



Steering the Course

World Sailing's plan to support women in sailing

Breaking barriers to create a sport for all

Steering
the Course



World Sailing is proud that our sport is one in which anyone can participate. However, the World Sailing Trust's 2019 'Women in Sailing Strategic Review' surveyed almost 5,000 respondents in 75 countries and showed there is a stark gender imbalance in sailing – as well as providing insight into why women and girls drop out, the real barriers to participation that they might face and how this varies across countries, ages, classes and competition and different elements of the sport.

It was clear from these findings that there had to be a change and we had to make the sport welcoming to a broader female audience. All of us – whatever, however, wherever we sail – agreed we must do better and addressing this imbalance is a responsibility everyone in sailing shares.

In 2021, World Sailing launched the annual Steering the Course festival from which this document takes its name. Since its inception, it has seen participation in 45 different countries across its three years to date.

This document outlines the actions that World Sailing is committed to and determined to fulfil. As the global governing body for the sport of sailing it is paramount we demonstrate strong leadership.

There is one very important reason why: making our sport more inclusive is simply the right thing to do.

The change we all want can be built on firm foundations. Unlike many other sports, girls and boys learn to sail together from a young age, and as they develop through the sport there are no defined men's and women's leagues.

Even at the highest level we can celebrate progress – we have a gender equal Olympic programme, and the governance changes voted through at World Sailing's Annual Conference in 2022 guarantee gender equity on our Board.

World Sailing was the first International Federation to sign the United Nations' Women Sports for Generation Equality Framework and we are also supporters of the Brighton Plus Helsinki Declaration.

Collaboration will be critical for success in achieving our ambitious objectives; everyone in sailing has a role to play. We have shown that when we act as one – as event organisers, as Member National Authorities, as clubs and as individuals – we can achieve great results. We are determined to succeed in our goals, build a sport that is truly for everyone and an environment where everyone feels welcome.



David Graham
Chief Executive Officer





Introduction

In 2019, the World Sailing Trust concluded action was needed in sailing so that “the young woman of today stays in the sport and has a pathway of opportunities, both on and off the water, that will span a lifetime.”

Sailing is a sport that is diverse in its equipment and competition, and we need to ensure our policies and interventions mean our participants are also diverse. Sport is unique as an important strategic instrument in women’s social and economic empowerment.

World Sailing is committed to making real and lasting change in these areas, reflections from World Sailing’s own policies and programs, as well as the findings from the World Sailing Trust’s Strategic Review, have clearly shown change is needed. Therefore, the Steering the Course document aims to outline the action and interventions that are being undertaken in these areas so we can see the change happening.

Summary of
focus areas
covered in this
document



Coaches, Instructors
& Team Leaders



Race Officials



Participation



Para Inclusive



Events



Media



Governance



Current Numbers



Coaches, Instructors & Team Leaders

The numbers here outline the number of coaches registered at World Sailing events, as well as completing World Sailing Coach Education Programmes.



World
Sailing

World Sailing
Championships

Women registered as
Coaches & Support Staff

13%

Aarhus 2018

18%

The Hague 2023

30%

2026/27 Target



World
Sailing

Youth
Sailing World
Championships

Women registered as
Coaches or Team Leaders

17%

Poland 2019

18%

Brazil 2023

35%

2026 Target

Women attending World Sailing
Technical Courses for Coaches

17%

2017-2020 Quadrennial

42%

2021-2024 Quadrennial (to date)

50%

2025-2028 Quadrennial Target



Race Officials

This data outlines the number of overall International Race Officials, as well as looking at event specific increases.



World Sailing
World Sailing Championships

Women registered as
Race Officials

24%

Aarhus 2018

41%

The Hague 2023

50%

2026/27 Target



Women registered as
Race Officials

30%

Tokyo 2020

30%

Paris 2024

50%

LA 2028 Target

Total Number of Women
International Race Officials

(includes Race Management,
Judges, Measurers & Umpires)

13%

2020

15%

2024

25%

2028 Target



Leadership

This data outlines the number of women on the Board, Committees and Commissions.

Women on the Board

President and seven elected Vice Presidents.

37.5%

2017-2020

37.5%

2021-2024

50%

2025-2028 Target

Women on World Sailing Committees

25%

2017-2020

33%

2021-2024

40%

2025-2028 Target

Women on World Sailing Commissions

32%

2017-2020

35%

2021 - 2024

40%

2025-2028 Target



Focus Areas



Coaches, Instructors
& Team Leaders



Race Officials



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Coaches, Instructors & Team Leaders



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Coaches, Instructors and Team Leaders

Coaches, Instructors, and Team Leaders impact the development of sailors in all stages of their sailing pathway. By increasing the number of women coaches and instructors, we can not only attract more sailors but also show coaching as a career pathway for women.

We also need to ensure all coaches are educated in meeting the needs of their athletes and that gender equity is included in all stages of design for our coaching courses.

World Sailing is keen to ensure that women are represented in elite coaching and strives to increase the number of women coaches at major events, including the Youth Sailing World Championships and the World Sailing Championships.

Key guiding documents

IWG Women & Sport	7
UN Principle no.	3
IOC Objective no.	15

World Sailing Olympic Vision – Accessibility & Diversity Tactics

See links on page 17

What World Sailing is doing

- Funding a minimum of three Women’s Technical Courses per year.
- Supporting women coaches in high performance through WISH Program – two coaches per program subject to Olympic Solidarity approval.
- Introducing an athlete-centred coaching module on all Technical Courses to ensure both men and women coaches have a greater understanding of the needs of their athlete.
- Creating an EDI Module for use on Technical Courses by the end of 2024, which can include topics such as understanding biases.
- Collecting data on country specific programs to build an ongoing global picture of coaching provision for women in sailing.





Coaches, Instructors
& Team Leaders



Race Officials



Participation



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Governance

Race Officials

Supporting more women to be part of the decision-making and officiating in our sport is vital to making sailing more inclusive. Race Officials running our competitions should reflect those taking part in the competitions.

Work needs to be done to increase the number of women Race Officials as well as ensuring there are equal opportunities for officials to develop their skills at competitions.

Key guiding documents

UN Principle no.	3
IOC Objective no.	8
World Sailing Olympic Vision – Accessibility & Diversity Tactics	

See links on page 17

What World Sailing is doing

- Targeting gender equality for Race Official Appointments at Olympic and World Championships by 2028.
- Funding a minimum of three Women’s Race Official Clinics per year.
- Targeting equal gender attendance at seminars by 2028.
- Promoting the pathway from attending a clinic to becoming an international official with possibilities for mentoring.
- Collecting data on national official programs and those who have completed World Sailing clinics to provide opportunities to progress in officiating.





Coaches, Instructors
& Team Leaders



Race Officials



Participation



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Participation

Women's participation in sport and physical activity is influenced by the range of activities available. Those responsible for delivering sporting opportunities and programs should provide and promote activities which meet women's needs and aspirations during their whole lifespan from childhood onwards. We need to ensure clubs, centres and Member National Authorities (MNAs) have the tools to attract new women and girls to the sport as well as retaining current participants. We also need to understand the barriers that stop women and girls participating and work to remove these.

Key guiding documents

IWG Women & Sport 2, 4

UN Principle no. 5

World Sailing Olympic Vision –
Diversity Tactic

See links on page 17

What World Sailing is doing

- Delivering the annual Steering the Course Festival to encourage new grassroots participants in the sport.
- Taking the Bias out of the Start Line – this guide produced by the World Sailing Trust helps events and clubs become more inclusive with regattas, structures and facilities.
- World Sailing is developing a program to promote access to the sport focused on under-represented groups. – this will be a framework that MNAs can adopt to support their needs.
- Explore ways we can support MNAs and Class Associations to ensure their participation is as gender balanced as possible.





Coaches, Instructors
& Team Leaders



Race Officials



Participation



Para Inclusive



Events



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Governance

Para Inclusive

Gender equity should be reflected in all areas of a sport, this includes Para Sailing. This means increased opportunities for women Para Inclusive sailors, coaches, support staff and race officials to participate.

Through Para Inclusive sailing, World Sailing hopes to remove barriers to participation and promote gender equality where possible. The Para classes encourage this through equal entry opportunities within the Hansa Class, as well as mixed racing in the 2.4mR and the RS Venture Connect.

We also need to highlight roles available in officiating, administration and coaching for women with disabilities.

Key guiding documents

IWG Women & Sport	1
UN Principle no.	3, 5

See links on page 17

What World Sailing is doing

- Delivering a Para Inclusion strategy which prioritises inclusion over performance.
- Promoting gender balance for coach attendees on the Inclusive Development Program - Coaching Workshop.
- Promoting attendance of women sailors at Inclusive Development Program – Performance clinics.
- Increasing the number of women sailors represented on the Para Sailing Rankings.
- Developing the mentoring and experience opportunities at Para Inclusive Sailing Events.
- Creating a pathway for women para sailors into officiating.





Coaches, Instructors
& Team Leaders



Race Officials



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Governance

Events

There should be equal opportunities for women to reach their sports performance potential by ensuring that all activities and programs relating to performance improvements take account of the specific needs of women athletes, and that these are built into sustainable infrastructures for developing sports performance. This can be achieved through:

- Events strategies and calendars – showing clear competition dates.
- Equipment choices for youth and senior pathways – allowing competitive opportunities for all athletes body types.
- Event quotas – allowing equal participation opportunities.

Key guiding documents

IWG Women & Sport	5
IOC Objective no.	6
World Sailing Olympic Vision – Accessibility & Diversity Tactics	

See links on page 17

What World Sailing is doing

- World Sailing will host a women’s networking event at every World Sailing delivered event. These events will also provide an opportunity for World Sailing to hear from everyone involved in the events on ideas and suggestions for future development.
- Ensuring event athlete quotas are equal at all World Sailing organised events.
- Creating a career pathway for women into professional sailing with a target of achieving a 50% increase in professional graded sailors on World Sailing’s Sailor ID Platform by 2030 vs 2017.
- Inclusion of rankings and qualification policies in the World Sailing Maternity Guidance.
- World Sailing will encourage its sanctioned Special Events to achieve gender parity for competing teams, including shore crew, by 2028.





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World Sailing should lead by example with how we represent the sport publicly.

In order to support the policies and projects World Sailing has in place to promote gender equity, we need to ensure the portrayal of our sport also encourages women and girls to participate and showcases equally our athletes in the sport.

We also need to empower our members, Class Associations and special events to ensure their communications also has equal portrayal of all involved in the sport.

Key guiding documents

UN Principle no.	4
IOC Objective no.	17

See links on page 17

What World Sailing is doing

- Equal promotion and representation of men and women sailors on World Sailing's social media channels.
- Continuing to promote and amplify women athletes as role models including through marketing campaigns, airtime and media coverage.
- Sharing stories of successful projects that engage women sailors, officials, and coaches to help spread best practice.
- Champion our Member National Authorities and Class Associations to ensure equal portrayal in their media and social media.





Coaches, Instructors & Team Leaders



Race Officials



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By instilling gender equality in our governance and decision-making, these principles should be embedded into our sport. These policies should not only empower participants but provide guidelines for Member National Authorities.

Our policies and procedures should also ensure sailing can take place in a safe environment for all participants, meeting the needs of all who take part.

Key guiding documents

IWG Women & Sport	6
UN Principle no.	1, 2
IOC Objective no.	14, 16

See links on page 17

What World Sailing is doing

- Releasing the World Sailing Maternity Guidance.
- Establishing the Diversity and Inclusivity Committee from 2025 and convening an equality, diversity and inclusivity forum at every Annual Conference.
- A constitutional requirement for a gender equal Board from November 2024.
- A constitutional requirement for at least 30% of Chairs, Vice-Chairs, Committee and Sub-Committee members to be from each gender from November 2024 with a requirement to use best endeavours to reach 50%.
- Publishing the World Sailing Gender Equality Charter
- Introducing a World Sailing Safeguarding Policy to ensure World Sailing events are a safe place for everyone taking part.





What sailing will look like in 2032

- Gender parity on the World Sailing Board, Committees and Commissions.
- Gender parity for World Sailing Race Officials at the Brisbane 2032 Olympic Games.
- Gender parity for Coaches and Team Leaders at World Sailing events and on World Sailing coaching programs.



IWG

Women & Sport
Brighton plus Helsinki
Declaration

[LINK](#)

IOC

IOC Guidelines
Equality and Inclusion
Objectives 2021-24

[LINK](#)

UN

UN Women
Sport for Generation
Equality

[LINK](#)

World Sailing
Olympic Vision

[LINK](#)

Key Guiding Documents





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