

WOC Qualification and Starting Order – Hearing replies

Overview

Official replies were received from 20 federations.

Distribution

Out-of-Europe: 5

AUS, CAN, NZL, RSA, USA

Europe: 15

AUT, BEL, BLR, DEN, ESP, FIN, FRA, GBR, GER, IRL, ITA, NOR, POL, SUI, SWE

AUS

Orienteering Australia supports in principle the proposals but has some concerns that there may be unforeseen consequences over time for non-European countries. No doubt the IOF will evaluate the implementation over the first two years and then consider whether any fine tuning is needed.

John Harding
Executive Officer
Orienteering Australia

AUT

Below the feedback of Austrian Orienteering Federation to the proposal put forward regarding WOC qualification and starting order in Middle and Long in the future. Firstly we would like to commend the working group for the proposal put forward. We appreciate the amount of work and many thoughts put into these papers. In light of the constraints given, the solutions suggested seem generally well rounded and viable.

There are some points we would like to comment on though:

Our primary concern is with the proposed start intervals of 1:30 minutes for middle distance and 2:00 minutes for long distance – the call for independent orienteering being at the heart of our sport. Grouping seems inevitable with these start intervals. We strongly believe the 2:00 minutes start interval shall be kept for Middle, and 3:00 minutes for Long (even at the cost of long competition times). If a shorter start interval is used for Long then there must be a spreading system.

Weighting of the relay seems high (although we do appreciate the relay as measure of a nation's strength as such) – a misspunch in the relay can have (too) serious consequences. Perhaps the better of the two past relay results could be used in the scoring to avoid this problem (for example).

Although addressed in the discussion paper, the problematic of promotion and risk of immediate relegation due to having fewer runners scored than others in the division seems to be not considered in the proposal put forward. This should be remedied, e.g. by a protected ranking in the first year after promotion.

The “red group” could be larger in our opinion (15-20 athletes).

In general it seems the countries will be pretty much cemented in their divisions. We cannot yet appreciate how this will play out in the future, but see the system as a bit too rigid in this aspect.

The matter of separate scoring of Middle and Long and subsequent separate qualification was discussed within the Austrian Federation; we have no clear common opinion on this though. Just let it be noted that there are some advocates for separate treatment (to bring more fluctuation into the system).

The possibility of two athletes of the same country starting in sequence should be avoided in our opinion.

Finally, although it makes no sense now to bemoan the abolishment of the qualification

races, a quotation from one of our young runners from last year: “Others celebrate medals, we celebrate qualifications”. This – a successful qualification for the final – has for many athletes for a long time been a first and primary goal at WOC, and an incentive to improve. We can see the merits also of a new system, but it will take some rethinking.

Also, we would like to take this opportunity to express our urgent wish to the IOF

committees that everything be done to protect and promote “real” forest orienteering and the original spirit of our sport.

With thanks to all working on these matters,

Erik Adenstedt
President of the Austrian Orienteering Federation

BEL

Please find below the comments of the Belgian Orienteering Federation with respect to the proposal for “World Orienteering Championships, Qualification and Starting order” as distributed February 5, 2013.

Despite the fact that we were not happy with the cancellation of the qualification races for long and middle, we must admit that this is the only feasible way to introduce the mixed sprint relay in the program of a global yearly World Championship. Please find below our comments to the proposal. First we indicate some of our concerns which we feel that should be discussed; in the second part we have added a number of remarks which are probably already taken care of but which we feel should be added to the final proposal in order to prevent discussions later on when the new rules are applied.

1. Concerns / proposals:

- a. In order to have a bigger change we propose that the promotion / relegation between division 2 and 3 is done for 2 countries instead of just 1.
- b. Another concern for small countries is that it might be that we cannot attend a World Championship when it takes place in another continent. Our funding is very limited and all our athletes are full amateurs, so the travelling cost might be insuperable. Therefore we propose that when a country cannot send a team to the WOC, the points collected in the previous year are taken into account to do the calculation. When a second year in a row there is no delegation, relegation will be the result.

2. Topics to be included to cope with special cases:

- a. What with the points when 2 (or more) athletes do have exactly the same time?
- b. How many points does an athlete or a team gets when it is disqualified?
- c. For the promotion / relegation: what if 2 countries do have the same number of points? Will there be a second criteria (e.g. the best result in the relay)?

So far our comments to the proposal. We hope that also the concerns from the smaller countries are considered during the evaluation of the feedback.

Walter Van Krunkelsven
Secretary-General
Belgian Orienteering Federation

BLR

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Mr. Brian Porteous, President
of the International Orienteering Federation

Minsk, March 15, 2013

**Comments of the Belarusian Orienteering Federation
on the proposal to remove the qualification races for
the Middle and Long finals of the World
Orienteering Championships 2014 and onwards**

Dear Brian,

Belarusian national team participates in the World Orienteering Championships since 1993. Having some objective financial difficulties we could not participate in all WOCs. Since that time we have witnessed a growth of level of our strongest runners and the popularity of orienteering as a sport within the country. Nowadays orienteering in Belarus is almost as popular as it was in golden times of 1980-1990.

When our team took part in the World Orienteering Championships for the first time, our level was not very high. For us it was a big success to have one runner in a final. Now we normally have two finalists for middle and long. In finals Belarusian orienteers are not at the bottom of the protocol (WOC 2010 – 14th place, WOC 2012 – 11th and 35th places, EOC 2012 – 25th and 25th places).

Young orienteers see performance of our national team, and feel that it is quite real to achieve good results at the World Orienteering Championships. Thus they have increased motivation for hard training.

The coaching council of the Belarusian Orienteering Federation sees that new IOF proposals (to remove qualification races and to introduce quotas for nations) may indicate an increasing bias in favor of sprint disciplines and oppression of classic forest orienteering.

Throughout the history Belarus saw many devastating wars. Huge damage was caused by the World War II. Many towns have been turned into ruins. Belarus was

restored in the 1950's – 1960's with introduction of active construction of rectangular buildings. We have very few old historical beautiful places in our cities, where we can make an exciting and complicated sprint orienteering. Our primary focus is on the forest orienteering.

Our comments on the 2012 IOF General Assembly's decision are as follows:

1. To preserve existing rules of the World Orienteering Championships.
2. If it is impossible to keep the existing rules, we propose to run qualifying races before the World Orienteering Championships, and to run finals in the WOC official program (as it is practiced in many sports).
3. Our main request is: do not to introduce quotas for national teams, because it is impossible to objectively assess levels of national sports teams.

– If you compare national teams according to results of one or two previous WOC this system is very sensitive to abnormal results.

For example:

1) A mistake of one relay runner leads to disqualification of the team and is a great step back in the struggle between nations, that does not show the real level of the entire team.

2) Due to economic difficulties, any national team may not go to a remote WOC (eg. Australia, Japan, USA). This non-participation in 1 WOC throws it down to the third division (i.e. for 2 years back), since results from the preceding 2 years are counted. It means that 1 runner during 2 next years will have to pick up his nation from the third division. However, the level of that nation's strongest runners did not reduce and the level of orienteering within that country did not fall down to the level of countries-beginners.

– If we'll try to compare national teams according to their results from many events (like in the biathlon World Cup stages) this comparison will not be sportive because it will be a competition of budgets of national teams to take part in as many starts as possible.

We believe that the most democratic choice is to preserve the qualification races.

Yours sincerely,

Chairman of the Belarusian
Orienteering Federation



Andrei Morozov

CAN

Here is feedback from Orienteering Canada regarding the WOC Qualification and starting order proposal presented by the Foot-orienteering committee.

We feel that the current proposal are not in the interest of the developing orienteering countries and consequently not in the IOF's interest of making WOC a truly global event.

STRONG NEED FOR A QUALIFICATION RACE

We worry a great deal about the impact of this proposal on forest orienteering for the smaller and growing orienteering nations. We want to see a qualification race for Division 2 and 3 teams added at the beginning of the WOC schedule. This can be a lower key race in terms of arena production and spectator access. The idea is that Division 2 athletes can enter one athlete (who isn't already qualified) and Division 3 athletes can enter 2 athletes (who aren't already qualified). The top, say, 10-15 athletes from this qualification race would get a spot in the WOC final. Ideally there would be two races, but understanding the organizational burden, we would be satisfied with only one qualification race.

Without this qualification race, we will have smaller teams at WOC, and the teams will be focused on sprint specialists. Our relay team which forms a key part of the division scheme will not necessarily have our best forest athletes. We worry about the overemphasis on sprint and less focus on forest orienteering for the Division 2 and 3 teams. The over-emphasis on sprint at the WOC level is out of sorts with the general state of orienteering.

For the small and developing orienteering nations, the qualification races are a key part of the WOC experience. They give an athlete HOPE to pursue that highest level of elite orienteering – the final of a World Championship race. Without the qualification races, we fear that many of our top athletes (or more specifically just below our top athletes) will lose their motivation and their hope to reach a WOC "forest" final will be missing. We worry about this lack of hope will be a real detriment to forest orienteering at the elite level in the developing orienteering nations.

We would like to better understand the rationale for a start window of 70 for women and 80 for men. We want to better understand the consequences of increasing the start window by 10-20 athletes. Is that truly problematic?

PROMOTION / RELEGATION SYSTEM

We approve the proposed promotion/ relegation concept, but we worry that using two years of points is overly complicated and unfair. We wonder if one year would be simpler and better.

By using two years of points, it appears that a team recently promoted to a high division is disadvantaged the following year. Compared to others in their new division, it appears that they are disadvantaged by having had fewer runners scoring points at the first of the two WOC events counting in the score. This system also provides the reverse effect to a team moving down a division.

START ORDER PROPOSAL

We **ONLY** agree to use the WRE system if there are adequate changes to the system to make it fair. We understand and appreciate that that process is underway and we look

forward to seeing the proposal for a different system.

By eliminating the qualification races, there are fewer WRE races at WOC which have traditionally been instrumental in helping our top Canadian athletes gain and maintain WRE points.

If the new WRE system is acceptable, we want randomization by group throughout the start list, not just for the red group. For instance first top 10 athletes are randomized (the red group), then the second 10 athletes, then the next ten or 15, etc. It's more interesting and can provide an interesting media opportunity around the start draw.

RULE 12.9

We would like Rule 12.9 to stay in place. The likelihood for collaboration has not disappeared. There is still a need for this rule.

INITIAL SET UP OF THE SYSTEM

It is not fair to use 2012 results. Teams should know beforehand that this system will be used based on their results. For a variety of reasons we had a very small women's team at WOC 2012. Had we known that our results would be this instrumental in setting up future WOC participation; we likely would have encouraged a different scenario with our female athletes, as challenging as that would have been for us given the circumstances.

If the new system is adopted we would like to see it in place starting at WOC 2015, using WOC 2013 and 2014 as the setup years, when all the athletes and teams understand the full consequences of the results in terms of future WOC qualification.

SPOTS FOR REGIONAL CHAMPIONS, WORLD CHAMPION and HOST NATION and MINIMUM QUALITY STANDARD

We support these.

ON-GOING USE OF THIS SYSTEM

As you have mentioned it may be that the method used to initially set up the system, may not be the best in terms of fairness for the system on an on-going basis. We would like re-assurance from the IOF that the system will be closely monitored and analyzed to ensure that it is a fair system and does provide a reasonable mechanism for improving nations to move up appropriately.

Charlotte MacNaughton

On behalf of Orienteering Canada's High Performance Committee

DEN

We thank you for the proposal regarding World Orienteering Championships, Qualification and starting order. You have done a great job turning the decision made by the General Assembly in Lausanne into a very concrete proposal. We know that it is a very difficult task to make a proposal like this. There are a lot of stakeholders who have their own ideas as to how the rules will be most fair. We know that it is impossible to make a suggestion that everybody agrees upon. However, though the suggestion is easily understandable – it is still too complex to explain to outsiders such as journalists. You cannot calculate the result with a pen and paper right after the competitions. You have to wait for the computer result. We need a more simple system - a system everybody understands.

We do not have the perfect solution. We prefer that the discussion is moved back to General Assembly. We fear that this is a step in the wrong direction – that this will make our sport even more complex and difficult to understand.

That being said – if the decision is to continue down the path with dividing nations into three divisions we would like to state four concerns regarding the proposed rules:

- In the relay a good result is of enormous importance. As it is a question about qualification for the individual races we feel that the importance is too big. If a team is disqualified it is disastrous. The fact that the nation ending as the 22nd team in the relay gets 36 points also means that a nation without a full relay team has a great disadvantage in the fight for a place among the 22 that will make it to division 2.
- The big spread in points in the top of the individual result lists means that one world class runner almost alone can ensure the nation a place in division 1. Also - one runner with one top result can ensure his/her nation a place in Division 2 – even if he/she is the only runner from this nation.
- The leaving out of randomness in the start list for everybody except top 10 means that there is a big risk that most runners will start in the exact same order in the middle and long distance.
- By automatically promoting/relegating one team from each division there is a risk that we may promote a nation instead of a much stronger nation.

Our suggestions:

- That the points given in the relay be changed to: 80-75-70-65-60-55-50-45-40-35-30-25-20-18-16-14-12-10-8-7-6-5-4-3-2-1-0 (this means points for the best 26 teams)
- That the points given in the individual competition be changed to: 80-75-70-65-61-59-57-55-53-51-50-49-48.....2-1-0 (this means points to the best 60 runners)
- That we still have a random start draw – but that the runners are divided into starting groups of 10. The 10 runners with the best World ranking as of the day before the competition are in the last start group. The 10 runners with the 11th to the 20th best World ranking are in the second last start group – and so on. When there are less than 20 runners left they are all placed in the start group immediately before, which will therefore consist of somewhere between 10 and 19 runners.
- To make sure that a nation does not automatically get promoted ahead of a much stronger nation we suggest that the best nation from the lower division must have a better score than the nation it gets promoted ahead of – after the relegated team has its best score on each individual competition subtracted. The best team in division 2 must therefore score higher with their two runners than the last team in division 1 does with their second and third best runner

Why these suggestions?

According to our calculations the results of WOC 2012 would give the following results:

Men			Women		
Nation	Sum of points	Number of places	Nation	Sum of points	Number of places
1 NOR	518	3	1 SUI	626	3

2	FRA	473	3	2	FIN	540	3
3	CZE	451	3	3	SWE	515	3
4	LAT	441	3	4	RUS	408	3
5	SUI	421	3	5	NOR	392	3
6	SWE	402	3	6	DEN	338	3
7	DEN	275	3	7	CZE	329	3
8	UKR	275	3	8	GBR	282	3
9	FIN	274	2	9	LTU	278	2
10	RUS	237	2	10	AUT	238	2
11	LTU	228	2	11	FRA	211	2
12	AUT	213	2	12	UKR	202	2
13	ITA	195	2	13	HUN	200	2
14	EST	190	2	14	EST	189	2
15	BLR	169	2	15	POL	137	2
16	GBR	153	2	16	LAT	130	2
17	POL	135	2	17	AUS	122	2
18	BUL	135	2	18	NZL	106	2
19	BEL	133	2	19	ESP	102	2
20	SVK	118	2	20	USA	97	2
21	HUN	116	2	21	ITA	95	2
22	AUS	67	2	22	CHN	95	2
23	ESP	64	1	23	BEL	82	1
24	POR	62	1	24	GER	80	1
25	ROU	60	1	25	BUL	77	1
26	GER	53	1	26	CAN	48	1
27	CRO	49	1	27	TUR	28	1
28	NZL	49	1	28	HKG	24	1
29	IRL	42	1	29	BRA	9	1
30	BRA	16	1	30	POR	6	1
31	CAN	12	1	31	JPN	6	1
32	USA	8	1		SRB	0	1
33	TUR	4	1		TPE	0	1
34	CHN	3	1		GRE	0	1
	JPN	0	1		SVK	0	1
	HKG	0	1		BLR	0	1
	KOR	0	1		SLO	0	1
	MDA	0	1				
	NED	0	1				
	MKD	0	1				
	GRE	0	1				
	SLO	0	1				
	PRK	0	1				
	ARG	0	1				
	TPE	0	1				
	KGZ	0	1				
	KEN	0	1				

SRB

0

1

The Relay

In the men's class Russia held 6th position after the individual competitions – the Czech Republic held the 7th position. After their relay victory the Czech Republic holds the 3rd position with 176 points to spare down to the 7th position. (These are more points than you get for two individual bronze medals). Russia on the other hand was disqualified and drops down to the 10th position with 165 points up to the 6th position they had before the relay – and 38 points up to division 1.

Of course the Czech Republic should be rewarded for their great victory. But with this one good relay result they have gone from fighting for one of the last places in division 1 – to having ensured their place if they in 2013 score the same as the 21st placed nation in 2012. And of course the disqualification of Russia should have some consequences – but not this severe. (Not to mention if a situation like in the relay I 2009 - where the best four teams in the men's competition dropped out – three of them to help the injured Swedish runner - should occur again).

In the women's class Belgium lost a quite certain place in division 2 by not having a relay team.

It is a different set of skills that is needed when you run a relay. The best relay team does not necessarily consist of the three best individual runners. A good relay result shows that you have three strong runners – and we therefore find it fair that points are rewarded for the relay. But the way the points are distributed in the proposal we feel that the relay is more important than the individual result. And as it is the number of runners in the individual competitions that are at stake we feel that the relay has too big importance.

Also we do not find it fair that if your last leg runner loses the sprint finish and ends up as 4th instead of 1st it costs the nation 126 points – more than you get for winning the long distance?

The spread in the top of the result list

In the current proposal one world class runner can gather 240 points in the two individual competitions. In 2012 it took 275 points for the men to get in division 1. This means that with a 22nd place in the relay – or two 43rd positions in the a-final for one other runner from the nation – would ensure four places in the final next year (including the extra place for the world champion).

You can of course use the same argument against our suggestion to the change. In our suggestion two good runners can still carry a 3rd (or even a 4th) runner with a very low level with them to the final. The changes however mean that three runners placed as 28th, 35th and 40th are worth as much as one world champion. If the aim of the rules is to ensure that all top 30-40 runners have a place in the final we feel that the changes we have suggested will help achieve this.

As you can see from the points below based on our suggestions there are very few changes in the order of the nations. It is still the same nations in division 1 – and there is only one change in division 2 for both the men and the women.

But the difference in points is a lot smaller. It will be easier for a nation like Russia to close the gap and ensure the place in division 1.

Men

	Nation	Sum of points
1	FRA	413
2	NOR	393
3	LAT	345
4	SWE	337
5	SUI	337
6	CZE	291

Women

	Nation	Sum of points
1	FIN	429
2	SUI	422
3	SWE	394
4	RUS	344
5	NOR	328
6	DEN	288

7	DEN	230	7	CZE	281
8	UKR	227	8	GBR	233
9	FIN	226	9	LTU	226
10	RUS	212	10	AUT	192
11	LTU	181	11	FRA	165
12	AUT	162	12	UKR	152
13	EST	146	13	HUN	150
14	ITA	145	14	EST	141
15	BLR	131	15	LAT	130
16	GBR	107	16	AUS	88
17	BUL	98	17	POL	86
18	POL	86	18	BEL	82
19	BEL	81	19	ESP	70
20	HUN	76	20	NZL	66
21	SVK	68	21	ITA	57
22	ROU	60	22	CHN	51
23	CRO	49	23	USA	49
24	POR	34	24	CAN	48
25	AUS	33	25	BUL	41
26	NZL	25	26	GER	38
27	ESP	22	27	BRA	9
28	IRL	22	28	JPN	6
29	GER	21	29	POR	6
30	CHN	3	30	TUR	0
31	BRA	0	31	HKG	0
32	USA	0			
33	CAN	0			
34	TUR	0			

Starting order

We see no reason why the starting order should be random for the best 10 runners – and not for the rest. There is a big chance that the starting order will be exactly the same in the middle distance and the long distance if we just follow the World Ranking. If a very strong runner for some reason is placed lower on the World ranking than his/her current shape justifies the same runner starting ahead of him/her in both the middle distance and long distance can get the advantage of being caught up on both distances.

We therefore suggest that the World Ranking is used to divide the runners into starting groups.

Thank you for listening

We hope you will take these suggestions into consideration. We feel that the changes add to the likelihood that the 45 best runners in the world will be in the final – while we still meet the not so strong nation's wishes of having at least one place in each final.

ESP

Related to this proposal, Spanish Orienteering Federation wants to express again our disagreement with this Championship model, as we did in the IOF General Assembly.

We think that with this proposal, promotion of orienteering in developing countries will be damaged, and this sport won't increase to a worldwide level.

Countries with only one runner in Long and Middle distance, won't participate with full teams only for Relay and Sprint. This will be directly connected with the number of relay teams participating, there will be countries without representation and other nations with two teams (with the opportunity of classification for both teams), so discriminations and differences will increase.

Víctor García Berenguer
FEDO President

FIN

Finnish answer for the proposed WOC qualification and starting order

The proposal seems to be well prepared and we do have only some small comments.

Overall the planned structure is good. Divisions are interesting approach and fare for the nations. However, the proposed starting order means WRE system should be analysed very carefully and all the detail considered how the WRE structure should be reviewed.

At least these facts needs to be analysed:

1. Only few WRE competitions means difficulties to reach points. This means less successful athletes/countries have to travel more and more for WRE competitions.
2. How long athletes will keep their points (in case of insurances, pregnancies)
3. Top juniors will not be selected to teams of WOCs because they don't have WRE points.
4. An athlete wins national qualification but he/she has weak WRE position. The athlete would have early start slot. Risk: an athlete will not be selected to team because nation has athletes with higher WRE points.

Some solutions:

1. Enough WRE competitions
2. Enough time to collect points and keep them
3. Good system of calculation. Higher points from EOC; EOC, WC competitions.

Conclusion: the proposed WOC qualification system is good but it needs very careful analysis for the review of WRE.

Finnish Orienteering Federation
Managing Director Mika Ilomäki

FRA

Here are the comments from the French Orienteering Federation (FFCO) about the IOF proposal about WOC qualification and starting order

WOC Qualification system

- FFCO agree with the division system, based on the last 2 or 3 WOC (in order to avoid relegation due to injury or misspunch). FFCO also agree with the idea to consider separate rankings for middle and long distance.
- 70-80 runners into WOC final seem too much to guarantee a fair and interesting competition. FFCO suggest to reduce the number of countries in the second division, and to increase the minimum amount of WRE points to enter to the final.
- The point system seems to give a big influence to the relay competition. Based on previous WOC results, the best way to rise in the division system is to have a good relay team. And develop a good relay team in order to run individual races seems strange. FFCO suggest reconsidering the relay scoring system.

WOC starting system

- FFCO agree with the general issues of the proposals for the starting system
- The reduction of the starting interval will not guarantee the fairness of the competition. There will be more groups and runners who will help each other, and this is not suiting the spirit of orienteering. FFCO, and French elite athletes strongly suggest to maintain the starting interval as it is now: 2 minutes for middle distance and 3 minutes for long distance.

GBR

British Orienteering has consulted with its athletes, staff and pertinent volunteers and has the following comments:

- We have concern about the use of World Ranking as being the best way to determine starting order
- It has been suggested that the team size limit should be greater than the current 7, given the addition of the new Sprint Relay format; there are mixed views on this. Some nations would benefit from an increase (e.g. Switzerland, that has Sprint specialists), while others could be disadvantaged (especially the nations that can't afford to send more athletes, which arguably could include GBR). We think we should try the new WOC format with the limit of 7, before changing it.
- A suggestion that the "red group" should be larger than the proposed 10 in the Men's race; perhaps 20.
- There has been no feedback about the acceptability, or not, of the proposed division system.

I believe the IOF is already aware of the concerns about World Ranking as a suitable way of setting start lists, since the proposal mentions further reviews and possible changes.

I hope this helps!

Mike Hamilton

GER

We thank the working group of the Foot Orienteering Commission for their suggestions and all the work they have done.

In spite of this the German federation is not very happy with the future model of the World Orienteering Championships, which was accepted at the last General Assembly. Especially we are not convinced of the positive effects of a WOC every year, which is disadvantageous for smaller nations seen from our point of view. We still miss an evaluation which gives a clear proof of the advantage of this model.

We want to draw attention to two points:

The qualification rules will be introduced retroactive. Results from WOC 2012 will be the basis, which no one knew before. It would be more fair, to introduce the system in 2015, based on the results of 2013 and 2014.

If the start interval for the middle distance is reduced to 1.30 min, forking systems like butterflies should be used.

Finally we want to ask about the effect of WOC every year. It was introduced ten years ago. Is there any evaluation of the consequence? If not, it is time to conduct an investigation.

IRL

The first thing that must be said is that the Irish Orienteering Association think that the current set up of WOC is better than the set up about to be introduced.

It would be good to see the qualification races retained. An option would be to keep the qualification races but have them all in the days before WOC starts. Some countries or runners could pre-qualified based on previous WOC results or world ranking. The smaller countries can enter the 3 runners in the qualification races where a limited number of spots are given out for the finals the next week.

The removal of the qualification races from WOC will limit the number of people that smaller countries can send. This will become a problem with regards to the relay. This is highlighted by the reference group but we think more should be done. Countries in division 3 can send a maximum of 2 people to run in the forest events. We would propose that countries could nominate either middle or long to have 2 people starting thus allowing countries to send 3 people and have a relay team. Countries that do not send a relay team will find it impossible to get promoted as the points reward is so great.

It is worth reiterating that having smaller nations only send one Middle/Long runner (which is what will happen for some countries) will be detrimental to the global development of the sport.

Having a Mixed Sprint Relay at WOC will do nothing for orienteering, outside perhaps of the largest countries where it may replace televising some other orienteering event. Middle and Relay remain fantastic events for TV, and effort would have been better spent ensuring good production of these, rather than remodelling WOC. At the moment everything that is being done is based towards TV. So orienteering's best chance to become more popular is to be unique and offer something new to the viewer. We would like to see some more done in this area rather than changing WOC.

With regards to the proposal that the start intervals will be reduced to 2 minutes in the long final and 1:30 in the middle final these start intervals are too short and will have an impact on medals and podium places. The IOF must be willing to apply Rule 12.9. People should have to orienteer their way to WOC medals.

The following points are on the proposed Division system:

- The initial set up of the system seems ok. The only change we would like to see is that all competitors earn points.
- Promotion and Relegation is very unclear. It just mentions highest and lowest scoring countries will be promoted and relegated.
- If all team members' scores are added, then it will be very difficult for teams with lower number of members to outscore teams in the divisions above them. This is the criteria for more than the standard number being promoted and relegated. This way of comparing countries is completely unfair, and biased towards the countries that are in the higher divisions.
- If you are promoted the points are based on the previous two years so you are at a disadvantage the first year you are promoted. There must be something done to address this issue or it is very likely that the countries that are promoted will be relegated the next year. A suggestion is that if you are promoted that you are guaranteed 2 years in the new division. This means you could not be relegated the first year and that you will be competing with the other teams equally the year after. Also the team that is relegated in the first year after they are relegated will have an unfair advantage as they will have a year in which they have an extra runner to count.
- The idea that the host nation has a team of 3 is a good idea. There is no provision made for the points scored by the home nation. This is an issue if the hosts are in

division 2 or 3. A suggestion is that a runner or runners to score are chosen before the race in line with what division the host nation is in.

- The new system will make it difficult for teams to know if any issue arising during the races will have an effect on their divisional status. If a team wishes to be absolutely sure that they do not miss any opportunity to qualify to a higher division, all teams must question any issue that may affect their leader board position. We would like to know if the IOF has considered this and how do they propose to deal with awkward situations and do they have the protocols and capacity to deal with them?
- Using WRE scores to determine starting order is problematic. WOC is the one event all nations want to participate in, and at present they start on an equal footing. Many athletes from poorer nations (or ones outside Europe) do not have access to enough events, and the system operates with few enough athletes and events. To get a good start position in the final will be very difficult for the smaller nations which will lead to no TV coverage and no promotion of orienteering in those countries. A separate sprint World Ranking is proposed is this definitely going to happen?

In summary the new WOC completely favours the larger nations and does nothing to develop the sport.

Darren Burke
Director of High Performance Orienteering
Irish Orienteering Association

ITA

Hallo!

The Italian Orienteering Federation is positive to the proposal.

Best regards.

Francesca Pedrini

**La Segreteria Generale
Federazione Italiana Sport Orientamento**

NOR

Here is Norwegian input to the proposed rules for qualification to the World Orienteering Championship (WOC):

Norway supports the proposal with the following comments:

It is important that the WOC is used as a strategic tool to create greater awareness of orienteering as a elite sport, increased media coverage and visibility. Norway underline that it is very important that any changes to the WOC program supports this strategy and not only attend technical considerations. Norway ask IOF to look further in to the amendment, Norway and other nations have suggested on previous occasions (IOF Congress)

In future work, it is very important that IOF clarifies that the WOC is the most important event and sets clear requirements for the organizers. TV coverage and focus on marketing and visibility is very important matters and should not be a matter for a local organizer only. It must be an absolute WOC quality requirement that the TV-production quality is in terms of international broadcasters. This could not happen without the IOF takes the lead in this work and clearly sets the requirements and follow up with resources to make progress in this work.

Comments to the proposal:

- Norway notes that the proposal is a bias of the traditionally strong and rich nations.
- The proposal is supported on the basis that;
 - Make more of the top runners in the Long and Medium finals.
 - A nation must be top 7 of nations to have three runners in the final. It gives a positive dynamics of power between nations.
 - Makes about 80 runners per class with a minimum quota of one run per nation. Provides a large but manageable starting field.
 - Provide regional winners a personal place. This contributes to increased global visibility.
 - Provides the host nation with full quota of 3 runners. This provides positive effect on WOC and increased awareness of home runners.
 - Contains a "Red Group" and provides an opportunity to use the World rankings fair.

Other comments:

- Norway is unsure whether it is a good solution to have two athletes from the same nation in a row in the starting field. It provides as a result that is "allowed" to follow other runners. Norway is not against the proposal, but ask IOF to look in to possible consequences.
- Norway could consider supporting a proposal to introduce a "easy" qualifying for some minor nations the day before. Such a low threshold qualification should then be organize as a regular competition in the public races.

Bjørnar Valstad

NZL

Submission to the IOF on proposed changes to WOC qualification and starting order

Executive summary

The structure of the proposed changes introduces more of a barrier for non-European based athletes. If the sport is to truly look to become more accepted as a world-wide sport then it must look to reduce barriers for international participation outside of Europe, not to increase barriers

- New Zealand does not support proposal 1.1: Introduction of a Division System.
- Under 1.6: Regional champion has a personal place, in the case of Oceania champions this place should be for two years.

Introduction

Currently the World Orienteering Championships (WOC) is seen as the pinnacle competition for New Zealand elite orienteers. Depending on the year, competition, location and available runners, New Zealand will send a team ranging between 5—10 athletes. In recent years New Zealand has achieved much success in many aspects of orienteering. Some of this success has been at WOC but all of the successes have been affected in some way by WOC. Unfortunately the proposed changes for WOC qualification and starting order are not favourable to further developing orienteering in New Zealand at a high performance level. The following submission outlines reasons for concern and possible solutions that would benefit orienteering in New Zealand.

Removal of qualification races

Because of New Zealand's geographical location and the relative cost of travel to Europe, high level competition is not as frequent as it ideally could be. The qualification races at WOC provide good exposure for three runners from our nation to the highest level of racing. Obviously this isn't the reason for qualification races and it isn't the number one goal for New Zealand athletes but it provides first time WOC runners with the exposure which is otherwise hard to obtain when based in New Zealand.

There can be situations where removing qualification races may not fairly reflect a country's ability in certain terrain/style of orienteering. For example at WOC 2011 in France, New Zealand was one of six countries that qualified all three women for the middle final. Thus In this particular terrain, New Zealand was one country that prevailed. And it would seem to illustrate that by removing the chance for the minor (non-European) countries to prove their skill in certain terrain the final will not be an accurate reflection of the best 45 runners.

We understand that the removal of qualification races has been mooted for a number of reasons (tv/cost/organisation) but the idea of a qualification opportunity for division 2 and 3 nations immediately prior to the WOC finals week would really benefit New Zealand. This gives the chance for competitors to earn a place in the final that perhaps wouldn't be available under the proposed system.

Introduction of a division system for qualification

The proposal to rank countries with a division system for the purpose of WOC qualification is also detrimental to New Zealand's high performance development.

While the NZ federation is able to support its team at WOC by paying for entry and accreditation it is unable to afford to pay for their travel to and from WOC. Therefore because the cost to NZ-based athletes of participating at WOC when in Europe is prohibitive, not every year is specifically targeted by NZ orienteers. This means that the team's results can fluctuate depending on the amount of focus placed on that particular year. This could therefore result in New Zealand either having a lower

ranking than it perhaps deserved or athletes having to spend at least 4000 euro a year to ensure more than one place in a WOC final.

If this change is introduced then NZ would currently only qualify one man to compete in the middle distance final. So If, for example, the proposed changes applied for this year's World Champs in Finland and all New Zealand athletes made themselves available for selection then in the men's middle with only one place available, New Zealand would have to choose between:

- the current junior world champion in that discipline (Matt Ogden),
- a second runner who has qualified for three previous middle finals with a best placing of 21st (Chris Forne), and
- a third athlete currently 30th in the world cup rankings (Ross Morrison).

Unfortunately this is an issue that is unlikely to be isolated to just New Zealand or just for 2013. By not giving the athletes an opportunity to qualify themselves, the final field is unlikely to be a fair representation of the best 45 runners.

Regional championships

In general we agree with strengthening regional championships, such as Oceania, by providing places for the champions in each grade. However, as the Oceania championships are held only every second year, qualification of Oceania champions would cause fluctuations in NZ's potential team size.

Accordingly we recommend that the Oceania champion maintains their qualification right to WOC for two years instead.

Provision of support services

Having a smaller team makes the justification for paying for support services (managers, coaches) from the other side of the world more difficult. The end result is likely to be that NZ will send support officials less often – especially when WOC is in Europe, as it mostly is - and hence without the management support NZ athletes will underperform.

Participation at WOC

As some nations may only be granted final places for one or two runners this may be the full size of the nation's team. It is unlikely that non-European federations will be able to justify sending one or two additional runners if the sole event that they compete in will be the relay. This will then mean that the participation in the relay and overall WOC participation will not be as large as in previous years.

Pathways for junior development

The proposed changes will also affect the smaller nations in their own countries. With limited positions available in the national teams, the incentive to build depth and motivate athletes on the fringe will be tested. Currently NZ has a very strong group of juniors and we are fearful that these juniors will be disenfranchised when reaching elite level if there are limited opportunities at WOC. Moreover, if the pathways for international achievement are reduced this may, in turn, impact on the number of our juniors staying in the sport.

Conclusion

The structure of the proposed changes introduces more of a barrier for non-European based athletes. If the sport is to truly look to become more accepted as a world-wide sport then it must look to reduce barriers for international participation outside of Europe, not to increase barriers.

We believe that change 1.1: Introduction of a Division System will:

- Be less fair for non-European nations, such as New Zealand, than the present system;
- Reduce participation in the relays and therefore in WOC overall;
- Result in non-European nations, such as New Zealand, underperforming at WOC because of the reduced viability of providing support services;
- Impact on high performance development in New Zealand by reducing pathways for elite development and international participation opportunities.

If, however, 1.1 is introduced, New Zealand supports the opportunity for division 2 and 3 nations, immediately prior to the WOC finals week, to earn further places in the final that wouldn't be available under the proposed system.

In the case of change 1.6: Regional champion has a personal place, that for the Oceania champions this place should be for two years.

Duncan Morrison
NZOF High Performance Director
21 March 2013

Stuart Payne
NZOF General Manager

POL

Hello,

On the beginning we are very sorry for delay and we please for accept our position.

We are opposed to the introduction of the proposed amendments to the Rules of qualification for the WOC. These rules will reduce the number of competing countries and popularization of orienteering in the world.

Overall direction for WOC strongest start to promote some European countries. The new system will prevent the start of the countries which reach better results: Australia, New Zealand or other.

During the vote in Geneva, countries have chosen this option because it provided a place in the Final WOC each country member! However, in this proposal cut off this idea by introducing a limit of 500 points scored during the WRE events. WRE-ranking events are held mainly in Europe. In 2013, there will be two runs in South America, 1 race in Nord America 3-4 runs in Australia and New Zealand, 1st gear in Asia and 2 gears in Africa. In addition, the power counting players out there competing, we believe that the winner can get the required minimum 500 points. Thereby totally cut off part of the continents players during the WOC. Will no longer be possible, such as the promotional campaign during the last two World Championships in France and Switzerland where arrived at the invitation of the organizers of representations of "exotic" countries. And it is only through this action failed to reach 50 countries in the WOC. For 500 points condition, this number fall to 32-35 again.

In Poland, Ministry of Sport it will stop funding orienteering. The position of our government is that if the sport does not have a chance to participate in the Olympic Games is not to help him in the development and finance. In conducting the Rules in this form will be the concept of action in this regard by our government.

Best Regards

Krzysztof Kolakowski

RSA

RESPONSE TO PROPOSAL ON WOC QUALIFICATION AND STARTING ORDER

We would firstly like to thank all those who have been involved in working towards refining the WOC qualifications process and starting order. It is obviously a difficult job with lots of conflicting opinions.

The SAOF views itself as a small federation that falls into a 'developing' orienteering nation status. The federation has little funding and struggles to find enough competitors to compete regularly at World Championship events, most noticeably since WOC moved from a biannual to an annual championship. The focus within our federation is trying to increase the number of orienteers in the sport, with the majority of resources going towards this. As a result, the members of our national teams to World Champs are mostly self-funded. However, there is still an intense interest and demand for South Africa to improve its results at the elite level, particularly at WOC. We believe that we are not atypical of many other 'developing' orienteering countries, which also face issues surrounding small budgets, scarce resource distribution between different priorities and the costs of international travel to attend World Championships and other elite-level events.

We feel that the recent changes and the current proposal on WOC qualification are not in the interest of developing countries and thus not in the IOF interest of making WOC a global event. The changes will be discouraging to many athletes in developing countries; it will see the entrenchment of the sprint orienteering discipline over middle and long distance forest orienteering disciplines, retarding the development of elite athletes in these countries. If the IOF believes that the future of orienteering is to make itself a more global sport by having more elite orienteering taking place in more countries around the world, then the proposed changes are not beneficial to orienteering as a whole. WOC is currently seen as the highest level of competition in orienteering, and almost all elite orienteers in these countries will want to strive to be the best they can be, comparing themselves at this highest level of the sport.

Importance of WOC to Developing Countries

With the limited funding that elite athletes in developing countries receive, weak exchange rates and the high cost of long-distance travel that most athletes incur to travel to Europe from other continents, most elite orienteers in these countries are limited to spending only a few weeks at a time training and competing away from their own home countries. As such, not only is WOC the epitome of top level competition, but it is the only international-level competition that such athletes attend outside their country. The IOF does not have a sufficiently developed schedule of world class international events where developing nations can be exposed to the top levels of the sport. WOC therefore functions as a critical component of many developing nation's high performance programmes.

The status of WOC is currently extremely high, as not only do developing nation orienteers compete against the world's best, but it is one of the few occasions they have to compete against their peer nations, i.e. other developing countries from around the world. World Cup events and Regional Championships do not carry the

same status as WOC for developing countries, as they do not have the same level and scope of competition.

Minimum Number of Competitors per Event

According to the latest proposal, all 'developing' and 'weak' orienteering countries will find themselves in 'Division 3', limited to a single competitor in middle and long distance races, although with three allocated starts in the sprint discipline. After discussions with our current national squad athletes as well as athletes currently or recently attending JWOC (our future senior team members), the SAOF and its elite athletes expect that some or all of the following circumstances will result:

- Developing nations may begin to focus on the Sprint discipline only. Many countries, even among developing nations are under pressure from internal and external sources to produce results, and many may channel all their resources into just the Sprint discipline, where technical navigation skills are less demanding. Some of our athletes, who may be the 2nd or 3rd best in the country over long and middle distance, may try and focus on sprint orienteering instead.
- It will be difficult for developing countries to develop a pool of 'forest terrain' competitors, as only one athlete will be able to compete in each of the individual forest disciplines, with a strong possibility of that person being the same athlete for both middle and long distance. The possibilities for athletes in developing countries to participate in forest disciplines at WOC are significantly reduced.
- If a country has a single very good athlete competing in the Middle and Long events, this may retard the development of other future potentially good competitors who may not get an opportunity to compete in WOC middle and long events for a number of years in a row. There is little opportunity for them to gain experience at this high level of competition due to the stronger runner dominating in their country.
- There is likely to be an increase in the difference between the world's top orienteers and those from developing nations over time, particularly in middle and long distance as a smaller pool of developing country orienteers is exposed to this level of the sport. The likelihood of surprise results and breakthrough performances from weaker nations in these disciplines is reduced.
- With only one or maybe two specialist 'forest' competitors from the individual races, a developing country would find it difficult to enter a competitive team in the Relay. If such a team does enter, they would not be expected to do well. Such a team would need to comprise of athletes who would probably be chosen specifically for the sprint event, as selecting an individual to run only in the relay event and not also in individual events is not seen as a good use of resources, particularly given that many athletes are primarily self-funded.
- With a reduction in team size at WOC and the focus on the sprint discipline, some developing countries may find it difficult to justify sending teams to WOC in certain years. This would reduce the number of nations competing at WOC, which is contrary to the IOF's intention.
- The proposed system makes it very difficult for a developing country, even one

that becomes good at the sprint discipline, to make the transition to achieving good results in the forest disciplines.

The points above suggest that over time, WOC will see fewer countries competing for top places in the middle and long distance. WOC will also see an entrenchment of developing countries as 'sprint-only' nations. WOC may see fewer countries sending any participants to WOC.

The SAOF propose that to avert the situation above, a higher minimum number of slots for all countries at WOC is essential. Although we believe that a return to three start slots per country would be ideal, the allocation of a minimum of two start slots per country will alleviate many of the problems above. This will result in an increase in the total number of competitors per event above the 70-80 currently proposed to approximately 100 at current WOC attendance levels.

The Points Scoring System

Although complicated, we believe the proposed calculation system is reasonably fair. We would suggest that points are awarded to a lower position level (e.g. 80th in individual, and to 40th position in the relay). This should make competition between countries in Division 3 more interesting and reduce the number of countries tied with 0 points at the end of WOC.

There may also be a potential problem in points system for recently promoted countries to a higher division, in that they would then be at a serious disadvantage against the rest of their division from having had few runners scoring points at the first of the two WOC events counting in the score. This is likely to see certain countries continually moving up and down between divisions as they find it difficult to compete in the higher division due to having a poorer point history.

We would also like to note that using 2012 WOC results to determine selection criteria for future WOCs is unfair on some nations, as selection processes and team sizes may well have been different from those that would have taken place, had such nations known how the proposed qualification system would impact on their future. Such nations generally had under strength or incomplete teams and thus did not knowingly have the option to maximize their points score under the current proposal. They would be at a disadvantage against countries who unknowingly did maximize their points scoring possibilities. We suggest that an alternative start-up and initiation process is used to determine WOC qualifications places, maybe using only one year of WOC results prior to the first championships that implements the proposed qualification system.

Regional Champion has a Personal Place

South Africa appreciated the initiative of giving regional champions personal places in their specific WOC event, in that it will create a better representation of athletes from all corners of the globe. It must be noted that this will not resolve the problems for developing countries that are limited to one athlete in middle and long events. Instead, this may further entrench the dominance of certain countries on certain continents where a single country may already dominate. If the proposal is implemented as given, South Africa would obviously take advantage of the Regional Champion rule in order to obtain a 2nd starting slot by hosting an African Championship. However, the Championships would not necessarily have a

meaningful outcome for the foreseeable future, due to the current performance gap between South Africa and other orienteering nations on the African continent.

Demand on Minimum Quality

The SAOF supports a minimum WRE points score for starting in a final. However, we would encourage the IOF to consider a lower points value as the minimum athlete criteria, in the area of 200 – 300 points. This will give developing nations more flexibility whilst at the same time ensuring that all competitors starting a WOC final have shown sufficient standard to finish a WOC final within or close to the maximum time.

Use of World Rankings in determining Start Order

The SAOF believes that the use of the WRE system is one of the most logical methods for determining start order. However, we note that the WRE system will need to be reviewed. For developing nations, there is a significant problem in initiating point scoring WREs, with many events in more remote corners of the world often not attracting the minimum number of ranked orienteers to allow the event to award points. Statistical aberrations can also occur if a small population of ranked athletes in such a country do not compete regularly against the rest of the world ranked runners, creating skewed points allocations. For South Africa, WOC is the only regular WRE that South African competitors attend outside South Africa. Many competitors from developing countries will find it difficult to reach the maximum number of four ranking events in a twelvemonth period, given the few number of starting slots available to Division 3 countries, disadvantaging them in the start list against other countries where athletes have better access to more WREs in neighboring countries. We would thus propose that start lists based on the current WRE system be determined by the average score of participant in the WRE system and not the total score that counts the best 4 results.

Conclusion

The IOF has a series of goals at WOC. These include: getting more nations and nations from different regions to compete at WOC; reducing the costs and complexity of organizing WOC; reducing the duration of WOC; and making WOC more TV and spectator friendly. The problem is that many of these interests are sometimes conflicting, pulling WOC in different directions. Recent decisions have been made that were intended to help with reducing the organizational work load and with improving media and spectator coverage. However, these changes are also limiting the possibility of development in the long-term for new and emerging nations. We believe that all changes should constantly be reassessed as this process proceeds. Is there really a reason why the number of individual competitors should be 70-80 and not 100? The SAOF does not believe that an increased time frame for WOC competition is a major factor if the proposed 'red start' grouping for the World's top 10, together with the WRE-based start listing is applied, as television and spectator interest can still be focused on the final phase of the event.

In conclusion, in the interests of development of elite orienteering around the world and a system where in the future a higher number of countries can realistically compete for better results at WOC, we propose that the minimum number of starters for a country for all individual WOC Finals be increased. As an alternative, we propose that qualification races be re-introduced, either for all middle and long

distance competitors as per the current WOC model, or as a final selection for Division 3 (and maybe Division 2) nations. Possibilities for having a split Sprint / Forest WOC in alternating years should also be reconsidered, as they will allow for a reduced event burden for organizers as well as a shorter timeframe for WOC in regions more suitable for each separate type of competition.

Nicholas Mulder
High Performance Manager
South African Orienteering Federation
on behalf of the SAOF executive committee

SUI



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Finland

Olten, 14 March 2013

International Orienteering Championships, Qualification and Starting order Proposal of the IOF

Dear Björn

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to comment on the proposal of the IOF how to handle qualification and starting order for middle and long distance finals for World Orienteering Championships in foot orienteering.

Herewith we send you our propositions that were also discussed with the Swiss athletes:

1.1 Introduction of a Division system

We agree with the proposed principle. However, we propose the introduction of four divisions:

- Nations 1 - 4: 4 runners
- Nations 5 - 8: 3 runners
- Nations 9 - 22: 2 runners
- Nations 23 - : 1 runner

Reason: The best 4 nations should be able to nominate 4 runners. It is a fact that even runner no. 4 of the strong nations is on a much higher level than runner no. 2 of division 2 and most of the no. 1 runners of division 3. At World Championships, the best runners must be able to participate. This has to be given top priority and not the aim to conduct politically correct championships where everyone can participate.

Comments of athletes: very positive throughout

1.6 Regional Champion has a personal place

We agree with the proposed principle. Provided that there are 4 divisions as suggested in 1.1, we propose that if the regional champion is from one of the top 4 nations, there is no further starting place for this nation.

Reason: It has to be avoided that a nation has 6 starting places (4 + European Champion + World Champion).

2.2 The Red start group

We agree with the proposed principle.

Proposal: The starting field is divided in groups of 10 according to the World Ranking. Within the groups the starting order is randomly drawn. The best group will start at the end.

Reason: With this rule it can be avoided that the start list in the finals is identical and that the runners always have the same opponent starting before and after them. Yet, the best runners start in the end and the tension remains high.

Comments of athletes: positive throughout

2.6 Final decision on race-programme

We propose to add two additional sentences: *The programme is to be put in a way that the best athletes in the world can participate in all the finals. The program has to be approved by the athlete's commission as well as the SEA, the TV producers and the sports director.*

Reason: The best runners should be able to start in the finals so that Orienteering is taken seriously.

Comments of athletes: positive throughout

Closing remark

WOC 2012 long distance final has proven that having an appropriate start interval (3 minutes) best prevents following. 2 minutes start interval for TV reason should therefore be ruled out.

Many thanks for the consideration of the Swiss contribution to the IOF proposals to qualification and starting order in International Orienteering championships.

Best wishes,
Swiss Orienteering



Karin Haueter
Secretary General

SWE

Here is a short response from the team management in Swedish orienteering association on WOC qualifying proposal.

One thing we like to mention is that the Nordic proposal on WOC program would give that we could have qualifying events remaining...

The proposal, which now stands does not affect the big orienteering nations very much, but we have to make sure what is best overall for orienteering.

We think that the article by Jan Kochbach at www.worldofdo.com is very good and his proposal to add an extra qualification some day before the WOC starts is good.

In the proposal from the IOF there are also some details that need to be clarified. eg protected ranking.

Håkan Carlsson
Landslagschef / Förbundskapten

USA

Dear Bjorn,

In response to your request, here is the feedback from Orienteering USA regarding the latest developments for wac.

First of all, the United States thanks the committee for its hard work, its dedication to our sport and its willingness to secure input from around the world on this important topic.

However, it is the United States' overall position, as it was at the 2012 General Assembly in Switzerland that we are fundamentally against any change in the current structure. If it is the goal of the IOF to broaden the appeal of orienteering throughout the globe, then the proposal agreed upon in Switzerland does exactly the opposite. Some would argue that this will give the division 2 and 3 countries something to strive for; however all it does is decrease our opportunities by providing fewer entries for wac competition. However the congress has voted for change and your committee has been tasked with implementing that change.

Therefore, the United States is generally in favor of the committee's proposal, thinking that it is as fair and balanced as it can be. However, we would like to raise five points for consideration.

1. **Regional Championships:** The current proposal assumes that a region has a championship every year. This is not the case in North America where we hold our regional championship every other year (2012,2014 ...). As this is the case, we would request that the North American champion be given a starting position in the two wac's following that championship assuming that athlete makes their national team.
2. **Nations Moving Up in Class:** The current proposal calls for a two year average when they earn the opportunity to move up in class. The first year is their last year in the lower division. This puts those nations at a disadvantage. We request that only the second year's performance be taken into consideration for that term.
3. **Implementation Timetable:** The proposal calls for the 2012 competition year to serve as the first year of measure. We feel that this retroactive timetable hurts countries that may have issues in 2012 and decided not to field full teams. We recommend that 2013 be the first year of measure.
4. **Rule 12.9:** We would like Rule 12.9 to stay in place. The likelihood for collaboration has not disappeared. There is still a need for this rule.
5. **The Shifting to Sprint Races with Fewer Opportunities for Forest Orienteering:** We agree with Canada's position on this issue.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback. Should you have any questions, don't hesitate to contact me at gjs@orienteeringusa.org

Glen Schorr
On behalf of Team USA