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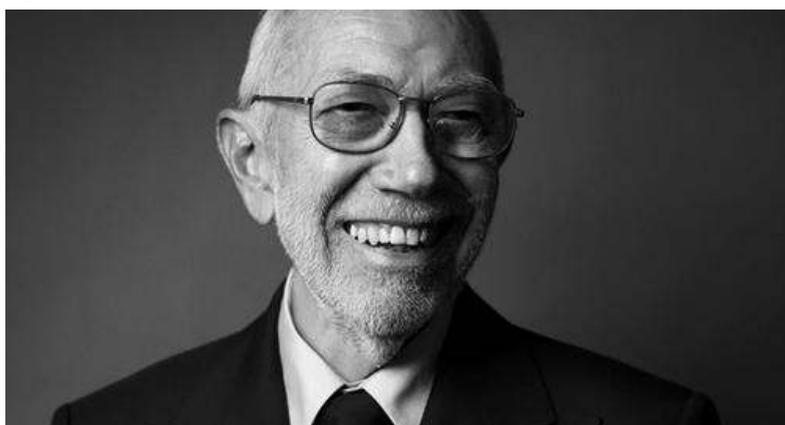
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## Tribute to Paul Elvstrom

by Dan Ibsen on 8 Dec



Sailing legend Paul Elvstrøm from Denmark - photo: Morten Bjarhof -  
Tribute to Paul Elvstrøm Dan Ibsen

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### The legendary Danish sailor Paul Elvstrom has passed away at the age of 88 years.

Paul Elvstrøm was 88 years and died peacefully at his home in Hellerup, north of Copenhagen, Wednesday morning.

Paul's sailing and sports career has been unique, where he won four Olympic gold, 13 world championships, seven European Championships as well as numerous international regattas throughout his career. Paul is also the only sailor who has won world championships in five Olympic boat classes.

He attended eight Olympic Games from 1948 to 1988, [learn more](#) [got it](#)



Photo: Leonard Scabo

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Tornado with his youngest daughter Trine in the most extreme of the Olympic boat types, Tornado.

Paul is for its sporting achievements honored with the Order of Dannebrog, the Century Sportsman (in Denmark), IOC's Olympic Bronze Order, ISAF Beppe Croce Trophy, Sailings Hall of Fame, The Danish Sports Hall of Fame, the Danish Sailing Association Honor, KDY's Merit in Gold and BT Gold (three times).

It all started in 1948 when Paul Elvström won his first Olympic gold medal in Firefly, then a one-person dinghy at the Olympics. Paul had not even had the opportunity to test the boat, before he went to England. This was the first time the world saw this talented young sailor, who took part in eight Olympic Games, from age 20 to 60 years.

First of all, Paul Elvström has been respected by all competitors for very fair sailing, as a good sailing companion and incredibly helpful to all others, because if they became better, so Paul had to be even better. Paul Elvström has never made a protest throughout his sailing career, he wanted to win because he sailed tactically the best and fastest.

Friendships in sailing was also very important for Paul, and he put it himself this way: 'If you by winning, are losing your friends, you are not winning.'

Paul is in most sailors' eyes - worldwide - the best sailor of his time. He was not only unique on the race courses; also he has had a great influence on the development of racing and sailing. His series of books about the racing rules of sailing - incl. the small plastic boats for the protest room - were the bible of countless racers throughout the world for decades, the explanation and interpretation of the rules was written by a sailor to other sailors.

At the same time Paul's skills and intelligence was transferred from the race course to the design of components, which is still used today. The Elvström bailer remains at Olympic and numerous other boats and dinghies worldwide. Elvström winch racket block also pioneered. And the Paul Elvström sailing life vest was the first designed and produced west of active



Paul Elvström also pioneered around hiking techniques and ideas for physical training, which is the foundation of modern athletic sailing. And Elvström Sails - founded in 1954 - continues to win races around the world and is based in Aabenraa, Denmark. And over the years Elvström Kjaerulf Yacht Design constructed many fast keelboats, which today can be seen in Danish waters. The Trapez dinghy was groundbreaking for its time in the 60'ies, and he also designed a windsurfer and received the ID Prize, Danish Industrial Design.

In short, Paul Elvström is not only one of the world's most talented and successful sailors ever, but also a complete and intelligent athlete who has achieved so very much - not only in his sport career, but also with as much impact on the sport of sailing around the world for almost more than 60 years, after he won his first Olympic gold medal in the 1948th

Paul has also helped to shape the Olympic program as it looks today. We sat down with Paul in the early 1990s, where he talked about his vision for the future of Olympic sailing and the boat classes he felt they should be on the program. Danish sailing has made a series of proposals, inspired by Paul Elvström, which have left its mark on the development of the Olympic sailing program; The proposals has been made for annual meetings of international yachting, which resulted in, among other things: the skiffboats 49er and 49erFX, Multihull with double trapeze and asymmetric spinnaker (first Tornado and now Nacra 17) and the more modern RS: X windsurfer. Paul would have liked even more exciting and athletic boats on the Olympic program, but he said: "My friends sailing in international yachting are too conservative".

Paul's importance to Danish sailing is nothing short of tremendous, all Danish elite sailors have been inspired and have learned how to train and get the most out of enjoying the sport of sailing. Danish sailing is the sport in Denmark, which has won the most Olympic medals of all sports - and it might not have happened without Paul's inspiration during several generations - and of course a number of talented young sailors with the same ambition as Paul, namely to win Olympic medals - and enjoy sailing.

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with grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Our thoughts are with the family in the difficult time.

Glory to Paul Elvström memory.

Dan Ibsen  
Executive Director  
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