

Sports

2026



THE 2<sup>ND</sup> “FOOTBALL WORLD CUP”  
... IN SAILING!

**SAILING** 2026 will be the year that hosts the second edition of the **SSL Gold Cup, the Football World Cup... in sailing. This edition will feature the participation of 67 nations, with 40 competing in the final series, and an expected audience of 10 million viewers.**

Football has its World Cup, sailing now has its own: the **SSL GOLD CUP**; "THE" ultimate challenge between nations to crown the Nations World Champion. Developed from an initiative by the best sailors on the planet and founders of the Star Sailors League (SSL), the **SSL GOLD CUP** will be raced in spectacular 14m yachts with a format modelled on the Football World Cup. Like that pinnacle event in football, National teams of 10 athletes will compete for the **SSL Gold Cup**, each wearing the colours of their country (affiliated with World Sailing: totalling 144 members national authorities). Like the Football World Cup, the **SSL GOLD CUP** will bring together sailing's best athletes who, thanks to the support of the event's organizers, will enjoy the use of the boats and the use of the training centre for regular scheduled training and the competition. In short, this represents a giant First for sailing!

#### **Sailing's 'missing link' (P. Cayard)**

For Paul Cayard, legendary American sailor, world champion, winner of both the Volvo Ocean Race and the Louis Vuitton Cup, the **SSL GOLD CUP** is precisely the event that sailing has lacked until now - the ultimate challenge, with national teams competing on a level playing field, to excite the general public. Dennis Conner, the Pelé of sailing, quadruple winner of the America's Cup and an advocate for the ground-breaking new event, considers that the **SSL GOLD CUP** will, thanks to the new SSL organization, become a new pinnacle within the sport of sailing to rival the Olympics. And it's in Switzerland, around Lausanne, the Olympic capital and world headquarters of the SSL circuit, that the training center of the **SSL Gold Cup** will take place over 2025 and 2026. The host venue for the **SSL Gold Cup** 2026 will be announced in January 2025.

#### **Eliminations and a Grand Final**

Leading up to the summer of 2026, consecutive training sessions will be held for familiarize themselves with the boat's settings. Preparation days will be allocated evenly to all teams, with extra training sessions given to emerging nations. The **SSL Gold Cup** itself will be held

in the second half of 2026 and will run for more than three weeks of competition. Similar to the Football World Cup, there will be two series: a qualifying series and a final series. The 40 teams of the final series will be divided into four groups and will take part in a succession of matches and playoff rounds culminating in the Grand Finale. Every five days, at the end of each round, half of the participants of that round will be eliminated, and eight new teams will join the series for the next elimination round.

**The SSL Gold Cup  
will be contested with  
spectacular 14-meter  
boats, to excite the  
general public and thrust  
the heroes of sailing into  
the limelight**

As in a tennis tournament, the order in which each nation enters the competition will depend upon its position in the world ranking (see below). After three weeks of four round-robin series, the top eight nations will earn their places in the Semi-Final races, which will consist of one fleet race that qualifies them for the Petit Final and Grand Final. The Grand Final will comprise just one race, from which the winner will be crowned the Nations World

Champion. The concept of the Grand Final has been adapted from other major sports and applied to sailing by the SSL, its conclusion celebrated with a spectacular champagne shower and huge media attention, similar to the Football World Cup.

#### **Live transmissions**

As at the Football World Cup, teams will only play one match per day, but spectators will be able to attend four matches scheduled daily and broadcast over the Internet free of charge in 27 languages throughout the competition.

#### **"Panini" stickers**

Finally, as is traditional before the football World Cup, lovers of the famous Panini stickers will be able to expand their collection with brochures and stickers of all the top sailors.

#### **With all of sailing's great titans**

"The **SSL Gold Cup** is one of those simple ideas that everyone dreams about and is surprised they have not seen or imagined for themselves earlier" @Yachtracinglife. Thus, as soon as it was announced, the **SSL Gold Cup** immediately sparked the enthusiasm of sailing's international elite, all of whom have dreamed of representing their country at the pinnacle of their sport. Very quickly, all of sailing's great champions (be it

France's Loïck Peyron, the USA's Paul Cayard or Brazil's Robert Scheidt) embraced the **SSL Gold Cup**. More than 600 athletes have already joined their **SSL** national teams, and the process is continuing behind the scenes to finalize each team's profile from around the world.

#### **Universality with 67 teams**

In summary, in 2026, the **SSL Gold Cup** will again bring together 700 athletes, 67 nations from five continents, dozens of Olympic champions and medalists, America's Cup Winners and ocean racing heroes for a regatta that will be the most exceptional of modern day water-borne battles!



*The SSL training center in Grandson will welcome the greatest legends of sailing and will allow young people to meet their heroes.*

# Like the football world cup

## NEW SCENARIO FOR COMPETITIVE SAILING

Just as ATP revolutionized Tennis in 1973, SSL introduced a new era for the Inshore Sailing Circuit in 2022. SSL's nations circuit, complementing the 20,000 races of the World Sailing inshore circuit annually, aims to honor the top sailing nations. The SSL strategy has been to develop a global circuit culminating in the "SSL Gold Cup," modeled after the Football World Cup, which bestows the official title of World Champion of Nations, recognized by World Sailing. The SSL GOLD CUP, occurring every four years between Olympic Games, aims to be the pinnacle of Sailing, showcasing heroes to a global audience. Like Football's World Cup, it represents the zenith for the 15 million athletes engaged in inshore sailing, while the Olympics remain the ultimate in our sport. Qualification involves Continental Trials, at existing championships or as standalone events.



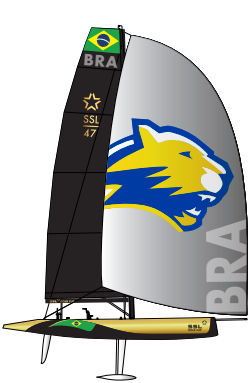
## SSL RANKING OF NATIONS

To establish match seeding for the SSL Gold Cup, the first ranking of sailing nations has been created alongside the ranking of individual athletes. The Nations Ranking uses data from each nation's top-ranked individual sailors, combined with an ELO rating system (similar to FIFA and Chess) based on each match sailed by the SSL National Team.

## COMPETITION FORMAT AND HOW TO QUALIFY

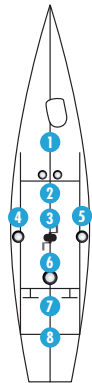
The SSL Gold Cup 2026 will consist of two series: a qualifying series in 2025/2026 and a final series in the second half of 2026. A total of 40 nations will compete in the final series. The host country is automatically qualified, and 39 other teams will qualify through the SSL Nations Rankings and the qualifying series, with selections made by continent to protect emerging nations.

QUALIFYING FROM THE SSL NATIONS RANKING			QUALIFYING SERIES	
To ensure the representation of all regions of the world, the best teams from each continent will secure qualification based on the nations ranking with the following quotas for a total of <b>29 spots</b> in the final series:			Additionally, 40 more nations will compete for <b>10 spots</b> in a qualifying series (2025-2026). The 10 qualifying groups will be organized by continents, with the winning team from each group advancing to the final series.	
<b>2</b> AFRICA	<b>2</b> OCEANIA	<b>12</b> EUROPE	<b>1</b> AFRICA/OCEANIA	<b>4</b> EUROPE
<b>6</b> ASIA	<b>7</b> PAN-AMERICA		<b>2</b> ASIA	<b>3</b> PAN-AMERICA



## SSL47 BOAT

Length	47 ft / 13.6 m
Height	82 ft / 25 m
Weight	3300 kg
Sail Surface Upwind	120 m²
Sail Surface Downwind	230 m²
Sailors	7-9



- 1 - BOW
- 2 - PIT
- 3 - GRINDER
- 4 - TRIMMER
- 5 - TRIMMER
- 6 - MAIN TRIMMER
- 7 - HELM
- 8 - TACTICIAN



67

NATIONS  
AS PARTICIPANTS

The SAF is encouraging more emerging nations to join the competition, especially in Pan-America, in Africa (like Mozambique, Senegal), and in Asia (including the Philippines or Myanmar).

AFRICA	ASIA	PAN-AMERICA	EUROPE	
MAR	BRN	ANT	AUT	ISR
MOZ	CHN	ARG	BEL	ITA
RSA	IND	BER	BUL	LTU
SEN	JPN	BRA	CRO	NED
SEY	KAZ	CAN	CZE	NOR
	KOR	CHI	DEN	POL
	MAS	COL	ESP	POR
	MYA	CUB	EST	SLO
	OMA	ECU	FIN	SRB
	PHI	ESA	FRA	SUI
	SGP	GUA	GBR	SWE
	THA	MEX	GER	TUR
	UAE	PER	GRE	UKR
	VIE	PUR	HUN	
		URU		
		USA		
		VEN		

OCEANIA
AUS
NZL
TAH

Three million viewers for the 1<sup>st</sup> World Cup of Football in sailing  
Reliving the Thrills of the SSL Gold Cup 2022

The finals of the first SSL Gold Cup took place in 2023 on the stunning shores of Gran Canaria, following an exhilarating qualifying series held in Switzerland in 2022. A total of 56 nations competed for the prestigious title of the Sailing Nations' World Champion, with 40 teams advancing to Gran Canaria for the final series. Over 25 days and 65 fiercely contested races, the championship title was at stake.

## An Epic Journey

The finals began with the Round of 1/32, where surprise teams like Tahiti and Malaysia emerged as contenders, advancing deep into the series. As the competition progressed, even stronger teams, ranked from qualification, joined each round. The Hungarian team, a standout that fought its way through the entire bracket, made it to the Grand Final alongside Italy, the Netherlands, and Spain. Hungary triumphed in a breathtaking finish, claiming the title of World Champion, with Italy and the Netherlands close behind. Hungary's victory was a remarkable achievement, especially given their experience

on lakes rather than open seas. Their win highlighted the power of teamwork and team spirit.

## Worldwide audience

The event was broadcast worldwide, achieving remarkable success with over 3 million live viewers who tuned in for an average of 19 minutes. Social media buzzed with posts, updates, and live stories, as the sailing world collectively celebrated the SSL Gold Cup. Influencers amplified the event's reach, while each team engaged their communities, ensuring the event resonated globally across the sailing community.

## Top 10 of SSL Gold Cup 2022

- Hungary
- Italy
- The Netherlands
- Spain
- Great Britain
- New Zealand
- France
- Brazil
- Australia
- Malaysia

## KEY FIGURES

25  
DAYS OF RACING65  
RACES3M+  
LIVE VIEWS19 MIN.  
AVG. VIEW DURATION132  
COUNTRIES REACH5.9M+  
SOCIAL MEDIA REACHSCAN QR CODE  
FOR FULL REPORT



**“THE SSL GOLD CUP IS  
WHAT WE WERE MISSING  
TO CHALLENGE SAILORS  
AND MAKE IT UNIVERSAL”**

PAUL CAYARD

Spectacular battle



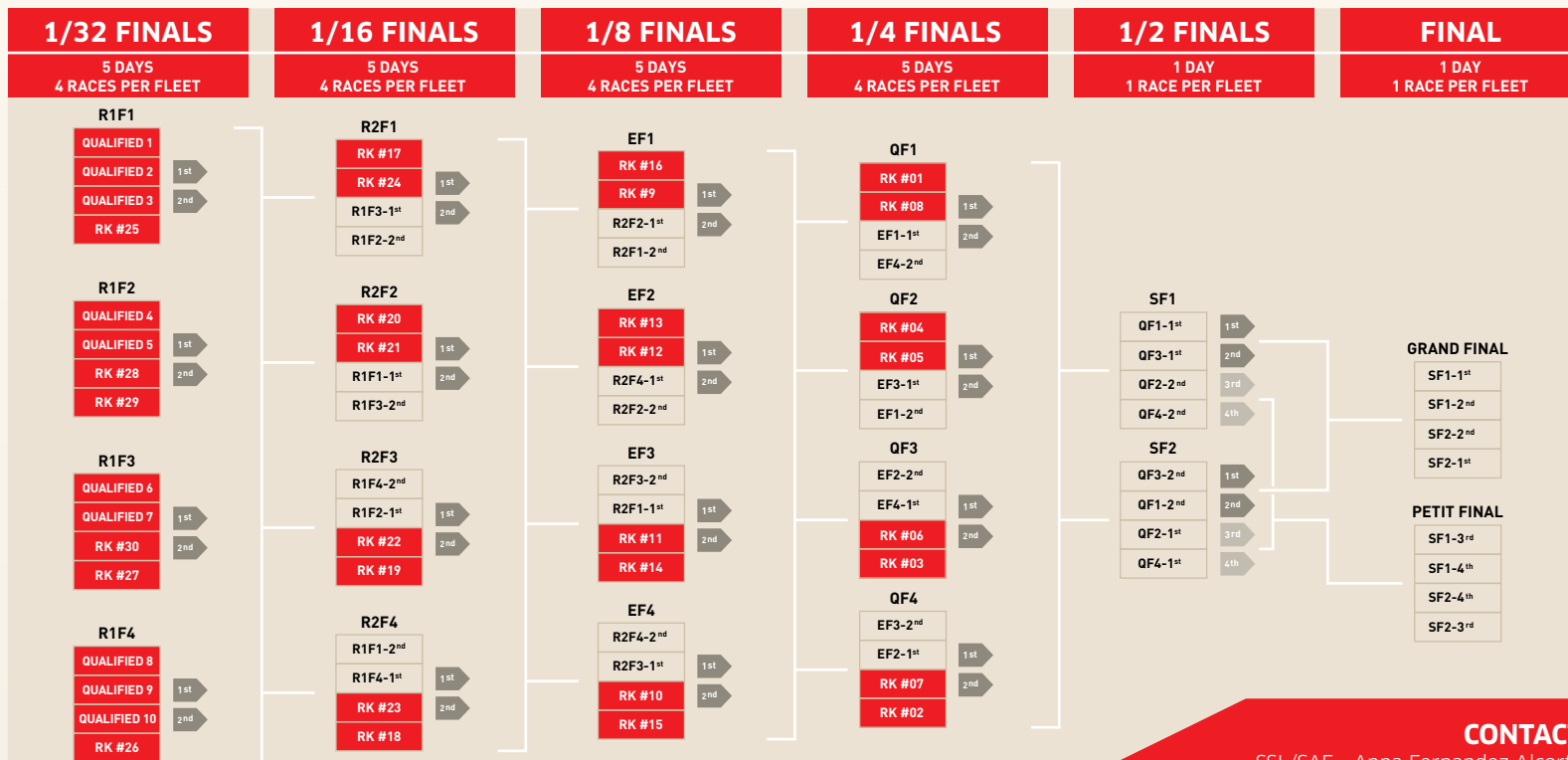
National pride



40

## NATIONS IN THE FINAL SERIES

Out of the 67 nations, 40 will compete in the final series. The seeding will be based on the SSL Nations Ranking.



### CONTACT

SSL/SAF - Anna Fernandez Alcorta  
anna.fernandezalcorta@starsailors.com  
WhatsApp +34 633 62 99 69