

INTERNATIONAL ORIENTEERING FEDERATION

ORIENTEERING WORLD

2015



IOF

Alena Fedoseeva from Russia competing in the Youth class at European Championships relay in Portugal.
Photo: Joaquim Margarido



ORIENTEERING WORLD 2015

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World Trail Orienteering Championships in Croatia with Bohuslav Hulka from Czech Republic in the Paralympic class. Photo: Joaquim Margarido

A word from the President

2015 has been a big year for the sport of orienteering. After many happy and productive years in Finland, we have moved our headquarters to Sweden and we have a new team of enthusiastic staff led by Chief Executive Tom Hollowell. I am excited by the progress made so far and the further progress will be able to make with this new team especially in relation to TV and marketing. With now 80 countries in the world orienteering family, we are a global sport and the challenge is to ensure that we receive the exposure we deserve around the world.

All our disciplines moved forwards in 2015 in terms of the quality of our major competitions but more remains to be done in expanding the reach of our TV coverage and in building our spectator audiences in our arenas. If we have aspirations to be in the Olympic Games, winter or summer, then we have to be able to show that we can attract crowds and that we can give them an enjoyable sporting experience. We have been working hard at building our contacts and networks to support our Olympic ambitions.

As we look forward into 2016 there are exciting events ahead, notably the first ever World Students Ski Orienteering Championships in Tula, Russia and our World Orienteering Day. There is now considerable momentum behind the growth in our sport and I want to say a big 'thank you' to all those working around the world to help us grow and develop.

Best wishes to the whole world orienteering family for 2016 – may we all run, walk, be pushed, wheel, ski or cycle in sunlit forests.



Brian Porteous
IOF President

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Front cover: Start in the women's relay at the World Junior Orienteering Championships 2015.
Photo: Malin Björkqvist

The first ever Asian Junior and Youth Orienteering Championships

One hundred and fifty athletes took part in the first ever Asian Junior and Youth Orienteering Championships held in Hong Kong.



Japan's second team won a close victory over Hong Kong in the sprint relay



Text and photo: Mårten Lång

The first ever Asian Junior and Youth Orienteering Championships took place in Hong Kong December 25th-27th 2015. The events included sprint relay, middle distance and sprint.

The races were preceded by a training camp where athletes from seven Asian IOF member federations, China, Hong Kong, Japan, Kazakhstan, South Korea, North Korea and Chinese Taipei, took part, alongside participants from Macao and Estonia.

"We hope and believe that these Championships will come to mean a great deal for Asian orienteering. From now on we plan to arrange these Regional Championships annually, with the senior championships and the junior and youth championships occurring alternate years. The championships for our young orienteers are particularly important for the development of orienteering in Asia," says Dominic Yue, chairman of the Orienteer-

ing Association of Hong Kong and member of the IOF Council.

One hundred and fifty athletes took part in the championships, which involved some very exciting races. The most even race was the very first, where Japan's second team won a close victory over Hong Kong in the sprint relay.

"It was a very technical course, which suits us Japanese very well. Our strength lies in our orienteering technique. To become the first ever Asian Champions means a lot to us. 2016 marks the 50th anniversary of orienteering in Japan, so this is an excellent way to start off the celebrations", says Kousuke Tachibana, who made up the winning team together with Naomi Suzuki, Kenya Takano and Wakana Miyamoto.

In the younger class, the winning team came from Hong Kong, and was notably made up of two pairs of siblings; Wong Yi Shan, Chu Yay Man, Wong Cheuk Wang and Chu Ying Yau.



How Egypt Discovered Orienteering

Text: Zoran Milovanovic

It took just one year for orienteering in Egypt to go from a completely unknown sport to a beloved one. Orienteering has had an amazing start in a country where it didn't even exist before.

Dr Tamer Mehanna, President of the Egyptian Orienteering Federation, is making a great effort to spread the message about orienteering all over the country. Special attention is paid to promotional and educational activities in the Universities and Schools. It has not been easy to start up the sport of orienteering in a country where no previous knowledge about it existed at all. One of the problems to overcome is maps. Therefore, they use simple maps made by enthusiasts from around the country, sometimes even a simple drawing of the school yard, but still good enough for navigation.

It is really impressing to see the results from the first ever Egyptian Championships in sprint, held in November 2015 in Cairo, with so many youngsters taking part.

Dr Ahmed Soliman, activities supervisor and students' trainer at Nile Egyptian Schools (N.E.S), Port Said, speaks about how the students have come to know about the sport of orienteering. He recognised the sport as an activity that the students should be studying in the physical education curriculum at Nile Egyptian Schools. To continue and to practice,

it was important to have support from his colleagues, Mohamed, Ahmed and Mariam, and especially from Dr Solafa, Director of Nile International Baccalaureate, Mr. Magdy Milad, Nile Egyptian Schools General Manager, and Mr. Emad Al Agan, Principal of Nile Egyptian Schools, Port Said.

- They gave us proper support, especially by considering orienteering to be a physical and mental activity that goes along with our school educational system, which depends on active learning, researches, thinking, creativity and reality simulation done through actual participation.

Another example comes from their branch in Cairo, where teachers Mai Moustafa and Marwa El Gazzar are not only making efforts to play orienteering games with their students, but also to take part in competitions.

When they asked the students whether they liked orienteering or not, the answer came straightaway: they liked Orienteering so very much, because it's a new sport and it's very interesting.

Finally, as teachers, they find practicing orienteering is very important for their students, as it develops and promotes their mental capabilities and exploring skills. Furthermore, orienteering does not only teach them how to reach their goals, but to be keen and persistent when striving for their goals as well.

Maybe that's why Rasha, Mariam, Sara, Engy, Omar, Ahmed and other friends took



The orienteering event in beautiful Al Azhar park in Cairo drew a lot of attention by other park visitors. Photo: Zoran Milovanovic

Best in W12 class in the sprint championships 1st place Rana Mohammed Refaee, 2nd place Jana Ahmed Saad and 3rd place Mariam Mohamed Saeed. Photo: Zoran Milovanovic

so many medals during the recent National Sprint Championships in Cairo.

They dream about one day participating at the World School Orienteering Championships and representing Egypt. I think they are on the right way to achieving this dream very soon.

At the beginning of 2016, they are all looking forward to the first international Egyptian Championships, taking place in the middle of February in famous ancient Luxor, where a 3 days orienteering event will be held. For the first time, in the ancient heart of Egypt, orienteers from east and west will come together with the young orienteers of Egypt, to inspire and be inspired.



Dr Ahmed Soliman, at the training with his students. Photo: Photo Library of N.E.S.



Popular Estonian youth camp

Text: Daisy Kudre

The Estonian Ski Orienteering team held their annual training camp in Ylläs in Finland in late November to early December in 2015. Daisy Kudre was there, and her insight into the inner workings of the camp paint an inspiring picture of Estonia's work with their young ski orienteers.

How many people participated in the camp?

This year Estonian ski orienteers were in Finland for two weeks from November 22nd to December 7th. It was an exceptionally big camp, with 32 Estonians in total. Ages ranged from 5 to 46 years, but most athletes were youths and juniors. This year 19 youths (9 girls and 10 boys) took part in the camp, and they were preparing for the European Youth Ski Orienteering Championships or the Junior World Ski Orienteering Championships, which will be held in Austria in 2016.

Do you go on a training camp every year?

Yes, every year the Estonian ski orienteering team goes on a traditional first-snow camp in Lapland at the end of November. We have done it for 15 years already. Normally the group size is up to 16 people, but this year a lot more people showed interest, so the group became a lot bigger. In the Estonian SkiO team there are no different training groups or coaches for youth/juniors/elite class – we are all together. So the camp is also not only for youth and juniors, but also for elite class ski orienteers.

The organiser throughout all the years has been Raul Kudre, the team leader of the Estonian SkiO team.

What is the main focus of the camp?

Each year we choose a training camp place according to the place where the first SkiO competitions will be held (Ensilumen Rastit). Traditionally we stay in the camp for two weeks. The main focus during the first week is mostly on physical and skiing technique train-

ings. For most of us it is the first time since the last spring to be back on skis, so it is important to get used to it. During the second week more emphasis is put on SkiO trainings and competitions. As mentioned, we take part in Ensilumen Rastit, the yearly Finnish opening event of the SkiO season, and use the opportunity to do technique trainings after the competitions.

The main reason we stay at the camp for so long is that we have no snow so early in Estonia, and it's important to make good quality skiing and SkiO trainings before the season starts.

Describe a normal day at the training camp.

In general it is a pretty typical training camp – normally we train twice a day, eat, sleep and rest between trainings.

However, four things very typical to this camp:

1) We always stay in cottages where we

cook the food ourself. The menu is prepared before the camp and food is bought earlier as well, but as we have no chef with us, every day two persons are responsible for cooking and cleaning. It is quite a big responsibility to cook food for 16 people (this year we were divided into two groups) and to make sure it's ready exactly in time when all the hungry athletes are starting to queue. For youths who are not used to cooking it is for sure quite a challenge! But so far we have never been left hungry. So twice during the camp the normal day includes also around 4–5h cooking and cleaning.

2) The persons who are responsible for cooking must also write a blog post on the Estonian SkiO blog. This is an awesome way to keep the blog updated, and let the youths share their ideas at the same time.

3) Most of the athletes are studying in highschool/university, so during these two weeks it is important to find some free time for studying.

4) Each camp we have two or three big meetings where everyone talks about their trainings/competitions/other thoughts. I think it is very important for the team spirit when youth and elite team do things together.

What is the best thing with the training camp?

Snow and ski orienteering! Also, good friends and the very open atmosphere in the camp.

What are the normal ski orienteering conditions at home in Estonia?

Looking at the last few years it is very difficult to describe a normal winter – it can be very snowy from December until the end of March, and it can be that there is no permanent snow cover during the whole winter. We have no mountains in Estonia (the highest hill is 317m), so there are no "safe areas" with snow. That all makes ski orienteering conditions quite difficult.

However, with a lot of snow the conditions are great. Each winter we have about 4 week-ends with ski orienteering competitions and one youth SkiO training camp. We have many good areas for SkiO, and with enough snow the quality of the competitions and courses is normally very good.

The organisers are usually very flexible and besides their normal work they are ready to put a lot of effort in organising the competitions/trainings just when and where there is snow. The consequences are easy to see - after two years of very difficult snow conditions Estonian team is bigger than ever before. This is something that all Estonian ski orienteers should be thankful for!



Jonne Rooma (left), Märten Henrik Pais, Lauri Kukk, Ragnar Rooba, some of the youngsters at the camp. Photo: Jonne Rooma

Evely Kaasiku, 22 years old.
Photo: Malin Björkqvist



Andres Saal, 20 years old.
Photo: Malin Björkqvist



The pupils with their professor Carlos Saldias.



Magdalena, one of the young pupils with a future within orienteering, is being interviewed.

Bosques de Chile: The love and respect for nature

Text and photo: José Ángel Nieto Poblete

San Vicente de Tagua is a small city 140 kilometres south of Santiago de Chile and there we have found a really interesting and inspiring school.

The school Bosques de Chile was founded by professor Carlos Saldias Guerrero to be an alternative school with orienteering as one of its main focuses. The pedagogy being used is based on the love and respect for nature. The school's project has brought youngsters to competitions and clinics, not only in Chile but also in Brazil, Uruguay and other South American countries. But the distances are far and the economic situation makes travel impossible for some of the children. IOF Regional coordinator José Ángel Nieto Poblete visited the school this year and made an appreciated clinic with the youngsters. The work within orienteering that has been done at Bosques de Chile has definitely made orienteering a popular and developed sport among young people in the region. The pupils are not only practising orienteering but also organizing events and other projects within the sport.



All the children participating in the project.



José Ángel Nieto Poblete teaching orienteering.



Training at the schoolyard.



Viktor Flingmark together with the other youth leaders at Junior World Championships in Norway.

Young leaders watch and learn

Text and photo: Malin Björkqvist

In conjunction with the Junior World Championships in Norway, young leaders from Sweden, Norway and Finland participated in the camp "2NULL15".

Viktor Flingmark, one of the Swedish participants, summarises an educational week:

- We got to see and hear how everything works behind the scenes when organising a championship. It was very interesting, says Viktor Flingmark.

Before the relay race, Ivar Malen and Per Sandberg held a talk on what it's like to be part of the organising staff. Ivar Maalen, who acted as the National Controller for the event, told the participants about his career as an organiser: - I was never very successful as a runner, but instead I made my career as an

organiser. There are great opportunities to do so, especially if you are interested in contributing to making the events as good as possible.

The participants of "2NULL15" were curious and had many questions, for instance regarding how much of an event comes down to planning and how much is improvised. Ivar Malen asks the participants what they think, and someone guesses that it is 70 per cent planning and 30 per cent improvisation. There is no right answer, but Ivar estimates that the figure is closer to 95 per cent planning and 5 per cent improvisation.

- But it is incredibly important to be able to make the right decisions even when improvising, he says.

Most of the youngsters at the camp al-

ready have different leadership roles within their respective clubs. Viktor Flingmark is still active in his mother club Uddevalla, despite now living in Falun in central Sweden.

- Uddevalla is involved in the organisation of the WOC 2016. I don't know what job assignment I will have yet, but I'll definitely be doing something, he says.

Organising the "2NULL15" camp in conjunction with the JWOC is a great plus, according to Viktor.

- I enjoyed following the races and cheering on the Swedish team.

What has been the most interesting?

- We have had so many exciting lectures. Among others, we had a GPS workshop with Hans Petter Mathisen, which was very interesting.



A 'Blue wave' of progress

MTB Orienteering: Fontainebleau's 'Pôle Espoir' (Elite Academy)

Text and photo: Joaquim Margarido

France has always been one of the world's greatest driving forces in MTB Orienteering. It was in Fontainebleau, just over fifty kilometres south-east of Paris, that the first World MTB Orienteering Championships took place in 2002, and it was there that athletes like Laure Coupat, Caroline Finance, Jérémie Gillmann and Matthieu Barthélémy became fam-

ous names in this discipline's history. But the years then passed and, though always feared by their opponents, France constantly failed to come back to take the world lead. Some sporadic successes – Jérémie Gillmann and the Men's Relay in 2007, Gaëlle Barlet in 2011 and Baptiste Fuchs in 2014 – just confirmed a period with few high spots. However when we come to the end of 2015, we find

four Frenchmen in the IOF MTB Orienteering World Ranking's top 20 and two French women in the top 10! When we look at their results in the European and World Championships, we can begin to understand that something has changed in a big way.

The change is significant and likely to be long-lasting. Since 2006 French MTB Orienteering has undergone a major reorganisa-



Antoine Vercauteren

tion, becoming much better structured, with the fruits beginning to emerge consistently a few years afterwards. Success was first fully appreciated (and celebrated) by the youngsters in Hungary in 2012 when Lou Denaix won the Junior World Sprint title. In 2013 Cédric Beill enjoyed one of the greatest achievements in MTB Orienteering's history, being crowned Junior World Champion in all four distances: Sprint, Medium, Long and Relay. The French men's relay team won the silver medal at the 2014 Junior World Championships. But it's in 2015 that one can truly appreciate the results of this long-term work, the magnitude of which brings France back to the forefront of World MTB Orienteering.

"Training is not an exact science"

Sports teacher, promoter, adviser, cartographer, organiser and public relations person, André Hermet is also a member of IOF's MTBO Commission, coordinator and coach of the French MTBO team. And he is Coordinator, at regional level, of the most important MTBO development institution in France and a true example to the world: Fontainebleau's "Pôle Espoir", its Elite Academy.

A cyclist when young, Hermet encountered Orienteering at the age of 24. This was too late to see his dream, to get into the French Foot Orienteering Elite Team, come true. But he still wanted to improve his knowledge, learn the secrets of physical preparation and know more about how to achieve technical improvement; his interest in putting these things into practice led him in due course to a period of study, and he was awarded his Sports Teacher Diploma at the age of 42. From that moment he began to devote himself fully to coaching at high level. To him, "coaching is to identify, bring forward, prepare, and lead an individual or a group in ways which realise their highest potential. But it's by not doing the same as others that you take a step forward."

What steps enable a musician to become a virtuoso? How do pilots of fighter jets manage stress during the flight? "High levels exist not only in sport", André Hermet comments. "I've always tried to innovate, applying new training methods based on knowledge and scientific research on the complexity of achieving excellence", he says. Bringing in theoretical concepts about perception, memory, logical thinking and planning, among other things, André Hermet just wants to improve the athletes' effectiveness whilst competing: "Training is not an exact science. There are no secrets or miracles. As a coach, it isn't enough



Lou Denaix



Constance Devillers

just to know and understand the principles of training. I need to know how to combine and use these principles to create "my" method. The percentage of MTB orienteers with large potential is not greater in France than in Spain, Finland or Portugal", he affirms.

Life in the Academy

In 1993 André Hermet found himself excited by and committed to MTB Orienteering, which was almost a novelty in France at the time. It was at that time that he began to promote the discipline regionally, but was faced with an insoluble problem: the lack of young people involved in the sport. It wasn't until 2000 – at a time when he had already been nominated as Technical Director of the first World MTB Orienteering Championships – that his efforts intensified. He became the coach of the Fontainebleau Pôle Espoir, an Elite Academy created by the French Orienteering Federation and recognised by the French Ministry of Sports. It is here that he's been recruiting orienteers from all over France who demonstrate potential, both in Foot Orienteering and MTB Orienteering. These young athletes are a group of 10 to 15 boys and girls who stay at the Pôle for three to five years, doing their

studies and having daily Orienteering training.

The Pôle can be seen today as an intermediate stage between the clubs that develop Orienteering activities and the French team. The team is composed of twenty to twenty-six athletes from all over France, the best athletes of the Elite, Junior and Youth categories. It's in the Pôle that athletes follow a programme with a training load of 12 to 15 hours a week, adjusted according to their age and technical and physical level. Trips away from the Pôle for further preparation range from Cross-country Skiing (one week in February) to specific preparation for major international competitions, with Training Camps in relevant terrain within or outside France. The results are now there, and just confirm that French MTB Orienteering is going the right way: this season the athletes from Fontainebleau's Pôle Espoir won seven gold medals, eight silver and three bronze in European and World Championships. To the names mentioned early in this article we now have to add those of Florian Pinsard, Constance Devillers, Antoine Vercauteren, Mathilde Sipos and Lou Garcin, among many others. A real "blue wave" is developing, and promises to grow into a "tsunami".



Photo André Hermet



Daniel Hubmann.
Photo: Malin Björkqvist



Tove Alexandersson.
Photo: Malin Björkqvist

**Daniel Hubmann,
Switzerland**

WOC
6 gold medals
8 silver medals
5 bronze medals

EOC
3 gold medals
5 silver medals
2 bronze medals

WC Overall
1st place 5 times
2nd place 2 times
3rd place 2 times

WC
1st place 27 times
2nd place 23 times
3rd place 8 times

JWOC
2 gold medals
3 bronze medals

Foot Orienteering: Review of

2015

Text: Clive Allen

The outstanding individual achievement in 2015 was without doubt that of Daniel Hubmann, World Champion at Middle Distance and winner of the World Cup overall by a huge margin. Now 32 years old, the Swiss star won his first World Championship gold in 2008

and this year's was his sixth. He has won the World Cup overall six times now, missing only 2011 and 2012 since the first occasion in 2008.

He ran in all this season's World Cup races and won four of them, giving him a total of 27 race victories in the World Cup going back to 2005. And he is not planning to

stop as an elite athlete just yet – he hasn't won a WOC gold in Nordic terrain, and the 2016 WOC in Sweden provides the next opportunity. Daniel Hubmann is becoming a household name in Switzerland where he and brother Martin have their own very active fan club and are great ambassadors for the sport.

Several other names have hit the headlines in 2015 too. At the World Championships (WOC), Maja Alm with three gold medals in Sprint and Relay, Thierry Gueorgiou for a third successive Long Distance gold, and Ida Bobach who won a Relay gold and then two days later took the Long Distance crown. In the World Cup, Tove Alexandersson for her

three wins in Tasmania in January and being winner overall for the second year in succession, and Matthias Kyburz who also won three races.

Team-wise it was very much Denmark's year. This was especially so at WOC where Denmark won 4 of the 9 gold medals: the Sprint Relay, the Women's Relay and two of

the three women's individual golds. The trio of Maja Alm, Ida Bobach and Emma Klingenberg were a level above everyone else in both speed and navigation, but a lot of the credit must go to the team coaches, headed by Lars Lindström, who have created a superb winning culture and guided the team in their thorough preparations.

Thierry Gueorgiou winning the long distance at the World Championship.
Photo: Malin Björkqvist



World Championships in Scotland

Text: Clive Allen

The World Championships in northern Scotland with Event Centre in Inverness were of course the pinnacle of the 2015 Foot Orienteering season. Very well organised they were too, with plenty of variety in terrain and course style. There were some fine arena settings, that for the Middle Distance and Relay in front of the imposing Darnaway Castle (the same field as that used in 1976!) being the most spectacular.

The Championships were broadcast on TV live in several countries and as a highlights programme in several others. Record numbers watched the races on web-TV via IOF LiveCenter. The open race programme – the Scottish 6-Days Event run alongside the Championships – attracted more than 6,000 participants, and this event along with WOC added an estimated £9.5 million to the Scottish economy.

WOC individual finals

The small town of Forres, renowned for colourful summer flower displays in its streets and parks, hosted the individual Sprint Final. Maja Alm of Denmark was the favourite in the women's race after both Tove Alexandersson

and Judith Wyder were forced to miss the race because of injury. And she duly took the gold medal, almost 40 seconds faster than silver medallist Nadiya Volynska from Ukraine, with the bronze going to the Russian Galina Vinogradova. The men's race was closer, Jonas Leandersson of Sweden being just 1.9 seconds quicker than Martin Hubmann, Switzerland, with Jerker Lysell, also Sweden taking the bronze.

The Middle Distance races were both close affairs, won by the Swede Annika Billstam and Daniel Hubmann. Annika at the age of 39 retained the Middle title she won in 2014, and this was her third WOC gold; all her international successes have come within the last 7 years. Silver went to the Finn Merja Rantanen and bronze to Sweden's Emma Johansson. Daniel Hubmann was 3 seconds quicker than the fast improving Lucas Basset, France and Olle Bostrom, Sweden was bronze medallist.

Classic Scottish forested and open highland terrain with almost no paths was the scene for the Long Distance races, with the arena down in the lovely Glen Affric valley. Strength, sure-footedness and top-class navigational ability were essential for success; young Ida Bobach, Denmark and the maestro Thierry Gueorgiou, France were the two

athletes who proved themselves able to cope better than anyone else. Ida Bobach won as a result of immense consistency on the almost 10 km course, taking the best route choices throughout whilst other faster athletes made significant mistakes. Mari Fasting, Norway was 2.44 slower in silver medal position, and the bronze went to the 2014 winner, Svetlana Mironova, Russia.

Thierry Gueorgiou retained his title and has now won the Long race three years in succession, and four of the last five. A few years ago he was known as 'king of Middle Distance' but now that has changed! A superb technician and immaculate in his preparation, he beat arch-rival Daniel Hubmann by 25 seconds, with another of his regular rivals, Olav Lundanes of Norway, third. These three athletes have between them won all the Long Distance titles since 2008.

WOC Relays: Denmark, Denmark again and Switzerland

The first race in the finals programme was the Sprint Relay in and around the small coastal town of Nairn, and here the Danish team set out their stall from the very start with a very strong run by Emma Klingenberg to lead after the first leg. Tue Lassen and Søren Bobach

both had good runs to maintain Denmark's position in the leading group, but it was Maja Alm who starred with her superior speed and spot-on navigation to bring the first gold medals of the week to Denmark. Norway took the silver and Russia the bronze medals.

A forest adjacent to that used for the Middle Distance but very different in character was provided for the forest Relays. Fast and direct running was the order of the day and the Danish women's team of Alm, Bobach and Klingenberg didn't falter, finishing more than 3 minutes ahead of Norway, with Sweden in bronze medal position. Favourites for the men's title were Switzerland, and they lived up to this billing; Fabian Hertner, Daniel Hubmann and Matthias Kyburz were 1.50 ahead of Norway at the finish with France in third place. It was here that the host nation came closest to winning a medal: the British men's team finished fourth.

A World Cup of contrasts

The FootO season started early in January with three fine-quality World Cup races held in Tasmania, Australia; the Middle Distance courses at Coles Bay in particular received much praise. Tove Alexandersson beat everyone in Sprint, Middle and Long formats, while Matthias Kyburz won Sprint and Long with Daniel Hubmann taking the Middle and two second-placings.

The second round in Norway and Sweden in June was reduced to two races after punching problems in the Sprint. Ida Bobach and Matthias Kyburz won the Long Distance races in Norway, and home athlete Helena Jansson along with Thierry Gueorgiou were victorious over Middle Distance in Sweden.

The WOC finals counted as always for World Cup points, and then the World Cup Final was held as usual in Switzerland at the beginning of October. Here Daniel Hubmann won both races and the women's honours went to Anne Margrethe Hausken Nordberg, Norway (Long) and Catherine Taylor, Great Britain (Middle).

Second and third in the women's final standings were Sara Luescher, Switzerland and Nadiya Volynska, Ukraine, with Ida Bobach one point behind Volynska in fourth place. Olav Lundanes, Norway was the best of those challenging the dominance of Hubmann and Kyburz in the men's list, closely followed by Sweden's Gustav Bergman.

The Sprint Relay World Cup comprised three races. The first in Norway was won by Sweden, the second was the WOC Sprint Relay won by Denmark, and the third was in the final World Cup round in Switzerland and was won by the host country. The overall results



Ida Bobach. Photo: Malin Björkqvist

were very close, with Denmark overall winners followed by Switzerland and Sweden.

Juniors and Veterans have World Championships too

This year's Junior World Orienteering Championships was held in excellent weather in July in the mountain resort of Rauland in Norway. Most successful competitor was Olli Ojanaho, Finland with two individual gold medals and a Relay gold medal. Tim Robertson, New Zealand was winner of the Sprint for the second year in succession. Sweden and Finland won the women's and men's Relays respectively.

The World Masters Orienteering Championships took place in and around Göteborg, Sweden. Well-known past elite orienteers Simone Niggli, Switzerland and Jörgen Mårtensson, Sweden won their classes in both Sprint and Long Distance by big margins. The oldest competitors, Astrid Andersson in W90 and Rune Haraldsson in M95, were both on home

soil. The standard of competition was very high and some races were won with tight margins; Peo Bengtsson in M80 won his Sprint Final by 1 second!

Unlucky Yannick Michiels

Unluckiest competitor in 2015? In my book that is Yannick Michiels of Belgium, a very much up-and-coming Sprint star. He had the fastest time in the World Cup Sprint in Sweden, but the race was voided and so the victory didn't count for anything. Then, going well towards the end of the WOC individual Sprint, he collided heavily with a fence he was trying to jump and lost several crucial seconds in time. He finished in fifth place, 4 seconds outside medal-winning time. He will be looking forward to better luck in 2016, where the high spots of the season will be the European Championships in the Czech Republic in late May and the World Championships in Sweden in late August.



Yannick Michiels
Photo: Malin Björkqvist

6 countries participated in WOC Clinic (Chinese Tapei, Moldova, Colombia, Ecuador, Cyprus and Egypt)
15 500 meters – men long distance, named "Orienteering Course of the Year 2015" in a vote by more than 1000 individuals in the orienteering community
440 meters' climb – women long distance



1,9 seconds - Least winning margin.
Jonas Leandersson, Sweden sprint

47 % women in the long distance
32nd WOC in history
– The first WOC was held in Finland 1966

11 cameras

14 kilometres of camera cables
29 TV crew members from 5 countries
10 countries bought at least highlights
5 countries broadcasted live
14 hours of live TV broadcast
12584 unique visitors on IOF LiveCenter, 4281 during the long distance



27 Medals

Denmark 4 gold
Switzerland 2 gold 2 silver
Sweden 2 gold 4 bronze
France 1 gold 1 silver 1 bronze
Norway 4 silver
Finland 1 silver
Ukraine 1 silver
Russia 3 bronze

364 competitors
48 countries
141 controls in individual medal races
1500 volunteers in WOC and the Scottish 6-days



TV camera at the relay

The Ski Orienteering season 2014–2015

Text and photo: Erik Borg

Norway and Switzerland hosted the two top events of the season, the World Championships (WSOC) and the European Championships (ESOC), and at both venues there was a lot of exciting racing of very high quality. Tove Alexandersson and Josefine Engström, both from Sweden, the Russian Andrey Lamov and Norwegian Lars Hol Moholdt can look back on the season with particular satisfaction.

WSOC, held in mid-February, started with victory in the Sprint Relay for the Russian team of Luliia Tarasenko and Andrey Lamov. In the individual Sprint the day after, Andrey Lamov and Tove Alexandersson were the winners. The multi-talented Alexandersson, who is also among the very best in foot orienteering, is leader in the women's list in the IOF SkiO World Rankings. She started the year by winning all three individual World Cup foot orienteering races in Tasmania, then quickly adjusted to racing on skis again in time for ESOC in late January.

Big win for Lars Hol Moholdt

Moholdt had highlighted 12th February 2015 – the WSOC Long Distance race on home terrain – well in advance, and the day could not have gone better. This was the third race of the World Ski Orienteering Championships, held at Budor, close to the towns of Elverum and Hamar. Moholdt was among the favourites, but up to that point the almost 30-year-old athlete had never won an international individual title. “I looked at the Long Distance as my biggest chance to win, and just that day had been my target for years,” Moholdt says. The race started well, it continued well, and it ended in the best possible way.

“I did my best, and the feeling of having had such a race on the day I really wanted is the biggest of all. It's fantastic to win and reach the goal I have had for almost 25 years,” he says.

New team members

After WSOC some of the best Norwegian runners, including Hans Jørgen Kvåle, retired from top international competition. Moholdt, who is an almost full-time ski orienteer, now has WSOC in Russia in March 2017 as his big goal. And “after a not-so-good start in the World Cup, the European Championships (Austria at the beginning of March) have be-

come my biggest target for this winter.”

Asked how it is to be a bit alone now in his age group in the Norwegian team, he says: “It's a bit strange that I'm now the oldest one. In particular, Hans Jørgen Kvåle and I have been travelling and training so much together for years and have enjoyed great and inspiring co-operation, but there are also things I can learn from the younger members of the team. I enjoy being with them.”

Josefine Engström: ten starts, eight medals

The experienced Swedish skier Josefine Eng-

ström won her first-ever individual WSOC gold in the Long Distance. Now 29 years old, she has worked long and hard for this gold. On the last day of the Championships she was on the anchor leg for the Swedish women's relay team which also won gold. This was a repeat of the outcome shortly beforehand at ESOC.

For Engström it was a special year, with four medals at both ESOC and WSOC: eight medals in all from ten starts. “Certainly my best winter as a sportsperson,” she says. In Norway (WSOC) it was two bronze medals plus the two golds. The unexpected level of success was explainable in one way. “For a full

year I didn't have any injury or sickness.” As a result of this and all her experience, she was stronger and smarter than ever.

The Middle Distance race at WSOC had a mass start. Staffan Tunis, Finland ended his 11-year long international career with victory just 13 seconds before Bulgarian Stanimir Belomazhev in silver medal position. In the women's race the first four to finish were all from Finland! The gap between the winner and fourth place was just three seconds, with Milka Reponen first across the finish line by a hairsbreadth to take the gold.

Three gold medals for Lamov

The World Championships in Norway ended with the Relay. Sweden, individual gold medallists Tove Alexandersson and Josefine Eng-

ström combining with Frida Sandberg, won the women's race. In the men's class it was Russia, just as in the Sprint Relay. The veteran Eduard Khrennikov won yet another gold; he was on the second leg. Kirill Veselov led off, and Andrey Lamov performed very well on last leg; he got his third gold of the Championships. He also won a silver medal in the Long Distance.

“Last winter went very well for me,” he says. “I could keep at a high level for the whole season. I was fit and enjoyed all my training sessions, feeling all the time that they moved me forward, and I'm glad for the golds in Norway and also a good ESOC.”

The only race the Russian was not satisfied with was the Middle (mass start) in Norway; even the stars can make mistakes! “On the way to the third control I was totally lost;

there were so many shortcuts and not many features that I could use to navigate by. I was actually very disappointed with myself that I went on without really understanding the situation. Later on in the race I even skipped one control and was therefore disqualified. Thanks go to my friends who consoled me that day!”

How does the double relay champion regard the two different formats?

“I like any kind of relay. Mixed Relay is more dynamic than normal relay, especially if it is at a big ski stadium. I like it how it was in Tyumen (Russia, ESOC 2014) for example. There, many teams could compete at a high level and it wasn't clear until the finish who was going to win. But personally I like normal relay even more, and especially doing the last leg,” Andrey says.

In the men's class in the WSOC Relay the Czech Republic team surprised everyone, not least themselves, in getting the bronze medals.

European Championships in Switzerland

The European SkiO Championships were based in Lenzerheide in eastern Switzerland and held shortly before WSOC. They were a huge success story for Russia and Sweden with three golds for each country.

The Russian golds were Luliia Tarasenko in the Sprint, and Tatyana Oborina and Andrey Lamov in the Middle Distance. For Sweden it ended with gold in the Sprint Relay and women's Relay and for Erik Rost on the Long.

There was one gold each for Bulgaria with Stanimir Belomazhev (men's Sprint), Finland with Mervi Pesu (women's Middle Distance) and Norway in the men's Relay.

A special award for Moholdt

For WSOC Long Distance winner Lars Hol Moholdt, celebrations were renewed long after the Championships were over. In the spring he was honoured by the political and administrative leaders of sport in Norway. The reason was that Moholdt's gold medal was number 1,000 in the list of Norwegian athletes who have won gold medals in world championships – a very special landmark. “Great that it's happened for me and nice to be in the limelight,” Moholdt says. The first Norwegian gold was won in 1897.



Lars Moholdt skiing up on the mountain Svanen (the Swan) in the WSOC Long Distance.



The winning Swedish women in the Relay: Tove Alexandersson (left), Josefine Engström and Frida Sandberg.



Staffan Tunis ended a very successful career by winning the Middle Distance.



Josefine Engström got her first individual international title in winning the WSOC Middle Distance.



Russians Luliia Tarasenko and Andrey Lamov won the Sprint Relay at WSOC.

Milka has always had snow at a stone throw's distance

Just ten kilometres from home, Milka Reponen can go skiing, even when there is no natural snow. But that isn't her reason for living in the Southern part of Finland, where there isn't always natural snow.

Text and photo: Erik Borg

Milka certainly won last winter's "most exiting end of a race" award. At the middle distance at WSOC – with everyone starting at the same time – there were just three seconds separating the four first athletes to cross the finish line, but the 24 year old athlete reached the finish first, achieving a long term goal.

– It's really great to be the world champion. It's an achievement that I have dreamed of for a long time.

How has the gold changed your life?

– The gold hasn't changed me so much as a person, but in sport I have got more self-confidence, and can approach everything little more relaxed than earlier. In general life, I have got more sponsors and at school it is now even easier to get holidays.

Farming life

Milka is studying physiotherapy at Turku University of Applied Science, and has completed about 75 per cent of the studies.

– I study full time during the spring and summertime. During the autumn and competition season I don't study so much, but I have to be at school about one week a month.

She moved to Paimio in South Finland two years ago.

– My husband Tommi and his parents have a dairy farm, so it was obvious that I had to

move to Paimio someday if I wanted to be with him, she smiles.

You're on the way to be a farmer?

– Tommi is already working there with his parents, so Tommi is going to be a farmer. At least now I think I will become a physiotherapist, but we'll see.

What about snow South in Finland?

– Paimio is really not a place with so much natural snow, but there are a lot of great orienteering maps and terrains, and really good possibilities for summer training. And it is easy to reach Lapland, Sweden or Helsinki-Vantaa airport from Paimio using night train, bus or ship, so Paimio is actually a quite good place to live. And luckily we have been able to stay for long periods in Lapland during autumn.

Every week she trains between 10–25 hours. Training times per week is about 10. Total

Milka Reponen is finishing just in front of Marjut Turunen at SWOC middle distance.

amount of training hours during a year is 700.

Skiing inside

In nature there's not that much snow all winter, but Paimio has something extra.

– Ski tunnel Paippi has been open for ten years, and it's really good.

It's just 10 kilometres from the farm to the tunnel.

– During August and September I use it a few times. Then we use it more during October, November and December, but during these months we stay mainly in Lapland. If here is no snow during winter then we visit it nearly every day when we are at home.

How is it to ski indoors?

– The tunnel is a great place to do trainings in bad weather, but of course sometimes it is a little bit boring to ski one loop again and again. After skiing a lot in the tunnel it is so



Marjut Turunen (left), Milka Reponen and Mervi Pesu.

great to ski outside again, and to do SkiO.

Two on top level

Milka has been together with her partner Tommi since 2008. They met at a SkiO camp. He is also among the world's best, and took part in last winter's WSOC, achieving a 18th place on the sprint.

– I'm quite sure that I would not be a world champion without Tommi's support. He takes everything calmly, is realistic and doesn't get very stressed. These are things that I've learned, or at least tried to learn, from my man. He also trusts and believes in me, even when I don't myself, and cheers me up when I'm depressed. From me, Tommi has maybe learned a bit about planning. It is great to have a partner who understands what sport demands and takes. And of course it is nice to travel together!

Challenging months

This winter's goal is to be better than last winter, and get medals at both the Student World Championships in SkiO and the European Ski Orienteering Championships.

The preparations have been a bit difficult. During spring and summer Milka worked a lot with her thesis and other school work.

– After that, I had problems with my hamstring and lower back, and haven't been able to run and do foot orienteering. In training, my main focus has been to do high quality trainings, since I haven't had so much time to do trainings. I have improved my ski technique on uphill, and the mental part. And of course I have done a lot of speed and sprint train-

ings. I still have some problems with my back, but I'm confident that I could compete and believe that I can compete the whole season.

Now she can do skate skiing without pain, but double poling and running hurts. She skis a lot, does water running, a little bit of running, strength training and a lot of core training.

– I also get help from a physiotherapist a few times per week, and I do a lot of muscle maintenance.

She will continue to do SkiO as long as she really enjoys it, and the hard training it involves. In the 2017 season the focus is on the ESOC on home ground, and the WSOC in Russia.

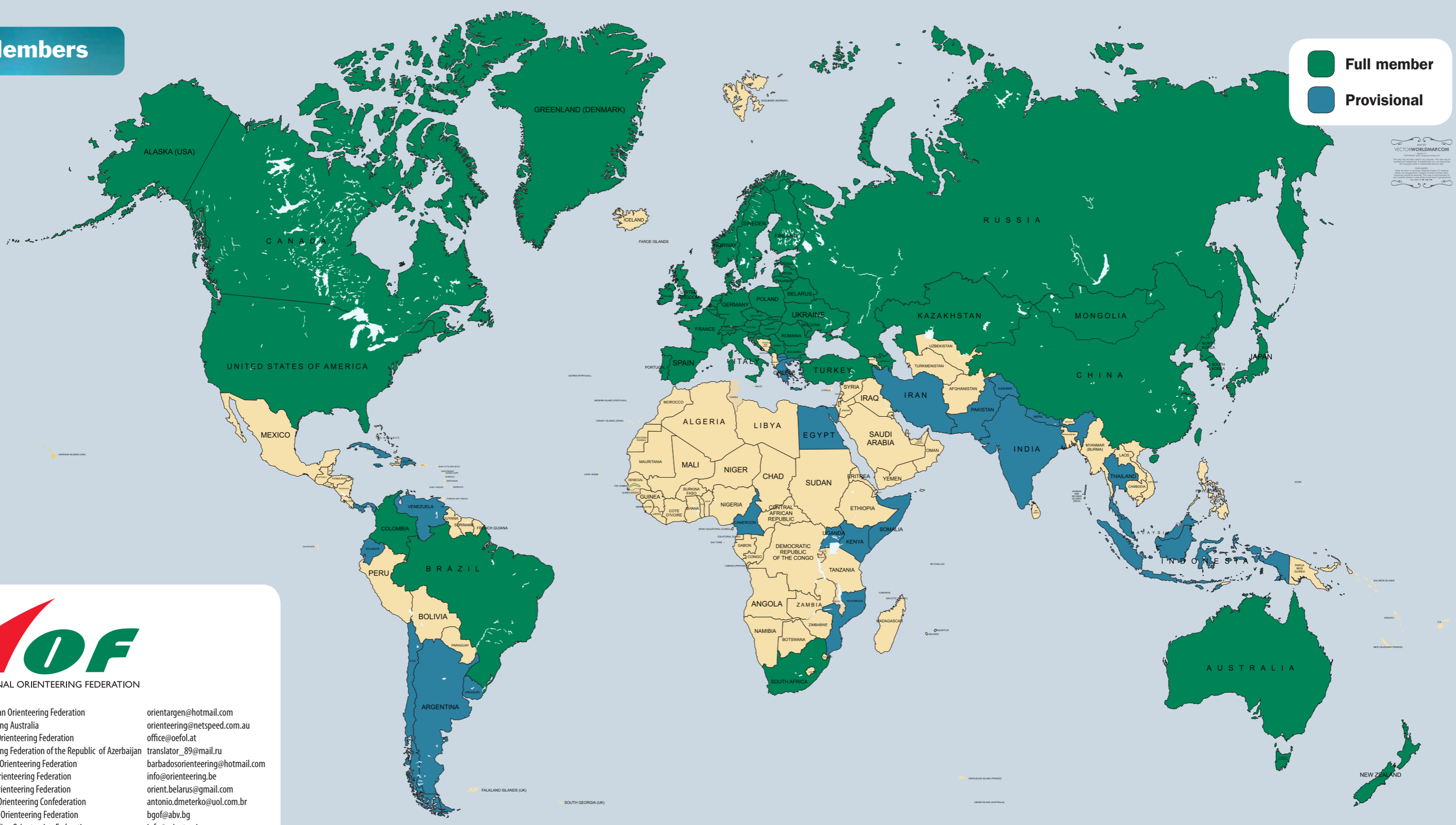
Make camps

In Finland there is an open training camp organised of the best athletes. Milka is central in it.

– For the past few years we have organised camps called Ski O Weekends in different places in Finland. The idea of these camps came from our great national coach Eivind Tonna. Some of the SkiO athletes find good places and maps for SkiO on roller skis, and then just invites others. These have been great camps to get high quality trainings at low expenses. We have organised about three to five SkiO Weekends per year. We have also been pleased to have some athletes from other countries joining in our camps, and everybody is still very welcome to join! We have also had snow camps, and other camps, together with the Finnish SkiO athletes. If somebody just has good training possibilities, then he or she invites others.

IOF Members

- Full member
- Provisional



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- SUI Swiss Orienteering info@swiss-orienteering.ch
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- VEN* Venezuelan Orienteering Association

* = Provisional members

Personalities of the year:

Michele Cera, Vladislav Vovk and Antti Rusanen

Held in Croatia in late June, the World Trail Orienteering Championships was the season's big highlight. But there was very much more to the season as a whole, with a wide variety of competitions on all kinds of terrain and a steady expansion in elite participation.

Michele Cera

Text and photo: Joaquim Margarido

New Year celebrations were hardly over when the first TrailO event got under way. On 6th January, in the beautiful snowy landscapes of Kivikko Disc Golf Park in Helsinki, twenty intrepid trail orienteers took part in a national competition in a temperature of -12° C. The following month the Portugal O 'Meeting' hosted 92 competitors from 11 countries and in March, in Pennsylvania, the US Trail Orienteering Championships took place. Also in March, Borský Mikuláš, a small town north of Bratislava, hosted the first-ever Slovakian TrailO Championships. April began with the Jan Kjellström International Festival of Orienteering in the English Lake District and ended,

three weeks later, with the Croatian National Championships.

We mention these events as we might have mentioned many others. In fact, the first four months of the year were with great activity all over the world, many events being national qualifying events for the World Trail Orienteering Championships (WTOC), scheduled for Croatia in late June. By the end of April 26 nations had guaranteed their presence in the big event, and the competitors' focus for the next two months would be of intense preparation for the big struggle ahead.

European Cup kicks off in Finland

The first round of the 2015 unofficial Euro-

pean Cup in TrailO (ECTO) took place in early May in Espoo, Finland, and was a huge sporting success. More than 100 competitors representing 10 countries were able to take advantage of a very high-quality weekend, with the European and World TempO Champions, respectively the Finn Antti Rusanen and the Norwegian Martin Jullum, proving to be the major figures, sharing victories in the two stages. Many of the world's best, their passports already stamped for Croatia, competed in Finland and also in the following rounds in Lithuania and Croatia.

The outstanding statistic is, of course, the high level of participation in the Croatian round, with 134 competitors present on the first day of competition, making this one of the best-attended events ever in TrailO history. In the competition the Finn Anna Jacobson, the Ukrainian Sergii Stoian, the Norwegian Martin Jullum and Latvian Guntars Mankus shared the victories, with Martin Jullum gaining a comfortable advantage over his closest opponents and becoming the top candidate for the overall victory, a feat he had achieved in the previous season.

Global excellence

Taking on its shoulders the responsibility of an organisation of huge complexity, the Orienteering Club Vihor, with the support of the Croatian Orienteering Federation and the IOF, welcomed a total of 123 competitors to the 12th WTOC which was held in Zagreb and Karlovac. Bulgaria and Turkey were represented for the first time.

WTOC 2015 will be remembered for its high organisational level, carefully planned in every detail. Words are inadequate to praise the quality of the provision for all who had the chance to be in Croatia, both in terms of the excellence of maps and courses, as for the availability and friendship of the hosts who did everything possible to provide the best conditions for all participants. For all these reasons, but also for the many surprises that the competition turned out to offer, this WTOC 2015 will be etched in everyone's memory as an event of reference and an example for the future.

Ukraine wins Paralympic and Team competitions

In the PreO competition, the Italian Michele Cera was the uncontested winner in the Open Class. The victory began to design itself on the first day of competition, with the Italian achieving the best performance among the 67 competitors. Just a one-point lead over a group of seven athletes, among whom was the World Champion in 2014, the Latvian Guntars Mankus, meant that Michael Cera had a real challenge on his hands for the decisive stage. Showing nerves of steel the Italian had a clear race, giving his country a victory both unexpected and tasty. Antti Rusanen and Martin Jullum ended one point down in silver and bronze medal positions respectively.

In the Paralympic class, the Swedish Ola Jansson took a precious one-point lead on Day One over his closest rivals, the Dane Søren Saxtorph and the Ukrainian Vladislav Vovk. On the decisive day, however, Jansson made four mistakes, falling to fourth place. Vladislav Vovk ended as the winner, followed by the Croatian Ivica Bertol and then Søren Saxtorph. With excellent performances from Vladislav Vovk, Vitalii Kyrychenko and Mykola Opanasenko, Ukraine won the Team Competition, the last one in the history of the Championships.

Ukraine was followed by Croatia – team world champion in 2014 – and Finland.

The TempO competition confirmed Antti Rusanen as one of the best performers in the world, winning clearly over the Slovakian Ján Furucz, who was one of the major surprises of the Championships. The other big surprise was the group of "unknown youngsters" in top positions, namely the Norwegian Sondre Ruud Braten (3rd), the Finn Lauri Mäkinen (5th) and the Portuguese Ines Domingues (7th). The Championships finished with an interesting TrailO Relay demonstration event in which Sweden, Finland and Italy took the podium places in that order.

European Cup overall for Erik Stålnacke

The World Trail Orienteering Championships were not by a long way the last act in this discipline in 2015. The fourth round of ECTO took place in Bollnäs, Sweden, one week before the well-known O-Ringen event. The Norwegian Lars Jakob Waaler and the Swedish Erik Stålnacke won the 7th and 8th stages there and came up amongst the leading standings.

ECTO's last two stages in Javorník (Czech Republic) had the Czech Jana Kostova and the Slovak Ján Furucz as the big winners. With a 2nd and a 5th place in the final stages Erik Stålnacke ended as overall winner of ECTO, relegating Martin Jullum, the Latvian Janis Rukšans, the Swede Martin Fredholm and Lars Jakob Waaler to the subsequent positions.

There's more next year

Towards the end of the year some of the major national competitions took place. In Kontiolahti, Finland, Jari Turto and Risto Vainio took the PreO and TempO national titles respectively, while in the Czech Republic Jana Kostova and Libor Forst were the National Champions in the Paralympic and Open classes respectively. In Uppsala, Sweden, Erik Stålnacke took the national PreO title, while Marit Wiksell triumphed in TempO. At Eidsvoll, in Norway, Lars Jakob Waaler and Geir Myhr Øien won the National Championships of PreO and TempO respectively, while in Navacerrada, north of Madrid, the Portuguese Nuno Pires took the Iberian Champion title. In October the city of Maribor, Slovenia, saw Ján Furucz win the CRO-ITA-SLO TrailO Cup 2015, a popular event that has taken place since 2006, attracting competitors from several countries of southern and south-eastern Europe.

In 2016 the elite programme will be even bigger. Being held for the fourth year in a row, the unofficial European Cup in Trail Orienteering will have its start in Portugal on 9th and 10th April, then Slovakia (21st and 22nd May), Italy (2nd and 3rd June) and Lithuania (13th and 14th August) and concluding in Norway on 17th and 18th September. Meanwhile the Czech Republic will organise the European Trail Orienteering Championships from 21st to 28th May, and the World Trail Orienteering Championships will return to Sweden between 20th and 28th August, after being held there in 2004 in Västerås – the very first WTOC.



Antti Rusanen

Trail Orienteering

The indispensable Personal Assistant

Text and photo: Joaquim Margarido

It's celebration time, the announcer has called his name and he moves to the podium under a rain of applause. This is the fourth time it has happened within the last six World Trail Orienteering Championships, and Søren knows the ritual perfectly well. He doesn't use much effort to get there. The distance is short and the electric wheelchair has no difficulty progressing over the grass. In the middle of the crowd, eyes wide open, Rikke follows him closely, living the moment with particular emotion. And when Søren raises his arms in triumph, medal on his chest and diploma and a beautiful bouquet of flowers on his knees, his personal assistant cannot help but feel an enormous pride in the achievement.

Rather than tell a story of a successful 'team', the next lines are above all a homage. A heartfelt tribute to all Personal Assistants of the Paralympic athletes in Trail Orienteering, to all those men and women who with their care, energy and great sense of mission replace the athlete in what they aren't able to do. This story is about Rikke and Søren, but it's also about Beata and Ágata, Marijeta and Mauro, Josip and Marina, Susana and Ana Paula,

Once upon a time...

For Søren Saxtorph, a Dane who became quadriplegic and found in Trail Orienteering a good complement to his rehabilitation process, not everything was roses during the 2015 World Trail Orienteering Championships (WTOC). In the very peculiar forest of Sesevete, turned into a swamp due to the deluge the night before the first day of competition, the athlete and his wheelchair would have been unable to progress without assistance, sinking inexorably into a sea of mud. But even when progression conditions are ideal, someone has to replace Søren in the seemingly simple task of punching the control card. It's here that Rikke comes into our story.

Rikke Søndergaard Nielsen was born in 1991 in Aarhus, Denmark. As well as Theatre Studies last year and Physics, her field of study currently, Rikke also teaches Mathematics and Physics. But she's also one of the five assistants to Søren Saxtorph, an elite competitor in the world of Trail Orienteering, an athlete who, in the Paralympic class, was silver medalist in 2011 (Savoie, France) and also counts three bronze medals in his collection (Norway 2010, Finland 2013 and Croatia 2015). Rikke knows that she has to be Søren's hands and legs, his support in the



ups and downs. But she also understands that he's an autonomous person with the capacity to make his own decisions and she just needs to assist him in achieving his goals.

Rikke was contracted by Søren as a Personal Assistant in January 2014, and she quickly realised that Trail Orienteering played a very special role in Søren's life. So it became common-place to see her every Monday night at the local Orienteering club, along with some of his other assistants – and Søren, naturally. And when, that summer, she got the chance to go with him to Sweden, Rikke could see in all its fullness the dimension of an event like O-Ringen and the peculiarities of this special discipline that is Trail Orienteering. From that moment, "every time there is an opportunity for me to participate, Søren makes sure that I do so", says Rikke, adding that "he's a focused and great teacher. I'm not the best with the compass, yet (laughs), but it's fun to experience what Trail Orienteering is about." Step by step, Rikke grasped TrailO's philosophy: "The thing that separates Trail Orienteering from most other sports is that it gathers people, independently of gender, age or physical condition. I think that is one of the best qualities of this sport", she explains.

Next big step: Croatia

The summer had gone and the autumn brought a question with it. "Would you like to be my Personal Assistant in Croatia, during WTOC 2015?", Søren asked. Rikke didn't think twice. Together with Søren, she then had the time to learn some of the most important things that a Personal Assistant is supposed to do, like having respect for the silence, staying close to the competitor, leaving the mobile phone at home... And "holding the control card and stuff", she adds. Another bit of what she calls her 'primary preparation' is "making a BIG lunchbox". "It's amazing how much I can eat during a Trail Orienteering day", she remarks.

In a competition like this, the life and time of a Personal Assistant is anything but easy. Rikke explains: "Most days during the Cham-



pionships I woke up at 6.00 a.m., ready for a long and adventurous journey. There aren't many relaxing moments during the day, but there's a lot of new experiences and fun." Rikke appears not to get anxious when Søren is hesitating out on the course or taking too long to decide. According to her, "he is the competitor and I just do my best to help him, but it's his race and his time limit. If we are pressured by the clock, I do all I can to push him as fast as possible. It's better than fitness training!" And when the time to validate Søren's answers on the control card arrives, the immediate second after knowing his decision, Rikke holds the punch over the card before actually punching: "That way, Søren has time to shout NO, not that one!", she says with a good laugh.

The 'Mud Day'

Rikke will remember the first day of competition for a long time. The heavy rain that fell throughout the night turned the trails of Sesevete forest into a muddy sea. Organisers, marshals, competitors and of course personal assistants, faced a terrible challenge. Rikke talks about that particular odyssey: "Oh yes... that first day. Before I left for Croatia, I thought

it would always be 30 degrees and sunny. But Søren texted me to bring my rain jacket and rubber boots, so I was a little shocked – what had I signed up for?... Luckily I brought them, and I used them on the first day. Let's call it the Mud Day. Søren was in his 120 kg heavy electric wheelchair, and the mud was about 30 cm deep everywhere. We got an extra 'pusher' named Robert. He helped me a lot pushing Søren around and also keeping the wheels free of mud with a stick. We could only smile about the situation, seeing it as a demanding experience. Of course Søren and the other competitors had a hard time in those conditions, trying to focus on the map and the terrain whilst being very limited in their ability to move around. At one difficult spot we were four people pushing Søren. I think everyone did a great job that day, making the impossible situation possible. And I will never forget washing Søren's chair after the race – the mud at least was kept out of the chair."

"I have a great teacher!"

For Rikke, the Croatian experience was fantastic and she enjoyed "the atmosphere and how people related to each other, regardless of their differences and their language. I had

never been to Croatia and never been at a World Championships, so the experience had great personal value too. I met a lot of nice people there as well", she adds. About WTOC 2016 in Sweden, she has no doubts: "If I have the opportunity again, I would love to come."

Rikke also got to know better the great athlete that Søren is: "He's a very thorough person, both in Orienteering and in other aspects of his personal life. He has hard times making mistakes and yet correcting them, which makes him a great competitor. He wants to do well and prepares a lot to achieve his goals." The bronze medal in the World Championships is a reward for a lot of hard labour, but Rikke refuses to accept that a portion – even a tiny one – belongs to her: "Zero. Søren's medal is his only. This sport is about reading maps and terrain, and all I did was push him from one place to another. When we have a medal for the best 'pusher', I will do my best to reach the podium", she says. About herself being on the podium in the Open Class after a successful campaign in some coming year, Rikke doesn't reject the possibility: "Oh... the competition standard in Denmark is getting higher and higher and I still have a lot to learn. But, yes, I have a great teacher!"





TrailO Relay: The big party is coming!

You don't need to be particularly familiar with Orienteering to realise that, despite it being the most fantastic sport in the world, it has a huge Achilles' heel which is called "visibility". And yet there is a format that erases, in a certain way, that difficulty: it's called a Relay and it's commonly seen as the "Orienteering Big Party". And for obvious reasons. First, because of the mass start, then the athletes' contact at each leg change, and finally the emotion of congratulating the winner as the one who comes first. Everything in terrain with good visibility, a vibrant atmosphere in the arena and an enthusiastic audience. As simple as that!

Text and photo: Joaquim Margarido

Twelve years after the first World Trail Orienteering Championships in Västerås, Sweden, the new TrailO Relay is being prepared to be part of the official programme of major international TrailO competitions next year. First in the 2016 European Trail Orienteering Championships in Jeseník in the Czech Republic, and then in the World Trail Orienteering Championships in Strömstad, Sweden. There are certainly some differences in relation to

Foot Orienteering, MTB Orienteering and Ski Orienteering Relay formats – in spite of having the same 'philosophy'. TrailO is very different from other disciplines, with the 'strategy factor' in TrailO having great relevance. It is a major step forward in a discipline that has something to please everyone.

Along the way, many people have made a contribution to the development of the TrailO Relay, but it is generally accepted that Martin Fredholm from Sweden is the person responsible for putting the ideas together and

working out the final format. So we asked him to tell, in brief, what the TrailO Relay is all about. "The TrailO Relay is a combination of the two existing formats in TrailO: PreO and Tempo. Each one of the three legs starts with a PreO course with 10–15 controls. After the changeover, each leg also has one or two Tempo stations. The final result for each team is the sum of the time spent for each leg at the Tempo station(s), plus any penalty time on the Tempo part (30 seconds for each incorrect answer), plus the penalty time on the PreO part (60 seconds for each incorrect answer). Each team has a combined maximum time allowance for the PreO part that can be freely distributed between the legs", he says.

Some history

The TrailO Relay isn't something that was simply thought up overnight; it has been developed over many years. In Sweden, the first stand-alone team competition with forked courses for each leg was organised in 2004. It was more like a PreO Relay, since the final result was based on points and seconds as in a regular PreO competition. The first time we

could follow this kind of race with a combined maximum time for each team and the result converted in seconds was in 2008 in a TrailO Relay during Tiomila. Until then, all competitions had used a forking method where competitors had to solve the same control tasks. But in 2011 a new forking method was tested in Sweden. Basically it consists of a number of controls divisible by three, where each leg has to solve about one third of the controls, but never the same control. The event is still a PreO Relay, since both points and seconds are combined in the final result, but since 2012 this has been the only forking method used in Sweden.

The idea to make it a TrailO Relay (the final result only in seconds) instead of a PreO Relay (points and seconds) actually came from the Trail Orienteering Athletes Commission, where the Finn Lauri Kontkanen is a member. The IOF Trail Orienteering Commission accepted that idea, worked out the draft rules in January 2015 and finalised them a few months later. During WTOC 2015 in Croatia the competitors had the chance to try out this format, and some minor problems were found (easily solvable), but the feedback was very positive. For the story let's say that the first unofficial TrailO Relay World Champion country was Sweden, followed by Finland and Italy.

Strategy and media-friendly

At a time when the first official competition is approaching, Martin Fredholm has his own ideas: "The TrailO Relay can be interesting if it is organised properly. The old forking method does not require much strategy, only how to use the maximum time. With the new method, team members on the first legs have to choose which controls to solve and which to leave for the other team members. And if the title in the end comes to depend on the outcome of the Tempo part in the third leg, you have to decide which team member can best cope with the pressure that creates", Martin says. Another interesting possibility offered by the TrailO Relay is the opportunity to show 'live' results. Martin, again: "Spectators can follow how everything progresses. For example, which teams have already solved the 'difficult' controls. And with a properly organised secretariat, each individual result will be posted in less than 5 minutes after the competitor has arrived at the finish."

Martin's last words go along with a good laugh: "My expectations for next year's Championships are that I will be in one of the winning teams", he concludes.



Martin Fredholm



MTB Orienteering:

An intensive four-month season

2015 was a 'bulge' year for Mountain Bike Orienteering. To the World Championships, held annually, were added the European Championships, held every two years. On top of these there was the opening round of the MTBO World Cup. This programme meant four months of intense activity for mountain bike orienteers that raised athletes world-wide on to several podiums, rewarding the best of the best and also providing some great surprises.

Text and photo: Joaquim Margarido

Located half-way between the capital, Budapest, and Veszprém beside Lake Balaton, the Hungarian town of Várgesztes hosted the opening round of the MTBO World Cup during the first three days of May. Following a harsh winter, the event was seen as the 'kick-off' for the season in this vast region of Central Europe, and it offered challenging terrain and highly technical courses along with a dedicated organisation that did everything to please everyone. Only the weather, rainy and cold, decided not to cooperate, with the mud covering bicycles and racing suits, sprinkling arms, legs and faces and gathering an unexpected prominence.

A set of 107 athletes – 73 men and 34 women – from 20 nations participated in the event, in which the names of the Frenchman Baptiste Fuchs, the British rider Emily Benham and the Finn Jussi Laurila ended in highlights. The first was the big winner of the Middle Distance and Mixed Relay. Emily Benham won the two individual stages by comfortable margins. As for Jussi Laurila, in addition to his second places in Middle Distance and Mixed Relay, he achieved victory over the Russian Anton Foliforov in the opening stage, a spectacular Mass Start Long Distance, by a close four seconds.

Other names deserving a special mention are the Austrian Kevin Haselsberger, the



Emily Benham

Luca Dallavalle



Lithuanian Jonas Maiselis, the Finns Antonia Haga and Ingrid Stengård and the Russian Svetlana Poverina. One last note on the Mixed Relay, run in a format that was a novelty: seeing the relatively small demand for a 'pure' Women's Relay, the Hungarian organisers changed the Women category to Mixed. There were twenty-seven 3-person teams with at least one woman. After a titanic duel, France won against Finland by the narrow margin of 22 seconds.

Foliforov: first-time European Champion

The second major get-together in the MTBO world season occurred at Idanha-a-Nova, Portugal. Although only early June, the day tem-

peratures were already above 30 degrees Celsius, a constant factor throughout a week of strong emotions. The other constant was the intense fight for the European elite titles, with 62 male and 40 female athletes representing 19 nations. They enjoyed highly demanding courses, both physically and technically, and the availability of a hard-working organising team, watchful to the smallest detail.

The Mixed Sprint Relay – a format not yet implemented in the World Championships – was an excellent event for the Championships' opening, revealing the clear supremacy of the winning team, the French pairing of Baptiste Fuchs and Gaëlle Barlet, over everyone else. The second day featured an exciting Sprint, in which the Estonian Lauri Malsroos

and the Czech Martina Tichovska were the surprising winners, taking the first individual gold medals in the European Championships' history of their respective countries.

The victories achieved by Anton Foliforov and Gaëlle Barlet in the Middle Distance, held on the third day of competition, also had a special meaning for both athletes. In Gaëlle Barlet's case, the triumph represented the end of nearly four years awaiting a victory in the MTBO World Cup. For Foliforov the achievement was even tastier, because despite his amazing achievements including at that time six gold medals, five silver and four bronze in World Championships, the truth is that the Russian had never won a single medal in the European Championships. Hence this gold had a very special taste.

With the European Championships approaching the end, Foliforov seems to have liked the taste of victory and was again the fastest in the Long Distance race. This time he had the company on the highest place of the podium of the athlete considered the big favourite for European gold, whatever the distance: Emily Benham. The last day saw

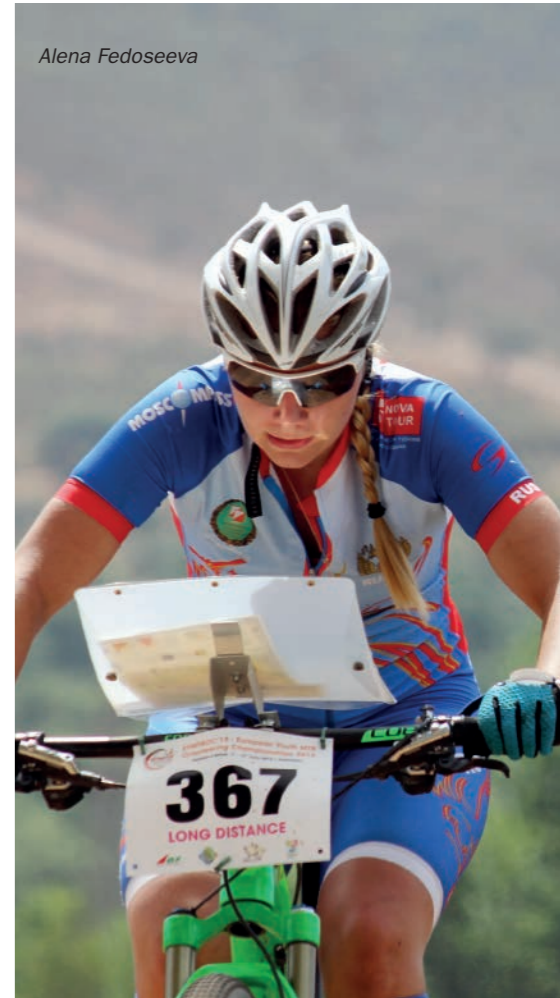
an always breath-taking Relay, with attention turned on the Russian men's team and in particular Anton Foliforov, and their winning sequence. According to an old Portuguese proverb, "it doesn't happen twice without a third time". The proverb, however, proved to be wrong – at least on this occasion – and the Czech Republic turned out to be the winners in both men's and women's classes, repeating the extraordinary achievement of the 2011 European Championships in Leningrad, Russia.

Martina Tichovska new 'queen'

The month of August was heading towards its end when the 13th World MTB Orienteering Championships took place in Liberec, in the north of the Czech Republic. Eight years earlier Nove Mesto na Morave had been the stage for the event's fifth edition and now, again, MTB Orienteering was back for a World Championships to one of its home-lands, where it has probably the biggest number of addicted participants. Amazing terrain, great organisational quality and the unconditional support of Czech MTBO-lovers foresaw a memorable



Anton Foliforov



Alena Fedoseeva



event. And so it was indeed!

For the Czechs the Liberec World Championships eventually had an even more special value, seeing the 'Queen of the Championships', Martina Tichovska, take the gold in the Sprint and Long Distance courses and silver in the Middle Distance. These fantastic performances enabled the Czech athlete to finish the season in the lead in the IOF MTBO World Rankings and taking second place in the World Cup overall behind Emily Benham. In the male sector there was a clear 'king', the Russian Anton Foliforov, gold medalist in Middle and Long Distance and winner of the IOF MTB Orienteering World Rankings and World Cup 2015 overall. But here one might argue that the title of 'king' should be shared with the Italian Luca Dallavalle, World Champion in Sprint, silver medalist in the Middle Distance and bronze medalist in the Long Distance. And a word for the French Gaëlle Barlet, who added to her European Middle Distance title the World title at the same distance, and to the Finland and Austria teams, the winners of the Relay in Women and Men classes respectively.

Stars of the future

Host nations of the European and World MTB Orienteering Championships, Portugal and the Czech Republic, also welcomed some of the big stars for the future and many others, again for European and World Championships, this time in the Junior category. Among the achievements there are some especially worthy of note, starting with the young French woman Lou Denaix winning three European titles (Sprint, Long and Mixed Relay), one World title (Relay), and three silver medals in the individual stages of the World Championships. Other big names amongst the women were the Czech Veronika Kubinova, World Champion in Sprint and European Champion in Middle Distance, and the Russians Alena Fedoseeva and Darya Mikryukova, World Champions in Middle Distance and Long Distance respectively.

Amongst the men there were two names deserving the spotlights: the Swede Oskar Sandberg, World Champion in Middle and Long Distance and the Finn Sauli Pietikäinen, European Champion in Middle Distance, Long Distance and Relay. The World Champion in Sprint, the Australian Angus Robinson, won for his country the first medal ever in its Junior MTB Orienteering history.

A word on the Masters

The last words go to the "not so young" classes that, in addition to fighting together for the World titles in several classes, contested a circuit known as the 2015 World Masters Series. This consisted of 11 stages in five countries - Denmark, Hungary, France, Portugal and the Czech Republic - with 574 athletes in all participating from all over the world. British Andrew Windrum and Hungarian Orsolya Marosffy won the M/W40 classes, British Andy Conn and French Aurélie Villar triumphed in classes M/W45, the Swede Per Gustavsson and the Dane Charlotte Bergmann were the big winners in the M/W50 classes and French Michel Denaix and British Charlie Somers-Cocks triumphed in M/W55. Interestingly, none of these names managed to get the gold in the World Championships in Portugal except for Aurélie Villar and Charlie Somers-Cocks who both won all three individual titles.

In the M/W60 classes, the winners of the World Masters Series were the German Harald Mannel and the Australian Kay Haarsma, in classes M/W65 triumphed the Swiss Walter Rahm and the Dane Birgit Hausner, while in M/W70 the Austrian Wolf Eberle and the Dane Ellis Byrgiel Sommer were the winners. Finally, in M75 the big winner was the Austrian Herbert Lackner. As in the other classes, here too there were athletes who combined victory on the circuit with World titles achieved in Portugal: Harald Mannel and Herbert Lackner, World Champions in all three distances, Birgit Hausner, gold medalist in Sprint and Middle Distance and Wolf Eberle, World Champion in Long Distance. Although not winning the World Master Series in their respective classes, the Frenchman Jean-Charles Laleve (M55), Spanish Monica Aguilera (W40), Australian Carolyn Jackson (W50), Swiss Monika Bonafini (W60) and New Zealander Yett Geldermann (W70) all achieved a tasty "full house", that is, took the Sprint, Middle Distance and Long Distance World titles, so deserving a very special mention.



Riding with Martina Tichovská

Cyklisté vítány – Cyclists are welcome

Rich in history and natural beauty, the Czech Republic is the perfect place for some days of active rest or hard competition. Following Martina Tichovská, the MTB Orienteering world leader, we're about to discover this paradise for bike lovers. Come and see for yourself!

Text and photo: Joaquim Margarido

Cycling is increasingly the preferred way of transport for those who regard active tourism as an option for their leisure time. Promoting health, enjoying the landscape at close quar-



ters and getting to see what otherwise would virtually be unnoticed - such are the great advantages of this authentic way of life. But there's more. Countries where the bike culture is a reality are the countries with people equipped to accept the different types of challenges offered on two wheels, testing their skills to the limits. So time for a conversation with Martina Tichovská, the current World Champion in Sprint and Long Distance, leader of the IOF MTB Orienteering World Rankings and an outstanding hostess in this MTB Orienteering paradise.

The flight is quite good - some turbulence over the Alps but nothing serious - and here we are on schedule at Vaclav Havel Airport in Prague. It's here that Martina lives. We find

her later in the evening in a small terrace house on the left bank of the Moldau River,

"Riding a bike is the thing to do in central Europe, and especially so in the Czech Republic".

sitting with a glass of Czech beer and contemplating the stunning views over the old city and the Karlův bridge, Prague's oldest bridge completed 613 years ago. "My home town is

Prague and, despite being the capital of the Czech Republic, I consider it a paradise for any kind of sport, including biking of course", she explains, adding that "riding a bike is the thing to do in central Europe, and especially so in the Czech Republic".

A trip in paradise

The sun begins to disappear behind Malá Strana and we appreciate the beautiful white boats, full of tourists, gliding constantly in front of us. Martina takes us away from Prague and talks about the rest of her country: "There are plenty of interesting areas for MTB Orienteering in the Czech Republic. We have almost every kind of terrain - hilly forests full of huge sandstone boulders, flat and fast rideable forests with good track networks, wild mountain forests with lots of marshes and so on. In addition, nowhere is very far away and you can drive across our country in less than 4 hours." But we also know that Foot Orienteering too is quite well-known in the

Czech Republic. Is it an advantage for MTB Orienteering? Martina is very positive about it: "Yes, of course. The Czech FootO tradition is really strong, and almost every forest has its own orienteering map which you can easily turn into a MTB Orienteering map anytime you want." Her last words that evening remain dancing in my head all night long: "The most suitable area for MTBO training and competing are the Czech and Moravian Highlands, which offers lots of MTBO high quality maps in very nice and hard biking terrain."

After dinner I try to check up on Martina's last words and find that the Czech Republic Government takes into account the benefits of biking, and now offers perfect conditions with a network of more than 2,000 km of bike paths, crossing here and there the international EuroVelo routes nos. 4, 7, 9 and 13. But the more interesting thing I find is what the Czechs called the Prague-Vienna Greenways Trail. The UNESCO World Heritage Lednice-Valtice area, the biosphere reserves of

Pálava, the White Carpathians (Bílé Karpaty) and, of course, the nearly 300 wine growing villages and towns with ten different Wine Routes are within the Moravian region. Martina knows perfectly what she is talking about.

An enviable number of events

The next day we travel to Plzeň, 100 kilometres southwest from Prague. The 2015 European Capital of Culture along with Mons (Belgium), Plzeň is a beautiful city with 170,000 inhabitants, well developed, with many places of tourist interest and of course the worldwide well-known Pilsner beer. During the trip, Martina explains the MTBO competition format in the Czech Republic: "The Czech Cup is the main series of MTBO competitions in the Czech Republic, including the Czech Sprint, Middle Distance and Long Distance Championships. It consists of about eighteen competitions taking place from May to October. In addition there are two big towns - Prague and Brno - where we can have some other local



training races during the year."

But Martina also talks about quality. According to her, "the organisational quality of Czech MTBO competitions is very high, and I'm not afraid to say that it's amongst the best in the world. The most famous and biggest competition is the MTBO 5 Days Plzeň, both for its professional organising team and its friendly atmosphere", she says. So you may now understand why are we moving towards Plzeň. This is the last of five days of competition and the atmosphere in the arena is more vibrant than ever. The British rider Emily Benham is about to win the women's class overall, but the attention goes to Vojtěch Stránský, the "home guy", who is going to win this year's edition, bringing him victory for the sixth time in a row in the six editions of the event.

"A new world record"

We meet Ondřej Hašek, the 5 Days Event Director, a really nice guy, very happy at that moment. We hear what he has to say: "This edition was really amazing! We have exceeded 700 competitors, 705 to be precise, from 25 nations including Australia and New Zealand. In one of the stages (the 3rd one) 669 competitors took part, which we think is a new world record. We are happy to have had almost 100 Men Elite competing, but we are even happier to see the number of young racers increasing in categories from 14 to 20 years old - this year there were 122." And he continues talking about this fantastic event, despite the accumulated fatigue from the last week: "The most challenging thing is having a full-time job and organising everything dur-

ing the evenings and a few weekends before..."

But in the end, we always enjoy all the days, because it's not only the races but also the social side of the event. Unique is the evening O-triathlon relay, this year supplemented by shooting for the first time, in an unforgettable atmosphere. We use the event to make videos, to invite guests from the sport of cycling and, of course, to have never ending parties..." says Ondřej. And also: "Our simple goal is to keep the tradition of well-being with good orienteering events and nice people who will come back every second year." Oh dear, I almost forgot his last words: "See you at the MTBO 5 Days in 2017!"

Back to Prague, some last thoughts - the charming city, the friendly atmosphere and the

tasty Pilsner still boiling in my head. "The people are the best feature we have in the MTBO community, I think", says Martina. To her, "The Czech MTBO world is like one big family and, despite the competitive spirit, people are always kind and friendly. It is the goal of each organising group to make some cultural programme for the free evenings. Those who don't take part in it cannot understand the true MTBO spirit!" The last words are about Martina herself: "I hope my life will be connected further with MTBO. I can't imagine living in a different way. The combination of bikes, forests and maps are my precious never-ending challenge." Last, but not least, she teaches me two more words in Czech: "Cyklisté vítány", which means "Cyclists are welcome".



Athlete of the Year

This has been a remarkable season for 27-year-old Danish orienteer Maja Alm. She won three gold medals at the World Orienteering Championships (WOC) in Scotland in August: firstly running the final leg in Denmark's Sprint Relay team, then again one day later in the individual Sprint Final which she won by 39 seconds, and the third in the Women's Relay. A significant improvement on the two silver medals she won at WOC in Italy last year; they are in fact her first gold medals in a World or European Championships. As a result she's been nominated as Sportsperson of the Year in Denmark; the outcome will be known early in the new year.

Text: Clive Allen

"This is, definitely, my best season," says Maja. "It was really incredible to win at the World Championships and now also be the

Photo: Malin Björkqvist



Maja Alm: A remarkable season

leader in the IOF Sprint World Rankings. I had a speed at this WOC that I haven't had before, and succeeded really well in the competitions mentally. I'm very proud of that."

Another season of special meaning was of course 2014, where the whole Danish team did so well and won six medals for Denmark. "Last year we saw, for the first time, that we could win and I think that's why we really believed in ourselves this year," adds Maja.

The three gold medals

The three gold medals mean the world to her, but in quite different ways. "The individual Sprint medal is, of course, really important to me. It is nice to show that I have the level to win an individual medal. In the individual distances you need to perform close to perfection to win a medal. In the Relay I see it more like three stable performances. I don't think the medals in the Sprint this year were a surprise. Silver medallist Nadiya Volynska was 4th last year, one second after me, so I knew that she was really strong. It was more a surprise that I could win with such a big margin."

"The Women's Relay medal is also very important to me. Ida Bobach, Emma Klingenberg and I have been training and competing against and with each other for so many years now, and I really think we have improved each others' levels. At the World Championships we really competed for each other as a team and I think we deserved to win the gold together. The Sprint Relay is important to me of course because it was the first gold I have ever won. We have had high positions in almost every Sprint Relay we have been running, and finally the margins were on our side. It is very nice to compete together on a team with the boys. The way girls and boys think before a competition is quite different and it is really inspiring to see how the boys do it."

Family beginnings

Maja Alm's route to the top in orienteering began when she was 18 years old. Or actually earlier: her parents went orienteering at weekends from their home in Rødekro, a small town in Jutland not far north of the border with Germany. Maja was a good competitor and at the age of 17 she got into the national junior team, but life was pretty full already with school, friends, parties and earning pocket money.

Lars Lindstrøm, now Denmark's senior coach, was national junior coach at the time, and he began to push Maja a bit: could she not think of committing herself a bit more? "I was very doubtful about what I should do



Photo Malin Björkqvist

Athlete of the year

Name: Maja Alm

Country: Denmark

Club: OK Pan Århus, Denmark

Date of Birth: June 10th 1988

Sport: Orienteering

Career Highlights: Gold at sprint relay, sprint and relay at the World Orienteering Championships in 2015.



when I was 18. Then I made the big decision and said “OK, then I’ll take the plunge!” She spent a period in a sports school and then moved to Aarhus and got a job in a day nursery, but here had problems with a long-term lung infection. After a 3-month tour of New Zealand with a couple of running friends, she returned to Aarhus, got back into serious training and soon afterwards won a European Championships bronze medal in Sprint.

The way to success

Before this year, Maja has won four silver and three bronze medals at World or European Championships, all but one in Sprint and Relay. “I had accepted that it wasn’t certain that I would ever win gold. I would still have had a fine career. And then look what happened ...”.

So how has she managed to progress to this new level of achievement? “Through the right sort of training I have managed to increase my speed quite a bit. And as a team we have done our preparations very thoroughly. We had three weeks in Scotland, a little prior to WOC, to prepare ourselves as best we could. We spent a lot of time in hard

competition with each other in the team, and I improved a lot over the three weeks. But we couldn’t compare ourselves with others and had no idea how we as a team would perform at WOC. There it became clear that we had reached a mega-high level.”

Although most of her success has been in Sprint and Relay, she has a silver in Middle Distance to defend at the European Championships in the Czech Republic in the coming season. “I will try to improve in the individual forest distances,” Maja says, “but I still want to be in a position where I have the chance to win the individual Sprint. The terrains in Sweden are quite different from those in Denmark, so my individual goals in the forest are more for WOC 2017 in Estonia. To have the chance to win the Relay gold next year, I have to improve my running in Nordic terrain, so my forest goal for the next season is concentrated on the Relay.”

Living in Aarhus, Maja will be winter training with the others in the Danish team based there, and there will be a training camp in warmer conditions in Portugal or Spain. Before that, however, she and the rest of the



Photo: Malin Björkqvist

team are having a ‘running style analysis’ at the university in Göteborg, part of the team’s ever more thorough preparation strategy. “The goal is to have it made clear through a precise analysis what restrictions, weaknesses or lack of balance each athlete has when running,” says Lars Lindstrøm, “and to use the information to help prevent and avoid injuries from over-training etc.” The analysis will lead to a detailed report including separate training plans for each individual runner. Later there will be a more concentrated build-up to the high spots in the 2016 season, the European and the World Championships.

Important to have time for ordinary life

Maja puts a lot of emphasis on orienteering not taking over her life entirely. “I live in a student house where I spend a lot of my free time together with the other students living there. I also spend masses of time with my partner, my friends and my family. It’s important for me to have a ‘normal’ life alongside sport, where there is time to do all those things I can’t do in the competition season.” She is training to be a dentist. “For the first 3½ years I studied full-time, which suited me well because I could work alongside friends and discuss things other than running. In the past two years I have changed to 50%, as studying to be a dentist requires more and more time

the further on you get. It’s nice to have time for everything now!”

Her partner Oliver competes at elite level in triathlon, and Maja says he has helped her a lot. “He has far stronger self-belief than I have, and I’m trying to learn from him. He’s also good at keeping my feet on the ground! It appears to mean little to him whether I am a World Champion or not. At the World Championships he enjoyed the Middle Distance most, where I didn’t do so well, because it meant he could have me more to himself; I had less attention from the media then.”

She also gained much from close collaboration with the Danish team’s sports psychologist when she first came into the senior team. “I am quite chatty and quite open as a person, and I believe I am reasonably well organised

and good at planning my daily activities and my life,” she says. “I think you have to be that way to be an elite athlete. I like things to look neat and tidy, but actually being tidy doesn’t come easily either to me or to Oliver!” says Maja.

The future – trying to stay at the top

So what next? Three gold medals in the same Championships is hard to beat, in fact almost impossible. Maja has been thinking about her upcoming goals, but she is still enjoying the success in Scotland. “I guess it will never be greater. Maybe I should stop at the top, and start doing something else. But I can’t, I love running too much. I am really looking forward to WOC in Sweden. I think it will be really big and challenging.”



Maja ran the last leg in the Sprint Relay. Here with her team mates Emma Klingenberg, Soren Bobach and Tue Lassen. Photo Malin Björkqvist.

Emily Benham: A big heart for MTBO

Emily Benham has a big heart for taking her sport to new heights. The Brit is the new leader of the Athletes' Commission in MTBO.

Text: Erik Borg

The 26-year-old is now number two on the World Ranking, and has had huge success in the World Cup and WOC in MTBO during the last few years. She also manages to have a lot of energy for working for the future of her sport, so that the athletes have better and more competitive events to go to.

– I view the work as doing something for the athletes. Event quality, course planning, rule changes and promotion work. I won't be involved at the top end, but I hope to be able to give thoughts from the perspective of athletes. Maybe that's a concern over the fairness of a race, the embargo rule, or how many groups of junior, elite, masters and youth should be in the terrain at the same time, she says.

What are the benefits of now being in charge, after having been a member for a year?

– I was involved somewhat in the AC before my appointment last year. I've known former leader Michaela Gigon for many years, so I was often in a position to give feedback anyway. Being the AC chair is a huge honour; but one that probably seems natural to many others. Ultimately my work is for and about the athletes. It won't be the loudest voice that wins; rather the ones with the best reasoning. I think I'm lucky that for a number of years I had no success at elite level, so I've been able to see both sides of the competitions. I already try I speak up for those from smaller or new nations, because they're the ones with the most potential for the future.

All kinds of work

Beside working hard on improving the sport, she also has a big eye on helping the athletes get better. She plans to work more with athlete development; through coaching and training camps, as well as by advice via email.

– It's important we aren't keeping our training a strict secret; our sport just isn't big enough. I see it as a method to encourage more athletes to make the step up from junior to elite, to fight for a place on a national team,

to achieve their best ever result.

Emily and Hans Jørgen Kvåle been a couple for a few years now. He won sprint at WOC in MTBO in 2014, but has had ski orienteering as his main sport. He stopped his career after last winter. Now he works as a Marketing Manager in the IOF. They have a big event waiting for them in 2016.

– We have no date for the wedding. It is difficult to find the time in our busy schedules to speak to each other and make arrangements, especially when Hans Jørgen is working 15-hour days for the IOF to get the SkiO production perfect.

A new situation

How is it to be the only one of you and Hans Jørgen to go hard for the sport?

– It's been a really tough transition, and no doubt one that has impacted somewhat on my 2015 performances. For four years Hans Jørgen has been my motivation, I couldn't lie in bed in the morning when he was out training! So far he's still been able to train with me a few times a week for the key sessions, but it seems that it will change next year too. It's also going to be more challenging in terms of race preparation. I can no longer get him to plan courses prior to World Cup races because he's probably already seen some information I don't know. That's going to be tough because he's a genius at making courses!

A lot of the same

Benham feels lucky to be able to see the 'behind the scenes' work Hans Jørgen is doing for SkiO.

– He's taking SkiO in a great direction; right now focusing on the TV production of the events – but also in his ideas for the future. It's the direction MTBO needs to head in. Not with a goal for Olympics inclusion, but to provide more for those that are interested in the races. GPS tracking alone isn't very interesting to watch; but combined with pictures, commentary and interviews, suddenly we have a product that we can use to help grow and develop the sport. The work the Czech organisers did combined with the TV production for the World Champs in 2015 was great. But we should strive to have this at most races, with a shorter production for the long distance.

Because Emily is close to Hans Jørgen she can help with develop new ideas or even shut them down if it's not in the best interest of



Photo: Hans-Jorgen Kvale



the athletes.

– Likewise he can advise me when something is worth pushing, and when I should drop my latest obsession. We're both careful with the boundaries of the athlete/IOF relationship. He never tells me information I shouldn't know, and I never ask for it. I think it's a good thing to be close; it's keeping MTBO in the IOF attention and making sure we aren't being forgotten.

What's your goal for the coming year?

– For 2016 I have goals away from MTBO. I'm still training, still doing the major races, but I will be having my main focus on other areas of my life. I have a wedding to plan; a mortgage to pay for and a lot of mapping work! I've made changes to my training to accommodate this, just that the changes are focused on the long term, rather than on 2016.

Even so, she sees no end in sight.

– I will stop when I no longer have the motivation to keep training or racing. 2016 will just be a small break; I took a year out in 2012 and it refreshed me mentally and gave me a new perspective on the sport. It's about time I change my perspective again, and gain some new experiences in the process.

Photo: Hans-Jorgen Kvale



IOF Council 2014–2016

President Brian Porteous (GBR), Senior Vice President Leho Haldna (EST), Vice President Michael Dowling (AUS), Vice President Astrid Waaler Kaas (NOR), Owe Fredholm (SWE), Tatiana Kalenderoglu (TUR), Mikko Salonen (FIN), Nik Suter (SUI), Maria Silvia Viti (ITA), Ting-wang 'Dominic' Yue (HKG), Laszlo Zentai (HUN)



Two eyes for the maps

Text: Erik Borg

For László Zentai maps are important, both in his work for the International Orienteering Federation and in his daily work. For almost ten years he has been a member of the IOF Council.

László Zentai started his work in the IOF as a member of the IOF Map Commission. He was the chair of the commission between 2002 and 2006. In 2006 the Hungarian Orienteering Federation nominated him for the IOF Council. At the congress in Denmark Zentai was elected.

In the council one of his responsibilities is Mountain Bike Orienteering. László is the link with the Map Commission. In the regional development he is responsible for South America.

– I ran the first IOF Mapping Clinic there in Brazil and Uruguay in 2006, and I also took part in orienteering events in Chile and Colombia. I am going to visit Ecuador in 2016 and give a mapping course there.

What is your main goal for the work you do with the IOF?

– The IOF should handle the very different experience levels of orienteering countries.

We have to concentrate not only on the best 10–15 countries. The less developed countries have to get more help.

László was born in 1959 in the city Salgótarján, in the northern part of Hungary, very close to the Slovakian border.

When he started studying cartography at the university he moved to Budapest. Now the Hungarian is head and professor of the only cartographic department in Hungary (Eötvös University).

A lot of maps

Besides IOF he has a voluntary job as the Secretary-General of the International Cartographic Association. In 2012 they gave out the publication "Maps for the future". László was one of the editors.

Why are you so interested in maps?

– I have wanted to be a cartographer since primary school. I was interested in everything what had any connection to maps. My favourite subject at school was always mathematics. The mathematics and cartography have the same clean and simple logic.

– What's the most important factor to consider in map developing? Can they be too complex to read and understand?

– 30–40 years ago we used 1:20000 and 1:25000 scale maps without problems. Most terrains can be mapped in different scales, even in larger and smaller scales, but we have to understand the basic theory of cartography: the generalization. It is quite simple: we have to think as an elite competitor, let's imagine what kind of information these elite athletes can intercept at high running speed. Nowadays we have survey techniques (orthophotos, laser scanning) providing us with a lot of data, but we have to learn how to use only the most relevant information.

Practise often

Zentai ran his first orienteering event at 14 years old.

– My brother got me involved. Both of us are still practising the sport.

Due to injuries he was only able to take part in 16 events this year. One of them was the Hungarian MTBO relay championships. Zentai starts in at least one MTBO event every year.

– In previous years I competed in 40–50 events a year. I have also participated in a few trail-o events several years ago.

An inventor of orienteering

Text: Erik Borg

Tatiana Kalenderoglu had a big reason for moving to Turkey. Well there, she has become one of the biggest pushers of the new sport of orienteering in the country.

The IOF council member was born in Moscow and spent almost 30 years of her life there. At the age of 16 she found orienteering.

– It was quite late for elite sport. But I was a good cross country skier and it helped me a lot in my short career of ski orienteer. I enjoyed trainings and competitions a lot and would have liked to continue, but after university I had to choose between work and professional orienteering and I chose work, she says.

15 years ago she moved to Turkey. Since then Istanbul she has lived in Istanbul.

– Orienteering is partly responsible for my move. In 1998 and 2000 I took part in selections for the then famous Camel Trophy adventure race. In 2000 I was selected for the Russian team, specifically because of my good navigation abilities. There I met my future husband, who was a team leader of the Turkish team. After that, in 2000, I moved to Turkey, where orienteering was not developed yet. I found myself in a position to promote my favourite sport here.

Now the growth is in at a good level. The Turkish Orienteering Federation has organised not only WREs, but also a World Cup stage in Foot-O in Antalya in 2014.

– I am proud to say that Turkey is one of the few countries who organize yearly championships in all disciplines.

Team building with orienteering

She has an event company with name Macera Akademisi (Adventure Academy). The company organise yearly many outdoor events, team building trainings, sport competitions, trail running, open water swimming, biking and orienteering.

– In most of our outdoor training I am trying to introduce orienteering to people. Orienteering is not a very well known sport yet in Turkey. But it is growing very fast.

Since 2012 she has been a member of IOF council. Her main task in the council is to help with regional development and communication with the SkiO Commission.



Tatiana Kalenderoglu is eager in developing and use and promote the sport also in the daily work.

The high motivation

– What is your main goal for the work you do with the IOF?

– The main goal is to make strategical plans for the future development of orienteering worldwide. To take care about inviting new countries, but, even more importantly, to be sure that we give the necessary support to existing members and keep their motivation high. We also need to think carefully about possible changes that technical development brings.

The 43 year old woman tries to take part often in orienteering events and trainings.

– We belong to a South Eastern European country, and I am very excited to take part in the Regional Masters Championships of our region. We know each other well, and it is always a good sportive fight there. I also like to do MTBO and take part in the Turkish Championships. Due to my previous experience I managed to be Turkish champion this year in MTBO.

What's your best achievement all over?


– My elite career was such a long time ago. I competed at a junior level and I took medal positions in the 1990's in the USSR SkiO Championships. I was a member of the USSR junior SkiO team at that time. I was the Turkish champion many times in Foot-O during the period 2004–2010.

Major Events





Foot Orienteering


2016


 **IOF Orienteering World Cup Round 1**
Poland, Europe, 30 Apr - 2 May


 **European Orienteering Championships**
IOF Orienteering World Cup Round 2
Czech Republic, Europe, 21 May - 28 May


 **European Youth Orienteering Championships**
Poland, Europe, 30 Jun - 3 Jul


 **Junior World Orienteering Championships**
Switzerland, Europe, 9 Jul - 15 Jul

 **Asian Orienteering Championships**
Chinese Taipei, Asia, 27 Jul - 1 Aug


 **World Masters Orienteering Championships**
Estonia, Europe, 7 Aug - 13 Aug


 **Nokian Tyres World Orienteering Championships**
World Cup 2016 Round 3
Sweden, Europe, 20 Aug - 27 Aug


 **North American Orienteering Championships**
United States, North America, 23 Sep - 25 Sep


 **IOF Orienteering World Cup 2016 Round 4**
Switzerland, Europe, 14 Oct - 16 Oct


2017

 **World Masters Orienteering Championships**
New Zealand, Oceania, 21 Apr - 30 Apr


 **IOF Orienteering World Cup Round 1**
Finland, Europe, 25 May - 28 May

 **Nokian Tyres World Orienteering Championships**
IOF Orienteering World Cup Round 2
Estonia, Europe, 30 Jun - 8 Jul


 **European Youth Orienteering Championships**
Slovakia, Europe, June-July


 **Junior World Orienteering Championships**
Finland, Europe, 9 Jul - 16 Jul


 **IOF Orienteering World Cup Round 3**
Latvia, Europe, 25 Aug - 27 Aug


 **IOF Orienteering World Cup Round 4**
Switzerland, Europe, 29 Sep - 1 Oct

2018

 **Junior World Orienteering Championships**
Hungary, Europe, 1 May - 1 Aug


 **European Orienteering Championships**
Switzerland, Europe, 6 May - 13 May


 **Nokian Tyres World Orienteering Championships**
Latvia, Europe, 27 Jul - 5 Aug


 **World Masters Orienteering Championships**
Denmark, Europe

MTB Orienteering


2016


 **IOF MTB Orienteering World Cup Round 1**
France, Europe, 14 May - 16 May

 **European Youth MTB Orienteering Championships**
Portugal, Europe, 24 Jul - 30 Jul


 **Junior World MTB orienteering Championships**
Portugal, Europe, 24 Jul - 30 Jul


 **World MTB Orienteering Championships**
IOF MTB Orienteering World Cup Round 2
Portugal, Europe, 24 Jul - 30 Jul


 **IOF MTB Orienteering World Cup Round 3**
Lithuania, Europe, 29 Sep - 2 Oct


 **World Masters MTB Orienteering Championships**
Lithuania, Europe, 29 Sep - 2 Oct

2017


 **IOF MTB Orienteering World Cup Round 1**
Austria, Europe, 2 Jun - 5 Jun

 **European MTB Orienteering Championships**
IOF MTB Orienteering World Cup Round 2
France, Europe, 29 Jul - 4 Aug


 **World Masters MTB Orienteering Championships**
France, Europe, 29 Jul - 4 Aug

 **European Youth & Junior MTB Orienteering Championships**
France, Europe, 29 Jul - 4 Aug

 **World MTBO Championships**
Junior World MTBO Championships
Lithuania, Europe, 19 Aug - 27 Aug


 **IOF MTB Orienteering World Cup Round 3**
Lithuania, Europe, 19 Aug - 27 Aug


2018

 **World MTB Orienteering Championships**
Junior World MTB Orienteering Championships
Austria, Europe, 4 Aug - 12 Aug

Ski Orienteering


2015 – 2016

 **IOF Ski Orienteering World Cup Round 1**
Finland, Europe, 27 Nov - 2 Dec 2015


 **IOF Ski Orienteering World Cup Round 2**
Germany, Europe, 22 Jan - 27 Jan


 **World Masters Ski Orienteering Championships**
Germany, Europe, 21 Jan - 24 Jan


 **European Ski Orienteering Championships**
Junior World Ski Orienteering Championships
IOF Ski Orienteering World Cup Round 3
Austria, Europe, 29 Feb - 5 Mar


 **North American and US Ski Orienteering Championships**
United States, North America, 11 Mar - 13 Mar

2016 – 2017


 **World Masters Ski Orienteering Championships**
Finland, Europe, 5 Feb - 12 Feb


 **European Ski Orienteering Championships**
World Cup, Finland, Europe, 7 Feb - 12 Feb


 **European Youth Ski Orienteering Championships**
Finland, Europe, 7-12 Feb

 **World Ski Orienteering Championships**
Russian Federation, Europe, 6 Mar - 12 Mar

2017 – 2018


 **IOF Ski Orienteering World Cup Round 1**
Finland 28 Nov - 4 Dec 2017


 **IOF Ski Orienteering World Cup Round 2**
Bulgaria 3 Feb - 8 Feb

 **IOF Ski Orienteering World Cup Round 3**
USA, 4 Mar - 12 Mar


Trail Orienteering

2016


 **European Trail Orienteering Championships**
Czech Republic, Europe, 21 May - 28 May

 **World Trail Orienteering Championships**
Sweden, Europe, 20 Aug - 28 Aug

2017

 **World Trail Orienteering Championships**
Lithuania, Europe, 10 Jul - 15 Jul

2018

 **World Trail Orienteering Championships**
Latvia, Europe, 27 Jul - 5 Aug

Meetings 2016

IOF General Assembly

21-26 August, In conjunction with the Nokian Tyres World Orienteering Championships in Strömstad, Sweden

IOF Council meetings

22-23 January, Malmö, Sweden
1-2 April, Warsaw, Polen
3-4 Juni, Budapest, Hungary
21-27 August, Strömstad Sweden

IOF Joint Meeting

22-23 January, Malmö, Sweden.
All IOF Commissions meet in a Joint meeting



A new event programme – challenges and opportunities

Text: Kirsty McIntyre

Some of the big upcoming changes within orienteering are the changes to the event programme. Here Tom Hollowell, IOF CEO/SG, tells us more about the changes, with particular regard to the FootO Programme.

Can you tell us a bit about the background to the changes?

At the last IOF Congress, in 2014, a Competition Review Project Group was tasked with looking over the entire IOF Event programme, in order to optimise it. The goal of the review is to make the events more attractive to media, organisers, venues and Member Federations.

What are the main changes?

With regards to FootO, a consultation paper was sent out to all Member Federations and an expert group, and an idea was formulated to split the WOC. The WOC format as we know it today is that each WOC holds middle, long and relay races in forest orienteering, as well as sprint and relay races in an urban setting. Splitting the WOC into a Forest WOC and an Urban WOC would mean that they would be separate events, held alternate years.

What are the benefits of taking this step to split the events?

Firstly, splitting the WOC means that the

WOC week will be shorter and more concise. The organiser need only consider one race format: forest orienteering or urban orienteering. This means that they can focus on one type of maps, one type of arenas and so on. Essentially, a more condensed and focused event will hopefully result in a higher event quality.

An exciting side benefit of the change is the reintroduction of qualification races. What this means is that many smaller countries are encouraged to take part, even though they might not win. This is very constructive with regards to the global development of the sport, since it means that the WOC becomes a reality for many countries that could never have hoped to participate otherwise.

What risks of splitting the WOC Programme have you considered?

One risk with splitting the events is that the Forest WOC risks becoming less financially viable. The nature of an Urban WOC means that it would be very visible, and attractive to sponsors, whereas the Forest WOC might suffer from losing this aspect. On the other hand, an Urban WOC might also suffer economically, if it is held in a city in a region where orienteering is not widely popular. The challenge

in the face of both these risks is to work hard on marketing the events well in advance, to make them attractive to sponsors regardless of these factors.

Furthermore, there is the issue of whether this split will lead to a distancing between the disciplines, eventually resulting in two sports. However, the events would still require the same level of expertise from athletes and organisers, and share the same structure and values, so in a sense the change is more about specialisation of skill, rather than a split.



Tom Hollowell



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