

Name of Authorised Person:	Eric Faust
Position:	ILCA Executive Secretary
Contact email:	
Title of Proposal:	Format for Olympic Fleet Racing Finals
Subtitle:	Joint proposal on behalf of the ILCA and 49er Classes
Related proposals:	

Proposal:

The ILCA and 49er Classes accept the recommendations of the Events Committee from August 2025, particularly with regard to the structure of the opening series.

Building on that foundation, we propose the following format for the Final / Medal Series for all four of our Olympic events (Men's and Women's One-Person Dinghy, and Men's and Women's Skiff). We also invite the Events Committee to consider this format for other boat events at the Los Angeles 2028 Olympic Games.

Our proposed format allows medals to be decided in the final race, while showcasing the intensity and athleticism of sailing in a compact, broadcast-friendly way.

Proposed Format

The Final / Medal Series will consist of three scores:

- The competitor's rank from the opening series (converted into points), and
- Two additional races sailed on the final day.

This structure is designed to ensure clarity for athletes and spectators, fairness across the fleet, and alignment with media requirements, including having medals decided in the final race.

Key Elements

- Scoring: Low-point system.
- Fleet Size: 8 to 10 boats.
- Umpiring: On-the-water umpiring to deliver immediate decisions.
- Starts: Use of OCS detection technology to eliminate recalls.
- Discard Policy: All scores in the Final / Medal Series are non-discardable.
- Race Duration: Target race times between 8–20 minutes, to be fixed during 2026 testing and adjusted by boat type and media window needs.
- Course Type: Windward / Leeward configuration.
- Tie-Break: RRS A8.2 (ties decided in favor of the better score in the final race), ensuring that the gold medal and all medals are decided in the last race.
- Initial Ranking Adjustment: Points from the opening series will be capped at a maximum of 7.

This proposal is consistent with the Events Committee's guideline of "ensuring medal decisions are made in the final race."

The table below shows, based on statistical analysis, that a sailor's position in the opening series strongly influences their final standing. For instance, the sailor ranked 1st in the opening series has a 34% probability of winning the gold medal, while having a 0% chance of finishing 10th overall.

Rank After Opening Series	Chance of Gold	Chance of Silver	Chance of Bronze	Chance of 4th	Chance of 5th	Chance of 6th	Chance of 7th	Chance of 8th	Chance of 9th	Chance of 10th
1	34%	19%	13%	10%	8%	6%	4%	4%	2%	0%
2	23%	18%	15%	11%	10%	7%	6%	5%	3%	1%
3	15%	16%	14%	13%	11%	9%	7%	6%	5%	2%
4	10%	12%	13%	13%	13%	11%	9%	8%	7%	5%
5	7%	9%	11%	12%	12%	12%	11%	10%	9%	7%
6	4%	7%	9%	10%	11%	12%	13%	12%	12%	11%
7	2%	5%	6%	8%	9%	12%	12%	14%	15%	17%
8	2%	4%	7%	7%	9%	11%	12%	14%	16%	17%
9	2%	5%	6%	8%	9%	10%	12%	14%	15%	19%
10	2%	5%	6%	7%	8%	10%	12%	14%	15%	20%

Current position:

The LA28 final format is not yet determined, but much of the opening series details have already been decided. This proposal is to specifically recommend the format to be used on the final day, with fine tuning over the quadrennial of all pertinent details.

Reasons:

This Final / Medal Series format aims to fulfil the task assigned by the IOC, which is to make the final day compelling sport for broadcast and in person fans, while also ensuring that Olympic medals are earned through sporting merit in line with sailing tradition. Additionally, here are specific points this format would accomplish:

Media Attractiveness

- All the medals decided in the final race
- Larger fleets than possible with winner takes all and each competitor can win any medal. Keeping more nations in contention increases global engagement.
- Fills the screen with action. More boats on the water ensures visually exciting racing for television and streaming audiences. Very small fleets risk producing races that are not visually exciting.
- Preserves sailing's core identity: fleet racing over a series of races, with a format tailored for Olympic broadcast intensity.

Using Multiple Formats

Assuming the Board Events (kite and windsurf) remain with a "winner takes all" final race, we suggest having an alternative Final / Medal Series format is a benefit to the sport.

- Sailing is being asked to radically change its format with limited opportunities to determine the impacts of these changes.
- Adopting a single format that is untested is extremely risky as, no matter the outcome, we will have a limited understanding of what worked and what didn't from both a competition and broadcasting point of view.
- In pursuing two distinct Final / Medal Series options, sailing can increase the speed of our learning for what resonates with both casual and dedicated fans.

The scheduling and layout of the LA2028 regatta lends itself to having two Final / Medal Series formats without confusing the public. There are essentially two regattas in different locations with boats and boards competing in separate venues and dates. This avoids any confusion from format differences.

The inherent differences between boards and boats (size, speed, spectacle, traditions, etc.) further justify a dual-format approach.

We can use the differences above to spend the four-year period learning as much as we can from engaging fans at our regattas and the Olympic regatta so we can be better placed to move the best direction in subsequent Olympics.

Big picture impacts

Increasing the role of small-fleet (8-10 boat) racing in the Final / Medal Series complements the racing in the opening series with many countries, showcasing the global nature of our sport while supporting grassroots participation through smaller, shorter fleet races. While preserving the larger numbers of fleet racing in the open series, the additional advantages could include:

- More emphasis on starting and tactics rather than buying new equipment

- The opportunity to develop a “Pro Series” based on the top sailors, fewer boats and shorter races
- A better link to local sailing which often involves smaller, shorter fleet races

Why not a “winner takes all” final for the boats?

While we understand the IOC has given advice, we also hope IOC will defer to World Sailing expertise when selecting formats. While the “order across the line determines the medals” may suit the boards, for boats this format risks producing a boring and unengaging four-boat race with unappealing visuals.

Instead, we draw inspiration from SailGP where 8–10 boat fleets with short, high-intensity races create so much action it can be hard to capture it all.

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