



EUROPEAN SAILING FEDERATION

SEMINAR

SAILING AND THE MEDIA Copenhagen, 4th & 5th April 2009

1. Introduction

Over the weekend of 4th and 5th April, the Executive Committee of EUROSAF organised a seminar for its members entitled *Sailing and the Media*.

The objective of the seminar was to help European MNAs develop ways in which they can influence the media in their own countries, for the benefit of sailing locally and as a whole.

Four speakers from different sections of the media were invited as guest speakers. These were:

Henrik Saabye
Television Producer, Founder and CEO Henrik Saabye Productions

Morten Lorenzen
Commentator, Olympic Regatta 2008 & Director Royal Danish Yacht Club

James Boyd
Editor, The Daily Sail Website - <http://www.thedailysail.com>

Jakob Ôdum
TracTrac, Digital Tracking of Sailing Events

Regrettably, on the morning of 4th Morten was indisposed, so was unable to attend. Dan Ibsen, EUROSAF Vice-President and Secretary General of the Danish Sailing Association ably stepped in to take his place.

The format of the seminar was that each speaker presented during the Saturday session, while on Sunday all the speakers formed a panel to help the meeting reach some conclusions. The Sunday panel was joined by Tomasz Holc, the ISAF Vice-President with responsibility for media matters and was Chaired by Chris Atkins, Chairman of the ISAF Events Committee. The Saturday meeting was Chaired by Kjell Borking, Vice-President of EUROSAF.

2. Presentations

Details of the presentations given by James Boyd, Jakob Ôdum and Dan Ibsen are available on the EUROSAF website.

The presentation by Henrik Saabye was very much an interactive session. Henrik has significant experience of increasing the profile of Hand Ball in Denmark, making it into a very popular TV spectacle, and he used this experience to draw out the thoughts and ideas of his audience. From this the meeting was able to resolve that sailing needed to create the following:

- ◆ Interest in the athletes; heroes, icons, to which the public can relate.
- ◆ Interesting events; simple, easy to understand and specifically for the media.
- ◆ Continuity; not just every four years during the Olympics.
- ◆ New media platforms; such as the internet.



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Conventional TV as a medium for sailing is no longer viable, except perhaps for the Olympics. The sport needs to endorse new opportunities to promote itself, such as creating our own TV programmes, aired by ourselves via the internet. We need to create interesting formats and competitions, where races last no more than 30 minutes. Perhaps a world-wide series, with a simple format, making it easy to understand. Above all, we need to create the star concept, by making the top athletes into stars, someone the public recognise. In doing this we need to maintain control ourselves and not hand over responsibility to others.

Sailing is interesting for young people, because it is a high performance sport with a range of top athletes from countries right around the world to which they can relate.

By embracing the opportunity offered by new media, sailing could become a very popular sport. Young (and not so young) people use the internet for so many things, so we need to make sure the information is there for them to find. A database of sailors (perhaps based on the ISAF Sailor), with interviews and video clips of the potential heroes is required, along with short explanations about the sport of sailing.

Henrik concluded with a very key message. By 2014, only the strongest sports will survive. Sailing needs a can-do attitude to be part of this. The opportunity is there and we need to ensure we take full advantage.

3. Sunday Panel

Chris Atkins summarised the presentations of the previous day into five broad categories:

1	Create more interesting events	DRAMA
2	Create super stars	PEOPLE
3	Create new media platforms	PRESENTATION
4	Audience & market segmentation	AUDIENCE
5	Olympics verses other events (ISAF v EUROSAF v MNA)	WHO & WHAT

He then requested the attendees to select which two of these categories they would like to focus on, so that they could be given a good airing in the time available. This resulted in topics 1 and 3 being selected.

4. Create More Interesting Events - Drama

The audience were then invited to suggest ideas that they considered were important in terms of adding drama to our sport.

- ◆ Drama verses good sailing
- ◆ Selection of Events
- ◆ Race organization to create drama
- ◆ Starting/Recall
- ◆ Penalty systems
- ◆ Keep boats closer
- ◆ Work with Outsiders (do not create solutions on our own, take outside input)



- ◆ Script how to create the drama
- ◆ What the viewer wants
- ◆ Make it understandable
- ◆ Format and Qualification
- ◆ Quick wins verses big changes

The panel were then asked for their comments in respect of the ideas suggested.

- ◆ Money, Blood and Sex are all important ingredients
- ◆ Drama is there, but hard to find – think about the drama
- ◆ Need to decide what is the right platform for sailing
- ◆ Rules are not difficult to explain - commentators to make rules simple
- ◆ The issue of how sailing is presented – this is key
 - ♣ what do we need to do differently? – sailors to consider
 - ♣ don't change, think about presentation – experts to advise
- ◆ Beauty of sailing, (comparisons with Formula 1 Racing)

5. Create New Media Platform - Presentation

- ◆ Sailing is the most visited sport on the internet
- ◆ Webcams of boats and marks
- ◆ Time zones
- ◆ Business models around tracking
 - ♣ as other sports
 - ♣ links to
- ◆ Money - how to fund?
 - ♣ needs a strong body (ISAF)
- ◆ Medal Race going forward:
 - ♣ information
 - ♣ screen
 - ♣ Olympic rights
 - ♣ test and develop at other events.
- ◆ Gaps between Olympics
 - ♣ combined Worlds
 - ♣ EUROSAF Championships
- ◆ ISAF Sailing World Cup (training ground)
 - ♣ develop common system
 - ♣ ISAF supplied manual



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- ♣ define media pack
- ♣ train commentators
- ♣ develop information database
- ♣ need sponsor
- ◆ Defined process towards a goal
 - ♣ format definition
 - ♣ working group with internal and external personnel
 - ♣ focus on 3 to 5 points only
- ◆ Merging of TV and Internet
- ◆ Sailors to buy tracking units (business model)
- ◆ Tracking now works
 - ♣ Club initiated
 - ♣ Event initiated
 - ♣ ISAF initiated

The panel summarised their views on the topic of Presentation, as follows:

- ◆ The venue and social content must be established to attract the spectator.
- ◆ Capitalise on being the most visited sport on the internet
- ◆ We have the technology and must find ways of making it affordable
 - ♣ ISAF, MNAs and event organisers need to meet in the middle
- ◆ Need to think of ways of turning tracking from cost to profit
- ◆ Sailing is not short of events
- ◆ Need to take events to the people.

Footnote:

It is appreciated that much of this summary report is simply a list of topics and ideas discussed at the meeting, but those of you who were present will know that all these points were discussed in some detail, and some excellent ideas put forward. This is just the beginning of a process, all MNAs need to move forward from here to take advantage of the start afforded by the seminar.

There is strength to be gained from sharing information, so EUROSAF will be creating a Media section on their website soon, where anyone can share successes, information and experiences gained from dealing with the media in their own country. Simply send your reports and comments to info@eurosaf.org and they will be published.

April 2009