



The 2004 World Ski Orienteering Championships:

Focus on media and spectator friendliness

Thanks to advanced technology, the World Ski Orienteering Championships to be held in Åsarna and Östersund, Sweden on 9-16 February 2004 will be a truly media and spectator-friendly event.

– We co-operate with Followit AB which is a company that utilises GPS and SMS technology to track dogs in the forest, among other applications. The same technology can also be used for the World Ski Orienteering Championships. Thanks to the GPS technology in conjunction with controls located close to the spectator areas at the event stadium for all races and the sprint event at Jamtli in particular, the World Championships will be good for both spectators and the media, states Event Director Niklas Eriksson.

The athletes will carry a small transmitter (78 mm x 43 mm x 18 mm in size and weighing approximately 100 g). The transmitter is contacted via SMS and it sends back the exact position to the server, computer or cell phone. The information can be presented on digital maps using a programme which is installed on the user's computer or on the Internet.

In the long distance event and in the sprint the 15 best men will be using it and in the mass start event the 15 best women will be carrying the transmitter.

In the relay event, the device will be carried by 6 men's and 6 women's teams.



Spectacular sprint at Jamtli

The 15th World Ski Orienteering Championships will put great emphasis on public and media friendliness. A major part of the competitions will be organised close

to the ski stadium in Åsarna and at Jamtli in Östersund. The mass start event on Friday 13 February will have three loops and a winning time of 45 minutes.

During the race, the spectators will be able to see the competitors seven times with an interval of 7–8 minutes only. In the relay event, each leg is approximately 25–30 minutes and there will also be a spectator control in the event stadium.

The most spectacular competition on the championships programme will be the final event, the sprint, on Sunday 15 February. The competition area at Jamtli in Östersund is no bigger than 900 m x 600 m and the crowd will be allowed to move around rather freely in the area. The winning time on the 4 km course with two loops will be approximately 15 minutes.

Ambitious target

Athletes from some 30 nations and 4 continents are expected to take part in the 2004 World Ski Orienteering Championship. The number of competitors is expected to be approximately 150-160. The organisers

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BARBRO RÖNNBERG
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Good Wishes for the New Orienteering Year 2004!

are also expecting up to 100 team leaders and media representatives.

– Our target is to have around 1,000 spectators per day, but I would hope to see 5,000-10,000 people from all over Jämtland supporting the local athletes to a double victory in the final competition at Jämtli, says Niklas Eriksson.

– Jämtli Historyland is a culture and museum area with many old buildings and it is situated only 500 metres away from the centre of Östersund. In this area, the citizens of Östersund spend a great deal of their spare time. If the Swedish athletes are successful from the very beginning of the championships week and win a lot of medals, I don't think it will be impossible to reach this rather ambitious goal. When the local athletes are doing well, people in Jämtland usually want to show their appreciation by attending the event instead of watching it on TV, Niklas Eriksson concludes.

World Ski Orienteering Championships 2004

Competition programme:

Monday 9th Feb

- Arrival

Tuesday 10th Feb

- Model Event and
- Opening ceremony at Åsarna

Wednesday 11th Feb

- Long distance at Åsarna

Thursday 12th Feb

- Rest day

Friday 13th Feb

- Mass start at Åsarna

Saturday 14th Feb

- Relay at Åsarna

Sunday 15th Feb

- Sprint distance at Jämtli in Östersund.
- Banquet at Åsarna

Monday 16th Feb

- Departure



PHOTO: PIRJO VALANEN

Norwegian Stine Hjerme Kirkevik is determined to win gold at the World Ski Orienteering Championships in Östersund, Sweden.

BY ERIK BORG

Eduard Khrennikov has been the biggest star in the ski-orienteering world in the last few years. He wants to be an even bigger star in Östersund, Sweden next year.

– The main thing in preparation for the World Ski Orienteering Championships in Östersund is equally high quality of all sides of preparation and reliable orienteering, states Eduard Khrennikov.

Khrennikov has four World Championship gold medals, and he has won the two most recent World Cup series. Last year, he won five of the nine World Cup races in which he took part. Two of the victories came from races in Östersund. The preparations for this season bode well for achieving top results again this winter.

– My training has incorporated a variety of different methods as well as different intensities and durations. It has included running, roller skiing, cycling and uphill running with ski poles, Eduard comments.

The Russians train on snow from November. Their first selection race is already in mid-December. There are several good Russian ski orienteers, so there are many more than just Khrennikov who can be successful at the World Championships in Sweden.

Home terrain for Nordqvist

Eduard Khrennikov's main competitors in the battle for overall victory in the 2003 World Cup were Bertil Nordqvist and Jukka Lanki. Nordqvist will be competing in his home terrain in Östersund next year. He won his first individual championship title last winter when winning the gold medal in the European Championships long distance race. At World Championship level, he still only has a relay gold although he has taken part in all the World Championships in the last ten years.

– It is very inspiring to have the championships in Östersund. I have sprained my ankle a couple of times, but apart from that, things have gone well, says Nordqvist.

Tomas Löfgren, who also lives in Öster-

On the hunt for gold

sund, and Peter Arneson are two other Swedes who are expected to be at the top of the results board at the World Championships.

Both the Finns and Norwegians have ambitions to fight for the top positions. The Norwegians have not won a World Championships gold medal for nine years, while the Finns didn't get any top places at the last World Championship in Bulgaria.

New queen to be crowned

The queen of the World Ski Orienteering Championships in Bulgaria two years ago, Lena Hasselström of Sweden, will not be defending her title this winter. There could be a lot of blue and yellow success all the same. Stina Grenholm is the current title holder at the medium distance event. Marie Lund and Ida Wikström-Holmgren have improved greatly over the last couple of seasons.

Norway's main hope is Stine Hjermstad Kirkevik. Her best result at the World Championships prior to this season have been two individual fourth places. She is aiming to improve on this in Östersund.

– My aim is to win gold, states Stine.



PHOTO: ERIK BORG



PHOTO: PIRJO VALLANEN

Bertil Nordqvist has been one of the world's best ski orienteers for many years. At World Championship level, he still only has a relay gold and is certain to be heading for an individual gold or two on home territory in Östersund.

Stine is even more motivated now than she has ever been before. She and her husband, Tommy Olsen, became parents just one year ago and she became Norwegian champion at the long distance just ten weeks after becoming a mother.

– I now look forward to every training session. That's when I have my free time, comments the young mother. - The training sessions are also more effective and targeted than before. I am more concen-

trated and I feel that I am training better now. It is difficult to say at what level I am today as I haven't measured my strength so much, she adds.

The Finns Hannele Valkonen and Salla Lehto are two of several Finnish girls who could be in the fight for medals. There could also be a strong Russian element in the women's class. Natalia Tomilova got her breakthrough last winter when she won the World Cup ahead of Tatiana Vlassova.



Stina Grenholm of Sweden is the current world champion at the medium distance event and she has ambitions to defend her title. Will Stina manage to succeed her compatriot Lena Hasselström as the queen of the World Ski Orienteering Championships?

Developments in elite training:

More variety and higher intensity

BY IAIN ROCHFORD

In the 1970s and through to the 1990s, the main feature of elite orienteers' winter training was long distance running at a moderate pace. In general they followed the Lydiard principle of training which was to build a solid base through long distance running and then to have a sharpening phase with a lower volume but higher intensity.

Solid training base

Egil Johansen of Norway, the World Champion from 1976 and 1978, and later national team trainer, trained up to 20 hours a week in the basic conditioning phase when he was at his peak. As he lived on the south coast of Norway at this time, nearly all of this was running.

His team mate, Jan Fjaerestad, trained even more. One of his training weeks in the winter of 1977 was as high as 32 hours of running. One Sunday morning in April 1977, he even ran for 1 hour early in the morning, then

competed in the Varspretten season opener in Norway which he won, then 40 km on the way back to Oslo after the race. The training paid off though as his personal best for the marathon is 2.12 hours.

Sigurd Daehli was another elite orienteer who trained along these lines. On his long runs he trained at such a moderate pace that he often trained alone as other endurance athletes in the student environment at Trondheim thought he was too slow. That didn't stop him running fast when it mattered though – among other victories he won the Nordic championships in 1977.

This is not to say that these top runners only trained at a moderate tempo, but that this was the dominant training form. They would also incorporate a tempo run at a fast pace and also one interval session.

Training intensities

Björnar Valstad, a silver medallist from the World Orienteering Championships in 2003, also trains with high volumes

at moderate tempo. His overall weekly training volume in the winter can even approach Jan Fjaerestad's volumes; the difference being that a lot of Björnar's training consists of cross-country skiing classic style. The second session of the day would always be running though. The intensity of his training over the year as a whole is 10% high, 15% medium and 75% low.

Allan Mogensen, another "veteran" elite orienteer has a similar breakdown of the intensity of his training. If, however, we look at the new generation of top athletes, many such as current Sprint World Champion Briton Jamie Stevenson, Jani Lakanen, Finland and Mikhail Mamleev of Russia have a training intensity of 15-20% high, 30-40% medium and just 40-55% at moderate tempo.

Variety important

One new feature of the training of the current crop of top orienteers is that they incorporate a significant cross-training



PHOTO: KEITH SAMUELSSON

Norwegian Egil Johansen won gold at the World Championships in 1976 and 1978. Here together with the other medallists after the long distance race at Aviemore, Great Britain in 1976. From left to right: Rolf Pettersson (SWE), Kristin Cullman (SWE), Egil Johansen, Liisa Veijalainen (FIN), Svein Jacobsen (NOR), and Anne Lundmark (SWE).

element into their training regimes. Not just cross-country skiing, but also mountain biking, spinning, swimming, circuit training, gymn work and floorball in the winter. Pasi Ikonen, the 2001 World Short Distance Champion even includes handball and football.

One key reason for this variety is both to keep the training interesting and thus to maintain motivation especially during the winter training period, and also so as to avoid "overuse" injuries from too monotonous training.

One other feature of the current elite training is the inclusion of regeneration and stretching to a much higher degree than previously. Scandinavian orienteers of course have always used the sauna as a means to restore the body after hard training, but stretching, massage therapy and similar has become increasingly important. This is probably linked to the high training intensities and the need to prevent injury.

Orienteering technique throughout the year

In the past athletes were content to take a complete break from orienteering in the close season, with some such as Norwegian Ivar Formo excelling in cross-country skiing. Formo won the Olympic 50 km title in 1976. Today's elite incorporate orienteering technique training as a year-round activity. All national teams and most top clubs seem to have a warm-weather training camp too where orienteering technique is a significant feature.

The athletes of Halden SK in Norway, for example, who include many world championship competitors, have 2-3 organised technique sessions a week throughout the winter, including one night orienteering session.

The French "centre of orienteering excellence" in St. Etienne which is producing such rising stars as Francois Gonon,

Damien Renard and new World Sprint Distance Champion Thierry Gueorgiou, places a high emphasis on orienteering technique training the whole year. The athletes run as many as 6-7 sessions a week in the winter including four at the weekend. The first session on the Saturday is a sprint race with high intensity, followed by a middle distance in the afternoon and a night race in the evening. There is just one long distance training on the Sunday.

In general, current top orienteers do appear to train with more variety and with higher intensity than the athletes of former years. This is undoubtedly due to the more varied demands of the relatively new disciplines of the sprint and middle distances. 15-20 years ago there were only two distances at the World Championships - the classic and the relay.

Orienteering technique the whole year is also a very important feature of current elite training methods.

The 7th World Games:

Over 4,000 athletes and officials expected

The World Games to be held in Germany on 14-24 July, 2005 will be the biggest ever. More than 4,000 athletes and officials representing 33 official sports and 6 invited sports are expected to participate in the 7th edition of The World Games.



Duisburg and its partner municipalities of Mülheim, Oberhausen and Bottrop will provide the athletes with 17 different high quality venues. The compact layout and the efficient local transport between the venues guarantees an unprecedented cohesion between the competitions, allowing the athletes and officials to take in the unique atmosphere of the World Games.

Orienteering in Bottrop

The International World Games Association (IWGA) has decided to include three orienteering events in The World Games 2005. The events will be organised in Bottrop, some 30 kilometres from Duisburg. The IOF has been allotted a total number of 80 athletes, i.e. 40 men and 40 women, and the programme will be similar to that of the 2001 World Games, i.e. an individual event for both men and

women, and a mixed team relay. The individual middle distance events will be held on Saturday 16 July and the relay on Sunday 17 July.

All international sports federations that have their sport included on the programme of the World Games are required to establish qualification criteria to ensure that the very best athletes in the world participate in the Games. The IOF Council has approved the Elite Events Commission's (EEC) proposal for qualification procedure as follows:

Qualification procedure

1. The host nation (Germany) shall have the right to enter 2 + 2 runners.
2. The eleven (11) best nations, Germany excluded, in the 2004 World Orienteering

Championship relay, ranked by adding the placing of both teams (i.e. men and women) from each nation, shall have the right to enter 2 + 2 runners.

3. The results of the 2004 WOC Sprint Final and the Middle Distance Final shall be used to fill 11 + 11 places. The nations are assigned slots separately for women and men. For each gender, a ranking list is compiled by adding each nation's best place in the Sprint to the best place in the Middle Distance, the second best place in the Sprint to the second best place in the Middle Distance etc. so that each nation can appear several times in each ranking list. The maximum number of runners per nation will, however, be restricted to 3 + 3 (including the places assigned under 1 and 2).

4. In addition to the limit of 3 + 3 runners per nation, the 2004 World Champions on Sprint, Middle Distance and Long Distance will have a personal place.

5. The EEC is authorized to allocate the remaining places up to the total of 40 + 40 runners.