



## THE INTERNATIONAL KITEBOARDING CLASS ASSOCIATION

An ISAF International Class

### 2015 annual report from the International Kiteboarding Association to the ISAF Windsurfing and Kiteboarding Committee

**Membership** has grown in 2015 to 63 national class associations, with another 4 (Iran, Saudi Arabia, Korea, India) currently having applied for membership.

**Events** in the Formula Kite class included the World Championships in Italy (72 entries, 26 nations, 6 continents) and European Championships in Turkey as well as participation in the Sailing World Cups in Melbourne (2014), Weymouth and the inaugural World Cup Final in Abu Dhabi (2014). The planned events for Panamerica and Africa/Asia needed to be postponed for economic reasons.

The KiteFoil GoldCup had 4 successful events in Mexico, Italy, USA and Australia.

The competition situation in the IKA Open class (and partly IKA TTR class) has been marked by the conflict between IKA and PKT (formerly PKRA). PKRA had been running the IKA Open World Championships through a tour since 2009. The new ownership of PKRA in 2015 decided to seek special event status from ISAF, effectively bypassing the classes rights for its world championship. The situation has developed as follows:

May 2009	Contract between IKA and PKRA to run a tour with events counting towards the IKA Open Freestyle World Championship Title. The leader of the world ranking at the end of the year becomes world champion.
August 2014	PKRA becomes new ownership, renaming into PKT (Panama based company). PKT is solely owned by Javier Perez, owner of a kitebrand (Best Kiteboarding) and sponsor of several world title aspirants.
September 2014	Negotiations between IKA and representatives the new ownership (CEO of Best Kiteboarding) with the request to grant PKT exclusive rights and to extend the disciplines to Big Air, Wave, Slalom, and Overall
October 2014	First Contract drafts. Contractual negotiations are difficult as requests from PKT do not match ISAF regulations
February 2015	Virgin becomes naming partner of the PKT, rebranding of the tour to "Virgin Kitesurf World Championships" and naming of every single event to be a "Kitesurfing World Championship"
March 2015	IKA is urging PKT to come to an agreement as the first events of the 2015 season are about to begin. PKT is still operating under the existing 2009 contract.
6 March 2015	Contact between ISAF (John Craig) and Virgin regarding sponsoring the sailing world cup (minuted in SWC management group)
19 March 2015	ISAF reports "Virgin opportunity progressing" (SWC management group minutes)
April 2015	No further answers from PKT to IKA requests to come to an agreement. Alastair Fox calls IKA office and reports that ISAF has received a request from PKT for special event status. AF states that ISAF has explained the regulations and rights of classes to PKT and promises several times that ISAF will not do anything if IKA does not agree to it



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June 2015	Meeting between PKT/Virgin and ISAF (Alastair Fox and John Craig). "SWC may be able to deliver <b>both</b> of Virgin's wishes" (minutes from SWC management group). Call from Alastair Fox to IKA, reporting that ISAF has explained to PKT that nothing will happen without agreement with the class.
12 June 2015	Having had no response from PKT since 2 month and noting that PKT is in severe breach of the contract between IKA and PKT predecessor PKRA, IKA serves a request to remedy those breaches to PKT. If such breaches would not be remedied, IKA would be forced to terminate the contract. Breaches of the contract include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Failure to ensure that competitors are members of national class associations and comply with regulation 19</li> <li>- Using non sanctioned world titles</li> <li>- Non-payment of sanctioning fees</li> <li>- Non-payment of prize money to competitors</li> <li>- Non-payment of wages and travel expenses to event officials</li> <li>- Failure to use the correct titles for the tour by renaming to "Virgin Kitesurfing World Championship" without IKA agreement</li> <li>- Failure to agree championship dates with IKA</li> <li>- Unapproved changed of class rules</li> </ul>
18 July 2015	Having received no answer from PKT, IKA terminates the contract and issues a press release that the rights for the world championships have fallen back to the class, and that the class has the sole rights to hold the world championship.
20 July 2015	PKT confirms termination of the contract in a press release, stating the "incredible support of ISAF"
20 July 2015	Email from Alastair Fox to PKT outlining the possibilities that ISAF could approve the use of the term "world" for the upcoming event in Fuerteventura. Encourages PKT to come to an agreement with IKA
21 July 2015	Email from IKA to ISAF outlining that IKA is not happy if ISAF would allow PKT to use the term "world" as a reasonable contract offer has been made months ago and is ready to sign. IKA points out conflict of interest issues between Tour owner, Brand, sponsored competitors, and the head judge of the tour which is an employee of the tour owner, and dubious decisions had been reported.
22 July 2015	ISAF grants the event in Fuerteventura to go ahead as "World" event. ISAF does not take position regarding who has the rights to run the event as this is a private business matter between IKA and PKT. ISAF recommends meeting between ISAF, IKA, PKT
22 July 2015	IKA confirms to ISAF that IKA will conduct the event
23 July 2015	ISAF requests that no more public statements will be made anymore form any party
23 July 2015	IKA again outlines the rights of the class.
23 July 2015	ISAF CEO Peter Sowrey questions if PKT events would be class events, as PKT had changed their rulebook at the beginning of the season (again, without IKA approval).



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23 July 2015	Phonecall from IKA Executive Secretary to ISAF CEO, requesting immediate meeting before the Fuerteventura event to resolve issues.
23 July 2015	WKSC Chair expresses his concerns about handling of world tour issues to ISAF
23 July 2015	IKA receives a call from Fuerteventura organizer stating that PKT Lawyer served a letter threatening the organizer with legal actions
24 July 2015	ISAF CEO informed about blackmailing tactics used by PKT
24 July 2015	Conference call in the afternoon. During the call PKT/Virgin joins in for the next conference call...
24 July 2015	PKT issues press release that PKT would run the Fuerteventura event and that ISAF has sanctioned the event. This happened without class agreement.
26 July 2015	Email from Malcolm Page "ISAF is happy to be open and honest with all parties"
28 July 2015	Meeting in London between ISAF, IKA, PKT. Parties agree that the event goes ahead and ISAF sends supervisor. IKA sanctions the event on a one-off basis. ISAF confirms that this will be a "one-time" exception. Both parties are asked to send their ideas for a new agreement to ISAF. Beforehand, ISAF (Jon Napier) had confirmed that ISAF does not understand why PKT does not sign the contract. The contract is based on the Olympic Classes contract. ISAF to draft a joint tripartite agreement to be signed before 14 August
02 August 2015	ISAF appoints supervisor to attend the event with the rights to direct the race committee about event execution and officiating.
03 August 2015	PKT CEO Alexander Lorenz refuses cooperation with ISAF supervisor during the event
10 August 2015	ISAF supervisor issues event report to ISAF outlining severe issues in officiating and event management, confirmed by the local event organizer. This includes undeclared conflict of interest of the judges and not finishing 75% of the scheduled competitions despite favorable conditions
11 August 2015	IKA requests contract draft as promised on 28 July. No answer
11 August 2015	Answer from ISAF to review the reports and discuss with executive
12 August 2015	Alastair Fox and Jon Napier on the way to Rio. No answer, no contract draft. Next event to start in less than 2 weeks
13 August 2015	Another request from IKA to ISAF about status quo
13 August 2015	JN states that ISAF needs more time to review the situation
14 August 2015	Email to ISAF CEO expressing IKA concerns and how ISAF handles the situation. Request clear statement about IKA classes rights until 17 August
19 August 2015	Information to ISAF CEO that IKA has issued a cease and desist letter to the organizer of the next event in Germany which claims to be a world championship, but has no sanctioning to do so
20 August 2015	Letter from ISAF CEO stating that IKA has the sole rights to hold the world championships of the class, however ISAF in principle will grant special event status to Virgin



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20 August 2015	IKA issues press release with word-by-word copies from the ISAF letter referencing IKAs rights
20 August 2015	<p>IKA receives following email from ISAF CEO. The email is referencing an article in an online magazine titled “IKA wins battle against Sir Richard Branson”. The class has never made such a statement. This is admitted in a later meeting between ISAF and IKA:</p> <p>“Dear Markus          ISAF has seen this news release from you. This is an unacceptable representation of our position and you have chosen to omit any mention of our intention to grant Special Event status to Virgin. Our view is that you are deliberately seeking to cause confusion in the sport and we will now have to correct the statement you have put out.</p> <p>Unless there is a dramatic improvement in the IKA’s attitude to this whole issue, I will have to ask the Executive Committee and the Equipment Committee pursuant to Regulation 10.13 to review the IKA’s ISAF Class status and whether you are complying with all your obligations as an international class association. I do not want to take this step, but we now consider there are serious concerns about the IKA’s ability to work with us to deliver medals for kiteboarding in Tokyo 2020. Regards Peter”</p>
21 August 2015	ISAF issues press release that special event status has been granted to PKT
21 August 2015	Request from ISAF CEO to meet “as a team” in Southampton
24 August 2015	Meeting between IKA and ISAF (CEO, Chris Atkins, Malcolm Page) in Southampton. IKA clarifies situation. ISAF CEO states that “we are all on the same side now” and that if ISAF would consider granting PKT special event status, significant changes (including withdrawal of the tour owner who is also involved with a kite brand and sponsors competitors) on race management and officiating. ISAF asks for two weeks time to clarify situation with PKT. IKA points out that we are on a tight timeline to announce our championships. Approval of the championship would be no problem (statement CA). ISAF points out that it is important to keep the topic “under the table” because of the IOC
15 September 2015	<p>Call from Alastair Fox:          Meeting with Virgin (Alex Lorenz and Mark Roper – Virgin Lawyer) last week.</p> <p>ISAF made clear that there will be no world championship title for virgin, and also nothing that can be confused with it – i.e. world tour champion. World Championship Titles are solely ours. I confirmed that we will run the world championships of the class next year and that we have to publish this very soon, and that we are unhappy that VKWC is still promoting the tour as world championship and the events as world championships. ISAF has told them that they cant and will follow up on this.</p> <p>Alastair said that basically the meeting with virgin was again about</p>



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	educating them how international federations work. No agreement has been made. Virgin is requested to come back to ISAF with a name proposal for the tour under the above conditions. Then ISAF will tell them all the other requirements (conflict of interest, race officials etc).
16 September 2015	Information to ISAF about intention to publish 2016 IKA Kiteboarding World Championship Tour plans soon. No response
21 September 2015	Draft Press release including delivering the world titles through a tour sent to ISAF
21 September 2015	Response from AF: IKA cant publish the press release because ISAF did not approve the events
21 September 2015	Response to ISAF: IKA had informed ISAF about the intention to run the world championships of the class with the details to be announced later due to the situation. VP Chris Atkins had confirmed in the meeting on August 24 that this would not be an issue
21 September 2015	AF insists that IKA needs to fully outline plans to ISAF before approval can be given
21 September 2015	Full list of events and which discipline is assigned to which class sent to AF
22 September 2015	Email from AF saying that ISAF cannot approve the IKA class world championships until they have received proposed events from Virgin, and that world championship titles must be awarded in a single event
22 September 2015	Email to ISAF asking why a class has to wait for an event organizer to have its events published, outlining that all IKA world titles in the past have been awarded through a tour as reported to ISAF.
26 September 2015	Email forwarded to ISAF CEO from Christophe Tack, defending World Champion, with complains about PKT
30 September	Email from President Mirco Babini to ISAF outlining the intended plans for the IKA world championships tour, and the requirement that these titles are delivered through a tour (due to the nature that Expression disciplines are run in single eliminations, and that this is the nature of the sport)
2 October 2015	Email from AF approving the world championship titles to be awarded at the last event of the season (specific events). Other events of our tour cannot be named world championships and additional use of the term "world" would need ISAF approval. AF expresses concerns about the whole structure of kiteboarding and states that "This is an essential subject for us to discuss with you and others from the Kiteboarding world prior to the ISAF Annual Conference."
4 October 2015	Again Request to ISAF that the world titles can be awarded through a tour.
6 October 2015	Executive Committee minutes from September published stating that a working party will be set up to deal with the kiteboarding and special event matter and report back to the November conference. This working party has not been started until today
09 October 2015	Email from ISAF that ISAF will not grant the rights for the use of the term "world" to IKA. Furthermore, "we may grant Special Event status



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	to the PKT and allow them to have a “World Tour” but we are clear they do not have the right to hold a World Championship and we will ask today that they remove references to such an event from their materials.”
09 October 2015	Call from PKT to organizers in Dakhla, that “everything is OK with ISAF and they can go ahead with their tour”
09 October 2015	Call from Mirco Babini to Alastair Fox: AF confirms that there has been no agreement and that ISAF did not event talk about details with PKT yet
12 October 2015	IKA publishes press release stating that there will be a full series of events and the world champions crowned at the last event of the season
14 October 2015	ISAF publishes press release (without prior information to IKA) that PKT will be granted special event status. PKT/Virgin publishes a press release that special event status has been granted for a “World Tour”. VKWC website still promotes the tour and its individual events as “World Championships”. There has been no input by the Executive Committee appointed working party on this.
14 October 2015	Email to ISAF questioning the promotion of a world championship through PKT, while PKT had been requested already 6 weeks ago to stop promoting the events as world championships, sanctioning fees resulting from a broken contract with an ISAF member are outstanding, event officials and competitors have not been paid.
14 October 2015	Answer from Jon Napier that “this is unfortunate”.
23 October 2015	Despite several requests to ISAF to protect the sole world championship rights of IKA, the PKT/VKWC website still promotes the tour and its individual events as “World Championships”. ISAF office has tried – so far without success – to make PKT take the “World Championships” wording down.

Formula Kite **Equipment** has become very similar throughout the different brands. The new yearly registration system using plaque IDs works very well. Equipment inspection is enforced, the class has invested in high tech measurement tools to enforce even better quality control on side of the manufacturers to ensure that tolerances are limited to standard production variation and not to gain advantages.

A new generation of kites (“Foilkites”, as used for paragliding) has been registered during the last equipment cycle and is currently produced by five brands. These new kites allow racing in down to 4 knots due to their lower weight (half of the weight of a pump-up-kite) and higher efficiency.

In general, the development of equipment has basically come to a halt with only minor changes being made between the seasons.

The KiteFoil Class (applying for ISAF class status in 2015) remains a full development class.

**Rules** have proven to work in the past events as included in the RRS 2013-2016, with changes made based on the submissions for the 2017 rulebook. This has reduced the number of protests to a normal amount (5-15 per event). Final submissions for the 2017 rulebook have been made by the class.



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The development of the class certainly aims for a further expansion to the remaining parts of the world, stabilizing participation in the racing disciplines, and deliver world championships in freestyle, wave, big air and slalom in 2016.

Markus Schwendtner  
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[www.internationalkiteboarding.org](http://www.internationalkiteboarding.org)