

Rendezvous Ballarat: 2004 World Mountain Bike Orienteering Championships

BY ROBERT MOUATT

Ballarat is an ideal venue to host the 2nd World Mountain Bike Orienteering Championships in October 2004. Strategically located in the Central Highlands Region of Victoria, Ballarat with a population of 85,000 is approximately 110 km north-west of Melbourne, the State capital. Travelling time between Melbourne and Ballarat's event centre is less than 75 minutes, and about 70 minutes from Melbourne's Tullamarine International Airport.

A good resting place

Ballarat, named after an Aboriginal word meaning 'a good resting place', is centrally placed among some of the best terrain in Australia for both foot and mountain bike orienteering. And when not orienteering, there are plenty of other attractions for visitors to enjoy. It has many natural and historical places of interest both within the city and nearby, and there are many excellent wineries in the region.

Until 1851, it was a quiet sheep-herding area but the discovery of gold in the region on 21 August that year soon changed everything. By mid October, over 2,000



Current Australian champion Alex Randall is one of the athletes favoured to spearhead Australia's quest for gold medals.

In this issue: Rendezvous Ballarat: 2004 World MTB Orienteering Championships; Emily Viner is going for gold; The successful Kirkevick-Olsen family; Khrennikov - the King of Östersund; Liisa Anttila - an all-year sports star; "We just decided to win"; Tomas Löfgren - a healthy World Champion; Jonne Lehto - a star of the future; .

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BARBRO RÖNNBERG
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

prospectors roamed the area seeking quick riches from alluvial gold.

In 1854 a series of events contributed to the Eureka Rebellion, one of the few civilian uprisings in Australia. The battle was over in 15 minutes, 30 miners and five soldiers were killed and the miners' Eureka stockade was burnt to the ground. However, the blue and white Eureka flag still flies boldly and defiantly throughout Ballarat. The 150th anniversary of the incident will be celebrated during December 2004.

It is the gold mining history that gives the Ballarat region its intricate areas for orienteering.

Why Ballarat?

Australia, in particular Victoria and especially the rural cities of Bendigo and Ballarat, has a long history in staging successful major international events starting with the 1985 World Championships in Bendigo. Thus when Australia was seeking a venue for the 2004 World Mountain Bike Orienteering Championships it was obvious that the central highlands of Victoria should be the first area considered. A survey of the area confirmed that it had the terrain and infrastructure suitable for international mountain bike orienteering events. Ballarat was chosen as the event centre as it was close to all potential competition areas and it had all the facilities to support a major international orienteering carnival.

The Carnival Program

A series of lead-up events and a training camp have been scheduled to enable competitors to overcome travel weariness and adjust to Australian conditions, without having to make earlier trips to Australia.

Four International Public races will be held



on Saturday 16 October, Tuesday 19 October, Wednesday 20 October and Friday 22 October. Junior, senior and masters classes will be offered, with events being staged on world championship areas in the afternoons following those events.

Who's Coming?

The organisers are expecting teams from Austria, China, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Great Britain, Hungary, Italy, Ireland, Israel, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, New Zealand, Poland, Portugal, Russia, Spain, Switzerland, Slovakia, as well as Australia. Competitors from Sweden, USA, Canada and Ukraine are also expected. The Australian team will not be announced until early September after the final selection trials, but 2002 team members and current Australian champions, Alex Randall and Emily Viner are favoured to spearhead Australia's quest for gold medals.

Variety of Terrain to Challenge Competitors

While the venues for each race cannot be disclosed, competitors can expect a variety of terrain ranging from medium to steep areas, some courses with long legs suitable for high speed racing, others through a complex network of tracks, and looped courses to allow the progress of competitors to be monitored. Even in October the ground should be relatively hard and

fast, with punctures always a possibility. Competitors are reminded that for environmental reasons, they may only ride the mapped roads and tracks and walking with or carrying a bicycle off the marked tracks on the map is prohibited.

Mild and Damp Weather

If Ballarat has average weather during the World Championships, competitors are likely to experience a few cool, damp days with the mean maximum temperature for October being 16.6 C and mean minimum 6.3 C, and around 69 mm of rain spread over 16 days. This should provide ideal conditions for all races.

The Event Centre, the Welcome Stranger Holiday Park, should be able to meet the needs of most competitors. It offers accommodation in 4 to 6 bed cabins, with bath, living room, cooking facilities and heating. Camping with a tent and a mobile home is also possible, at very reasonable prices. The Park has a lockable bicycle storage facility, an outdoor pool, and a heated indoor spa pool. Internet connection is available at the reception desk. Plenty of accommodation of higher standard (motel, hotel) is available nearby. The Park is only 2.5 kilometres to the city centre. Grocery stores, bakeries and restaurants are within 1 kilometre of the Park.

The Welcome Stranger is the name of the largest gold nugget found in the region in the 1850's. It weighed 65 kilograms and was found at Moliagul, about 85 kms north of Ballarat. Nuggets and small gold flakes are still found in the region. Those who miss out on a medal may like to go prospecting for their own gold before they leave the area.

Breeding Ground for World Class Orienteers

As well as having excellent areas for orienteering, Ballarat has produced a number of world class orienteers. Two of the best known are Nicki Taws, whose best result was a third in a World Cup race in Canberra in 2000, and Emily Viner, silver medallist in 2002 World Mountain Bike Orienteering Championships in Fontainebleau, France. Both grew up and studied at Melbourne University's School of Forestry in Creswick near Ballarat before career opportunities enticed them to move to Canberra ACT where they have lived for several years.

The lead-up and Championships program

10 October	Sunday	Check into Event Centre
11–15 October	Monday to Friday	Training camp events at Nerrina, Creswick Forest, St Georges Lake, and Canadian Forest
16 October	Saturday	Victorian MTB-O Championships in Daylesford Model event for WOC Long Distance race
18 October	Monday	Opening Ceremony, Promotional event, Ballarat
19 October	Tuesday	Long Distance Qualifying event
20 October	Wednesday	Long Distance Final
22 October	Friday	Middle Distance Model and Final
23 October	Saturday	Relay/Closing Ceremony/Banquet

Emily Viner is going for Gold

BY BLAKE GORDON

What sort of performance are you expecting at the selection trials in Queensland (at Easter) and Bendigo (at September)?

– Top three in all trial races.

What is your best result in foot and MTB orienteering?

– Foot Orienteering: Australian Champion 1996, 6th in the World Championships Relay 1997. MTB Orienteering: Silver medal in the World Championships 2002.

What is your training program? What sort of training do you plan leading up to the 2004 selection trials and championships?

– My training program is focussed on the 2004 World MTB Orienteering Championships and it incorporates both road and MTB racing.

What are your goals for 2004?

– At least one gold medal at the 2004 World MTB Orienteering Championships.

What do you think Australia can achieve at the 2004 Championships in Central Victoria?

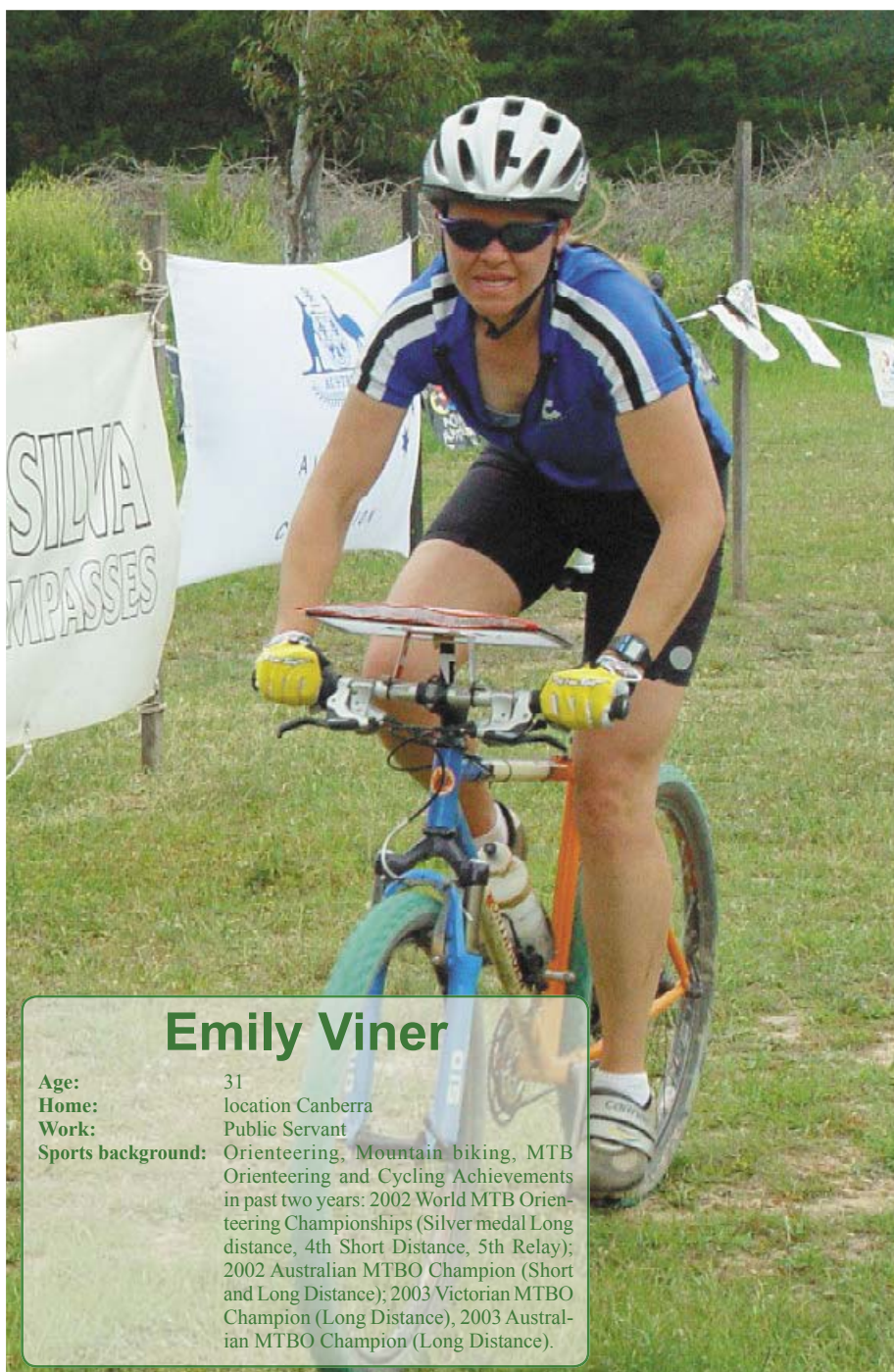
– Australia are strong enough to achieve gold medal results in both the men's and women's fields with a strong showing in the top fifteen of these fields also.

Bike equipment and the technical side of MTB Orienteering are quite different from foot-O. How do you prepare for a race in the hour before you ride?

– By calming my mind and focussing on being ready for quick navigation/route choices. The most important thing is to trust your choices and maintain focus throughout the race. I check my bike in the morning before the race and trust (hope!) that I won't experience any mechanical problems.

What bike(s) do you ride - MTB and road. What plans do you have to upgrade in the near future?

– I ride a Bontrager mountain bike and a GT road bike. I hope to update parts on my mountain bike in the coming year. If I could manage a sponsorship deal involving a lighter bike, I would use that (assuming it matched the fantastic performance of the Bontrager!). My road bike is adequate for what I use it for. I would always spend money on my mountain bike in preference to updating my road bike.



Emily Viner

Age: 31
Home: location Canberra
Work: Public Servant
Sports background: Orienteering, Mountain biking, MTB Orienteering and Cycling Achievements in past two years: 2002 World MTB Orienteering Championships (Silver medal Long distance, 4th Short Distance, 5th Relay); 2002 Australian MTBO Champion (Short and Long Distance); 2003 Victorian MTBO Champion (Long Distance), 2003 Australian MTBO Champion (Long Distance).

What are your thoughts on the future for MTB Orienteering in Australia in the next 3 years?

– I think the sport will grow rapidly in the next 3 years, particularly with the hosting of the 2004 World Championships. We need to ensure a well-publicised and exciting competition with ample spectator opportunities at the World Championship events. It is most important though to support the Australian squad in all areas of training and sponsorship from now until October to maximise the opportunity of racing a World Championship in your home country. The future of the sport

will build from the results we achieve.

With a world championship in MTB Orienteering on a yearly basis from 2005 onwards, what affect will this have on Australian participation?

– Undoubtedly it would be tremendously hard for most people to support a yearly trip overseas with the bike, unless they were sponsored at least in part. I hope that enthusiasm increases in Australia – only with large, strong field in both men and women classes can we support a team to annual World Championship events.

The Kirkevik-Olsen family played while their rivals waited



PHOTO: SAMI SUODENJOKI

Stine Hjermsstad Kirkevik and Tommy Olsen became parents to little Simen in Autumn 2002. At the World Championships this year, they became the best ski orienteering couple in the world with two gold, two silver and two bronze medals.

Simen on November 28, 2002.

– Although ski orienteering is very important to us, other things have become even more important. As parents you have a more relaxed attitude to sport. If you don't succeed as you had hoped, at least you know that you have succeeded in other areas, continues Stine.

What did becoming a father mean to you as an elite sportsman, Tommy?

– I don't really think that it has had a decisive impact in the last couple of years in terms of my development as an athlete, even though it may appear as though it has. I have probably become more relaxed, which is positive, but at the same time I have had less time for training and race preparations, he states.

Training is really fun

A couple of years ago, Stine won the short distance race at the Nordic Championships. At the last World Championships in Bulgaria, her best result was fourth. Then Simen arrived.

– It was really good to have a pause from all the training and racing, states Stine but since giving birth to Simen, she has had a great desire to resume her ski orienteering career.

– Training has been both my leisure time and a psychological break from taking care of Simen. I have really looked forward to and enjoyed practically all my training sessions. This factor, together with my complete break from the sport during pregnancy, has been the major reason for my success this year. When I am highly motivated, I can get more out of my training, and this produces results. I have probably become stronger physically after giving birth, but I don't think that that is the main

BY ERIK BORG

Stine Hjermsstad Kirkevik and Tommy Olsen played with their son Simen before the start of the long distance race at the World Championships in Östersund. Throughout the World Championships, the Kirkevik-Olsen family continued to "play" games with their rivals.

When the start of the first World Championships distance, the long distance race, was delayed for two hours due to the intense cold, the presence of little Simen meant that the waiting time for his parents was somewhat different to that of all their rivals.

– While our fellow competitors probably did not relish the long wait, we just played with Simen, which took our minds off the race delay, says Stine.

Stine Hjermsstad Kirkevik won the long distance gold medal by a margin of 2.28 minutes to second place Hannele Valkonen of Finland. Stine was the first Norwegian individual ski orienteering world champion for 12 years. Tommy Olsen won the bronze medal in the men's

class after Russian Eduard Khrennikov and Tomas Löfgren.

– I am overjoyed to be world champion, that's what I have been training for since I was very young, comments Stine.

Stine also won the middle distance race, while Tommy won the silver medal in both the mass start race and the relay with the Norwegian team. In the sprint race, Stine again got a medal, this time the bronze and Tommy concluded his World Championships with an eighth place. Prior to this year's WOC in Sweden, the couple had started in a total of 17 different individual World Championship races without winning a single medal.

Success came with parenthood

Why has Stine become so good?

– Because she has become a mother", smiles Vidar Benjaminsen, the former ski orienteering king and now Norwegian team leader at the World Championships.

Stine and Tommy became parents to little

reason for my good results, states Stine.

Babysitters

Although it has been a fantastic experience to become parents for the first time, it has also been tough at times. Simen has woken at 5 o'clock each morning at that can be a bit early when both parents train a lot and need a good night's sleep.

– The only negative aspect of becoming parents has been the difficulty in getting enough sleep and rest. That may be the reason why I was ill at Christmas, adds Stine.

Prior to and during the World Championships, on the other hand, Tommy and Stine did not have any difficulty in getting enough sleep.

– That's because we owe our parents and the rest of our support apparatus a big thank you for all their babysitting help. After leaving Simen in the safe hands of his grandparents, we were able to go on training camps with the luxury of an undisturbed night's sleep and only ourselves to think of. This meant that we could prepare optimally and build up to top form. At the World Championships themselves, granddad Kåre (Kirkevik) looked after Simen at night time, while Vigdis (Thingelstad) and Ellen (Aure) took care of him in the daytime, making the days worry free for us so that we were able to concentrate on what was important at this time – our sports performances and results, concludes Tommy.

A Long Road

Tommy has taken longer to reach the top of his sport than Stine. He only began to concentrate fully on ski orienteering after he had actually made the decision to retire from his chosen sport. Although he made the Norwegian biathlon team and competed in six World Cup races in 1989, he didn't really think that he was getting enough return for all his training and decided to "retire" shortly after.

With a less "serious" attitude, he began to get good results in ski orienteering. In the beginning, his orienteering technique was not good enough, but he has continually worked on this aspect and also increased both the amount and "seriousness" of his training. Last year, he became "double" European Champion, and he would really like to go for one more World Championships as he still lacks a World Championship gold medal in his collection.



PHOTO: SAMI SJODENIKKI

This year too, Eduard Khrennikov was in fantastic form at the World Ski Orienteering Championships. He added three more gold medals to his collection.

Khrennikov - the King of Östersund

BY ERIK BORG

Eduard Khrennikov of Russia was again the major star in the men's class at the Ski Orienteering World Championship 2004 in Sweden. He started the event with a gold medal in the long distance race, had an off-day in the middle distance, but then rounded off the championships with gold in both the relay and sprint events.

His set of results from the championships show how dominant he is in the sport. In

the long distance race, his impressive speed in the ski tracks and orienteering skills over the last part of the race enabled him to win by a clear margin. In the relay event, he kept cool in the head-to-head battle with Tommy Olsen of Norway, and a shorter gaffling relay course enabled him to finish alone and take the gold for Russia.

On the last day of the championships, he still had enough strength and energy to ski well and without errors to take home the sprint gold medal as well. In Östersund, he showed once again that he really is a man for the big occasions.

Eduard Khrennikov is en route to becoming one of the biggest, if not the biggest, name in the history of ski orienteering. With his three gold medals from the 2004 World Championships in Sweden, he now has nine World Championship medals in his collection. An incredible seven of these are gold, and although a few other athletes have amassed more medals in total, no one else has as many gold medals.



Liisa Anttila - an all-year sports star

BY ERIK BORG

Liisa Anttila is a multitasking sports-woman. She is a World Champion in both winter and summer sports. Now she is hoping that she will soon recover from her knee injury so that she can begin her preparations for yet another World Championships this year.

In Finland in 2001 she became World Champion with the Finnish women's relay team at the World Orienteering Championships in Tampere. This year in Sweden she again became a World Relay Champion but this time in ski orienteering.

– The relay was again the best race for me. I could have skied even faster but I didn't want to take any chances, says Liisa, who brought Finland home just over two minutes ahead of second-place Russia.

In the sprint race she was just two seconds away from winning another gold medal.

– Of course it would have been even better to win an individual title. I was so close. I could have lost the two seconds almost anywhere. But with a perfect race with the right route choices and no errors it should have been possible to go a minute quicker, but that's with hindsight and after the race is over that's just

speculation, she adds.

Many medals

In total the Finnish star has five individual medals and four relay medals from World Championship races in either orienteering or ski orienteering. She is a real multitasking sportswoman. She also has excellent national results in Finland from cross-country skiing and cross-country running too.

– Winning a World Championships is a goal for which I have trained hour after hour, states Liisa.

The 2004 World Ski Orienteering Championship was a return to form for Liisa after the disappointment from the 2003 World Orienteering Championship in Switzerland last August. In the stifling heat, she ran completely out of energy and became so dehydrated that she had to retire and ended up in hospital.

– Switzerland did not go to plan. I hope that I will at least make the finish line this autumn at the World Championships in Västerås, Sweden, she comments.

Enjoys training

Liisa really enjoys her sports and her train-

ing too. She trains a lot and has had her share of injuries over the years. Her biggest problem at the moment is a bad knee.

– I have had problems with “runner's knee” and I have to get this fixed soon. In the meantime I can ski as much as I want with no problems.

What is competing at ski orienteering like in comparison with foot orienteering?

– If you want to be the best at anything, you always have to focus on it 100%. And of course you have to be tough, both mentally and physically, says Liisa Anttila.

Wants to continue for a long time

Liisa will be 30 years old in September but she has no plans to retire just yet. The next goal after the World Orienteering Championships in September in Sweden will be the World Championships in ski orienteering in her home country of Finland.

– I intend to continue for a couple more years. I'm not in a hurry to retire. Hilde Gjermundshaug Pedersen will soon be 40 years old and she is one of the best cross-country skiers in the world, states Liisa.

Gjermundshaug-Petersen of Norway is now a cross-country skiing star but seven years ago she won the World Cup in ski orienteering. In 1997, Liisa was actually ahead of Hilde in the overall World Cup standings prior to the last race in Russia, but Liisa did not start in that race.

Liisa is one of the all-time biggest stars in orienteering. She has won World Championship gold medals in both orienteering and ski orienteering.

Arja Hannus is the best of all-time

Only a few athletes ever manage to become a World Champion, irrespective of whether it is a winter or summer sport, but no one can measure up to Arja Hannus. She has won individual World Championships in both orienteering and ski orienteering.

Norwegian Ragnhild Bratberg has also won gold medals in both orienteering disciplines.



PHOTO: PEKKA VARIS



PHOTO: PEKKA VARIS

Erja Jokinen, Lisa Anttila and Hannele Valkonen won a great victory at the 2004 World Championships in Åsarne.

We just decided to win

BY ERIK BORG

This ski orienteering season, the Finnish girls won all the major relay races.

– We have a team that has no weak links at all. The day before the relay, we simply decided that we were going to win, says team member Erja Jokinen.

Hannele Valkonen, Erja Jokinen and Liisa Anttila were the Finnish golden girls at both the Nordic Championships relay in Norway and the recent World Championships held in Sweden.

– Both relay races went well for us right from the start and the gold medals came surprisingly easy. The secret was probably that our team is quite even in that we don't have any "weak" runners in the team, adds Erja Jokinen.

– We have three good athletes who can perform very well on an individual basis

too. Performing well in relays is very important for us, as well of course as obtaining good individual results, comments Hannele Valkonen.

Russia has been the dominant country for many years as far as women's relay racing goes and the Russians were the reigning champions before this year's World Championships. This year too Russia had what looked on paper to be an unbeatable team, but the Finns were not to be outdone, managing to win by over two minutes ahead of the Russians.

– Before the relay we were keen to show what we could really do after our relatively weak results in the middle distance race. We had a team meeting the day before at which we built up our team spirit and simply decided that we were going to win the next day, states Erja Jokinen.

Do the Finnish girls have a special element in their team building?

– Not really. We gain a lot of course from the fact that we know that we have some of the best ski orienteers in the world in our team and personally I know that I can trust the other team members to perform well on the other relay legs, says Hannele.

How do you decide the team order for the relay?

– Somehow it's just obvious who should run the different legs. Hannele is a good first leg runner and enjoys racing "head-to-head". I can do my own thing on the second leg and Liisa is probably the best last leg runner in the world. She has won so many relays in the course of her career and she definitely does know how the last leg should be run, adds Erja.

Next year, the World Championships will be organised on home terrain in Finland and the three Finnish girls are keen to remain the best relay runners in the world. This year's gold medals were just the start!

A healthy World Champion

BY ERIK BORG

Throughout his career Tomas Löfgren has always had problems with his health. Naging small problems that meant that he was always missing training days - too many days that he could really get the results he deserved.

Now however, the combination of love, a better and more varied diet and rest and restitution at the correct time has resulted in far fewer days of illness. And with a far better training base, Tomas was one of the stars of this year's World Championships in Östersund.

In the 2001/2002 ski orienteering season, Tomas was too ill to train for a combined total of 118 days. He was plagued by cold after cold. He was also ill during the World Championships that same winter. If illness was not bad enough, he also broke a ski in the middle distance race in Bulgaria.

If his previous results from major championships were disappointing, this years World Championship in Östersund saw a change of fortune: he started with a silver medal in the long distance race, continued with the gold medal in the middle distance,

anchored Sweden to fourth place in the relay and finished with a fine sixth place in the sprint race.

– It was a fantastic championship. I knew that I had a chance of a medal in all distances, but that it would go so well was far beyond my expectations, comments Tomas.

This year he remained healthy during the World Championships and had no more than 41 days of missed training since the beginning of May last year.

New diet

– I have achieved a better balance now between training and restitution. If I feel a bit under the weather, then I rest a bit longer, although I don't have any more rest in overall terms than I did before. The difference is that the rest days are more correctly positioned in the training plan. A better diet also certainly helps too. I haven't done anything specific in terms of food but I have begun to eat a more varied and higher quality diet since I moved in with my girlfriend last August. Now there are two of us to make the food and it's more fun to cook when you are not alone, states Tomas.

– Of course, love may also be an important factor for my success. A happy social life provides a solid foundation for everything you do, including sporting performance.

Did you ever think of retiring from international competition because of your health problems?

– I must admit that the period after the World Championships in Bulgaria was difficult. I did consider concentrating on my studies and work instead of aiming for international races, but I regained full motivation to continue training and racing after a couple of months. Since I have raced well and got some good results despite the days off I have been forced to take because of illness, I have always wanted to continue to see how good I could be if only I could manage to remain healthy, states Tomas Löfgren.

Tomas comes from Falun but lives in Umeå in northern Sweden with his girlfriend Malin. He just celebrated his birthday on March 9th. He has been a full-time ski orienteer for a while, but is now focusing on finishing his

studies to become a construction engineer.

Fan Club

On his way to the gold medal he received extra support from his own fan club – the Speedy Löfgren Fan Club.

– The fan club was mostly for fun leading up to the middle distance race with a mass start. There was a whole gang of supporters from the ski college in Mora who came up to spectate for that race. Their support meant a lot to me and it felt as though everyone was cheering me on. I am happy that I managed to do well when they made the effort to support me, he comments.

Was the gold medal race your best-ever performance?

– I felt in good, but not outstanding physical shape. In orienteering technique terms, I made very few errors. In all I only lost around 40 seconds over 37 controls, which was very good as it was quite difficult orienteering. First and foremost it is the way in which I executed the race that I am most satisfied with. I kept cool on the last lap even though it was high pressure racing. I have had problems coping with these racing situations before and I am really happy that I managed to do so at a World Championships. I have managed to ski and orienteer fast before, but never on such a demanding course as we were faced with in Östersund, states Tomas.

Thomas went out a few metres behind Tommy Olsen of Norway on the last deciding lap, but the Norwegian skied straight into a tree allowing Löfgren to go past. The Swede then increased the pace to build up a gap which he held to the finish.

Another World Championships

What are your aims for the future?

– I would like to defend my title next winter. I believe there is still room for improvement if I can remain healthy and can work on my weaknesses.

How long will you continue?

– That will be determined first and foremost by the financial factor. I will start working in the near future. I will continue training and racing as long as it remains fun, but I don't know how seriously.



PHOTO: PEKKA VARIS

Tomas Löfgren was a popular winner at the 2004 World Ski Orienteering Championships.



PHOTO: ERIK BORG

Ski orienteering stars of the future: Jonne Lehto of Finland, and Russians Julia Lebedeva (left) and Olga Novikova at the Junior World Championships in Finland.

Jonne Lehto – a star of the future

BY ERIK BORG

Jonne Lehto won three gold medals at the Junior World Ski Orienteering Championships in Finland. With his two golds from earlier he has now won a total of five Junior World Championships gold medals. It's not only with skis on his feet though that he has been successful.

– I think I have been able to achieve success because I am not so big and tall which means that I am a good all-round skier. No one type of terrain or ski track presents any problems for me. I can go fast uphill as well as on technical downhill sections, says Jonne Lehto.

Lehto had accumulated valuable experience from his participation in two previous Junior World Championships prior to this year's Championship in Vuokatti, Finland. He won a gold medal in the relay already in 2002. The following year in Russia he won the long distance race and this year he took a clean sweep – long,

short and relay events.

His older sister, Salla Lehto, who won two World Cup races last year, believes that the most important reason for his success is his determination and will to succeed.

– He has always been willing to train to attain his goals. Another reason behind his success is the fact that he doesn't really have any weaknesses. He is an equally strong orienteer as he is an all-round skier. He trained very hard before this season and his prior experience also counted a lot, she comments.

All-year round sportsman

Lehto is also a top-class orienteer with three Finnish junior titles to his credit. He also made the Finnish team for the Open Nordic Championships last year and achieved reasonable results. He wants to continue with both summer and winter orienteering disciplines at top elite level for some years yet.

– I don't know which one to give priority to. I will probably know the answer in a few more years. Then I can make a choice, states Jonne.

Jonne's next major goal is the Junior World Championships to be held near Gdansk in Poland in July this year.

– Am I aiming for more gold medals? No, not really. First of all I have to qualify for the Finnish team as there is some pretty tough competition for places, he states.

Russian girl power

While Jonne Lehto and Finland took all the medals in the men's class, Russia swept the board in the women's races. Olga Novikova and Julia Lebedeva came out top in the respective individual races, and these two, together with Yulia Bronnikova, also secured victory for Russia in the women's relay.