not all Classes can compete in the same range of conditions, although efforts should continue to align these as much as possible especially in the lower wind ranges. To remain relevant as a sport we should always have something to present to the audience. The WP discussed adjusting the Games schedule to enable a Board Event and a Dinghy event to be scheduled the same day.

Recommendation 6

- i) The WP recommends that all Olympic Events should be able to compete in a wide range of conditions, especially at the lower wind limit.
- ii) In alignment with the recommendation of the Events Committee to reduce the Opening/Elimination Series for all events, the Working Party proposes scheduling three days of racing, complemented by one reserve day. This approach introduces greater flexibility in the scheduling of events, allowing races to be conducted under the most favourable conditions.

Below are examples of possible Olympic schedules:

Item 5.3 & 5.4

	Days with least other sports in the Games																
	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	
	14-Jul-28	15-Jul-28	16-Jul-28	17-Jul-28	18-Jul-28	19-Jul-28	20-Jul-28	21-Jul-28	22-Jul-28	23-Jul-28	24-Jul-28	25-Jul-28	26-Jul-28	27-Jul-28	28-Jul-28	29-Jul-28	30-Jul-28
Opening Ceremony	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	Closing Ceremony	
M Kite			1-4	5-8	9-12	Reserve	Medal	Reserve									
W Kite			1-4	5-8	9-12	Reserve	Medal	Reserve									
M Windsurfing												1-4	5-8	9-12	Reserve	Medal	Reserve
W Windsurfing												1-4	5-8	9-12	Reserve	Medal	Reserve
M Dinghy							1-3	4-5	6-8	Reserve	Medal	Reserve					
W Dinghy							1-3	4-5	6-8	Reserve	Medal	Reserve					
M Skiff			1-3	4-6	7-9	Reserve	Medal	Reserve									
W Skiff			1-3	4-6	7-9	Reserve	Medal	Reserve									
MX Dinghy								1-3	4-5	6-8	Reserve	Medal	Reserve				
MX Multihull										1-3	4-6	7-9	Reserve	Medal	Reserve		
Race Areas needed		1	3	3	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	1	1	1	0
Events Broadcastable Live		2	3	3	2	2	2/3	2	2	2	2	2/3	2/3	2	1	2	0
Events Not live at all		0	1	1	0		1/2	1	1	0	0	2/3	1/2	0	0	0	0
Assumptions:	No racing day 1 to give athletes best opportunity to attend Opening Ceremony and there is a 5 hour raceable wind window each day across 3 race areas each Event has 3 day opening series, 1 reserve day, 1 medal racing, 1 medal reserve day																
this shows	even using an additional day compared to Paris 2024, there are still 2 congestion points (21&22 July and 25&26 July) that miss notable racing live the use of reserve days magnifies the the loss of live coverage																

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MX Multihull										1-3	4-6	7-9	Reserve	Medal	Reserve		
Race Areas needed		1	3	3	2	1	2	2	2	1	2	3	2	1	1	1	0
Events Broadcastable Live		2	3	3	2	2	3	3	3	1	3	2/3	3	2	1	2	0
Events Not live at all		0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1/2	0	0	0	0	0
Assumptions:	No racing day 1 to give athletes best opportunity to attend Opening Ceremony and there is a 5 hour raceable wind window each day across 3 race areas each Event has 3 day opening series, 1 reserve day, 1 medal racing, 1 medal reserve day																
this shows	using an additional two days compared to Paris 2024 removes the congestion																

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Events Not live at all		0	0	2	0	1	0	1	0	2	0	1	0	0	0		
		* training	* training	* training	* training	* reserve	* reserve	* reserve	* reserve	* reserve	* reserve	* reserve	* reserve	* reserve	* reserve		
Assumptions:	There is a 5 hour raceable wind window each day across 3 race areas each Event has 3 day opening series, 1 reserve day, 1 medal racing, 1 medal reserve day																
this shows	how racing could be done with the least resources some high value races will not be broadcast																

7. Identified issue: Duration of races

The WP noted that the duration of races of some Olympic Events does not encourage viewership especially for new sailing fans. However, the WP also noted that for the sport to remain fair and for athletes to present their skillset the duration of these races cannot be drastically reduced.

Recommendation 7

The WP recommends that the Target Time limits of the Dinghy and Mixed Dinghy to be reduced to 35/40 minutes. The Race Time limit to be reduced proportionally.

8. Other identified issues and recommendations

The Working Party engaged in comprehensive discussions to align our strategies with the overarching goals outlined in the Olympic Vision. These discussions covered several key areas essential for the growth and long-term success of Olympic Sailing.” This report not only presents the primary recommendations but also reflects other vital considerations (below) brought to the table during our deliberations.

To reach our goals as set out in the Olympic Vision the WP would like to encourage other key partners in the World Sailing family to address the following:

- i) Equipment committee to continue and accelerate their work to ensure the quality and consistency of the Olympic sailing equipment - both to reduce campaign costs, simplify games management and to help sailing move towards supplied equipment.
- ii) The continued development and greater use of technology for both umpiring and Race Management