

AUSTRALIA

FUTURE OF WORLD ORIENTEERING CHAMPIONSHIPS: ORIENTEERING AUSTRALIA COMMENTS

Orienteering Australia (OA) is supportive of the principle of adding the sprint relay and the reduction of qualification races during WOC week. However, we have some concerns about the format of the middle distance race and the qualification system for the long distance into the future. Additionally OA sees many benefits to the Swedish proposal of alternating between forest WOCs and sprint WOCs.

The reduction of qualification races together with the introduction of an extra medal race is a positive step in developing excitement and assisting in building the media focus on Orienteering throughout the entire WOC week. The introduction of the mixed sprint relay will see a new race that should produce close, spectator friendly racing with more nations in contention, for longer periods of the race than any previous WOC race. OA is supportive of these initiatives.

Without knowing the exact format of the middle distance race it is difficult to present an informed opinion. We perceive there is a high possibility the nature of middle distance orienteering will change from a high technical focus, to more of a running focus with the person with the best sprint finish being the winner. This is at odds with the attraction of the sport for the majority of participants. Admittedly it has the potential to be an exciting race to follow as a spectator. However, we are at risk of compromising the true nature of our sport in the pursuit of spectator/media friendly races, when realistically the vast majority of people who follow the sport are themselves participants.

We foresee problems in the prologue for the proposed middle format. If it is to be run with three parallel starters running three loops in different order, it will be a challenging prospect to have quality, technically difficult courses. This format also makes it very favourable to start in the middle of the start group where you are likely to get company on each of your loops. OA considers a prologue with a winning time of over 20 minutes as a more favourable option.

The proposed selection criteria for the long distance appear reasonable at first sight. However, with the selection for the long based on previous WOCs it has the danger of making the race a 'closed shop', as (to an extent which depends on the exact scoring system) nations which have two or three finalists are likely to have a considerable advantage in future qualification relative to those which have only one. Countries ranked 25 or below, with no long qualifiers, are at an even more severe disadvantage in breaking into the field in future years. Nations may find it extremely difficult to qualify additional runners for the race, and nations who have established spots in the race are at an advantage in qualifying for future WOCs. Despite the apparent attractions of basing WOC qualification on previous WOC results, we believe that a qualification scheme based on the best 4-6 runners from each nation in World Ranking events is likely to be fairer.

The demands of organising a WOC have progressively increased over time. When Australia organised the WOC in 1985, there were two races (long with no qualification and relay), both of which were held in forest terrain. The proposal for future WOCs will see three sprint races and four forest races. The challenge of purely producing seven high quality maps and finding seven suitable areas, three urban and four forest, within a reasonably small geographical area is difficult for many countries. The additional requirements for spectator and media friendly arenas and media production of the races

make organising a WOC a daunting prospect, and currently prohibitive for any country outside of Europe.

The proposal to have separate forest and sprint WOCs makes the prospect of a WOC outside Europe more achievable. Organising a Sprint WOC is much more reachable for Australia and many other non-European countries, including numerous countries (particularly in tropical and sub-tropical climates) where the forest is not well-suited to traditional long distance orienteering. WOC could be organised in big cities where the pick of sprint orienteering terrain is. It would be more achievable to produce a professional media product and would be more central for the majority of organisers. Importantly it would also enable greater exposure to top class orienteering to the growth demographic in Orienteering - time poor city dwellers who are reluctant to travel or spend a lot of time at events. Some venues may also be better suited to hosting a purely forest WOC (for example, Australia has numerous towns and smaller cities which would be suitable for the forest events, but most have limited or no good-quality sprint areas).

With the current and proposed WOC format, sprint races appear to have been seen as an afterthought. Sprint races have undoubtedly not been held in the pick of the nation's terrain, as opposed to forest races which have often been chosen because of the unique, challenging terrain. Having a pure sprint WOC would allow venues to be chosen without needing to have regard to the availability of suitable forest terrain, allowing these races to be held in more spectacular and challenging environments.

Regards

John Harding
Executive Officer
Orienteering Australia
15 January 2012

Antwerp, December 24, 2011



BELGIUM

Dear members of the I.O.F. Council,

As requested in your mail of November 2, 2011 please find herewith the comments from the Belgian Orienteering Federation on your proposal “WOC in the future”.

We do agree on the basic concept of the proposed structure (5 finals and races grouped by type with rest day in between) however we do have some remarks concerning the long distance.

In order to broaden the worldwide participation (required in view of the Olympic dream) we believe that all nations should be allowed to enter at least 1 participant. OK, this will enlarge the departure window but you can define that the participants of the countries ranked 25 and lower should start in the first starting block (i.e. outside the window in which TV broadcasting is interested). Additional reason for this approach is that the participation of a particular athlete is not blocked by the lack of results from his countrymen.

Suppose we have an upcoming talent in a new country, then he/she will not be able to participate in the long for a number of years (or maybe even never) until he/she has realised sufficient results in previous WOC's.

Furthermore, the calculation method to define the nations ranking should be explained more in detail before an evaluation is possible and this as well for the transition period (when we introduce this concept till after the 3 years transition has expired) as for the final situation. Additionally, this calculation method should be fair so that countries which are allowed to enter more runners are not favoured (e.g. results of long are not considered in the calculation or points scored by a country are divided by the number of runners from that country so that country average is calculated per discipline and these are added).

Best regards,

Walter Van Krunkelsven
Secretary-General
Belgian Orienteering Federation

CANADA

Summary of feedback from Canada

Proposed program:

Format	Participation
Sprint	Qualification: 3 athletes per nation + reigning World Champion Final: According to results of qualification
Sprint relay	Final: 1 team per nation (2 women + 2 men)
Middle	Prologue: 3 athletes per nation + reigning World Champion Final (chasing start): All athletes completing the prologue
Relay	Final: 1 team per nation per each gender (men and women)
Long	Final: Pre-qualified athletes (details, see below)

Sprint

- We support this proposal. No change from present.

Sprint relay

- We are in favour of adding this event.

Middle

- We have mixed feelings about this item, but the majority of Canadian feedback supports this proposal.

Relay

- We are happy to see this back on the proposal. We definitely want to see the traditional relay on the program.

Long

For the Long final, starting places are awarded based on the following criteria:

Nation's places	Nations are ranked based on <u>all results achieved in the previous three WOC's</u> Women and men are calculated and ranked separately Nations ranked 13-24 are guaranteed one place Nations ranked 7-12 are guaranteed two places Nations ranked 1-6 are guaranteed three places
Regional place	Each region is guaranteed to start with at least one athlete
Individual place	The reigning World Champion is guaranteed a personal place

This will give a start field of 47-49 athletes from 28-30 nations, which can be compared to the current model where 45 athletes can start coming from between 22-25 nations.

- We are not comfortable supporting this proposal without knowing the exact details of how regional places will be awarded. We require these details before we are able to support or not support this proposal.
- We would like to see the regional allocation increased to 3, understanding that this would increase to start field by 12 or so.
- We do not support any qualification based on the World Ranking list because of its current inherent unfairness. We are glad that this isn't part of the current proposal.

Other

- We still like the idea of the WOC format alternating between "traditional formats" and "sprint formats" year to year.

CZECH REPUBLIC

Praha, 12. December 2011¹

WOC in the Future - the Czech position

A modern and visible WOC

"WOC is underlined as the primary vehicle for making orienteering visible."

Taking in account the current state, is this the right strategy? Shouldn't we better develop the WCserie as the first step (brush the race formats + set up a stable TV production)?

Btw, some experts say for TV companies it is more interesting to get a serie of high class races.

Programme structure and contents

We strongly disagree with the transformation of middle distance into a chasing-start race!!! We can't see sufficient reasons for such a radical cut!

Arguments:

- According to the valid IOF course definitions, the middle distance should be the most technical of all the disciplines we have. On contrary, the winning strategy in a tight chasing start race is quite much about tactics of a face to face run and a strong run-in. These are definitely not the essential principles of a middle distance concept.
- Moreover, by now, the middle distance with an individual start turns out to be a very suitable format for a successful orienteering TV transmission! Why shall we then erase it?!
- The prologue standings would have a crucial impact on chances in the final race. There are big doubts concerning the fairness of such a prologue for 150 people at the same course.

Allocation of places for the long final

The proposal should definitely specify in detail how the places will be distributed "according to the three latest WOC5", as this is the key part of the allocation concept. Namely, it might be much easier to keep the positions, than to win them.

The aspect of winning the places for possibly someone else feels also not correct. (Runners chance of a WOC start depends on his team mates performances in previous years.) In orienteering, the starting field is not stable, the circulation of runners is naturally rather high.

The Czech proposals to the Council:

- Don't introduce any hasty changes to the current program'
- Instead, set up a stable TV-production and enforce it at top IOF races. Let it work with the formats we already have. Then evaluate.
- We would also recommend the biennial "forest WOC" and biennial "sprint WOC" to be considered.
- The system of the IOF funding should be revised. The current system provides no motivation for a truly effective approach to the marketing issues'
- When trying to develop our sport, don't compromise it's essence!

Best regards

Jiří Šubrt

Secretary General

Czech Orienteering Federation

ESTONIA

Opinion of Estonian Orienteering Federation on the IOF's WOC in the Future project.

Estonian Orienteering Federation has discussed the proposals of the IOF WOC in the Future project within its board and listened to the national team runners and representatives.

Estonian Orienteering Federation understands the need to change the WOC program due to its cost and the need to make orienteering more popular sport, but does not view the new suggested program as the best way to do that due to following reasons:

- 1) The new formats do not especially introduce orienteering as a „thinking-sport“, but put more emphasis on pure running capability. Although tight finishes may be interesting to watch on TV, they do not help the viewers to get more understanding of the roots of orienteering as an individual navigation sport.
- 2) The suggested outcomes of the new formats, namely those concerning the TV and spectator-friendliness have not been explained enough in detail.
- 3) The proposed new formats itself have not gained much popularity among the athletes as:
 - Chase-start in middle distance takes away the much appreciated challenge to find the best Orienteer.
 - Sprint-relay for mixed teams has not been a success on the World Games.
 - Criteria for awarding the places for the Long distance finals based on the three previous WOCs prefers the larger nations with broader base of athletes but does not take into account smaller nations with a handful of capable runners.
 - Suggested formats have not been tried out enough on international level, for example WCup events, to be sure of their suitability as proposed by the IOF.

Suggestions of Estonian Orienteering Federation based on the aforementioned reasons for the WIF projects are as follows:

- 1) The IOF shall look into ways of making current WOC programme and competition formats more attractive and spectator friendly by developing existing GPS-tracking and TV-coverage possibilities. The previous WOC in France provided a lot of excitement with the current format. Further exploring of fast developing world of technology can give us new tools for showing spectators what happens in the forest and thus helping “ordinary” TV-viewers to understand excitement with our sport.
- 2) The IOF must thoroughly explain how the suggested new formats are bringing the popularity among the spectators and TV-viewers as suggested by the WIF project group. If we are looking for mass start, chasing start, man-to-man races, first-to-finish etc. - isn't it obvious, that current relay format has it all!?
- 3) Suggested formats must be tried out at international events, for example regional championships and WCup events, before including them in the WOC.
- 4) Selection criteria for Long distance (or any other distance) shall be based on shorter time interval to allow smaller nations with young and capable runners who deserve participation, to take part.
- 5) The idea of “forest WOC” and “sprint WOC” alternating is worth considering. It will give us a possibility to keep existing long, middle and relay at well elaborated standards and experiment with new formats at sprint WOC. In current project group suggestion knock-out sprint is not mentioned at all, but it has been tested at WCup level twice and quite successfully. This format could be one of disciplines at sprint WOC. Sprint WOC could fit well

in same years when EOC (and other regional championships) take place. At the same time we can get new WOC-organising countries when concentrating on forest-O or sprint-O only is possible.

We sincerely hope that current discussion in IOF leads to improved of status of our sport and WOCs without losing the unique values of orienteering.

on behalf of Estonian Orienteering Federation

Sixten Sild
chairman of the management board

16.01.2012

FRANCE

Paris, 12th January 2012

To the IOF Sports Director
Björn PERSSON

WOC in the future

Dear IOF Sports Director,

After consultation of all interested parties in our country about the IOF proposal for WOC in the future,
the French orienteering federation wants to express its disagreement with the new WOC program.
There are 2 main arguments :

1. If the reason of this change is to make orienteering more visible and accessible for the modern media, we consider that the WOC in Czech Republic was already a success, with a very good production between pictures, speaker and GPS routes. And those goals were achieved with the actual race formats. Our proposal is that for each WOC the same production team makes the WOC media communication, or that the IOF gives a special media training to each WOC organizer.
2. In the appendix 6 of IOF rules (competition formats), the middle distance is characterized by consistently technically difficult controls in a technically complex terrain. This defines the middle distance as a technical format. But if it is organized with a chasing start, the spirit of these rules will not be respected. And this format is the only one with this specification. A chasing start applied to the middle or the long distance misrepresents the nature of foot orienteering.

The negative comments of the French orienteering federation are mainly against the chasing start in the middle distance. We are not against the mixed relay besides the classic relay with 3 runners. We hope that you will consider our comments positively. If you need more details about our arguments, we can provide them.

Yours sincerely,
Jean-Paul TERS
French orienteering federation president

GREAT BRITAIN

British Orienteering

WOC in the Future Consultation

Many thanks for giving British Orienteering the opportunity to comment on the proposed changes to the World Orienteering Championship. We have assimilated the views presented by athletes, coaches and senior volunteers. The feedback and summary is attached for your consideration.

Yours sincerely,

Mike Hamilton

Chief Executive, British Orienteering

WOC in the Future Consultation: GBR Response

British Orienteering welcomes the revised “WOC in the Future” proposal from the IOF, and we appreciate the opportunity to provide further comments. In forming our feedback we have consulted with Britain’s elite athletes, as well as with the coaches and staff of our Performance Programme.

We welcome and support the efforts of the IOF to increase the media profile both of WOC and of orienteering in general. However, we believe that we must be careful not to compromise the fundamental character of the sport in pursuit of greater media coverage. Indeed, the quality of the media presentation of the current WOC programme has been very variable over recent years, and we believe that any alterations to the programme are unlikely to be effective in raising the profile of WOC unless they are accompanied by more consistent and higher-quality media presentation. We hope that the work that the IOF is doing in this area will result in greater support to enable the host nations to deliver this.

We consider it imperative that WOC continues to provide the premier competition in each of the recognised orienteering disciplines. We firmly believe that all the current WOC disciplines should be retained, and we are therefore pleased to see that the current Relay format has been included in this version of the IOF proposals. There is very strong opposition among our athletes, which we support, to the proposed removal of the interval-start Middle race. The Rules of Orienteering themselves stress the “technically demanding” character of the Middle as a discipline, and we believe that removing the interval-start Middle race from WOC and replacing it with a chasing-start would undermine this emphasis on technical navigation, to the severe detriment of the WOC programme. British Orienteering does accept that there is a place for innovation in WOC. Of the two new disciplines currently proposed, we particularly welcome the Sprint Relay, which we believe could make an attractive addition to the WOC programme. However, we are concerned that only a few nations would have strong enough groups of both men and women to be competitive in a mixed-sex event, and we therefore feel that separate Men’s and Women’s Sprint Relays may be preferable. We support in principle the reduction in qualification races during WOC, and we agree that reducing the burden on athletes during the week and increasing spectator and media interest would both be desirable outcomes. However, we have major concerns about the proposed method of “seeding by nation” for determining the allocation of start places in the Long Final. We believe that this proposal risks seriously hampering the growth and development of the sport worldwide, by reducing the possibility of “breakthrough” performances by promising young athletes from less established orienteering nations. We are also concerned that, given the increasing tendency towards athlete specialisation, it would be unfair for a nation’s performance in e.g. the Sprint event at a previous WOC to affect the number of places they were awarded in the Long Final. It is also unclear from the current proposal how the start order for the Long Final would be decided, and this needs to be addressed. We therefore believe that the proposed qualification method needs substantial revision, to ensure that deserving athletes have the opportunity to qualify for the WOC Final in their chosen discipline regardless of their nationality.

Many of our athletes and coaches have expressed concerns about the proposed division of the WOC competition weeks into “blocks” of different types of competition. With athletes specialising in different disciplines, having the Sprint and the Sprint Relay, or the Long and the Relay, on consecutive days could force many of the top athletes in these disciplines to choose between these competitions, weakening the field and undermining the prestige of WOC.

British Orienteering also welcomes the alternative proposal from the Nordic federations for separate Forest WOCs and Sprint WOCs in alternating years. More detail would be required before we can comment fully, but in principle we have no opposition to this suggestion and we would be interested to see it developed further. However, given the current timescales we cannot envisage such a drastic alteration to the format of WOC being introduced until WOC 2016 at the earliest.

Thank you once again for the opportunity to feed our comments and those of our athletes into the process. We look forward to receiving the next revision of the IOF proposals in due course.

Summary

British Orienteering supports:

- Increased support from the IOF to enable host nations to deliver a consistently high standard of media presentation at WOC
- Retention of all current WOC disciplines, including the Relay and the interval-start Middle
- Addition of separate Men’s and Women’s Sprint Relays to the WOC programme
- The principle of reducing the number of qualification races during WOC
- Revision of the proposed method of allocating places in the Long Final, to ensure that it remains fair to talented athletes from historically weaker nations
- Adjustment to the proposed schedule for the WOC competition week, so that athletes are not forced to choose between events in their preferred discipline
- Further development of the Nordic proposal for alternating Sprint and Forest WOCs

GERMANY

On behalf of Achim Bader, Chairman of German Orienteering, i am replying to your proposal for WOC in the future. He is away for the moment so i am telling you the point of view from German Orienteering (Deutscher Turnerbund).

Contrary to the proposal of the IOF for the Programm of WOC in the Future, we would prefer a solution with a bianual WOC with a classic WOC and a sprint WOC like some federations suggested before the presidents conference in France an like the sweedish federation announced in november.

Otherwise we would like the programm to stay as it is.
If you have questions please don´t hesitate to ask me or Achim Bader.

Kind Regards
Christian Gieseler
(Chairmen Elite Orienteering)

IRELAND

WOC in the future proposals – some Irish views.

The general feeling is that the new WOC format should make the world championships more exciting and heighten the spectator experience.

There seems to be a good mix of events from the traditional long distance to the more TV friendly sprint events.

However, the high percentage of sprint/middle orienteering in the world champs programme may have a long term effect on more 'classic' orienteering. Overtime, a new elite type of orienteer who is focused more on shorter, urban sprint orienteering may eventually develop.

The new Middle distance race format was most favoured, whilst the long distance qualification criteria caused the most concern amongst the Irish orienteer's.

To summarize by race types:

Sprint and Traditional Relay

Unchanged, these events remain as before.

Middle distance, prologue and chasing start

This new format brings excitement to the middle distance, our athletes look forward to running in this event. It gives runners the chance to improve on their prologue race, possibly into the top 45.

In the past those out of the top 45 (in qualifying) did not race in the final. This is an improvement.

Sprint Relay

Another spectator friendly event. This could be a difficult event for nations without depth in their squad. Especially nations who lack depth in terms of senior women orienteers .

Long Distance

The long distance pre-qualification criteria caused most concern with those who commented.

It would be good to have at least one guaranteed finalist in the long distance.

However, Ireland is not certain of this guaranteed place. The qualification criteria must be fair.

There is a concern that Ireland is disadvantaged by being a small orienteering nation in Europe, whereas many of our immediate rivals may benefit from qualification on grounds of region.

(Asia, Africa, South America etc)

If it is the case that a nation does not have a pre-qualified finalist based on recent WOC performance, Will that country then be relegated to the sidelines as far as long distance is concerned? By not competing in the Long final that nation may be disadvantaged in future years. How will that nation become eligible to achieve a pre-qualified status?

The same goes for nations that qualify for one finalist – how do they achieve two finalists status?

Lastly a point on rights of the individual. This pre-qualification system could be viewed as unfair on a talented individual orienteer from a less strong nation. If an individual is capable of performing at the very top level (say top 30 in a final) but is from a country that is ranked outside the top 24, then he or she will not have the opportunity to realize their dreams. It may be that this individual is then tempted to run for a different nation thus leaving the original nation weakened.

This situation would do nothing to promote the development of orienteering in that country.

One of our responders felt very strongly about this point saying: *“The new system is biased towards the teams who are already at the top and ensures that they will probably remain there. Even if only a few competitors each year are discriminated against by this it is still surely wrong”*.

Summary

Overall, it seems the feeling in Ireland is positive as long as the Long distance pre-qualification criteria are well defined and fair.

The nations ranking from previous WOC's must reflect accurately each countries effort and dedication to past World championships.

Finally, taking into account the past 2 world champs (Norway and France) Ireland is ranked 25th in terms of overall finalists (5). Ireland's men's relay teams have finished 23rd in both of the last 2 world champs. What will the nations ranking criteria for the long distance be based on exactly?

Please let us know before the next world champs in Switzerland so that we can set our performance targets!

Ivan Millar
(High performance director, IOA)

ITALY

COMMENTS OF FISO TO THE DOCUMENT “WOC in the future ”

As organizers of WOC 2014 FISO proposal is the following.

Elimination of at least two qualifications races. The reasons for this are:

- saving of organization efforts and costs
- continuous interest of media
- participation of all Federations in the finals.

The final reason is very important. Many Federations (we can say: most Federations, including FISO) participate in the WOC with little or no chance to enter the finals. The slots for the Federations must be calculated on the previous WOC, not on the WC or WRE. Most Federations cannot afford the participation in the WC or WRE, not even part of them, surely not with complete teams. Also the regional Championship are not recommended at the moment, with so huge difference of presence in the various Regions. WOC is a straightforward way to measure the strength of Federations. Of course, the “strength” should be calculated taking into consideration the best competitor only for each Federation.

The problem is: what to put in place of the qualifications. Athletes seem to dislike both mixed relay as well as mass start: should we take into consideration athletes opinion? If yes, than the WOC will be shorter even with the same formats as before, without the need of two separate WOCs as some Federation proposes. If no, **FISO prefers to have the WOC of 8 days with all the old formats and two new formats.**

FISO does not think that two WOCs will result in savings for the Federations. In fact, the costs for Federations are travel, living and entries. If the formats urban and forest are divided in two blocks within the same week (three blocks seem too many to FISO), Federations can decide to participate in both or one only part of the WOC, saving living and entries, if they decide to take part in both they will not have to pay twice the travel costs for two WOCs. **Another reason to oppose two WOCs is that IOC looks very closely to the number of Federations taking part in WOCs. Two WOCs will result in less Federations participating in each of them.**

As a conclusion FISO prefers to have the WOC each year with all the old formats, eventually two new ones added.

If the only modification is the elimination of two qualifications, then the WOC can be reduced of two days, again: without the need of two WOCs.

If new formats should be added, disregarding athletes opinion, then FISO recommends mixed relay and mass start (middle is best). Beside the fact that the General Assembly voted for “mass start” and not “chase start” (FISO would have voted against in the latter case while voted in favor for the first) FISO strongly dislikes chase start for:

- the complication of the prologue for the organizers,
- the risk if something goes wrong in the prologue (remember sprint qualification in Aix-les- Bains)
- the intrinsic unfairness of the chase where the winner of the prologue has the disadvantage of showing his course to the followers.

The only point in which the FISO proposal may not satisfy is the increase in the number of Federations which may afford the organization of a WOC. But is it really so? FISO does not think that the main point are maps and terrain, or that Federations do not apply because of the difficulty to find both types of terrains (urban and forest) in the same area. If the WOC is to be 5 days, whether urban or forest, the cost depends on the overall organization and in the number of days. If a Federation has to organize a WOC the problems are financing, arenas, accommodations, media etc.: when you are in the business it does not change much if you are in the forest or in the city: city can eventually produce more troubles than forest. **Moreover, consider that financing of WOC comes also from the public races: what interest has a many-days public race in urban environment?**

Additional note.

FISO feels that addressing a big issue such as “WOC in the future” some of the problems which came out in the last WOCs are eventually to be solved. FISO made, since many years, the proposal to include

three wing forks and eventually two forks (the first two wings, the second three wings) in the long and middle formats. This is the only way to solve the “follower” or the “cooperation” problem, not the interval start of one or two or three minutes. This issue must be addressed and should become part of the rules.

The second problem to be addressed is the enforcement of the rules. Of course the problem of Terrain/Map/Courses is paramount to assure fairness and standardization from one WOC to another. Extreme terrains must be avoided. If it is not so, than you need long and expensive training camps. Only strong Federations can afford to spend money for this.

How can you imagine an Olympic sport where all the Nations must first take part in training camps, test the maps etc. one year before and few months before the event?

THE NETHERLANDS

Although the Netherlands being a small orienteering country we are happy to take the opportunity to give our thoughts about the 'WOC in the future proposal'.

Besides a more fundamental discussion about whether 'raise its "market share" in sports media' should be an argument in restructuring the WOC, we have 3 (major) concerns regarding the present proposal.

1. The proposed pre-qualification for the long distance final, based on nation ranking in previous WOCs, makes it nearly impossible for a single excellent runner from a small orienteering country, like the NL, to participate in the long distance. As such a country will most likely not be ranked in the top 24 countries, and hence will not be awarded with a starting place. Moreover, as starting place awarding is only based on WOC results – and not e.g. the World Cup or World ranking – this will create a kind of 'vicious cycle': no starting opportunity will not improve the nation ranking, resulting in no starting place, etc.
2. The introduction of the (mixed) sprint relay is interesting, but should such a novel format not first be tested in an other setting instead of being introduced at the WOC, to evaluate whether such a relay adds something to the orienteering world. In particular while the introduction of this relay clearly has resulted in the removal of the long distance qualification (connecting this 2nd concern to our first one)
3. Finally, we doubt whether a chasing start is a good idea for a - middle distance - final. An important element of - middle distance - orienteering is detailed map reading and a high degree of concentration throughout the entire course. We foresee that this will be violated by chase starting as this will certainly introduce following.

With kind regards,

On behalf of the Dutch Orienteering federation (NOLB)

Marco Mensink

DENMARK, FINLAND, NORWAY, SWEDEN

WOC in the future – Common response and proposal from the nordic federations NORD (Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden)

In connection with the annual meeting of the NORD federations in Helsinki 14-15 January 2012, we have addressed the remit sent out by IOF Council November 2nd, 2011, requesting responses from member federations relative to the WOC in the future project.

The NORD federations have agreed upon a common response and an alternative proposal for the future WOC. In doing so, we have re-examined the need for changes to the current WOC format and reviewed proposed alternatives.

Vision and goals

We feel it is very important that any changes to the current format of the WOC are related to the IOF vision and goals, i.e. there is a need to address the question; *Why is it necessary to make changes to the WOC program at all?*

As you can see in our common response to the IOF Strategic Directions, we are in support of the vision of having orienteering in the future be an Olympic sport. Related to this vision and the key issues and goals stated by the IOF, particularly the statement that the WOC should be our premium platform for promotion of orienteering, we feel it is necessary to state the underlying goals for the WOC program.

These are:

- WOC should increase the visibility of orienteering. Here we feel it is important to add that broadcast TV productions are a key element.
- WOC should be attractive to external audiences and partners
- WOC should provide competitions of high technical quality which are valid representations of athlete skill, i.e. with the best athlete on each discipline as winner.
- WOC should be a vehicle for increasing the number of participating nations.
- WOC should be a vehicle for increasing the global skill level of elite orienteers, i.e. a goal should be to have athletes from more nations capable of winning podium places and medals at WOC.
- It should be possible for more nations to be able to apply for and host WOC.
- The cost of participating at WOC should be decreased.
- The cost of organizing a WOC should be reduced.

Relating these goals to the current WOC format we do feel that it is appropriate to make changes to the current WOC program, as it is limiting in reaching these goals.

Programs considered

We have reviewed and graded 3 alternative WOC programs to the above stated goals. The programs are:

1. The IOF Council proposal as described in the document of November 2nd, 2011. The proposal can be organized within 7 days.
2. An alternative program which is based upon the current WOC program, but with addition of one “first-to-finish” format (mass-start, chase-start or knock-out sprint). In this alternative

qualification races, as in the current WOC program, are removed with the exception of the sprint. Qualifications for the middle and long distance races would be based upon some form of nation strength system. The new additional distance and relay would be open to equal participation for all nations. This program can also be organized within 7 days.

3. In this case a “Terrain” WOC and “Urban” WOC would be organized alternating years.
 - The terrain WOC would include the existing Middle, Long and Relay disciplines plus one additional “first-to-finish” discipline. Qualifications for the middle and long distance races would be based upon some form of nation strength system. The new additional distance and relay would be open to equal participation for all nations.
 - The urban WOC would include the existing individual start sprint discipline (with qualifications and final), a knock-out sprint discipline based upon the experience of the World Cup (NORT) and a sprint-relay. For the urban WOC equal participation of all IOF nations for all distances will be possible.

The terrain and urban WOCs would each be able to be organized within 5 days.

Evaluation of alternatives relative to the stated goals

WOC should increase the visibility of orienteering.

The issue of visibility is less related to the formation of the program than it is to the investment made in TV and media productions. Here we assess that the 3 alternatives are relatively neutral in comparison, potentially with a slight advantage to alternative 3 due to the fact that production cost is reduced in a shorter (5-day) program, and media representatives need to be on site for a shorter period of time which should increase media representation.

WOC should be attractive to external audiences and partners.

Here we assess that the 3 alternatives are relatively equal.

WOC should provide competitions of high technical quality which are valid representations of athlete skill, i.e. with the best athlete on each discipline as winner.

In all three alternatives, event quality should be improved compared to the current WOC program mainly due to the removal of qualification race days. In alternatives 1 and 2, event quality is still affected by the fact that organizers and event advisers need to work with a wide scope of discipline specific quality such as 2 different mapping standards, both terrain and urban environments and a longer program in number of days. In alternative 3 organisers and event advisers are allowed more focus, i.e. need to consider only a single mapping standard, a single environment, and more discipline specific guidelines and skill sets. We therefore assess alternative 3 as clearly the best in allowing improved technical quality.

WOC should be a vehicle for increasing the number of participating nations.

All 3 alternatives allow for disciplines which are easier for new nations to participate in and allow for shortening the week, i.e. it is possible to attend only a few days. Alternative 2 may be slightly less attractive if a terrain-based mass or chasing start is chosen as the additional first-to-finish discipline. However, this could be exchanged for a knock-out sprint. We therefore assess the 3 alternatives as being comparatively neutral.

WOC should be a vehicle for increasing the global skill level of elite orienteers, i.e. a goal should be to have athletes from more nations gaining finals places and capable of winning podium places and medals at WOC.

All three alternatives can offer new opportunities for a wider spread of podium finishes among nations as they add an additional urban distance (assuming alternative 2 includes a knock-out sprint). However, we assess that the inclusion of 3 urban disciplines in alternative 3 will even further raise the opportunity for new nations as finalists and podium winners, and therefore assess this as the best option. With more potential organisers (see next goal) there is also a higher probability to have a WOC in an athletes home country with potential for enhanced performance.

It should be possible for more nations to be able to apply for and host WOC.

Here alternative 3 is clearly the best. This in terms of having availability of appropriate competition areas for the respective disciplines, as it may be difficult to find quality terrain and urban areas from the same location. And in terms of the shorter WOC week. Many more nations should be able to host WOC with alternative 3.

The cost of participating at WOC should be decreased.

Cost of participation is highly related to the number of days a WOC is spread over. In all 3 alternatives there will be improvement compared to the current WOC program, but alternative 3 offers the most savings in participation cost. Cost of preparing for WOC (training camps etc) is also reduced as for an urban WOC preparations can more easily be achieved in the home country. Note that this may also improve fairness as large and small nations will be competing on more a more equal basis of preparations. Today large nations have an advantage of being able to afford more in-terrain training opportunities.

The cost of organizing a WOC should be reduced.

Here we assess that alternative 3 gives clear advantages over the other 2 alternatives due to the fact that the WOC week is shortened and a smaller number of finals reduces costs for TV and media production etc.

Summary

Based upon this analysis we feel that alternative 3, with alternating terrain and urban WOC weeks, is clearly preferred for achieving the goals of the WOC program.

Details of the proposal

To give some further detail to alternative 3 we propose the following as a potential program for the terrain and urban modules respectively.

“TERRAIN MODULE” (5 DAYS)	“URBAN MODULE” (5 DAYS)
<p>MIDDLE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • interval start final • e.g. nations ranked 1-6 receive 3 places, nations ranked 7-12 receive 2 places, the rest 1 place, gives approx. 60 men and 55 women (strength of nations: using the current WCup quota) • reigning world champions and regional champions get a personal place 	<p>KNOCK-OUT SPRINT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • interval start prologue (10-12 min) + quarter finals (6-7 min) + semifinals (6-7 min) + final (7-8 min) • reigning world champions and regional champions get a personal place in the qualification • all nations may enter 3+3
<p>LONG</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • interval start final • e.g. nations ranked 1-6 receive 3 places, nations ranked 7-12 receive 2 places, the rest 1 place gives approx. 60 men and 55 women (strength of nations: using the current WCup quota) • reigning world champions and regional champions get a personal place 	<p>REST DAY</p>
<p>REST DAY</p>	<p>SPRINT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • interval start qualification + interval start final • reigning world champions and regional champions get a personal place in the qualification • all nations may enter 3+3
<p>MASS START</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • e.g. 3 loops model (45–60 min) • reigning world champions and regional champions get a personal place • all nations may enter 3+3 	<p>REST DAY</p>

RELAY	SPRINT RELAY
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• men´s & women´s relay separately• 3 legs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• men´s & women´s separately• 4 legs, 2 runners

Comments:

- Using the current World Cup “strengths of nations” rules for qualifications gives a consistent qualification method across IOF events.
- We do feel that both reigning world champions and reigning regional champions should be guaranteed spots in all individual races.
- We consider the Mass Start as the best option for the “first-to-finish” discipline to be added. This is due to the fact that it more easily allows a larger starting field allowing smaller and new nations to participate. However, a prologue and chase start discipline could be replaced here as long as a large starting field could be accommodated.
- Smaller and newer nations could participate only at the back end of the terrain module, which would reduce participation cost.
- A mixed relay has no athlete support and we feel it should not be added to the program. Therefore the relays should be run with single gender.
- We prefer a sprint relay to have a 2-runner format with multiple (2) legs per runner.

Additional aspects

We feel that the WOC week needs to fit into a context of an overall IOF international event schedule. Therefore we propose that Regional Championships are strengthened by becoming also qualification events for WOC as stated above. We would propose that terrain and urban regional championships can be held alternating years, but in the opposite cycle to WOC.

We also feel that a structure for the World Cup which fits this overall structure of WOC and regional championships should be fixed.

Helsinki, 15th January 2012

Danish Orienteering Federation
Finnish Orienteering Federation
Norwegian Orienteering Federation
Swedish Orienteering Federation

POLAND

Warszawa, 13.01.2012

International Orienteering Federation

In response to program WOC in the future.

Polish Orienteering Association would like to express its opinion about published program of WOC in the future.

We have two main proposal for such program. As we have in mind also recently published Strategy. One of the main point is to spread orienteering as much as possible around the whole world. As we stated in our last proposal we think that we should try to minimize the National Team. According to Council proposal the minimum number of Team is 5 persons: 4 runners and 1 coach. It is still too big expense for developing country to send a Team.

We propose to reduce the Sprint Relay to 2 person (Man+Woman) running twice. So we still have 4 legs, still we have 45 minutes event that is very suitable for Live TV coverage. And in addition we achieve:

- More teams at the WOC
- More spectacular event
- Bigger possibilities to organize easy-to-watch event

As for now, we have organize already twice such event and we are sure it would be very well welcomed by small and not-so-rich countries.

The second proposal is much more radical. Similar to Sweden we propose to divide the WOC for two different events. One it could be Sprint WOC or Urban WOC with Sprint Relays, Individual Sprint and maybe some third format proposed by Sweden. The second one should be Traditional WOC or Forest WOC with individual long, individual middle event and traditional 3-legs relay. Those events should be arranged every second year.

To make WOC more as a step towards the Olympics the Sprint/Urban WOC should be organize in the even years. That will be automatic possible for involving it onto a IOC program. In such situation the Forest/Traditional WOC should be organize in odd years.

Best Regards

Tadeusz Patejko
President
Polish Orienteering Association

SOUTH AFRICA

South African Orienteering Federation



RESPONSE TO IOF COUNCIL PROPOSAL ON FUTURE WOC PROGRAMME

This document serves to let the IOF Council know the opinions of the South African Orienteering Federation (SAOF) on the proposed changes to the World Orienteering Championships (WOC) programme.

The SAOF is, as a relatively small federation, happy with the policy to make WOC an inclusive event with more opportunities for smaller nations to take part in the finals. The new concept for the middle is particularly appropriate for this policy, as it allows both for participation of up to three runners in the qualification, and all competitors get to run the chasing start. The sprint could be improved, in terms of including smaller nations, by introducing a 'B' and 'C' final as is done in JWOC and WMOC. This would allow weaker orienteers a second run, and a taste of a final competing against nations at a similar level.

The sprint relay is a good idea, and will likely serve to increase media attention. However, from the perspective of a small nation situated far from likely WOC venues (i.e. with high travel costs), having a large enough squad to field a mixed relay team is not trivial.

The SAOF is positive to keeping the forest relay as it has been in the past.

The criteria for starting places in the long distance are reason for concern for a number of reasons. In principle, the SAOF agrees that the long distance event can function well with pre-selected finalists, and these should be chosen based on performance and inclusivity. It is worrying, however, that the points calculation for ranking nations for places in the long distance have not been explained in detail. The problem with ranking by nation based on previous WOC results is that this will favour nations sending large teams. It also seems like it will make it difficult to qualify for later years if not among the 24 top nations when this ranking is introduced (as one will not be able to collect points in the long). This means that nations with small number of athletes at WOC are disadvantaged from qualifying for the long. Should a small nation be able to generate one very good orienteer, the lack of a good team will possibly prevent this one strong person for a place in the long. It seems like a better idea to guarantee all member nations a minimum of one place, or possibly invoke world ranking points as another route for an individual to qualify if the nation is not in

the top 24 (or some other arbitrary number). Another possibility is a 'B' final for additional nations/individuals where qualification points for future WOCs can be achieved. The point here is that for poorly funded federations or any developing nations, not having any (or only one) participant in the long will affect the willingness of athletes to travel to WOC, and thus reduce team size and the possibility, for example, of fielding relay teams. Overall, we emphasize that the current proposal for pre-selection to the long final disadvantages currently weak and developing nations from ever achieving results in the long distance. We are not against pre-selection, but suggest ranking is done in such a way that developing federations are not disadvantaged by lack of previous WOC results. South Africa is in a relatively good position because of lack of competition for the African regional qualifying spot, so we also worry for the sake of developing nations in general.

Despite some concerns, the SAOF would like to thank the IOF Council for their work on this proposal, and we look forward to a future of WOC's that both celebrate the best orienteers (which should remain the main focus of the championships) and the world of orienteering.

Best regards

Ake Fagereng
SAOF VP Technical
on behalf of the SAOF executive committee

SWITZERLAND

Swiss Orienteering

WOC in the future

Swiss Orienteering is still not in favour of the proposed new WOC programme, basically for the same three main reasons as in our review in April 2011:

1. In our opinion, today's programme has no real weaknesses concerning the format of the finals, but the current programme should be organised in a better way. Before changing things drastically, IOF should optimise the present situation.
2. The proposed programme is very complex from an organiser's point of view. We fear that it can be organised only by a handful of countries. This will prevent the spread of orienteering.

1. Quality of today's programme

The background for our review is still a perceived lack from IOF's side to motivate a change to the WOC programme. IOF has not presented an analysis of today's programme identifying its strengths and weaknesses.

In our opinion, today's programme fulfils all relevant criteria stipulated by the IOF at the 2010 General Assembly when arguing for the project start. The three individual disciplines are well defined and diversified (if sprint is not organised in forest) in character. The nations relay became really attractive when the number of legs was reduced to three. Mass-start and even chasing start events in biathlon and cross-country skiing have not proven to be really successful. All races look the same: a dead competition until 500 m before the finish and then a sprint.

We strongly feel that IOF should try to optimise the quality of today's event organisation before adding more and more complex events.

We repeat what we said in April: we feel that every WOC organiser starts from scratch and that no knowhow-transfer takes place. All concepts are re-invented.

There is another quality aspect. We acknowledge the pressure to develop orienteering based on the GA directive towards the Olympic Games. However, if we eventually arrive there at all, it will be with a product similar to today's World Games programme. We therefore ask IOF to maintain the character of the other WOC disciplines (long distance, middle distance, nation's relay) as they are.

2. Complexity

Only very few nations worldwide will be able to deliver what IOF is requiring. The proposed new programme increases the technical and resource complexity of the WOC week significantly. Two events with a race in two parts in one day is heavy to stage, the most recent example in FRA underlines this fact. The proposed new programme increases the financial burdens of every WOC organiser because more finals and more TV cost more than today's qualification races. In the opinion of SUI, backed by extensive discussions with our main sponsor, live TV coverage of all finals is not worth the money. Today's WOC programme is attractive enough with live TV for the fast disciplines sprint and the nations relay and maybe also the middle distance. For the long distance an edited version is much more suitable.

The real character of our sport is hardly presentable in TV. It is better to stimulate TV viewers with the good live events only and to present the other events as summary. This was by the way the official IOF position just 5 years back and SUI and its commercial partners (PostFinance, Sport TV) believe more in such a model than a with live TV from all events.

3. Sports value

We are glad to see that the number of medal events is now five instead of six as it was proposed earlier this year. This is a step in the right direction. Our ideal situation is made up with one medal per format, the fewer the better because then the sports value per medal is higher. Our ideal situation, however, still is a WOC week with four medals. We further question the value of a format like the mixed sprint relay. We foresee massive problems to introduce such an elite-focused format into our national championships model where these events are mass-sport events and not stand-alone elite events. But a WOC format without a counterpart at the national level has no value.

We see the idea and the wish of new spectacular formats to increase publicity of Orienteering, but at the moment there is no format, which is tested several times, and years during Worldcup and which gives more publicity. The goal of IOF must be to improve Worldcup and to introduce new formats there. If these formats are successful, the formats can be taken into consideration for a future WOC.

Proposal from SUI

At this point in time, our proposal is meant to trigger IOF's thinking along the way "why at all changing the WOC programme?"

Analysis of today's programme

Strengths

- Well established formats
- Widely accepted amongst runners
- A sound mixture of formats containing the real spirit of orienteering (long, middle, nations relay) as well as TV-friendly formats (sprint, nations relay, middle)
- All formats are conducted at national level
- The USP "at one with nature" is very much applicable

Weaknesses

- Long WOC week: manageable for a limited number of organisers
- Qualification on site: increases costs and causes frustration for those runners missing (all) finals
- Constantly increasing demands concerning TV: affordable and manageable by less and less federations
- Too few customers for live TV productions
- Too expensive IOF sanctions fees for many IOF members

Opportunity

- Improving the weaker parts of today's WOC will deliver a sound and manageable WOC programme, and receive higher acceptance than a revolutionary change (IOF proposal)

Threat

- Even more increasing TV demands and thereby increasing complexity (technology, resources, finances)

Swiss proposal for an improved WOC programme

- Sprint, Q & F, as today
- Nations' relay, as today
- Long individual start (3 minutes), final only, qualification according to IOF's proposal (nations ranking at previous WOC's) but with more nation places for the strongest federations, red start group for all federations with 2 and more starters
- Middle individual start, final only, qualification: every nation 1 start slot, second, third and fourth start slot equal to long distance qualification model (plus reigning champion), red start group for all federations with 2 and more starters
- **New format:** Chasing start based on the result of the middle distance final.

Winning time between 45-60 minutes.

- The order of the events is based on the organisers possibilities

Comments

The proposal eliminates the weaknesses of today's programme, preserves the essentials and character of our sport; it is suitable for live TV production for the fast and spectacular formats and suitable for TV summaries of the long distance race.

In the most important event, more places to the strongest federations should allow that really all the best athletes could participate. In our opinion, four runners for the strongest nations would further increase the media attention for the finals.

All federations can participate in at least four out of five events. The overall programme length can be reduced by one or two days, which saves costs for the participating federations.

SUI will most likely bring this proposal forward to the 2012 General Assembly to open up for a more principal discussion about the needs for a programme change. In the final proposal we will add a clause saying that this decision overrules the mass-start decision from the 2010 General Assembly.

Sincerely yours,
Swiss Orienteering
Karin Haueter
Co-Secretary General

USA

Feedback on November '11 WOC in the Future Proposal Orienteering USA January 15th, 2012

Summary:

In general, we like IOF's most recent proposal. We have concerns about how regional spaces for the Long Final are to be determined and also suggest that the number of regional places might be increased to at least 3, in keeping with the idea of "A WOC for all".

Breakdown by proposed events:

1) Sprint - No changes from current, this is fine.

2) Sprint relay - We support the addition of a sprint relay and are happy with the 2 men, 2 women teams.

3) Middle - We have some mixed feelings on the chasing start, noting that this is likely to significantly change the nature of the event. However, if a 'first-to-the-finish' event is mandated, we much prefer a chasing start to a mass start. At the very least, this format should be tried out several times at major international events, and the IOF should make an effort to popularize this format worldwide if a world championship is to be contested in it.

4) Relay - No changes from current, this is fine. It is great that the traditional, single-gender relay keeps a well-deserved place in the WOC program.

5) Long - We have three major concerns with how start places are to be awarded:

a) First, the way the scoring will be done for the previous 3 WOCs should be clarified. Will this include all races? Only finals? How will it meld the relay with the individual races? As men and women are split, the sprint relay must not count. Also, it will be unfair to score the long final for this ranking as nations have unequal start rights based on past performance, creating a perpetual cycle of start place disparity.

b) Secondly, it should be made clear how regions are to choose any starters from that region. We suggest an objective method be used, such as top runner at the regional championships who qualifies for his/her national team in the long distance. However, there is an issue with awarding start places directly to runners rather than federations, so this needs to be spelled out clearly.

c) Thirdly, in keeping with the idea of a WOC for all, we believe that 3 regional start places would provide a better representation than 1, perhaps with the stipulation that each start place is assigned to a different nation within the region. This will allow weaker regions to really have access to this race.

Other considerations:

We like the proposed block schedule of sprints, day off, middle, day off, relay + long.

If an alternating year schedule of sprint-WOC then forest-WOC were proposed, we would also be happy with such a proposal.

Thank you for removing the basis of long qualification on WRE points. Here in the US, with few and low-attendance WRE events, we do not feel these accurately represent the talent of our athletes.