

Athlete's SkiO Commission meeting, 1/6/13

Present: Hans Jørgen Kvåle (NOR), Chritian Spoerry (SUI), Staffan Tunis (FIN), Alison Crocker (USA), Eduard Khrennikov (RUS). **Not present:** Olga Novikova (KAZ)

Athlete's SkiO Commission business:

- notes on the meeting should be taken and published on the Ski Orienteering facebook page; feedback from a wider pool of athletes is good (Alison)
- Athlete's SkiO Commission want to have a closer dialog with the IOF SkiO Commission (Hans Jørgen via Eivind)
- Athlete's SkiO Commission will start to give feedback to Event Advicers and Organisers to higher the quality of coming events (Hans Jørgen)
- next meeting in Latvia at European champs

Ski O-Tour:

- General Question – how to make more presigious?
 - o good quality events
 - o clear ranking (published before hand, including bonus seconds to make sprints and mass starts actually contribute to the rankings)

- Feedback on this Tour so far (mass-start long distance and sprint in France):
 - o Very limited information. Hardly any information at the events website and no old maps published.
 - o Start for the sprint was footo style, with having to pick up the map and put into the map holder after the start. While not "unfair", this is not within ski-o guidelines, nor is it the way we think that starts should be run (not good for tv to see athletes fumbling around with the map). However, the start arena itself was great, located right in town, with a visible start and finish.
 - o Map issues. Some trails were not correct with respect to each other, this is not acceptable for skio. Also, the line thicknesses were always for 1:15000 (?), not the correct thicknesses. More than one color of vegetation green was used, occasionally this made trails under that deeper green hard to read. Not all stone walls were correct (sprint map). Many if not all of these things should have been detected by the Event Advisor.
 - o Forking in the mass start worked well to separate athletes, but to have commin first control is not a preferable way.
 - o At least one route leaving the first control of the mass start descended the same way other athletes were still ascending. It was ok because the field snow was skiable for this event, but if not, there would likely have been collisions. The event advisors must ensure against this.
 - o Having 3 different systems for entry led to some problems.
 - o In general, we need to push the Event Advisors for WREs to do better and make sure all aspects of the competitions are up to the standards set for WREs. Hopefully this feedback of the athletes can go directly to the Event Advisor's list so that all Event Advisors become aware of the issues at this event and can provide the guidance necessary at their own events.

Touch-free SI:

This is a definite improvement over standard SI and it seems to be working ok.

Issues thus far:

- light should be equally visible on all units; made more visible with a larger and always red light
- Should be flashing for 10 seconds not 3 seconds
- batteries running low leads to dim lights, this should be checked beforehand and also allowed that the athlete request a change
- We must find ways to discourage athletes hitting units. This is not required to be sure of a "punch" and can make it unfair for later athletes, if the control/SI box is disturbed. We should 1) recommend that the fairplay approach of all athletes is to pick up a control if they knock it down 2) have two controls at each control point.
- Also, a note: the finish only records your time when you leave the transmitting bubble, not when you enter, so all athletes should make sure not to fall or stop *at the line*, but proceed at least a meter past it.
- Noted that start punching does not yet work well for SI Touch-free.

Ski-o commission topic: Athletes starting too early

- The option of a punching start was discussed, but rejected as it requires picking up a map afterwards (else the athlete may take too long to look at map before punching) and that is not desired.
- The best option is a start gate. Receive map 15s before start, can start from 5s before start time up until start time.
- If a start gate is not possible, someone (strong!) must hold athletes solidly by the shoulder until their start time.

Mass start issues

- It is best to have a movie of the start. There should be a significant penalty (30s) for those starting early or looking at their map early.
- The very best map distribution method is that there are enough helpers to deliver the maps (one for every two athletes). The next best is to have the maps laid upside down in the mapholder

GPS tracking issues

- Norway and Finland to rent GPS devices for tracking at European champs.
- Note that this is good and the way forward.
- However, tracking requires that the maps be made by GPS.
- Also, there become issues with live-broadcast. For interval start races, we will have to have quarantine. The quarantine must have ample room to warm up and also a warm space for before the race.
- Fairness issue of how much of map is shown online if it is also used in subsequent races. If all of the maps is shown, it is most fair to distribute maps to competitors afterwards. But the organizers should show as little of map as to make GPS tracking interesting (white out areas not used by the present competition) and hopefully will use different areas around the arena on subsequent days.

Next year's World Cup season

- Currently being worked on. Something early in Finland, later joint Norway/Sweden. Both to include camps beforehand for trianing. EOC not decided yet.

Military Games

- Important. At least Norway, Finland, China, Russia, Switzerland, France sending teams. Important to have good racers showcasing the sport. The relay is planning of been changed from 3 men to 2 men.

World Ranking System

- The current system isn't great for athletes that aren't able to participate in early-season WREs. On the other hand, it is good to encourage athletes to attend these WREs. 12 months rolling ranking suggested. The feelings of the athlete's commission are mixed on this.

IOF Event Adviser feedback

AC have recent years seen a lot of EA mistakes in events and want EA to do better jobs at the events. Organisers are doing their best, but they need correct guidance. AC want to write a report directly after each major event about the event to all event advisers. Also coming organisers should read this report so mistakes are not getting done over again

Common mistakes:

- Turn at controls in the beginning at mass start
- Only one first control in start of a mass start have never worked!
- Dangerous control placing: steep downhills, especially in mass start and when some forkings are not having the control
- Controls punching units not fastend properly and fall over. Should be fastened to trees or well built racks
- It must be several last controls in mass start races and on both sides of the track!
- Should avoid obvious shortcutting or very long ones. Ski Orienteers will always shortcut if it is possible, even for long distances and steep up and downhills. Bingo and big disadvantage for early starters. Better to prepare a track. It is ski-o not foot O. If the organisers find a possible shortcut to crazy and dangerous that they think no one will/should take it they should mark the area forbidden or dangerous, otherwise some athletes will try to make the shortcut.
- Map readability. EA have to check the ISSkiOM is followed and that the tracks is drawn correctly.
- Start point visible from stadium/start.

Development of the sport (will be discussed more in coming meetings)

- Important to make our competitions understandable for media, public and service teams. After the start the speaker should inform about how the passing of stadium and etc will be and when the athletes are expected to come. Best is to show information/maps on big screen
- GPS tracking, big screen, good speakers and live internet coverage should be mandatory in IOF championships. Problems with maps quality and GPS reception is only usable excuses not to use gps.
- Quarantine zone. When needed quarantine sone should be used active by the organicers from start of gps tracking. Finish quarantine until start of gps tracking and from start of gps tracking start sone quarrantine. Strict rules for communication for quarantine sone. if quarantine sone for a long time it should be possible to sit/lay down in a heated room for the athletes.

Quarantine zone need to be big enough for warm up, ski waxing and ski testing. Preferable also warm up ski areas.

- It should be put a much bigger effort from the organizer to promote the events they are holding. Both for spectators, media and their sponsors. Big posters in the local city. Invite school classes to watch the races. They can have this as a project drawing international flags etc.

Ski changes in Long Distance

- Done by nations with enough support for coaches to lay out skis for incoming athletes, and even re wax skis between laps if the weather conditions dictate.
- Is this a good thing or not? Not good for nations that do not have this level of support, but good for raising the 'professional' nature of the sport, possibly. What is most fair? The ideal might be to have boxes for athletes like in skiathlon (xc skiing), so that nations without support can at least lay out pairs of skis to quickly change into although it does not solve the re waxing problem. We have no clear answer for this yet, we would like to discuss with other athletes not on the commission.

Coming events

- Major IOF SkiO events should be clear 2 years in advance
- WOC and JWOC organisers must hold Wcup the year before
- Bulletin 1 with embargoed area should be attached with apply and published immediately after they are given the event.