What people are saying-

Jonathan McKee is a valued member of the new Offshore mixed gender committee. He is one of the few American sailors to bridge the worlds of Olympic and offshore sailing. He has won 2 Olympic Medals, coached in three Olympics, and competed successfully in the Mini Transat, Barcelona World Race, and Volvo Ocean Race:

“Dear Olympic Aspirants,

If you think you can sail hard for 60 hours and might have what it takes to be an offshore Olympian, now is your moment! This is going to be an amazing event, showcasing a completely different skillset than the other Olympic classes. You will need to be a good sailor; a fast helm, a good trimmer, a smart coastal tactician. But you will also need to have the endurance and toughness to race hard for 2-3 days straight, and you will need to be able to forge a close working relationship with your partner. If this is of interest to you, there will increasingly be opportunities to develop your program, some driven or supported by the US Sailing Team, others from your own initiative. If you think this could be for you, I would encourage you to GET STARTED TODAY! Find a way to develop the necessary skills and experience, find a partner. Get out on the water any way you can and align yourself with other like-minded sailors to make it more fun and efficient. If you need advice on how to do this, feel free to contact me or any of the expert coaches and staff on the USST. No excuses!

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Stan Honey, Chair of World Sailing Oceanic and Offshore Committee and winning navigator for numerous events such as VOR 2005-6 and 24hr and Transatlantic multihull and monohull races says:

The Olympic Offshore Event will dramatically increase the visibility of sailing in the Olympics. It will be the longest endurance event in the entire Olympic Games, and the only event with 24-hour per day internet video for two continuous days. The scoring will be dead simple; the first boat into the Olympic Harbor wins the Gold. The event will make Olympic sailing more relevant to existing sailors as it will be closely related to the type of sailing pursued by over 50% of sailors in the US. Nobody knows whether age and experience will triumph over youth and energy in this event. A good call on how to handle the inevitable wind transitions from nighttime drainage wind to afternoon seabreeze could make all the difference for the Gold, and the more experienced sailors might have the edge.

Allan Terhune, J/22 World and Lightning North American Champion, North Sails Salesman Annapolis says:

“The new double handed distance event is very exciting! As someone in the marine industry, this a growing segment of the sport worldwide and what I believe to be part of the future. It is something all of us are and should be working to support and get off the ground. As a sailor, this is a huge
opportunity. I love the fact that I could do this with my wife and chase our Olympic aspirations, which is something we couldn’t do in any other class. We can’t wait to see how this event develops and grows in the future.”

Jay Kehoe, Waterfront Director of Chicago Yacht Club and spokesman for the Chicago Mackinac distance race 2020 says:

“The new Olympic offshore doublehanded discipline is so exciting for our sport. This will and can bring Olympic sailing to the common man and woman! While this may not be the goal of the Olympic Committee or World Sailing it is a desperate shot in the arm our sport needs. With the plethora of current “short” offshore events that are always looking for entries this discipline gives every man a chance to sail with and against the best on an almost level playing field. Athleticism is always an advantage! But my sense is smart sailing, good seamanship skills and good old-fashioned common sense will likely prevail in the early stages of the quadrennium. This will help focus our sports need to rally around our athletes, especially when this discipline has made it significantly easier to compete against the best! Look for the Chicago Mac Race to have a doublehanded division, Block Island Race and Newport to Bermuda race to all focus and promote doublehanded sailing and racing. This type of racing can also be brought back to your local club and run some shorthanded racing! All and all it is good for the sport and will be great for the USA!”

Stan Schreyer, North Sails sailmaker, long time Boston University head coach says and offshore enthusiast:

“I think the new Olympic Offshore discipline will be great for Olympic Sailing, and the sport as a whole. The format will be television friendly. In many ways, I think distance racing is easier for non-sailors to relate to - it is a battle against the elements as well as a competition with other boats. So, I think this will grow Sailing’s audience.”