

Exclusive Olympic Helmet Supplier for LA2028

1. Introduction

- 1.1 At the Paris 2024 Olympic Games, World Sailing was unable to mandate the use of helmet cameras because of unresolved safety and liability concerns. The addition of cameras and mounts creates pressure points that helmets are not certified or tested to withstand.
- 1.2 This limitation prevented the Olympic Broadcasting Services (OBS) from planning reliable camera integration, missing a key opportunity to enhance sailing's visibility and storytelling on the Olympic stage.
- 1.3 For LA28, the opportunity to appointment a single, exclusive helmet provider would directly addresses this challenge. Supplied, certified helmets would allow OBS to design and integrate cameras safely, mandate their use, and plan Olympic broadcasting strategies with confidence.
- 1.4 The purpose of this paper is to facilitate consultation with key stakeholders.

2. Proposal

- 2.1 For LA28, the appointment of a single, exclusive helmet provider would allow to mandate the use of helmet cameras. Camera integration is the main driver for this proposal, with further benefits including:
 - (a) Supplied, certified helmets allow OBS to design and integrate cameras safely and plan Olympic broadcasting strategies with confidence.
 - (b) Increased athlete safety, reduced liability for World Sailing and OBS with fully certified, performance-tested helmets.
 - (c) Clear, harmonised rules that remove subjective enforcement and reduce the risk of technical protests.
 - (d) Improved "look of the Games" through consistent high-visibility national branding.
 - (e) Opportunities for Olympic branding.
- 2.2 This recommendation delivers on the direction given by the Events Committee Recommendation 4 approved by Council at their July meeting, calling for visual clues on athlete clothing or equipment to distinguish male and female athletes, supporting spectator understanding, officiating, and athlete recognition. Supplied helmets present a practical and visible solution: men's and women's fleets can be distinguished by colour schemes or patterns, and additional opportunities exist to mark fleet leaders (e.g. specific colours for the top three athletes).
- 2.3 Forward WIP is the preferred option to deliver this solution. They already have majority use across Olympic foiling classes, a proven track record in SailGP and America's Cup, and readiness to supply certified helmets tailored for Olympic use.
- 2.4 NOCs would retain choice of model and size from three available options, ensuring athletes receive equipment suited to their preferences within a unified framework.
- 2.5 Appointing an exclusive provider ensures:
 - (a) Certified solutions for helmet safety and performance, including tested camera integration.
 - (b) Clear and enforceable compliance standards, reducing World Sailing liability.

- (c) Harmonised visual identity with national codes and Olympic branding to enhance broadcasting.
 - (d) Streamlined supply and inspection processes for NOCs and Classes.
- 2.6 Alternative options (allowing open choice of brands, or defining minimum criteria only) were considered but present risks of:
- (a) Inconsistent safety and visibility standards.
 - (b) Loss of certification if athletes modify helmets with paint/stickers.
 - (c) Increased WS liability and subjective enforcement by Technical Committees.
 - (d) Missed opportunity for OBS integration and Games branding.
- 2.7 Timeframe:
- (a) To decide on whether to appoint a technical provider before the end of the year, enabling teams to plan and train with their selected helmet model.
 - (b) Key Performance Indicators will include: supply examples for presentation at the 2026 Test Events, successful OBS integration trials, and full compliance for the Los Angeles 2028 Olympic Games.
- 2.8 Technical provider deliverables:
- (a) Supply high-visibility helmets incorporating national codes, flags, and Games Look.
 - (b) Offer National Olympic Committees a choice of three certified models: ProWIP, X-OVER, and WiFlex Pro.
 - (c) Coordinate with NOCs to ensure timely supply of selected models, appropriate sizes, and certified stickers.
 - (d) Collaborate with OBS on the design and testing of camera integration.
 - (e) Support and participate in Test Events to validate performance and compliance

3. Background

- 3.1 Current class rules require helmets to be “brightly coloured” or of “high visibility,” but these terms are undefined and applied inconsistently across classes. In practice, teams frequently customised helmets to comply, which voids certification. Common modifications such as stickers, paint, or mounts invalidate standards, exposing athletes to risk and World Sailing to liability.
- 3.2 At the Paris 2024 Olympic Games, the lack of a unified approach created significant challenges. World Sailing relied heavily on volunteers, and OBS was unable to design consistent camera integration across multiple helmet designs. As a result, they redirected resources to other opportunities, limiting the use of athlete-centric footage.
- 3.3 The inconsistencies between class rules further complicate the technical regulatory framework and inspection controls. Some classes permitted white helmets with stickers, others prohibited white altogether; some allowed stickers or painted surfaces, others did not. This patchwork of rules created confusion, undermined compliance, and risked technical protests.

4. Issues

- (a) Strategy/Objective Implications

The recommendation supports the strategic priorities of athlete safety, Olympic presentation, and technical leadership, reacting to feedback from OBS.

- (b) Consultation

Completed: OBS, Olympic foiling class managers (Nacra 17, iQFOiL, IKA-Formula Kite), Format WG chair.

Ongoing at the date of drafting the paper: Athlete Committee, Equipment Committee, Events Committee, Coaches and Team leader's Commission.

(c) Risk Register Implications

(i) Perceived exclusivity reduces athlete choice.

- External. Impact: moderate (5/10). Likelihood: medium (1/3).
- Controls: NOCs may select among three helmet models; transparent process with Classes and IOC. Decision by end of 2025 expected to provide sufficient time to accommodate to preferred option.

(ii) Legal challenge from other manufacturers.

- External. Impact: moderate (5/10). Likelihood: low (1/3).
- Controls: process to be framed under LA2028 approval processes. Precedent exists in exclusive supplier arrangements.

(d) Legal, Governance and Compliance

Exclusive appointment may require amendments to relevant Class Rules, Olympic Equipment Regulations and supplier agreements.

(e) Responsibility

Director of Technical and Offshore – overall responsibility