

Youth Events Committee Annual Report 2025

Submitted by the Chair, Piotr Oleksiak

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Overview

This year marked a major step forward for the Youth Events Committee, transitioning from a sub-committee into a full committee reporting directly to Council. Throughout 2025, the Committee focused on establishing clear objectives, defining its Work Plan, and coordinating effectively across World Sailing's structures. Four Working Groups were established to analyse the current state of Youth Events and provide recommendations for improvement:

- Youth Olympic Games Working Group
- Event Standards & Essentials Working Group
- Event Organisation Financial Feasibility Working Group
- Participation Data Working Group

Youth Olympic Games

The Executive Office is supporting the IOC in analysing the Entry Requests submitted by NOCs to identify priority candidates and potential challenges in preparation for quota allocation. Invitations from the IOC are anticipated toward the end of Q1 2026. Key decisions on the competition schedule are still pending due to limited local weather data. Recruitment of a suitable Sport Manager remains unresolved, creating some uncertainty regarding local race management capability and equipment procurement.

To strengthen continental readiness, World Sailing, in partnership with the Fédération Tunisienne de Voile and the International Techno293 Class, delivered the first African Youth Olympic Games Training Camp in Hammamet, Tunisia. Supported by the IOC Athlete Development Fund and Take Outdoors, the camp brought together 10 young sailors and seven coaches from six countries – Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, Libya, Senegal, and Egypt. Led by three-time Olympian Patrik Pollak and Youth Olympic medallist Lucie Pianazza, the programme covered technical and tactical development, equipment setup, and video-based debriefs. The camp created strong regional momentum and established a foundation for athlete and coach collaboration. Three additional camps are planned across Africa in the coming months to ensure continuity and preparation leading up to Dakar 2026.

Subject to the required local information being available, the Notice of Race for the YOG is planned for publication in Q1 2026 ahead of the IOC invitations. The Working Group will continue to monitor organisational readiness and development activity.

Event Standards & Essentials Working Group

This group has been tasked with identifying and consolidating minimum organisational and technical standards for Youth Sailing events. In 2025, work focused on collecting existing documentation, identifying good practices from Member National Authorities and Classes, and benchmarking them against the standards applied at the Youth Sailing World Championships. Surveys are planned at the Youth Worlds in Vilamoura with stakeholders, including coaches, sailors, and officials, to gather direct feedback on event standards. 2026 will serve as the year of data consolidation and evaluation, with the findings forming the basis for operational guidelines to be implemented in future events and bid evaluations.

Event Organisation Financial Feasibility Working Group

The Financial Feasibility Working Group is developing tools to understand and evaluate the real cost of hosting Youth Sailing events. In 2025, preliminary data was collected from organisers to identify major cost drivers, areas for potential savings, and challenges in securing sponsorship. 2026 will focus on finalising financial models and preparing recommendations to ensure long-term event sustainability.

Participation Data Working Group

The Participation Data Working Group initiated a comprehensive data collection effort covering Youth World Championships and class-based events. The 2025 work centred on defining data parameters, creating reporting templates, and identifying data gaps. Comparison graphs have been created to enable easy analysis and evaluation of participation trends across regions, age groups, and equipment types. The next phase in 2026 will use this information to support decision-making on event formats, emerging trends, and participation growth strategies.

2025 Youth Sailing World Championships – Vilamoura

Preparations are progressing smoothly. A site visit was successfully conducted, with a very detailed plan discussed across all areas. There are no major concerns or risks at this stage. The Sailing Instructions will be finalised and published by December. Entries are increasing as late entry requests continue to be accepted. Notably, the OA has waived the late fee for Kite sailors to boost participation. A total of 428 athletes and 151 coaches from 72 countries will compete in Vilamoura. Lastly, the Media Plans appear exemplary and all-encompassing.

2026, 2027 and 2028 Youth Sailing World Championships

The hosts selected and approved for 2026 are Vilamoura, POR, and for 2027 and 2028, La Palma, ESP, subject to contract. These events include detailed commitments to support emerging nations through regional development activities. The contractual framework for

each edition now defines the hosts' responsibilities in delivering preparatory development programmes linked to the Dakar Youth Olympic Games and broader African sailing initiatives. The host agreement is drafted and awaiting final approval.

2029 and Beyond

With decisions secured through 2028, World Sailing now operates within a clear multi-year planning horizon. This stability allows for proactive support to hosts and Classes while ensuring consistency with Council-approved policies. The bidding process for 2029 and beyond is expected to open in early 2026, with a decision targeted for September 2026. The new bid documentation will integrate outcomes from all Working Groups, ensuring that standards, feasibility, and participation data form a coherent foundation for future Youth Sailing World Championships.

Outlook for 2026

The year ahead will focus on consolidating data gathered by the four Working Groups, enabling informed decisions and the implementation of practical actions. Emphasis will be placed on the delivery of the Youth Olympic Games in Dakar, selecting hosts for 2029 and beyond, and presentation of the Working Group outcomes to Council. Through this process, the Youth Events Committee will continue to strengthen pathways for youth participation and ensure consistency, sustainability, and accessibility across all youth sailing events worldwide.