

## Women's Match Racing in 2016

The stars of sailing shone brightly at the Olympics in Great Britain this year ... and no star shone more brightly, nor more brilliantly, than that of Women's Match Racing

It fulfilled all the dreams of even the most skeptical.

It provided "up close and personal" views of the most dramatic and exciting racing at the Olympic Games, where no race, no match and no series was assured to any competitor and where the odds makers surely must have lost a lot of money in trying to predict those who would finally ascend the podium to accept the Bronze, Silver and Gold medals.

In St. Petersburg, at the mid-year meeting, it was decided to eliminate from the Games in 2016 what has turned out to be the brightest star in the Olympic sailing firmament.

A Submission will be presented at the meeting in November to put Women's Match Racing back into the Olympics for 2016.

The logical reasons for having Women's Match Racing in the Olympics have been expressed many times:

- It has the best spectator factor of any of the disciplines
- It is the most accessible sailing discipline to the media (TV onboard, Internet and press)
- It is the most easily understood discipline by the public where the team that crosses the finish line first wins the match and the team that wins the last match played wins the Gold Medal
- It is suitable to a wide range of athlete sizes and weight
- It is suitable to a spectator-friendly arena setting
- It is a clear demonstration of athleticism, tactics and strategy
- It is short races which keep the attention of the viewing public
- It prolongs the Olympic sailing life of athletes and allows heroes to develop

Cost has been raised as a negative factor, but in fact, the equipment cost is less than other disciplines where sails, spars, foils and even the boats themselves have to be replaced and transported to events around the world time after time during the 4 year period leading up to the Games.

For example, one cost saving measure going forward would be to remove the Women's Match Racing from the Sailing World Cup and to allow the women to compete in regattas which already feature the equipment they use in the Olympics (Sheboygan, St. Quay, Rio, etc.), where the entry fees are significantly less than the SWC events.

Also, using the Women's Match Racing Olympic Qualifiers as the seeding process for the Games would allow the Olympics themselves to eliminate the round robins, going directly to the quarter final knockouts and thereby reducing the number of racing days ...and cost of race officials, etc.... by approximately ½.

But there are other cost issues.

- Is it cost effective, and even contrary to the stated position in Regulation 23.1.2, to now have MNAs that have invested in the match racing equipment cast it all aside and start anew by purchasing new equipment that will have to be replaced regularly during the 4 years leading to Rio?
- Is it cost effective for MNAs to cast aside their investment in training programs, development of teams and coaches for women's match racing?
- Is it fair, or even justifiable, to have the host country (which bid on the Games before this decision to change horses in mid-stream was made) to have to discard the investment they made in buying their Elliott 6Ms in preparation for the Olympics.

But cost is not and should not be the determining factor in your decision. The determining factor should be, "***What is best for sailing in the Olympics?***".

The answer to that question was made in Weymouth. Women's Match Racing was the center ring star of the event and portrayed Olympic sailing in the very best light. Does it really make sense to remove the "star" of the show from the next performance?

It takes courage, fortitude and personal integrity to recognize that one may have made an error in judgment in a prior decision and to rectify that error when given that opportunity. We ask you to ask yourselves, "Knowing what I now know, after Weymouth, would I have made the same decision that I made in St. Petersburg regarding Women's Match Racing?" If you would not, we ask you to please take this opportunity to rectify an error previously made and to vote in support of Submission 065-12.

Respectfully submitted,

Henry L. Menin

ISAF Match Racing Committee Chairman

On behalf of the committee