

O-zine

International Orienteering Federation

On-line Newsletter

Issue 4 – December 2005



PHOTO: PIRJO VALJANEN

Ski orienteering survey:

Green light for continued Olympic campaign

BY BARBRO RÖNNBERG

The IOF should continue to work towards inclusion of ski orienteering in the Olympic Winter Games. This was one of the recommendations received as a result of a questionnaire circulated to the member federations. Other recommendations were that the IOF should maintain the current policy in relation to the World Championships, World Cup and Junior World Championships, work in order to attract

member federations to organise major events, and look at how to further grow and develop ski orienteering in member countries.

In September 2004, the IOF Council established a working group with the task of reviewing the current status of ski orienteering in IOF member countries and to gather proposals for the future of world events in ski orienteering. The group consisted of Council member Leho Haldna (EST), Veli-Markku Korteniemi (FIN) and John Brammall (AUS).

In addition to the questionnaire circulated to IOF member federations, a similar questionnaire was circulated to a reference group consisting of runners and coaches. The responses received from both target groups show quite similar results.

Federations satisfied with present World Events programme

The responses to the survey clearly indicated continuing support for the IOF's cam-

In this issue: Ski orienteering survey – Green light for continued Olympic campaign; Less training, higher quality for “silver-Erja”; Ruslan Gritsan – more golds than any other man; The Czech challenger; News in brief.

O-zine is an on-line newsletter published by the IOF. You can receive an e-mail notification whenever a new issue of O-zine is released. To register, just fill in the form at www.orienteering.org/headline.htm and press the ‘Subscribe’ button.

Season's Greetings and Good Wishes for the New Orienteering Year 2006!

BARBRO RÖNNBERG
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

paigned to have ski orienteering accepted into the Olympic Winter Games. All but three of the federations supported this view – these three indicating they were undecided on the issue. Most federations believe that the sport will benefit considerably through inclusion in the Winter Olympics.

There is a clear preference for the retention of the present World Events programme with World Championships in odd years and World Cup in even years. There is also a clear overall acceptance of the existing World Cup model and general satisfaction with the current organisation of the Junior World Championships.

The federations are also generally satisfied with the current allocation of World Ranking Events, although opinions regarding the World Ranking System are somewhat divided. In particular, concerns were expressed regarding the objectivity of the ranking system, with its main application seen to be the assigning of World Championships start allocations. Such views were expressed by the Federations and are also strongly evident in the athletes' observations.

In general, the federations support the role of the IOF in determining the international events calendar. The international programme is not seen as creating any

difficulties in attracting elite athletes to national championships.

Scope for growth and development

The survey indicates a lack of growth in most of the ski orienteering nations that responded, with little change in participation in national ski orienteering events over the last three years.

It is apparent that the number of nations participating in the World Championships has remained relatively constant over recent years. As a winter sport, ski orienteering cannot be practised in all IOF member countries. On the other hand, there are member federations with suitable climatic conditions that do not practise ski orienteering or compete in IOF major ski orienteering events. Hence, there is scope for growth.

The working group identified three major objectives for ski orienteering, namely, to raise the profile of, and increase participation, in the World Championships, to develop a new competition format, and to attract member countries to organise World Championships and World Cup events. The group also suggested a number of ways in which these three objectives might be achieved. One of the suggested means of

increasing the numbers is to investigate and develop new competition formats that are suitable for most snow conditions and reduce the financial risks in event organising.

Major ski orienteering nations to provide more input

In order to achieve the objectives, the working group has proposed to the IOF Council that the Ski Orienteering Commission be reorganised to respond to the recommendations and, in particular, to provide for more input from the major ski orienteering nations Russia, Finland and Sweden. Further, it is suggested that a project group should be established with the remit of developing a new competition format.

The International Olympic Committee has recently confirmed that Ski Orienteering will be included in the review of the programme of the Olympic Winter Games that will be conducted following the Turin 2006 Games, the outcome of which will determine the programme of the 2014 Olympic Winter Games.

The decision regarding the host city of the 2014 Olympic Winter Games will be taken at the IOC Congress in Guatemala City in July 2007.

Negative doping test results

All results of the anti-doping tests carried out at this year's world elite events in Foot orienteering, MTB orienteering and Ski orienteering have been negative. On behalf of the IOF, a total of 76 in-competition tests were carried out at the World Championships in Foot Orienteering, Mountain Bike Orienteering and Ski Orienteering, and at World Cup events.

Sue Harvey re-elected EMSA Vice President

At the General Assembly of the European Masters Sports Association (EMSA) held in Rüsselsheim, Germany, the IOF Honorary President, Sue Harvey, was re-elected 1st Vice President of the EMSA. She also is a member of the Executive Committee of the International World Games Association (IWGA), and a

News in Brief

member of the Board of Governors of the International Masters Games Association (IMGA).

Poland appointed organiser of the 2008 World MTB Orienteering Championships

The 2008 World Championships in Mountain Bike Orienteering have been awarded to Poland.

Call for applications to organise IOF major events

From 2007 onwards, the World Cup series will be based on the World Orienteering Championships, regional orienteering championships and a small number of

already existing, high quality events. The deadline for applications to host a World Cup event is 10th January 2006. The deadline is primarily applicable to events in 2007 but, in order to facilitate the planning process, federations are asked, if possible, to submit applications for 2008 or 2009 as well.

Applications to host the World Orienteering Championships and the World Trail Orienteering Championships in 2010 and 2011, the World MTB Orienteering Championships in 2009 and 2010, and the Junior World Orienteering Championships in 2009 shall reach the IOF Secretariat by 31 January 2006.

The deadline for applications to organise the Junior World Ski Orienteering Championships and the World Ski Orienteering Masters Championships in 2007 and 2008, and Ski orienteering World Cup events in 2008 is 15th April 2006.

Less training, higher quality for “silver-Erja”

BY ERIK BORG

Erja Jokinen is the ‘silver girl’ of ski orienteering. Ahead of the coming winter she has done more quality training, and she thinks a more stressful daily life can also make her better in managing stress during her races. But gold isn’t what she is thinking most about.

– Of course it is important to get good results, but that is not my reason for competing in ski orienteering. I try to enjoy

training and competing. Good results come as something extra. Winning the missing individual gold medal is not the object of my training, says Erja. The 26-year-old Finnish girl has won five individual silver medals in world championships in ski orienteering. From relay races she has a bronze and a gold.

European Championships

This year her main focus will be on the World Cup first round in her home country

Finland, and the European Championships that are part of the final round. In some ways she isn’t as well prepared as before last winter because she has given her studies higher priority.

– I’m studying to be a teacher. I started in September and will finish in May 2006. It’s quite demanding and takes a lot of time. At the same time I’m also writing my master’s thesis which hopefully will be ready by the end of the year. So I definitely don’t have problems in using my free time and I haven’t been training so much, but hopefully I have put more quality into my training, she says.

She also suffered an injury in the autumn and had to do some substitute training. Since she wasn’t able to ski or run she had to ride her bike or do ‘running’ in the pool.

– But because of the higher pace of my life caused by the studies I believe I can handle stress better than before, she says.

Goal – “doing well”

– What are the most important goals for the coming winter?

– I will be satisfied if I manage to do well in competition. It is possible that I won’t be as strong as last year and I have to accept that if it happens, Erja says.

The biggest favourites for the gold medals this coming winter are the Norwegian Stine Hjemstad Kirkevik and the Russians Tatiana Vlasova and Natalia Tomilova. The experienced Russian women are likely to do especially well on home ground. Stine Hjemstad Kirkevik has won two golds in the last two World Championships. She is missing a victory in a World Cup race and is maybe the biggest favourite to win the World Cup overall. She is also a big candidate for European golds; the Norwegian has been training very well.

The Finn Erja Jokinen’s main goal is to do well in competition.



PHOTO: SAMI SUODENJOKI

PHOTO: ERIK BORG



Ruslan Gritsan has won four World Championship gold medals this year. Now he is ready for more success.

Ruslan Gritsan – more golds than any other man

BY ERIK BORG

Ruslan Gritsan has spent 300 days in training camps in the past year. He has also competed in world championships in two orienteering disciplines, and has won more gold medals in 2005 than any other man.

Early in the year Ruslan won two golds at the ski orienteering championships in Finland. He shared the gold for middle distance with Andrei Gruzdev, and was a member of the winning Russian relay team. In the summer he won two individual golds at the MTBO (mountain bike) World Championships in Slovakia.

– The winter season is very short, only 4 months. It's a challenge to compete in summer too, especially at high level. When I take part in MTBO it's a relaxation from ski-O with it's hard competition and high tension, says Ruslan.

Long and hard work

Which of the golds is most important for you?

– The individual medal in ski-O is the most important for me because it was the end result of a very, very long training programme – starting as long ago as 1997.

The MTBO golds were unexpected in some ways. They were the outcome of a very well-organized training period in the summer, together with mountain terrain in Slovakia which demanded a high level of physical condition. I possessed such condition because of my hard training in skiing, he says.

He finds that the skills required for MTBO are very similar to those in ski-O, but the speed in MTBO is higher. – Choice of route is more difficult in MTBO, he says.

How did you prepare for the MTBO championships?

– I rode 3,000 kilometres, half of them orienteering with a map, and competed in 21 international and national events in different kinds of terrain, he says.

A lot of camps

The 27-year-old Russian almost goes directly from one training camp to another. At the start of the winter he spent 20 days in Finnish Lapland, then 20 days in the Urals with the Russian team, and then to selection races from December 19th–23rd.

– In the last year I will have spent 300 days

in all in training camps, including travel. There are no opportunities for good training in Moscow where I live, says Ruslan.

He is at home from time to time. In May, June and July he combines training with his work as a teenagers' coach at a sports school in Moscow.

His outstanding results are all the more remarkable considering that he also has a handicap to cope with. He can only see out of one eye. He lost his sight in his right eye when he was four years old. He has worked hard to cope with this disadvantage, and his results in 2005 are the best proof that he has done that very successfully.

An active winter ahead

The 2006 Ski Orienteering World Cup finals, incorporating the European Championships, are in Russia, and the Russians are the big favourites for taking most of the medals and top positions this coming winter. In addition to Ruslan, Eduard Khrennikov and Andrei Gruzdev are two very strong competitors. A number of Finns, Swedes, Czechs and Norwegians will also be amongst the best in the coming winter, when the World Cup and the European Championships are the highlights. The first two rounds of the World Cup take place in Finland and Latvia.

The Czech challenger

BY ERIK BORG

Ondrej Vodrazka, Czech Republic, has come closer and closer to the international podium in the last year. He was only 22 seconds from a medal in the last World Ski Orienteering Championships in Finland. This year he hopes to be even better than before.

– My goals for the winter are first to get into the red group. Then to achieve better results than last year, and thirdly to win the Czech Championships, he says.

– How have you improved as a ski orienteer?

– Maybe I am mentally stronger. Each good result has improved me, Ondrej says.

To win the World Cup overall is not something he talks about and he is not among the favourites, but he could do very well. He has produced some good results over the years. He was sixth in long distance

at the World Championships in Bulgaria in 2002 and fourth at middle distance in Finland last winter. This winter he is looking forward to the World Cup.

– I like the seasons with a World Cup: more competitions, more experiences, more chances to get a good result and yet also more difficult to win, because there are 6 men from each country, says Ondrej. He has trained well and feels that he is in good shape, maybe a little bit fitter than last year.

He's the Czech with the best results, but Jan Lauerman is also doing well amongst the men internationally. – Jan is the reason that I'm quite good, Ondrej says.

More mountain biking

The 28-year-old Czech has prepared for the winter almost as normal, but there has been one change. – I have ridden my mountain bike more than usual, about 2,000 kilometres in all from April to

August. I also took part in some MTB orienteering competitions in the Czech Republic, he says.

Ondrej is far away from the 300 days a year in training camps which Ruslan Gritsan spends, but Ondrej too has used several weeks during a year on camps and competitions.

– During the winter it's 10-14 days on ski camp with the Czech ski orienteering team in December, 6-8 Czech Cup competitions or Czech championships, and then international competitions (World Cup, World Championships, European Championships). In total 50-60 days during winter. If there is no ski orienteering competition on a particular weekend, I enter a cross-country skiing competition instead. In the spring and summer I go orienteering, cross-country running, and do some mountain bike orienteering. Sometimes I enter 'extreme' competitions, such as this year's 'Dolomitenmann' mountain run, he says.

World Cup in Ski Orienteering 2006

Round 1: Vuokatti and Kiuruvesi, Finland, 12–23 January

Round 2: Madona, Latvia, 1–6 February

Final Round: Ivanovo, Russia, 20–27 February

Junior World Ski Orienteering Championships 2006

Ivanovo, Russia, 20–27 February

World Masters Ski Orienteering Championships 2006

Madona, Latvia, 1–6 February



PHOTO: ERIK BORG

Ondrej Vodrazka is a good ski orienteer from the Czech Republic. He could be among the best in the World Cup in the coming winter.