



The Happy Hangover Summit – September 2024

The NYYC and SFofNY organized The Golden Spinnaker Gala and raised record funds. In addition to the generous donors and a hard-working committee, the success was in large part due to the fact that all top tier athletes were invited and every table had an athlete to meet, learn from and donate to.

Oakcliff held an athlete orientation before the Gala to coach the athletes for the evening. This was to familiarize them with the guest's backgrounds, the expected protocols, and schedules. At this meeting there was also a pre-game brainstorming session on where they and the Olympic program was and where it needs to go. Much of this report is from them, the people who are in the trenches and doing the work.

In anticipation of an excellent Gala, we organized a Summit, code name: *Happy Hangover Summit*. It was at neutral location and key organizations were invited to send a representative with a request that the representative was a person who was not only in a decision-making position but also was also actively involved in the operations of their organization.

Invited: US Sailing Staff, US Sailing Board, US Sailing Foundation Board, NYYC, SFofNY, St.FYC, Peninsula Sailing Foundation and greater Bay Area orgs, American Magic, BMQR, Pensacola YC, America One and some independent voices and consultants.

All invited participants were sent an overview of the mission, some background information including the Oakcliff Olympic Helix, a brief agenda and a spreadsheet which they were to return in advance so individual responses could be combined for the summit. All were asked to come prepared to brainstorm with positivity.

AGENDA

- Lane Definitions:
 - Each organization comes prepared with up to 3 things that they believe they do 'best' and describe them
 - Review of Spreadsheet with detailed assessments
- Brainstorming:
 - The sky is the limit
 - What does a successful American Olympic Sailing landscape look like
- Tactics and Resources
 - The athlete perspective (Efficiency, Leadership, Team Culture)

- Helix – note was created WITH athletes in 2015 – pre-Tokyo
- Procedures and points of contact for athlete engagement
 - Grants, coaches,
- Centers of Excellence
- National Training Site
- Cooperation Agreement - defining policies and procedures moving forward
 - Next meeting?
 - *Unfortunately, US Sailing did not participate so this final and most important step did not and could not happen.*

In lieu of a Cooperation Agreement the Summit Report and Survey Results are Presented:

Summit Report 2023 (Sept)

*This report was created using different viewpoints and comments from both summit participants and athletes. They are organized into different sections for easy of discussion. After almost 6 months, it is being released in February 2024 in hope (and panic) that the conversation, planning, action, training and donations can be organized to salvage what should be an absolutely inspiring opportunity:
A Domestic Olympic Games!*

We are stronger together. Every organization and individual sailor in the US has the potential to strengthen the sailing eco-system and play a role. We can assume that not everyone is going to get along perfectly.

Past fighting and restricting the field so that one gets the outcome one wants: a natural outcome of intense competition, for something that matters deeply to all involved has not worked. An increased sense of urgency is needed and will require high energy and enthusiasm.

This summit is designed to discuss who is best at doing the many segments needed for any chance of American Olympic success in sailing.

General Goals and Standards Pre-Accepted as Fact for all Discussion:

- Create a structure for American Athletes to podium at the Olympic Games
- Strive for the highest level of excellence and professionalism - from athletes to coaches to organizers and supporters
- Achieve Financial Stability and Integrity for all programs including all regulatory and best practices (audits, transparency etc.)
- Work with mutual respect of each entity / participant
- Put the overall team first and individual athletes second
- Culture of excellence, good humans, coach, teach, correct, enable athletes to reach their highest level

Overall Report

Parties need to agree upon:

- The current Olympic athletes come first.
- The second tier can't be ignored and need to be developed with leadership and direction.
- This is not a short-term problem.
- We need to build a distributed development organization where donor affinity, involvement and trust can be at the forefront, not a centralized organization where involvement is minimized.
- If the past groups couldn't raise enough money for Project Pinnacle, then no one can.
 - We have a very large and diverse country, there's no evidence that all parts of the country want to do things the same way, and Project Pinnacle was a way of institutionalizing doing it all the same way.
 - Donors want and need to know that their funds are scrupulously managed for the benefit of the athletes. Despite audits and assurances, many people do not trust large organizations and people they do not know.
 - Donors trust people they know personally and institutions who have never let them down. EG: Yacht Clubs they belong to, training centers they know well. Fundraising is local. People give to people! (note the success of the Gala)

We need to harness the collective energy and expertise from all organizations and individuals to develop and sustain the sport.

- A National Governing Body is required for success – and by order of US Congress, USOPC and IOC (see definitions below).
- The challenge and country is too large for one entity to do it all.
- The leadership is the only thing in questions at this point.
 - Is it an effective team of 15 to 20 working for US Sailing?
 - Is it a coalition with representation of all organizations?
 - At this moment it is time (summit) with the lack of participation from US Sailing, it seems that it is the latter, led by Oakcliff but with high participation from other entities. The attached spreadsheet is 75% completed to show how this may work.

So often entities are talking about control. Control is not leadership and very much not in the American psyche. LEADERSHIP is what has been missing!

See the spreadsheet for the rest of the Summit results

Athlete Feedback

Would like a more objective way of tracking progress over time (other than just results at international events).

- James Lyne – KPI's (Key Performance Indicator)
 - *Def: a quantifiable measure of performance over time for a specific objective. KPIs provide targets for teams to shoot for, milestones to gauge progress, and insights that help people across the organization make better decisions.*
- Can we have an easy to read dashboard that shows strengths and weaknesses: eg
 - VMG off the line?
 - VMG pick up or drop off the way to the left corner.....
 - Ability to measure, define and improve on personal performances (PR)
 - How is it truly measurable and repeatable?
- Trackers: can be used but need to be heavily analyzed to see what's working and what's not.
- Wind Sensors: At least in kites: can be used in training only not allowed during racing.
- Some athletes working on getting more data analysis on their own.
 - SAP was providing tracking data Gold Scape (sp?)
 - Athletes reported results were very confusing and pointless.
 - Riley Schutt would have been really good at it – but under-utilized.
 - Question: Is it the data open source?
 - America is good at gathering data but the distribution and organization is NOT
 - What has been provided isn't always awesome nor easy to understand.
 - Need a person – to put data together with on-site observations or it is a waste of time and money. (eg America's Cup two boat testing – a percentage is thrown out)
- If valid - data could help direct where resources are going
 - A regular ranking system similar to the World Match Racing Rankings
 - Personal Best (PR)
 - Hours logged - a key in the funding...
 - How to measure hours vs quality hours

It is Important to be a part of a team – feeling a part and working as a part of it.

- Structure the team this way.
- Nothing – Fully on your own.
- Get help from others
- Leader or Collective to passed along – information and manage it (as in who gets it when based on skill level and when it will be useful vs confusing).
- *editor's note: I was pleasantly surprised how passionate their conversation was as to the desire to work together and be a part of a team. Would be nice if the leadership had this too.

Culture combined with efficiency is what is missing the most.

- Can you require it in some way?
- How to build?

Domestic Competition is IMPORTANT

- Need to get international sailors TO America
- They currently think there is no point in them training in the US – our reputation is that bad?!
- 2028 is a huge opportunity that can reverse above.
- Can we get more World Sailing events hosted by US entities?
 - Note can be requested/applied for/lobbied at World Sailing Meetings – generally through US Sailing as the NGB
 - Need club/organization to want to do it and do it well.
 - Clubs need to be lead and coached into applying and requesting.
- Having Bigger Events here NEED ONE IN LA – EACH YEAR.
- Note LA28 is a host organization and is there to host the games and put on an amazing event. It is not their responsibility to help US win medals. That is up to the US
- Domestically need longer ‘proper’ regattas’ as opposed to weekend “US Opens” and Triple Crown’s.
- Rather have top 6 for 6 days rather than 45 for 2 days
- Hunt’s Solution: Two weekends Open to all, S, S, M W F, S,S to increase the numbers and week days for the more full-time training.
- **2024 UPDATE: 2 Oakcliff Triple Crown, 1 Seawanhaka Triple Crown, 2 Windmark and maybe one more at American Yacht Club are scheduled**
 - <https://www.oakcliffsailing.org/regattas> *Scroll down to Triple Crown section*

Other Comments

- My favorite places to train in the US is Miami having both the ability to train out on the ocean and Biscayne Bay. Long Island Sound is also nice in the fall and spring since there is usually a decent sea breeze. That said, I think the location doesn’t matter too much and switching up venues is helpful.
- For youth ILCA sailing, I think the most important thing is training/racing in a large team of 20-30 (or even more) boats. With multiple coaches pushing for fitness training and what being a successful sailor entails, I think it would be a great setup for creating some of the best youth sailors in the world.
- For my current level, the most important thing is being able to train with other top sailors who are also 100% committed. Unfortunately, there aren’t any other ILCA 7 sailors training full time in the US, so I have to look elsewhere. I used to live in Europe, so Europe ends up being my best option.
- I didn’t know sailing was in the Olympics - from a Midwest Laser sailor

Reference Material

US Sailing's role as NGB in Olympics and International Competition

Note: Much (but not all) of what is below is from US Sailing documents

Note: Links to the source documents are provided.

[USOPC](#)- Unlike most other nations, the United States government does not have a Ministry of Sports and does not fund its Olympic Committee. This is in part due to the taboo of mixing sports and politics in the U.S. as well as the tax structure which allows American citizens to donate to the athlete / sport / cause of their choice rather than having the central government tax their citizen and distribute to the athlete / sport / cause. The USOPC was reorganized by the Ted Stevens Olympic and Amateur Sports Act, originally enacted in 1978. In particular it requires all classes to be treated equally and all athletes to be supported equally in all ways once they have qualified for the Olympics.

US Sailing is the designated National Governing Body (NGB) for Sailing by the [USOPC](#) by an act of Congress. [Ted Stevens Amateur Sports Act](#). Note pages 22-23

National Governing Body (NGB)

The role of the NGB is clearly spelled out in the [USOPC bylaws](#)-note pages 37-39. In addition to being the sole organization that nominates athletes to Team USA for the Olympics, it is the *coordinating body that develops interest and participation* as well as specific responsibilities under the USOPC bylaws such as, relating to sport performance: *maintain and execute on a strategic plan that is capable of supporting athletes in achieving sustained competitive excellence, and in growing the sport.*

Funding of NGB's:

Domestic sponsorship of the Olympics and private contributions are the main source of funding that the USOPC distributes annually to NGB's in the form of grants to the NGB and direct athlete support. This information is public- see [Sports Benefit Statement from 2022](#).

World Sailing:

US Sailing is the designated Member National Authority (MNA) to World Sailing (IF). World Sailing runs sailing in the Olympics and has oversight through Olympic class contract with each equipment class that is used for an event in the Olympics. Entries to Olympic class qualification events, the Olympics and other World Sailing events (for example: Youth Worlds, Offshore Mixed Double World Championships) are allocated to the designated MNA. US Sailing staff and volunteers provide leadership/representation at the IF (International Federation) World Sailing.

Areas where US Sailing has traditionally had a strong influence and continues to are: Racing Rules- US Sailing has traditionally been a leader in the development of the RRS (Racing Rules of Sailing) and continues to have representation and significant input in this area Race Officials- international judges, umpires, measurers, race managers, Events Committee (input on Olympic format and events), Equipment Committee (technical expertise), and in many other areas important to the sport

International Selection Committee:

US Sailing's processes to select athletes for international events is handled by an [International Selection Committee](#), a committee of US Sailing, USOPC has oversight of the processes and the documents.

What does the USOPC expect/require of an NGB?

To uphold the values of the Olympic movement: To be transparent, honest, high standards of safety, care of athletes, care for, stewardship of the sport at the highest levels- should be associated with these values- of our employees, coaches. Maintain and run dispute/grievance resolution within the sport.

Athletes Representation:

Recent events lead to USOPC mandating and promoting an "athlete first culture" and requiring athlete representation on the Board and relevant committees such as the International Selection Committee. The US House of Representatives October 2020 passed the ["Empowering Olympic, Paralympic and Amateur Athletes Act of 2020"](#), aimed at giving Congressional oversight of the US Olympic and Paralympic Movements. The Bill ensures that the governance structure of Olympic and Paralympic sports in the United States will receive renewed oversight aimed at protecting young athletes from abuse. This Act also called for an oversight commission charged with a top-to-bottom examination of the USOPC and the 1978 Amateur Sports Act, aiming to increase athlete representation in governing bodies, and called for more funding and independence for the US Center for SafeSport.

Since this bill was passed the USOPC requires 1/3 athlete representation on an NGB Board and designated committees as well as significant oversight/audits of the NGB. Athletes now must have a significant voice in all matters.

A Culture Change: Required changes to US Sailing structure

As part of the audit process the USOPC requires US Sailing to have the Board of Directors (of which 1/3 of members must be athletes) directly responsible for the oversight of Olympic Operations. It is important to note the significant change in the athlete development and selection process that has occurred over the past 40 years.

Historically a small volunteer committee that consciously made a point to be elite and separated from USYRU (US Sailing's previous name) selected and trained athletes to represent the USA at the Olympics.

Today US Sailing has this responsibility as the NGB- mandated by the USOPC. This is a significant culture change that has been extremely difficult for those that were part of previous structures to a) understand without a deep dive into the underlying events and resulting reasons for change b) to adapt to a new way of thinking and embrace an “athlete first culture”.