

World MTB Championships première

PHOTO: JUKKA LIIKARI

BY IAIN ROCHFORD

After having World Cup races since 1998, the newest orienteering discipline, Mountain Bike (MTB) Orienteering, held its first-ever World Championships in the vast forests around the historic town of Fontainebleau, situated south-east of Paris. National teams from 28 countries participated in this historical event.

The organising team, led by Andre Hermet, who was also the mapper and planner, produced a worthy championships with good courses and good terrain and worthy champions, marred only by a problem with the terrain for the opening prologue.

This prologue race was to have decided the start order for the chasing start of the classic distance. However, it emerged at the team leaders' meeting that the terrain and map for this event had already been used for the French Championships just a few weeks prior to the World Championships. A necessary compromise was hastily reached that the classic distance would revert to a normal individual start procedure, and all competitors would qualify for the classic if they finished within 200% of the winner's time.

It was clear beforehand that the major "professional" MTB orienteering nations, such as France, Czech and newly-emergent Finland, with their full support teams of leaders, mechanics, masseurs etc., would be seen at the top of the results list, but it was also hoped that other strong individual competitors would gain a podium place. Finland duly demonstrated the quality of its athletes and took 4 of the 6 titles. The host nation, France, also lived up to its reputation as a cycling country by taking the other two.



The inaugural World MTB Orienteering Championships were held in France. Jussi Mäkilä won the men's individual long distance race.

Australian debut successful

The performance though of the Australian competitors, exemplified by Emily Viner's second and fourth places, backed up by Alex Randall's placing just outside the top ten in the men's Classic race, was a breath of fresh

air for the sport. No Australians had previously competed in the previous World Cup races (held exclusively in Europe), and consequently did not know where they stood. They quickly found out that they could indeed compete with the best, and this bodes

In this issue: Successful World MTB Championships première; IOF Anti-Doping Controller Roger Aerts: "A-D work is challenging"; A long and testing World Cup season; Sue Harvey elected Vice-President of the European Masters Association; ARISF meeting in Lausanne.

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well for 2004, when Australia will host the next World MTB Orienteering Championships.

MTB orienteering racers have been a mix of foot orienteers successfully making the crossover to MTB orienteering, such as Alain Berger of Switzerland and Laure Coupat of France, ski orienteers and cyclists. But the sport is now seeing specialist racers emerge who concentrate seriously on their sport, and it will be interesting to see how the sport develops in the future.

Negative doping tests at the World MTB Championships

All the results of the anti-doping tests conducted at the World Mountain Bike Championships held in Fontainebleau, France, were negative. The tests were carried out on behalf of the International Orienteering Federation and the analysis was performed by the Laboratoire National de Depistage du Dopage in Chatenay-Malabry, France, respectively.

ARISF meeting in Lausanne

PHOTO: JAN C. FRANSOO



The ARISF delegates pictured in front of the IOC Headquarters in Lausanne.

In late August, the IOF President Sue Harvey attended the Annual General Meeting of the Association of the IOC Recognized International Sports Federations (ARISF). The meeting was held at the IOC Headquarters in Lausanne, and the ARISF members were welcomed by IOC Sports Director Gilbert Felli.

Sue Harvey - Vice President of the European Masters Association

IOF President Sue Harvey has been elected Vice President of the newly founded European

Masters Association (EMA). The association was founded by six sports, i.e. athletics, orienteering, basketball, handball, lifesaving and chess, and the objective of the EMA is to organise European Masters Games. The vision behind this objective is wider, though: to encourage masters sport for its health and social benefits.

The next EMA Council meeting is scheduled for December in Aarhus, Denmark, to coincide with the World Handball Masters Championships.

World MTB Orienteering Championships 2002

Fontainebleau, France, 1-7 July, 2002 (top 10 results)

Long distance

Men

1) Mäkilä Jussi FIN 1:30:10, 2) Gillmann Jérémi FRA 1:31:32, 3) Berger Alain SUI 1:32:21, 4) Rygl Jaroslav CZE 1:32:27, 5) Clor Hervé FRA 1:32:36, 6) Korchagin Victor RUS 1:33:37, 7) Poirrette Joël FRA 1:34:18, 8) Zhurkin Maxim RUS 1:34:46, 9) Tervalva Mika FIN 1:35:29, 10) Perrin Gilles FRA 1:38:02.

Women

1) Tommola Päivi FIN 1:16:52, 2) Viner Emily AUS 1:17:59, 3) Bornhak Antje GER 1:18:29, 4) Ryglova Hana CZE 1:18:47, 5) Finance Caroline FRA 1:19:30, 6) Mäkelä Hanna-Maija FIN 1:19:39, 7) Korhonen Kirsi FIN 1:20:05, 8) Gigon Michaela AUT 1:20:17, 9) Jakoubova Marketta CZE 1:20:22, 10) Väisänen Mervi FIN 1:20:46.

Sprint

Men

1) Tervalva Mika FIN 27:13, 2) Berger Alain SUI 27:49:00, 3) Gillmann Jérémi FRA 27:59, 4) Mäkilä Jussi FIN 28:00, 5) Korchagin Victor RUS 28:18, 6) Zhurkin Maxim RUS 28:20, 7) Perrin Gilles FRA 28:30, 8) Prochazka Jiri CZE 28:52, 9) Houlihan John GBR 29:14, 10) Olsen Tommy NOR 29:22.

Women

1) Coupat Laure FRA 30:24, 2) Väisänen Mervi FIN 30:31, 3) Bornhak Antje GER 31:18, 4) Viner Emily AUS 31:45, 5) Gigon Michaela AUT 32:40, 6) Finance Caroline FRA 33:11, 7) Tommola Päivi FIN 33:17, 8) Hrdinova Marie CZE 33:29, 9) Ryglova Hana CZE 33:51, 10) Jakoubova Marketta CZE 33:52.

Relay

Men

1) France (Sxay Sébastien, Poirrette Joel, Pralus Olivier) 141:56, 2) Czech Republic (Strejcek Petr, Mach Radovan, Rygl Jaroslav) 142:14, 3) Finland (Pesu Raino, Makila Jussi, Tervalva Mika) 142:18, 4) Russia 144:00, 5) Slovakia 146:47, 6) Switzerland 150:24, 7) Latvia 151:00, 8) Australia 156:49, 9) Italy 157:00, 10) Estonia 158:07.

Women

1) Finland (Korhonen Kirsi, Tommola Päivi, Väisänen Mervi) 111:00, 2) France (Coupat Laure, Coupat Magali, Finance Caroline) 111:46, 3) Czech Republic (Ryglova Hana, Jakoubova Marketta, Hrdinova Marie) 111:47, 4) Germany 118:54, 5) Australia 123:27, 6) Switzerland 131:30, 7) Italy 132:48, 8) Slovakia 150:47, 9) Japan 152:55.

IOF Anti-Doping Controller Roger Aerts: Anti-doping work is challenging

BY BARBRO RÖNNBERG

“The IOF declares that doping is prohibited and the provisions of the IOC Medical Code apply, subject to any necessary changes, to all persons and competitors under the jurisdiction of the IOF and its members” (IOF Statutes, clause 3.1)

For many decades, the IOF has appointed an Anti-Doping Controller to be responsible for ensuring that doping control is conducted according to the procedures laid down in the Anti-Doping Code. Since 1998, the IOF has also had a Medical Commission which is responsible for providing Council with expert advice on all matters in the field of doping in sport. The IOF Anti-Doping Controller, Belgian Roger Aerts, is one of the four Medical Commission members.

Belgium is not one of the traditional orienteering nations, but Roger Aerts discovered the sport because of his career in the army.

– I was an army officer and except for the four last years, I had the opportunity to serve in Paratrooper units or the headquarters staff throughout my entire career. One of my promotion colleagues and my room-mate during my studies in the Military School became one of the pioneers who introduced the orienteering sport in my country, in the first instance into the Armed Forces, in 1961 and 1962. He convinced me of the importance of this sport in the training of paratroopers. At that time competitions were organised on military maps at a scale of 1:25.000 and on more than one occasion a bit of luck was more than welcome, says Roger Aerts.

Prepared for the challenge

– In the past, I was a member of the committee of our regional orienteering league, and I used to be responsible for all matters related to “Best Medical Practice in Sports”, as it’s called by the regional government. Because of this task, I began to collect documents and to attend lectures and conferences regarding doping and anti-

doping. When the IOF then looked for somebody to take on the task as Anti-Doping Controller after Norwegian Brit Volden, I was the Vice-President of the Belgian Orienteering Association and I felt ready to take on this challenge, continues Roger Aerts who has recently been reappointed for a third Congress period of two years.

All the IOF member federations have undertaken to comply with IOF’s rules and regulations, including the Anti-Doping Code. Each member federation is also expected to have anti-doping rules of their own. These rules must naturally be in harmony with the IOF Code and the Olympic Movement Anti-Doping Code.

According to Roger Aerts, the biggest challenge for the IOF in the field of anti-doping work probably is to overcome the difficulties caused by the different speed of development in different countries.

– Some federations are already at a very high level whilst others are just at an early stage of development. This makes the communication difficult. I would hope that, in a not too distant future, each national federation will decide to appoint a contact person responsible for matters in relation to anti-doping. Among other things, the task of this contact person would be to provide the IOF with information about doping tests and related issues, and to assist the IOF Anti-Doping Controller when doping tests are carried out under the responsibility of IOF.

Rewarding to work with the organisers

The responsibility for doping control at World Championships and other major orienteering events is certainly no easy task. The Anti-Doping Controller must be prepared to master any situation but, fortunately, Roger Aerts loves the challenge.

– Many organisers underestimate the workload of doping tests and pay too little attention to it in the preparatory phase of the event. They tend to believe that



Belgian Roger Aerts has recently been reappointed IOF Anti-Doping Controller for a third Congress period of two years.

everything is just fine once they have found a doping control unit. A very common problem is the escorts. Several months before the event, the organiser is requested to provide an appropriate number of escorts who are not expected to have any other tasks. However, sometimes the escorts are found at a very late stage, which may cause unforeseeable problems. Also, the doping control units often contact the organiser very close to the competition, and I am usually never able to contact them before the event. Therefore, the first contact with the responsible organiser upon my arrival at the venue is very important. So far, I have been able to overcome these and any other obstacles.

– The job as IOF Anti-Doping Controller gives me the opportunity to travel to countries I would never visit otherwise. I also have the privilege of living in very close proximity to the event organisation for several days. It is remarkable to see all these volunteers working day and night to make their competition as successful as possible. Most of them are positive and quite relaxed, no matter how easy or difficult their task may be. It is a true pleasure to work with such dynamic people for a short time, concludes Roger Aerts.

The World Cup took centre stage this year, with seventeen events staged in six countries – Belgium, Switzerland, Norway, Sweden, Hungary and the Czech Republic. Simone Luder, Switzerland and Bjørnar Valstad, Norway are the top names in the individual standings after the finals in the Czech Republic at the beginning of October; Norway's women and Finland's men took the relay gold medals.

Eight Wins for Luder

Simone Luder, 24 years old, has dominated women's orienteering this year, winning eight of the thirteen World Cup individual races – five long distance, one middle distance and two sprints. Such was her dominance that overall victory was already assured before the individual final. A Biology student, she finishes her studies in the spring and will then concentrate on preparing for the 2003 World Championships to be held in her home country in August. "I haven't yet reached my top level in training", she says, and vows to be stronger mentally, physically and technically next year. She will be aiming to improve on the 1 gold and 1 bronze medal she won at the Finland World Championships in 2001.

Behind Luder competition was tight and compatriot Vroni König-Salmi took second place in the World Cup standings, albeit 60 points behind, through victory in the final race. Hanne Staff, Norway finished third in the table, 7 points further down.

Final Decisive for Valstad

The men's competition remained open right to the end. Pasi Ikonen, Finland, made the best start to the season and led the standings by 13 points ahead of the final round of races. He suffered injury and loss of form, however, and ended up fourth overall. Bjørnar Valstad with two race victories and a second place behind him was well placed to take over the

A long and testing World Cup season

PHOTO: ERIK BORG



Simone Luder dominated women's orienteering this year, winning eight of the thirteen World Cup individual races.

lead, but had to resist strong challenges from Michael Mamleev, Russia and Mats Haldin, Finland who finished second and third respectively in the final standings.

Valstad heads the final table by 10 points. "Victory is really important for me", said Valstad, now 35. He rated this success second only to his World Championship victory in Scotland in 1999.

Relay Gold for Norway and Finland

Norway's women have shown excellent form throughout the season and were rewarded with victory in the final where the race order

– Norway first, Switzerland second and Sweden third – became also the order in the final standings. Finland finished fourth overall and Great Britain fifth.

Finland dominated the men's relay competition, winning three of the four races, but it was a close final with Denmark only 16 seconds behind Finland at the finish. Sweden finished third in the final, good enough for second place in the overall table, with Denmark taking third place in the standings ahead of Switzerland and Norway.

CLIVE ALLEN

World Cup 2002, Final Standings

Men

1) Bjørnar Valstad NOR 358, 2) Michael Mamleev RUS 348, 3) Mats Haldin FIN 347, 4) Pasi Ikonen FIN 326, 5) Jani Lakanen FIN 319, 6) Yuri Omeltchenko UKR 312, 7) Thomas Bührer SUI 292, 8) Holger Hott Johansen NOR 291, 9) Gábor Domonyik HUN 259, 10) Jamie Stevenson GBR 259, 11) Janne Salmi FIN 242, 12) Thomas Asp SWE 234, 13) Carsten Jørgensen DEN 228.

Women

1) Simone Luder SUI 434, 2) Vroni König-Salmi SUI 374, 3) Hanne Staff NOR 367, 4) Gunilla Svärd SWE 356, 5) Katarina Allberg SWE 333, 6) Heather Monro GBR 313, 7) Karin Hellman SWE 313, 8) Emma Engstrand SWE 303, 9) Birgitte Husebye NOR 301, 10) Brigitte Wolf SUI 299, 11) Anette Granstedt SWE 292, 12) Jenny Johansson SWE 274, 13) Karin Schmalfeld GER 267.

Relay (Men)

1) Finland 60, 2) Sweden 47, 3) Denmark 43, 4) Switzerland 38, 5) Norway 37, 6) Great Britain 32, 7) France 30, 8) Russia 30, 9) Australia 26, 10) Czech Republic 22.

Relay (Women)

1) Norway 57, 2) Switzerland 54, 3) Sweden 50, 4) Finland 41, 5) Great Britain 29, 6) Germany 26, 7) Czech Republic 26, 8) Denmark 23, 9) Poland 23, 10) Lithuania 19.