

# Paul Elvstrom on the Subject of Future Olympic Sailing

- or perhaps more to the point

## The Olympic Sailing in the Next Century beginning Year 2000

*This paper is based on a number of notes taken during an afternoon's informal get together. It does not pretend to be the exact words, but it is pretty close. It has been submitted by the Danish Yachting Association.*

On the subject of changes to the Olympic yachting - You cannot have a satisfactory result by making small changes, you have to start from the beginning, you have to start all over again to get the renewal everyone asks for, including the President Samaranch and the sports director of the IOC, Gilbert Felli.

We sailors are generally somewhat bored watching Olympic racing in medium and light winds. Isn't that terrible?

I think it is boring and wrong that you have forbidden pumping, rocking etc. in the races. You should forbid racing in less than 5-6 knots of wind and then allow pumping, rocking and other athletic ways of improving your speed. Olympic sailing is for athletes and for the very best - let them pump and rock as much as they can.

Olympic sailing is for the very top, for the best sailors in the world. It is not supposed to be a picnic and a social rally. But the main point is, it must be fun for the sailors, it must be demanding and challenging, and it must be exciting and dramatic. This above all means, it must be fast. If it meets these criteria, it is also spectacular and exciting to watch and good for TV.

**You have to take unorthodox views on the equipment.** - The elite sailors should not be put into popular international classes, it is no good for the classes, and it is not a challenge for the sailors, and it is not spectacular for the people watching. An exception could be the 14' international, one-design, trapez dinghy. I would recommend equipment where you have three different riggings and sails for three different conditions light winds, medium and heavy winds.

There should be no sailing with less than 5-6 knots of wind-speed. The race committee should decide on the rig to be used that day, based on the wind conditions, this will permit racing under different wind conditions, which will be fun, exciting and demanding. It will also reduce the advantages of a light person in light winds and a heavy person in strong winds, and put more emphasize on the technic.

One should construct a Multihull, with great manoeuvrability and with a big asymmetric spinnaker.

Today you race in a catamaran, where you generally make only one tack per beat in medium/strong winds and therefore have very few tactical possibilities. As a matter of fact, two Multihulls should be constructed, one as a single-hand Multihull and a twoperson trapez Multihull. Both types should be fast with different rigs for different conditions are highly manoeuvrable. You have the advantage that this equipment will be less sensitive to the weight and the size of the sailor.

Although I was the first one to develop the single-handed trapez dinghy, I do not think it is a very good solution for the Olympic sailing. It takes a little too long to tack, whereas you get a better result in a single-handed Multihull with trapez.

I do not have any strong feelings about the Finn or the Laser, I do not think it makes much difference. The Laser is certainly hopeless to hang in, and very unhealthy as such. The full equipment must be provided at the event, the sailors should not be allowed to bring their own rigs. But anyway, both dinghys are antique.

**On Fun-boards.** - You could bring the Fun-boards into the Olympics with the three different rigs as I have recommended, which would allow them to sail even in lighter winds with a huge sail area. You should also make the board rather large,

which will reduce the weight influence of the participant, it shall of course be a one-design.

The days of the keel boats in the Olympic sailing are - in my opinion - out, they are slow, there is no real challenge, they are not exciting, and just think that you are planning to race a keel boat in 1996 without a spinnaker. Our grand-grand-children will never believe it. The international classes are fine, but not for Olympic sailing. But as long as my old friends sit as class officers and in the top of the IYRU, things are hopeless to change. But they do their classes a bad service. Olympic elite sailing is one thing, and class racing is another, both have their rights and advantages, but the classes will never promote new ideas, new development and untraditional solutions. The international classes are the most conservative force in the IYRU.

Look at the Sidney Skiffs, when there is a strong wind, they have smaller rigging, when there is a light wind, they have a larger rig. Something like that should be developed for a three or four person boat in the Olympics.

**On the race courses.** - The courses should be of the sausage type; forget all the triangles. But more important, the start should always include the round the ends rule. Also the rules should be changed so that a general recall is not possible, if you have a change of wind direction, then abandon before the start, but only one start should be permitted in each race. One thing that could make the races more fun, would be the knock-out principle, knock-out the last three boats in each race, until you get down to 12 or 10, and then knock-out one or two.

If you have the sausage course, why not anchor three or four balloons with television camera down the course; that would cover the course very well, and with a competent commentator and fast boats with lots of sail

area in relation to the wind, yacht racing would appeal far more to the public.

**On match racing.** - In my view, match racing is so boring to watch, at least in light and medium winds. The main reason why match racing has the popularity is the money. The amount of money involved, spectacular prize money and the large crews. Just think of a match race where one boat is punished before the start, and you have to follow a race which is so unexciting as anything. I would strongly recommend that you change the starting procedure so that you have three marks on the starting line and each boat has its own part of the starting line and they start at the same time. You would have a better chance of some close racing.

**How to get the equipment.** You have to start now if you want the equipment for year 2000. Let the IYRU specify the type of equipment they want, but make the specification very, very broad, specify a single-handed equipment, highly manoeuvrable, very fast with three rigs for different conditions, and then invite the builders and constructors to come with their equipment and test the most suitable equipment - it would have to be a very competent group of IYRU specialists, but it would surely be great fun. You can do the same with the two-person equipment, you could specify that the three rigs for women should be slightly smaller in area, get the best sailors to test it, and then select your equipment for the year 2000 and onwards, I am sure there are people or manufacturers enough who would be very keen to produce this equipment so it can be supplied at the events.

Would you like to take part in that group, Paul? - Yes, I think I would.

Please give my greetings and love to my good old friends in the IYRU.