

Proposed changes to the World MTB Orienteering Championship Long Distance qualification system

The WMTBOC Long Distance allocation system was introduced in 2013. It was based on allocating start slots to nations according to the results of previous WMTBOC Long Distance competition and World Ranking.

This allocation system and the abolition of the Long Qualification Day were positively received by the majority of Federations; but the system had its shortcomings. The biggest problem was that it did not have the flexibility to allocate well deserved start slots to quickly developing and overseas nations, who often cannot travel with their best riders every year. There was a justifiable demand to provide a possibility to quickly developing and overseas nations to gain start slots based on good performance on the ongoing World Championships.

The MTBO discipline is at a relatively early development stage, and only the top 4 to 5 nations are strong as teams on a consistent basis. The majority of the nations are represented by well performing individuals, who may not have the possibility to prepare and attend World Championships every year. In the middle ranks there is often a major performance gap between the best rider of a nation and the team strength of the given nation. Hence an individual qualification provides a better way to determine the top 60 participants of an A-Final of a World Championships.

The MTB Orienteering Commission suggests the following modifications to the Long qualification system that aim at retaining the balance between the main general principles of IOF World Championships start slot allocations, and individual qualification.

The new qualification system is based on individual qualification and offers six qualification paths for the A-Final

- Pre-event qualification to ensure peace of mind for best riders (approximately for 30 riders due to overlap and no shows)
 - Results of previous WMTBOC Long (top 30 placed riders)
 - World Ranking (top 30 ranked riders)
- On-event qualification to give opportunities for upcoming and overseas riders
 - Sprint results on WMTBOC (1/3 of the open places, rounded down)
 - Middle results on WMTBOC (all the rest, i.e. 2/3 of the open places)
- Home nation is given minimum 3 start slots, if fewer than 3 riders qualify
- All nations that do not have qualified riders are given one start slot

Basic principles retained from the current allocation system in line with Council requirements

- No extra effort required from organisers, no qualification day needed
- Every nation gets a guaranteed start slot in the A-Final
- Home nation gets several guaranteed start slots (3 slots starting from 2014)
- 60 riders can qualify for the A-Final, but extra places can be allocated to non-qualified nations
- Top riders of the previous WMTBOC Long get guaranteed start slots
- Top riders in the World Ranking get guaranteed start slots 2 months before the event
- If there are no more than 66 riders entered in the Long Distance Competition in a gender class, all of them participate in the A-Final

Changes proposed by the MTBO Commission starting from 2014

Area	Proposed system	Current system	Comment
Basis of allocation	Individual	National	Individual qualification makes on-event qualification fairer
Qualifying places of previous WMTBOC Long	1 – 30	1 – 15 (30)	In current system overseas nations get places for top 30 result
Qualifying places of World Ranking	1 – 30	~15-20	In current system top 35-40 ranked riders may gain a start slot
Qualification based on Sprint Final	~ 10	n/a	1/3 of the open slots (rounded down)
Qualification based on Middle Final	~ 20	n/a	The remaining 2/3 of the open slots
Home nation guaranteed start slots	3	5	Home nation can qualify up to 6 in the new system
Maximum riders per nation to qualify	6	5	General team limit of 6 applies
Invited riders over national maximum	Reigning World Champion	Reigning World and Junior World Champion	Reigning Junior World Champion may qualify on the event, hence no personal slot

The system is based on the assumption that the Long final is the last individual final on the World Championships, as traditional on WMTBOCs, and the results of the Sprint and Middle races can be used to qualify for the Long Final. There is a low level of specialisation in MTBO at this stage, hence Middle and to some extent even Sprint typically give good indication also of Long results.

The new system was discussed with the athletes and it was perceived as a fairer system that gives more chances to qualify for the Long Final.

The allocation/qualification system is a special rule that was intended to be adjusted every year, if necessary. The proposed system does not require extra effort from the organiser over the current one; hence the implementation does not require the agreement of the organiser. The commission would like to see it applied starting from the 2014 WMTBOC in Poland.

Steps of the qualification process for the A-Final is as follows

1) All nations can enter up to 6 riders (+ the reigning World Champion) into the WMTBOC Long Distance competition.

2) Upon arrival teams are requested to submit name entries of the athletes for the Long distance competition by noon the day before the first competition day of the World Championships

If no more than 66 riders are entered in the Long Competition for a gender class, all riders get a start slot in the A-Final.

3) All entered athletes who finished 1-30 places on the previous Long World Championships get a place in the A-Final

4) All entered athletes who stand on 1-30 places on World Ranking 2 months before the day of the Long Final also get a place in the A-Final

It is expected that approximately 30 A-Final start slots are allocated this way due to overlap of 3) and 4) and no shows. The remaining of the 60 start slots available to qualifying riders are given out based on the results of the Sprint and Middle Final.

5) 1/3 of the remaining A-Final start slots (rounded down) are allocated based on the results of the Sprint Final to top placed athletes who were entered in the Long competition and yet to receive a start slot.

6) The remaining A-Final start slots are allocated based on the results of the Middle Final to top placed athletes entered in the Long competition and yet to receive a start slot.

Start slots allocated to riders under steps 3)-6) cannot be changed or reallocated.

7) If the home nation qualifies fewer than 3 riders in steps 3)-6), extra start slots given to allow 3 home riders in the A-Final. The additional rider(s) are named by the team leader.

8) Every nation who does not qualify a rider under steps 3)-6) gets a start slot in the A-Final. The rider is named by the team leader.

All remaining riders who entered the Long Distance competition participate in the B-Final.

The A-Final is drawn in 6 start groups (in start order: First, Early, Middle, Late, Orange, Red), while the B-final is drawn in 3 start groups (Early, Middle, Late).

All riders who receive start slots under step 8) get a place in the First start group. All other riders are drawn according to the IOF Competition Rules for MTB Orienteering Events section 12.

Sandor Talas
Chairman IOF MTB Orienteering Commission

Simulations of the proposed qualification system

The simulation was prepared for the ME class only, because WE participation numbers are typically between 60 and 66, and thus all riders may ride the A-Final.

In 2013 a national allocation system was used for the Long Final. The proposed system replicates it quite well.

Countries	Qualification	Allocation	Difference
	2014	2013	
AUS	3	2	1
AUT	4	4	0
BUL	1	1	0
CZE	6	5	1
DEN	4	4	0
EST	5	5	0
FIN	6	5	1
FRA	4	4	0
GER	1	2	-1
GBR	1	1	0
HUN	1	1	0
ITA	2	3	-1
JAP	1	2	-1
LAT	1	1	0
LTU	3	2	1
NOR	1	1	0
POL	2	1	1
POR	2	2	0
RUS	6	5	1
SPA	1	0	1
SWE	3	3	0
SUI	2	2	0
TUR	1	1	0
UKR	1	1	0
USA	1	1	0

In 2012 a separate Long Qualification event was run.

The proposed system replicates it reasonably well. The major differences are coming from mid-ranked riders who marginally qualified or did not qualify for the A-Final

Simulation for WMTBOC 2012, Hungary					
Countries	Qualification	Long Q		Difference	
	2014	2012			
AUS	1	1		0	
AUT	5	3		2	
BRA	1	0		1	
BUL	1	1		0	
CRO	1	0		1	
CZE	6	6		0	
DEN	4	3		1	
EST	3	3		0	
ESP	1	1		0	
FIN	6	6		0	
FRA	5	6		-1	
GER	1	3		-2	
GBR	1	2		-1	
HUN	3	1		2	
ITA	2	4		-2	
JPN	1	1		0	
LTU	2	2		0	
NOR	1	1		0	
POL	2	1		1	
POR	2	2		0	
ROU	1	0		1	
RUS	5	6		-1	
SUI	5	4		1	
SVK	1	1		0	
SWE	2	2		0	
TUR	1	0		1	