

World Championships proposal gets mixed reaction

The Norwegian Øystein Kvaal Østerbø is looking forward to a new World Championship programme. He likes the plans for sprint races and more man-to-man competition, and that it will be an easier step up from other competitions for newer nations.

BY ERIK BORG

The IOF has been actively working on a new programme for the World Orienteering Championships (WOC) since the General Assembly in Trondheim in 2010. A project group including representatives from the IOF, athletes, media experts and coaches presented its proposal in May 2011, after hearing the views of national federations. The IOF Council then prepared its proposal for the Presidents' Conference in August in France.

The main points of the current proposal are:

- No qualifications during the WOC week (except for Sprint).
- Long Distance and Sprint unchanged from how they are organised now. If the

number of medal races will be increased from four to five, the traditional Relays with three legs will be retained.

- Middle Distance to have a prologue followed by a chasing start race. The winner will be the first to the finish.
- A Mixed Relay for teams of two women and two men will be added. A mixed relay like this has been a component of the World Games orienteering programme since 2001. It will be organised in the same time period as the Sprint, giving smaller nations the option to stay for a shorter time at the World Championships if only taking part in Sprint and Mixed Relay.

“It's a good thing that the IOF is trying to make the programme for the World Championships more interesting for the public



Øystein Kvaal Østerbø likes head-to-head competition. PHOTO: ERIK BORG

and spectators, and at the same time trying to make a Championships where the step is not too big for newer nations to take part. Orienteering can be more interesting for newer nations with the planned changes in the Championship programme. Dropping two of the qualification races will also make it easier for runners to take part in all the different distances”, says Øystein Kvaal Østerbø, Norwegian national team runner.

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Anna Zeelig
Editor-in-chief

Petition against the plans

At the recent World Cup races in the Czech Republic, the Czech runner Eva Jurenikova organised a meeting of former and present world champions, and a petition was drawn up informing the IOF that the athletes do not like the new proposals for the WOC programme. Some athletes even said they would not take part in a future WOC with a programme like that being proposed.

More than two-thirds of the athletes taking part in the World Cup in the Czech Republic signed the petition. “We want to hold on to the idea of a sport where running alone in unknown terrain is an essential ingredient, and we think the changes that are proposed haven’t been tested sufficiently”, explains the Norwegian Carl Waaler Kaas, middle distance world champion in 2010. “We, the runners, want to discuss this matter directly with the IOF”, he says.

Björn Persson, IOF Sports Director, has already let the athletes know that he is ready to meet them. The athletes have not yet said how they would like the future WOC to be; the message so far has only been that they do not like the IOF’s proposal.

Two athletes – Emil Wingstedt, Sweden, then the Co-ordinator of the Athletes’ Commission, and Sarah Rollins, Great Britain – were members of the WOC in the Future Project Group which has come up with the proposal.

“Having more first-to-finish races will create a better balance”

The only Norwegian present at the World Cup races in the Czech Republic who did not write his name on the petition to the IOF was Øystein Kvaal Østerbø. He has

Council’s proposals on the programme

	4 finals	5 finals
Sprint qualification + Sprint final	●	●
Sprint Relay (mixed teams 2+2)	●	●
Middle Prologue + Chasing start	●	●
Long final, individual interval start	●	●
traditional Relay		●



been among the best in the world since 2003 in both foot and ski orienteering.

“I like to be alone in the forest with the map. But I also like to be in a race with other runners, whether it’s a sprint in a city environment or a race out in the forest. I enjoy races where the first to finish is the winner, and more of these will create a better balance in the World Championships programme.”

The 30-year-old athlete appreciates that it often isn’t easy to make changes. “We orienteers can often be a bit too sceptical about changes”, he says. “When first introduced, the Sprint was not accepted positively by everyone either. But in fact the Sprint has been good for introducing the sport to new groups of people. Sprint racing in urban areas is also a discipline where you can hope for a good performance in a Championship without having to have weeks of training in the specific type of terrain for the Championship beforehand.”

Impossible to make changes that all agree with

Kvaal Østerbø believes that co-operation is the way to progress towards deciding on the best programme. “The runners’ views should be heard when planning a new WOC programme, but I think most runners are quite conservative and therefore resistant to changes to the programme we have today. It’s a big challenge for the IOF to come up with a good WOC programme for the future, and I think it will be impossible to change the programme in a way that every runner can agree with”, Kvaal Østerbø says.

The Norwegian himself isn’t convinced that the proposals are perfect in all respects. “Maybe it could have been good with a mass start on the long distance. I hope that the traditional relay will be on the programme in the future too. I would also prefer that the new Sprint competition could be a relay with separate classes for men and women where each runner is running three short legs, or a knock-out sprint such as that we have tried in the Nordic Orienteering Tour, but I have also good experiences from the Mixed Relay in The World Games”, he says.

The Russian Andrey Khramov, six-times World Champion in foot orienteering, would also like the traditional relay to be retained. He hopes also that a Mixed Relay will be added. “I ran Mixed Relay at The World Games and liked it. Another relay will only make the World Championships better”, Khramov says.

WOC in the Future

Information on the progress of the WOC in the Future project has been published on the IOF website since September 2010.

The presentation by the IOF Council was discussed by national federations at the Presidents’ Conference in August in France, and it is the content of this presentation that the athletes are protesting against. The full presentation and the complete WOC in the Future

deliberations until now can be viewed on the IOF website in the section WOC in the Future.

The final decision on the programme will be taken next summer at the IOF General Assembly in conjunction with the World Orienteering Championships in Lausanne, Switzerland, and the changes can first be implemented at the World Orienteering Championships in Italy in 2014.

Still at the top as standards rise

Standards overall have improved immensely in Mountain Bike Orienteering, but seven times world champion Michaela Gigon is still one of the best. The leader of the IOF MTB Orienteering Athletes' Commission again won a gold medal at the World Championships this year.

BY ERIK BORG

“My physical fitness has more or less stayed the same since 2005”, Michaela says, “but I have improved my MTBO technique quite a lot since then so that I can ride faster, and I can still ride where some other girls have to push their bikes. Generally I think I have become stronger in competitions, which is also necessary for me because the standard of the other girls is going up too. I noticed at the European Championships in Russia, where I had quite good long and middle distance races, that “quite good” is not enough anymore: I finished 5th and 6th.”

Working for a better sport

The 34-year-old mountain bike orienteer is also co-ordinator of the Athletes Commission for MTB Orienteering, enabling communication between the athletes and the IOF. Many athletes but also organisers come to her with their desires, questions and complaints. “I take part in MTBO Commission’s meetings, where I have no right to vote but the members usually listen to the athletes’ ideas”, Michaela says.

Michaela thinks the Athletes’ Commission can really make a difference. For example, in the past few years the MTB Orienteering rules and map standards have been improved, and the World Cup has been reintroduced. “It has certainly not all been due to our influence, but I think we gave a lot of useful input for these changes. That input mostly came from a questionnaire which was answered by athletes from 20 different nations”, Michaela says.

At the moment it is a challenge to find organisers for international events. Michaela

hopes that several more federations will be prepared to organise events such as the World Cup and World Championships in the future, and also that athletes from more nations will be represented at the big events.

Soon leaving the army

For some years now Michaela has been a professional sportswoman in the Army, but that will stop at the end of November this year, because the army no longer supports athletes in non-olympic sports who are over 30 years of age.

“I will soon have to earn my money with work - unless I win the lottery, which won’t happen because I am not playing lotto. I am planning to finish my studies in geometry next summer. Most probably I will start working as a teacher for mathematics, physics and geometry in September 2012, which means that I will then have to restrict my sports activities to school holidays.”

Her big ambition - a Sprint gold

When asked if she still has something to aim for after winning a record 7 gold medals in World Mountain Bike Orienteering Championships, Michaela says: “Winning the Sprint World Championships is my biggest goal now. That is the only title which I am still missing. Sprint is my favourite discipline but I have always managed to mess it up somehow until now.”

“I am chasing my eighth gold now, but it is not so easy - it is getting more and more difficult to win. A few years ago I could be quite sure to win a medal if I had a race without mistakes. I cannot be so sure any more.”



Michaela Gigon has been among the world's best for several years, consistently improving her standard.
PHOTO: ILIY SOKOLOV

The World TempO Trophy

BY CLIVE ALLEN

TempO suggests a fast form of orienteering, and so it is, in one way. TempO is the ‘sprint’ form of trail orienteering, where decisions on which of several flags, if any, is in the centre of the circle on the map are timed, all the way through. It really is high tempo, but in small bursts, a bit like a footballer sprinting for the ball and, after some sharp activity and then sending it further, jogging or walking until it comes his way again.

The World TempO Trophy is now an established supplement to the World Trail Orienteering Championships, and may soon be incorporated as an additional format. This year’s Trophy was held the day after the 2-day Championships, with the start of the course on the edge of the main World Championships arena.

Thirty-five decisions – at full speed

There are 7 viewing stations in this competition, with 5 decisions to be made at each – 35 decisions in all. Each person spends about 3 minutes at a viewing station, so there’s a long time between the first person and the last going out on the course. At last I am on my way – I walk purposefully along the track to the first station, where there is a small open tent, a chair and two officials, and hand over my control card.



A TempO competitor in action. The clock is running. PHOTOS: ISABELLE RORA

“In front of you there are 6 flags. Can you see them all?” I say yes. “Your time starts now”. I am sitting in the chair looking out at the 6 flags and the terrain immediately surrounding them, a complex mix of spurs and re-entrants, trees and bushes. On my knee is a set of cards, and I rapidly turn over the cover card to look at the first underneath – a card with a small segment of 1: 5,000 map oriented in the direction I am looking, a control circle on the map and a control description printed beneath. I have to decide which of the 6 flags – if any – is the one matching the circle and

description, and answer with words for A to F looking from the left, or Z if none of them matches, so: alpha, bravo, charlie, delta, echo, foxtrot or zero.

Quickly into action

Quick! I look at the circle on the map and at the description, then up at the terrain. Back to map, back to terrain. Yes, I’m sure it’s the one furthest to the left. “Alpha!” I flip to the next card and repeat the procedure. This time I’m not so sure; the control description is ‘spur’ and there are 2 flags on the spur. Which (if either) is at the correct height? I concentrate on the contours on the map, to assess the heights and the steepness of the slope. Time is ticking away. Eventually I go for “Echo”. Next card – control description ‘between two trees’. Rapidly try to identify the correct trees – yes, there is a flag exactly half-way between them. “Charlie”.

The fourth card – the circle is over a re-entrant. It’s some distance away and not easy to see just where the re-entrant starts and finishes. There is a flag in the area, but it doesn’t seem to be properly in the re-entrant. “Zero”. And so to the last in this sequence, ‘vegetation boundary’, quite easy this time because now I’m beginning to ‘know’ the area. “Delta”.

Full concentration as the competitor matches the circle on the map and the pictorial description with the flags on the slope.



The officials have timed the full period up to me saying 'Delta' and entered my answers and the time taken on my control card. They return the card with a smile – does that mean I got them all right, or something else? Now I can move on to the next stations, where the whole procedure is repeated, but with new map segments and terrain details.

Go – stop – go

I try to keep my concentration, ready for the next group, but what's this! There's a queue of people in front of me, waiting to go to station 2. I find a shady spot to sit and collect my thoughts, and 10 minutes later I'm called up again. There's another queue for station 4, but after that I have a clear passage – stations 5, 6 and 7, all close to

each other, in quick succession. No time to collect my thoughts here, but I try to take a few deep breaths and a good look round before sitting down in the next chair.

And suddenly it's all over. Thirty-five quick decisions made, and time to walk back to the assembly point, hand in my card, and wait for my answers to be checked and my points calculated. The total time taken at all 7 stations is calculated, then 45 seconds added per mistake.

A solution sheet is issued to everyone so that we can identify our mistakes and discuss the various situations. Just as in foot orienteering, there is plenty to talk about afterwards. The course planners can be highly imaginative – in this competition, for instance, providing exactly the same problem twice at one of the stations! In-

teresting to look at the results and see how many chose different answers.

The winner, Martin Jullum from Norway, took 227 seconds in all for his decisions, and made just 2 mistakes – impressive! My time was 482 seconds with 9 mistakes, giving a score of 887 – OK for my first international TempO competition, and I have learnt a lot and know what to do better next time.

TempO and its parent form trail orienteering (TrailO) have much to offer for all orienteers - they provide excellent training in map interpretation, particularly in relating contour shapes between map and ground. I think I have become a better foot orienteer through taking part in trail orienteering.

News in brief

World Championships organisers appointed

Great Britain has been appointed organiser of the 2015 World Orienteering Championships. The Championships will be held in Inverness, Scotland. "It was a tough decision between two very good candidates, Sweden and Great Britain", IOF Senior Vice President Marcel Schiess says.

The IOF Council has also awarded the 2013 World Ski Orienteering Championships to Kazakhstan. The events will be held in Ridder, East Kazakhstan, at the end of February and beginning of March 2013. "The organising team is very knowledgeable and experienced, and has proven their capability and skills in the World Cup finals 2008 and the Asian Winter Games 2011", IOF Ski Orienteering Commission Chair Markku Vauhkonen says, and continues: "The Ski Orienteering Commission has no doubt that the events will be successful".

The World Masters Orienteering Championships in 2014 were awarded to Brazil. This will be the first time a major IOF event is held in South America. The host city will be Porto Alegre.

www.orienteering.org



PHOTO: PIRJO VALIANEN

The World Games qualification rules published

The next edition of The World Games will be held in August 2013 in Cali, Colombia. The International World Games Association (IWGA) has agreed to include three orienteering events in the programme: two individual events for men and women, a sprint race and a middle distance race, as well as a mixed team relay. The IWGA has allocated spaces for a total of 40 male and 40 female runners to the IOF.

The host nation Colombia will have the right to enter 2+2 runners. To view how the remaining spaces will be allocated, please visit the IOF website -> Calendar -> The World Games 2013.

Record attendance at IOF Presidents' Conference

Representatives from a record 45 nations attended the Presidents' Conference – a meeting held every alternate year, between IOF Congress years, in conjunction with the World Orienteering Championships.

A keynote speech entitled 'The World of Sports' was given by Mr Jan Fransoo, President of ARISF and Vice President of Sport Accord.

The meeting discussed future strategic plans for the IOF and possible changes to the race programme for the World Orienteering Championships.

North South East West

North South East West is a regular feature in the O-zine. In this issue we are including all parts of the compass, describing the Development Clinic at the World Orienteering Championships 2011 which brought together athletes, coaches and organisers from 12 countries.

BY CLIVE ALLEN

Modelled on the long-standing O-Ringen Academy, a Development Clinic organised by the IOF at the World Orienteering Championships in France in August attracted almost 50 participants from 12 nations.

The idea of holding the clinic came from the French Orienteering Federation as a project to celebrate the IOF's 50th anniversary. The French government assisted with funding for accommodation, local transport and entries for the Championships themselves, and there was also support for travel costs from the IOF.

The clinic was aimed at IOF member nations which previously were associate members, or younger full members such as Barbados and Cyprus. It was run by IOF Council members Brian Porteous, Astrid Waaler Kaas, Maria Silvia Viti and Laszlo Zentai, with assistance from Sergio Grifoni and French helpers led by Blandine Astrad.

Those taking part arrived just two days before the first qualification race of the Championships, so a high priority was put on teaching 'survival skills' for the tricky French terrain. After some introductory talks in the morning, when a representative from the French Federation of Sport was present, the first afternoon was devoted to technique training in the forest: a short



PHOTO: BRIAN PORTEOUS

course involving map memory techniques, a line event and a micro exercise in a very detailed patch of forest. Then in the evening there were lectures and discussions on topics such as club development, map-making, development priorities in a federation, and environmental issues.

The second day followed a similar pattern, with preparation for the middle distance qualification race being the main forest goal for most participants. One of the chief objectives of the clinic was to get more nations feeling 'comfortable' about coming to a World Championships – to understand what it was like to be a team at the Championships and what kind of preparation was

needed. In this respect the clinic differed from the O-Ringen Academy, where participants attend as individuals rather than members of teams.

The complex limestone terrain proved to be a special challenge for most clinic members, but several successfully completed the middle distance qualification race and their legs in the relay. All were able to get help and support from the clinic leaders as the clinic continued throughout the Championships in a more informal fashion. A lot of new friendships were made, and the clinic objective of promoting regional cooperation in parts of the world such as Asia and mid-Europe was clearly being achieved. Some of those present may well be inspired by the standard of orienteering they experienced in France and will find their way to Scandinavia for more training and experience, like so many before them. Let's hope so!



Participating countries
IOF member since

Barbados 2010	Greece 1999
Belarus 1994	Korea 1979
Brazil 1994	Kyrgyzstan 2007
Chinese Taipei 1998	Macedonia 1994
Cyprus 2011	Moldova 1998
Georgia 2005	Uruguay 1999

Thinking positively despite injuries

BY ERIK BORG

A couple of months before the World Orienteering Championships in France, Helena Jansson got injured. The Swede couldn't run for quite some time, but just one month before the championships she was able to start again. And she ended up being the only athlete at the World Championships with a medal in all distances. Some weeks later she became the overall winner of the World Cup.

Helena was smiling after the final race in the World Cup. She had again done well, and was as usual very delighted and had a lot of positive comments. When she realised, a couple weeks before the World Championships, that she wouldn't be in her best physical form for the championships

this year, she was simply thinking that she had to do her best with the condition she was in. That condition proved to be a lot better than she thought. The championships week ended with gold at middle, silver in sprint and bronze at both long and relay.

"It was the finest week of the summer. I am not thinking just about the results, but also the superb spirit we had in the Swedish team and the very good orienteering in challenging terrain", she says. Her gold-medal middle distance race was her first-ever 'perfect' race at a World Championship.

A break from studying

Helena always tries to think positive. "That's best for me and those with me, but



In June Helena Jansson struggled with injury, but since then she has achieved wonders.

PHOTOS: ERIK BORG

I can also have harder times", she says. Now she is back as a full-time student of medicine. From March to August she had a break from studying to prepare for the World Championships, living in Bern in Switzerland with her boyfriend Niclas Jonasson, who won the sprint gold in 2004. This was good for her in all but one way. Helena was running in poorly-fitting shoes, and due to that she suffered the injury which lasted a month.

"Still much to learn"

Helena now has 11 World Championship medals. In the centre of La Chaux-de-Fonds in Switzerland at the beginning of October she achieved her first overall World Cup victory. "When I was injured in June I hadn't at all expected such results, but the good end to the season is the result of ten years of tough training."

She is only 26, but she has already won a lot. "I feel I can still do better in orienteering skills. I can learn to run better. My orienteering technique can be improved. There are so many challenges and I am looking forward to them", Helena says.

"There are no plans to stop my career in my mind just now. I will go on. There is so much to learn", says Helena. With a smile.

Helena Jansson happy after winning the World Cup overall.



IOF 50 years celebrated at the World Orienteering Championships

The International Orienteering Federation was formed in May 1961 with 10 member nations, all European; now there are 73 members on 5 continents. A ceremony was held at the World Orienteering Championships in France in the finals race arena to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the IOF.

The ceremony started with four parachutists bringing the IOF flag to the arena. A video specially made for the anniversary was shown on the big screen; the video showed many of the landmarks in the development of the work of the IOF from the early days to the present.

IOF President Åke Jacobson then spoke about the anniversary and invited three past Presidents – Bengt Saltin, Heinz Tschudin and Sue Harvey – on to the stage. The IOF flag was brought down the finish chute in ceremonial fashion by the French Youth Team, and a couple of their



PHOTO: PIRJO VALJANEN

members came on stage to congratulate Åke Jacobson on the anniversary. The IOF flag was raised and the ceremony

ended with a lively version of 'Happy Birthday' being played on the sound system.

World Ranking, Top 10 (as of 12 October 2011)

Foot Orienteering

Women: 1) Helena Jansson (SWE) 5809, 2) Annika Billstam (SWE) 5714, 3) Dana Brožková (CZE) 5625, 4) Minna Kauppi (FIN) 5559, 5) Simone Niggli (SUI) 5524, 6) Signe Søres (DEN) 5517, 7) Lena Eliasson (SWE) 5485, 8) Tove Alexandersson (SWE) 5469, 9) Merja Rantanen (FIN) 5446, 10) Linnea Gustafsson (SWE) 5430.

Men: 1) Thierry Gueorgiou (FRA) 5820, 2) Daniel Hubmann (SUI) 5668, 3) Peter Öberg (SWE) 5601, 4) Baptiste Rollier (SUI) 5572, 5) Olav Lundanes (NOR) 5558, 6) Matthias Müller (SUI) 5551, 7) Philippe Adamski (FRA) 5548, 8) Pasi Ikonen (FIN) 5542, 9) Francois Gonon (FRA) 5536, 10) Oleksandr Kratov (UKR) 5515.

Federation League (for leading 20 athletes)

Women: 1) Sweden 94178 points, 2) Finland 88496, 3) Norway 80163, 4)

Switzerland 78320, 5) Czech Republic 75615, 6) Great Britain 74839, 7) Australia 69514, 8) Denmark 52505, 9) Russia 52084, 10) New Zealand 41041.

Men: 1) Sweden 98106, 2) Switzerland 90849, 3) Norway 89142, 4) Finland 88138, 5) Czech Republic 78874, 6) Great Britain 76857, 7) Denmark 74569, 8) Australia 72554, 9) New Zealand 67824, 10) Italy 62898.

MTB Orienteering

Women: 1) Ingrid Stengård (FIN) 7447, 2) Rikke Kornvig (DEN) 7407, 3) Michaela Gigon (AUT) 7369, 4) Marika Hara (FIN) 7317, 5) Christine Schaffner-Raeber (SUI) 7264, 6) Laura Scaravonati (ITA) 7220, 7) Susanna Laurila (FIN) 7193, 8) Ksenia Chernykh (RUS) 7167, 9) Hana Bajtošová (SVK) 7152, 10) Maja Rothweiler (SUI) 7128.

Men: 1) Samuli Saarela (FIN) 7751, 2) Erik Skovgaard Knudsen (DEN) 7692, 3) Jiří Hradil (CZE) 7565, 4) Ruslan Gritsan (RUS) 7518, 5) Anton Foliforov (RUS)

7508, 6) Valeriy Gluhov (RUS) 7491, 7) Tobias Breitschädel (AUT) 7396, 8) Beat Schaffner (SUI) 7388, 9) Jussi Laurila (FIN) 7381, 10) Marek Pospíšek (CZE) 7358.

Ski Orienteering

Women: 1) Marte Reenaas (NOR) 1309, 2) Josefina Engström (SWE) 1286, 3) Polina Malchikova (RUS) 1279, 4) Helene Söderlund (SWE) 1278, 5) Tatiana Kozlova (RUS) 1275, 6) Kajsa Richardsson (SWE) 1258, 7) Alyona Trapeznikova (RUS) 1249, 8) Liisa Anttila (FIN) 1239, 9) Stine Olsen Kirkevik (NOR) 1230, 10) Natalya Tomilova (RUS) 1216.

Men: 1) Staffan Tunis (FIN) 1309, 2) Andrey Grigoriev (RUS) 1289, 3) Peter Arnesson (SWE) 1276, 4) Kiril Veselov (RUS) 1274, 5) Olli-Markus Taivainen (FIN) 1246, 6) Andrei Lamov (RUS) 1243, 7) Lars Hol Moholdt (NOR) 1239, 8) Erik Rost (SWE) 1238, 9) Vladimir Barchukov (RUS) 1238, 10) Eduard Khrennikov (RUS) 1232.