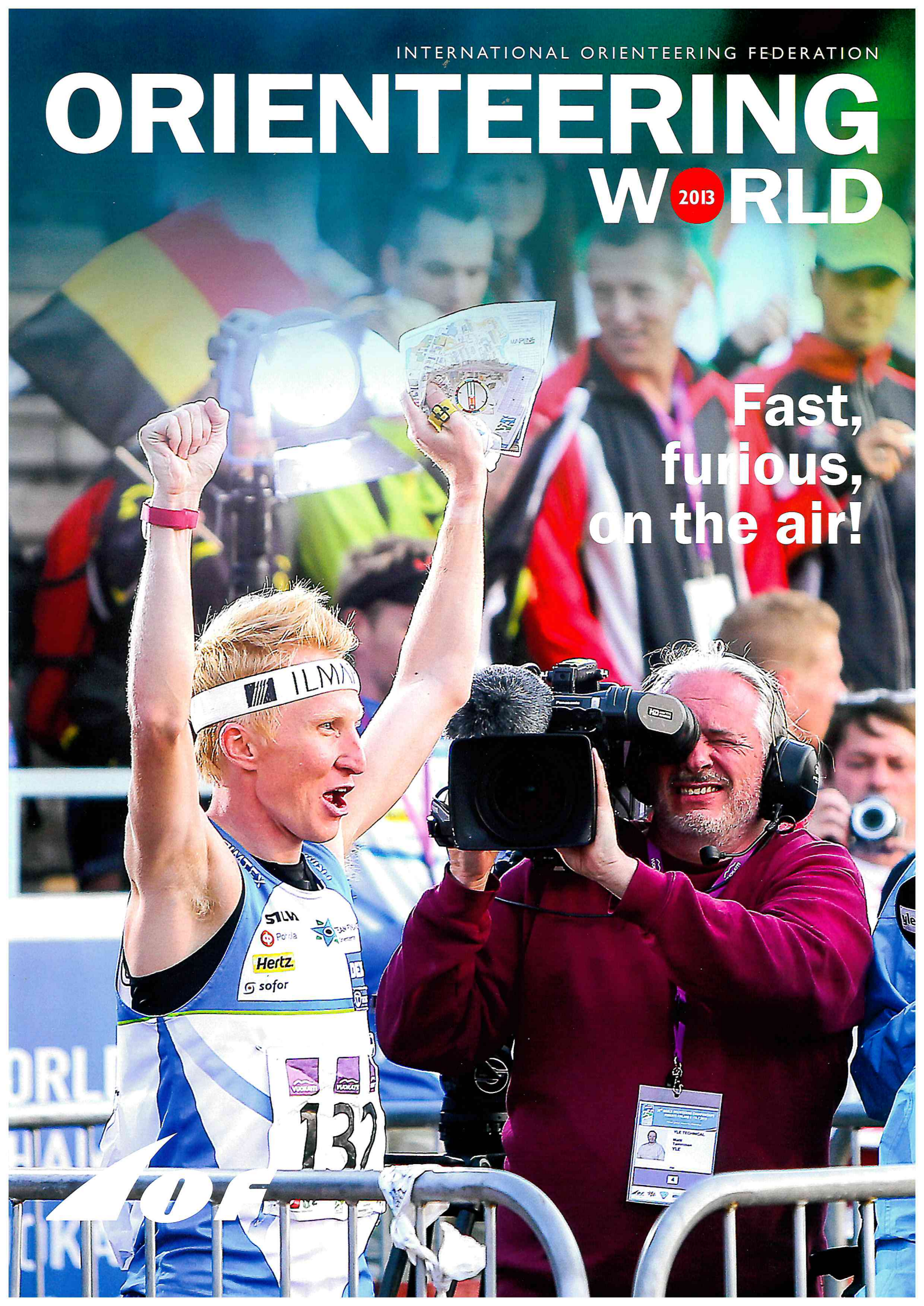


INTERNATIONAL ORIENTEERING FEDERATION

ORIENTEERING WORLD 2013

Fast,
furious,
on the air!







ORIENTEERING WORLD 2013

Contents

5	PRESIDENT'S FOREWORD
6	PRESENTING OUR SPORT TO THE PUBLIC – A LANDMARK YEAR
12	THE WORLD GAMES
14	WORLD MASTERS ORIENTEERING CHAMPIONSHIPS
16	SIMONE NIGGLI – A LEGEND IN ORIENTEERING
22	SKI ORIENTEERING MORE VISIBLE THAN EVER
23	NEWS IN BRIEF
24	FOOT ORIENTEERING: LEONID NOVIKOV AND LIZZIE INGHAM
27	TRAIL ORIENTEERING: WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS IN FINLAND
30	MTB ORIENTEERING: A STORY OF FOUR SEASONS
32	SKI ORIENTEERING: PETER ARNESSON – NOW A MAGNET FOR THE MEDIA
34	IOF MEMBERS
36	MAJOR EVENTS
38	RESULTS

Simone Niggli's (here 17) road from a talented junior to a legend. Page 16.



ORIENTEERING WORLD 2013

Contacts

Published by:

International Orienteering Federation (IOF)
Radiokatu 20
00093 VALO
FINLAND
www.orienteering.org
Twitter: @IOFOrienteeing

Editor-in-chief:

Anna Jacobson, Assistant Secretary General, IOF
Email: anna.jacobson@orienteering.org

Editor:

Clive Allen

Contributors to this edition:

Erik Borg, Jan Exner, Joaquim Margarido, Sverker Tirén

Visual design:

Mainos Marlini

Layout:

Suunnistaja Magazine
email: suunnistaja-lehti@suunnistusliitto.fi

Printer:

Eura Print Oy
PL 5, Antinkuja 1, 27511 Eura
FINLAND

Publication notes

ORIENTEERING WORLD is the official journal of the International Orienteering Federation (IOF). Permission from the editor-in-chief should be sought prior to reproduction of articles or photographs.

ISSN 1015-4965

Next issue: November 2014

Front cover: Mårten Boström won the Sprint at the World Orienteering Championships 2013. Photo: Aapo Laiho



Sharing Our Secret

I have often said that orienteering is one of the best kept sporting secrets in the world and that that is one of our major challenges. I still believe that to be a true statement, but I have to concede that we are making some progress in addressing the challenge. Our 2013 World Orienteering Championships showed that we have the skill to produce outstanding television coverage of orienteering – and that quality, coupled with the hard work of our Finnish Federation and YLE the host broadcaster, enabled us to achieve the most extensive distribution we have ever achieved, including live and as live coverage in the USA. We plan to build on that success in future years, and to extend the quality coverage to include our major ski orienteering events.

On another level, in common with major governing bodies, the IOF Office is leading our work in respect of the social media. While we can only dream of the social media departments of the bigger sports, we are now making good use of Twitter and Facebook, so please make the IOF one of your friends or follow us on Twitter. The extent of social media activity is becoming a significant factor in the commercial strategies of sports and we want to take full advantage of that potential.

Visibility, in the context of our Olympic ambitions, is not just about TV and media coverage. It is also about our presence on multi-sports platforms around the world where we can be noticed by those making decisions. We have made very significant progress in this area in 2013. In addition to very successful participation in The World Games in Cali, Colombia and being one of the biggest sports in the World Masters Games, we were one of the largest sports in the World Military Winter Sports Games in Annecy, France.

We have had a long and successful partnership with FISU, the International University Sports Federation, and this year we have built on that partnership with FISU, agreeing to the establishing of the first World University Ski Orienteering Championships in 2016 and to Ski Orienteering joining the Winter Universiade in 2019.

The next important component of our visibility as a sport is the number of countries we have in active membership of the IOF and where the sport can be seen around the world. We have recently been delighted to welcome Azerbaijan, Cameroon and Iran into the IOF family and we know that there are other countries getting ready to apply for membership.

All these areas of progress where the IOF is leading are important, but one must not underestimate the impact of what might be called organic growth of our sport's visibility. What I mean by that is the power of national and local visibility of events and activities. We organise competitions which are large in terms of participation by any sporting comparisons, and we really do need to harness that footprint of activity to generate increased publicity and visibility.

So progress is being made. The challenge for the whole sport from club to international level is to continue that progress, and to translate increased visibility into increased commercial success through membership growth, other forms of commercial partnerships and further increases in participation. If the whole sport works together to build our visibility, then we will have the best possible chance to make our dream become a reality.



Brian Porteous
IOF President



Presenting our sport to the public – a landmark year

Written by Clive Allen

Orienteering has been making itself more visible to the public at large for a few years now, and two factors have been prominent in this very important development for the sport. The first of these is the rapid growth of urban racing, especially the Sprint format. The second is the use of TV cameras, GPS tracking and other new techniques to bring orienteering firmly into the television spotlight and show all the action on the race arena's giant screen.

Combine these two factors together, and then add a capacity audience – all fans of their national heroes – in an intimate sports stadium, and you have all the ingredients for a really stimulating sporting experience. That is what happened at the World Championships Sprint Final in Sotkamo, Finland in July, where 7,000

excited spectators crammed into the stadium normally used for Finnish baseball. The start was in the stadium, video and GPS tracking from out on the course on the big screen, and the finish again of course in the stadium; all this backed up by expert loudspeaker commentary in English and Finnish.

Add to this mix a home-country victory in the men's race and mega-star Simone Niggli in the women's, and a more intense spectator experience is hard to imagine.

All this, the action out on the course and the highly-charged atmosphere in the stadium, was carried live to a TV audience of 300,000 in Finland, a whole 20% of the channel share that evening. And it was transmitted as a whole programme or in edited extracts to TV viewers in Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, Latvia and – for the first time ever – USA, where

NBC's sports channel showed four one-hour programmes covering the three individual finals and the relay. 2013 has been a landmark year in presenting our sport to the public at large.

The IOF TV Project

For some time now, IOF has had TV presentation at the head of its priority list of development activities. IOF Sports Director Björn Persson in particular has been working hard with a specialist group of TV production companies who are keen to help establish orienteering as a TV sport as good as any. The TV Project has reached an advanced phase, and IOF is now in the position of being able to guarantee quality coverage from every future World Championships.

Leaders in this field are Kruuva in Finland,

Photo: Petr Kaderávek/JWOC2013



For the technically minded

Up to 16 cameras were used in the TV production of the 2013 finals – on 'cherry pickers' and platforms in the arena, on a mini-helicopter hovering over the arena and run-in, and near controls in the terrain. Most of the cameras were employed around the courses and linked to the production unit by cable.

GPS tracking was provided by Tmi Pekan GPS-seuranta. Every runner in every race (including qualification races) carried a small GPS transmitter housed in a specially-designed vest.

Tracking, when used in the TV transmission, showed the routes of all competitors live as they ran through the forest, or re-ran the routes of selected competitors in common time for comparison, or picked up and re-ran a unique route execution mistake when it was decisive to that competitor in the race. In the relay it was particularly interesting to watch the comparison of the long-way-round but fast alternative on a long leg, taken by several runners, with the more direct but slower route. The combination of pictures and tracking in the transmitted output gave the commentators every opportunity to describe the impressive technical and physical skill levels of top elite orienteers.

Scrolled timing of runners, in boxes at the foot of the screen, was intelligently used in anticipation of a competitor's arrival at a TV control, and also as races reached their climax with few to finish and with few controls left to visit. There was a camera at almost all the controls near the end of a course and also views of some of the terrain between. A more complete coverage was difficult to envisage. The Producer's choice of the right pictures at each decisive moment was crucial to the quality of the output.



working with YLE (Finnish national TV), and Karel Jonak of Gearbox Production Ltd, a Czech company whose most recent involvement was with this year's Junior World Championships.

Much work is being done to create a consistently high-quality product. The best action pictures from the forest and arena are linked with scrolling intermediate and finish timing in boxes on screen and GPS tracking of competitors' routes shown live on the competition map. It is in particular the intelligent use of the GPS tracking that has revolutionised the portrayal of orienteering on TV; now a commentator and an expert working together can describe in full the techniques being employed out on the course, and can pick out the decisive moments and re-run them for emphasis and extra information.

Three distinct challenges

But creating a quality product is not the only challenge facing the IOF. The TV Project is a three-pronged challenge, as described by IOF President Brian Porteous: "The first challenge is ensuring that the sport looks good and can be understood on TV. We have made real progress with this challenge over the past 10 years and GPS tracking means that we can now show exactly what is involved, the critical

events in a competition and the decision-making and speed of competitors. In other words, those who are more used to watching a whole match on a football pitch can in effect see all the aspects of our sport on our pitch".

"The second challenge is for us to ensure that we produce consistent quality content in the coverage of our major events. In Finland this year we saw an excellent example of the type and extent of TV coverage we require, with

live coverage from all finals and the ability to package other TV products like interviews and highlights. This will only be possible in countries which have sufficient interest in and knowledge of the sport, and the IOF needs to ensure that in other countries we can still produce the same quality coverage of our finals live".

"The third challenge is that of broadcast distribution, and that is by far the most difficult of the challenges. Until 2013, live coverage has only really been of interest in the Nordic countries, Switzerland, the Czech Republic and a very few other nations. This has been despite the international live signal being available through Eurovision most years. In 2013 we took a major step forwards with the Universal Sports Network (USN) from the United States. With great assistance from YLE and the Finnish Federation, USN broadcast all the 2013 WOC finals live on their internet

channel and then broadcast them 'as live' at peak time in the evening on four successive nights. This is the type of distribution which is essential if the value of our sport is to grow in global terms".

Good for the local economy

Spectators came in droves to this year's World Championships finals, encouraged too by the Kainuu Week multi-day event, on at the same time, where on some days you could run in the footsteps of the elite only an hour or so afterwards; numbers taking part were double the usual. More than 5,000 spectators attended each of the forest finals, and an estimated 2-3,000 people were out around the Sprint course as well as the 7,000 in the stadium.

A World Championships is a huge boost to the local economy, a fact being increasingly

recognised by the authorities in the host countries, who can appreciate also that full TV coverage enhances the event even further.

Five finals on TV in 2014

Now we look forward to the World Championships 2014 in Italy, where a comprehensive package of some 12 hours of programming is already in place. "The final scope of TV coverage is not yet finalised, but it should provide a wide range of TV opportunities ranging from full live or 'delayed-live' coverage of all 5 finals, through daily highlight packages, to simple interview slots", says Brian Porteous.

Overall it is clear that the TV Project will yield positive outcomes on quite a number of fronts in the coming years.

Karel Jonák:

"I believe orienteering can become one of the most attractive TV sports"

Written by Jan Exner

On a bright Sunday, the 20th of July 2008, the Finnish women are defending their world title in the relay race and the British men are celebrating the first gold medal in the orienteering history of their country. Thousands of fans are enjoying the unique atmosphere of the final race of the 2008 World Orienteering Championships in the Czech Republic. Many spectators are present personally in the arena, but most of them are closely watching the race in many different places all around the world – thanks to television.

"In my opinion, Czech Television managed to show all the 'armchair spectators' the real essence of orienteering," says the Czech national coach Radek Novotný. "It was clear that orienteering is not only about jogging through a forest, punching controls and sprinting towards the finish line." The world's reaction to the television production of the 2008 World Championships was astonishing; orienteering had made a big step forward.

Orienteering on TV keeps improving

Since then five years have passed, and more and more orienteering events, both international and national, can be followed on television.

And orienteering broadcasting is still developing. "Nowadays we work better with GPS tracking, we have improved the graphical image, we can move further with TV cameras and even the technology of the wireless transfer is better than in 2008," explains the Czech Television Sports Director Karel Jonák.

"The important thing is that we have managed to maintain a high broadcasting quality. It is important both for spectators and for our customers – different TV companies and programmes," states Jonák.

Junior World Championships 2013 on TV

In 2013 the Junior World Orienteering Championships were held in the Czech Republic, and Czech Television was there. "The fact that even Junior Championships appeared on TV is itself a great achievement. From the TV production point of view, I am very satisfied with what we did," says Jonák, who has become a respected expert in the field of orienteering broadcasts, and also much more.

The pictures a spectator sees during an event is just the top of a very high pyramid of hard work by many people. "We've been preparing for the 2013 Junior Championships for more



Photo: Petr Kaderávek/JWOC2013

than two years," explains Jonák. "For example, when we studied the draft of the middle distance course for the first time we realised that it would be impossible for television to cover it. Many thanks go to the organisers, who completely changed the concept of the race so that we could start on our detailed planning and preparation," says Jonák.

Orienteering is not like football

"When making a live orienteering broadcast, the most difficult part is the cooperation between TV employees and the course setters. Solving logistical problems is also a challenging issue," says Jonák. "Orienteering is in no way like football. There you can come, you park the production trucks next to the main stand, you plug into an electrical socket or two and you can broadcast in a moment. This is not so in our case."

According to Jonák, it is sometimes not easy to get everything ready for a TV broadcast. "Because orienteering events are usually organised 'in the middle of nowhere', it is for example often very difficult to get the TV trucks



A home win in the Junior World Championships Relay in the Czech Republic - popular with the TV guys! Photo: Michael Vambera/JWOC 2013

to the site of the event and find parking space there." And that's just a beginning. "Then you must lay out all the cables and prepare many other things," explains Jonák.

"It is a race before a race," adds Novotný. "The first draft of the courses has to be elaborated on in detail. We need to find relevant positions for radio and TV controls, and prepare all the materials for a director and for graphic designers. Last but not least, the TV commentator needs to have the best preparation possible, because his performance has a huge impact on the overall image of the programme."

Everyone can hear a commentator's voice and see some of the cameramen, but they are only a few of the people working on an orienteering broadcast. "The production team contains more than 30 people. And there I am not counting the help of many organisers and other volunteers. Without them we could never make it happen," says Jonák.

Future developments

Karel Jonák and Radek Novotný know what

needs to be done in the future. "Thanks to the response of Czech Television and the skill of Karel Jonák, we are nowadays able to make impressive programmes on orienteering. This is what we must build on – not only in the Czech Republic, but also within the International Orienteering Federation," comments Novotný.

"My personal goal is to keep orienteering on TV and stay in the centre of attention," states Jonák, who has a clear idea of the future image of its broadcasting. "It's crucial to keep a very high standard, otherwise we will lose our customers and we will have to work hard to get their trust back."

"Orienteering must be more dynamic, more attractive and more understandable for non-orienteering viewers if it is to remain on TV," says Jonák, who knows that he still has a lot of work ahead of him. "We must focus on a more attractive graphical image, better usage of GPS tracking and the implementation of modern wireless technologies."

TV broadcasting is important for any sport, and orienteering is no exception. "People

often talk about orienteering as one of the possible future Olympic sports. We must realise that the quality and extent of TV production is one of the criteria used by the International Olympic Committee. I want to move to the level of getting them really interested."

Orienteering as one of the top TV sports

In 2010 Karel Jonák said he believed orienteering was as attractive a TV sport as, for example, biathlon or cross-country skiing. "I still believe it today. It is clearly on a par with them," says Jonák.

"It's not only World Orienteering Championships; European Championships and some World Cup races are also broadcast on TV", comments Jonák, who is ready to go even further. "It might sound to some as an overstatement, but I truly believe that orienteering is capable of becoming a member of an exclusive family: that of 'the most attractive TV sports'. I am trying to do my best to make this dream come true."

"The World Games in Cali, Colombia have exceeded my expectations. However it is not the three gold medals which particularly remain in my memory, but the hospitality of the Colombians."

Matthias Kyburz (SUI), triple winner at The World Games



Georgia Whitla (NZL) and Alison Crocker (USA) after the Mixed Sprint Relay.

"Everything was just a blast! It was wonderful being there, with other athletes in all other sorts of sports. It had a much different feel, because we were part of something really big. And having people in the city so interested in taking photos and saying hi was a new aspect of being a sportswoman for me, it kind of felt like being a superstar for a week!

The orienteering events were a good challenge. Orienteering in the woods at Rio Panche just felt so different. I guess I'd been around bamboo once before, when I did some training in Japan, but it makes for a forest that is very different from those in North America and Europe!"

Alison Crocker (USA), 5th in Sprint



"I think The World Games is great, and it's cool that orienteering can be part of such a big event. It's nice that there are athletes from so many different nations and sports competing at the same place, and it's fun for us to have a championship in places where we don't normally go orienteering.

As an elite runner at international level you must be able to handle all types of terrain. I have been orienteering in a lot of places, for example in Zanzibar. I did both a sprint training in Stone Town, with very narrow streets and a lot of people, and a middle distance training in a coastal terrain, where I was running with water up to my knees on part of the course because it was high tide.

Even though the orienteering competitions were the most important events at The World Games, the closing ceremony is my best memory from Cali. It started with all the athletes entering the big stadium with a capacity of 50,000 spectators, and after some speeches it became a great party, with a combination of performances by some of the biggest artists in Colombia, among them Carlos Vives, and dancing."

Øystein Kvaal Østerbø (NOR)

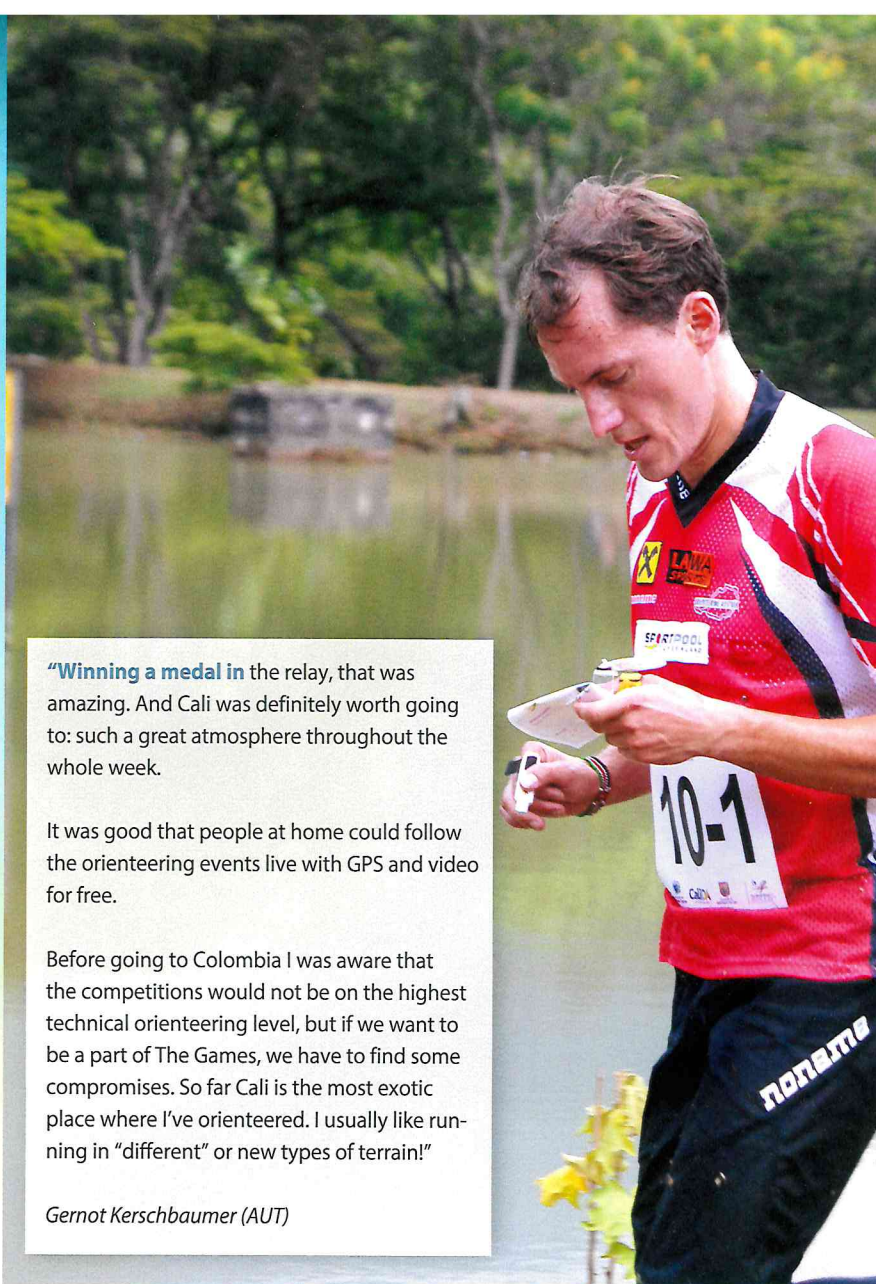
"Earlier this year I had lost the spirit, the motivation to train hard. I had no will to put so much energy and money on orienteering; I had just lost the hunger. Then I heard that I was selected for the Russian World Games team! That was the motivation I needed: a good performance at The World Games was something I really wanted to achieve. Suddenly I had my motivation again."

Andrey Khramov (RUS), silver medallist in Sprint

"Cali was absolutely buzzing and it didn't seem to be just because of The World Games. We were very well looked after by an enormous team of volunteers who were mostly students dressed in brightly coloured trousers.

The sprint race was held in a park relatively central in Cali. The course was not the most technically challenging but the incredible heat and humidity meant that most of us felt like we'd had a horrific day out. I felt like I blew up at the 6th control and crawled in for the remaining 14."

Tessa Hill (GBR)



"Winning a medal in the relay, that was amazing. And Cali was definitely worth going to: such a great atmosphere throughout the whole week.

It was good that people at home could follow the orienteering events live with GPS and video for free.

Before going to Colombia I was aware that the competitions would not be on the highest technical orienteering level, but if we want to be a part of The Games, we have to find some compromises. So far Cali is the most exotic place where I've orienteered. I usually like running in "different" or new types of terrain!"

Gernot Kerschbaumer (AUT)

"I really had to fight hard halfway through the Sprint course to be able to keep up my speed. I think the course planner did the best he could with the area. The challenging parts were to get the controls in the park in a good flow and be in advance in your orienteering the whole way."

Annika Billstam (SWE), Sprint winner

"I was very happy with how the commentary and the concept of sport presentation worked. The way things were displayed to the public was excellent."

Tom Dielen, IWGA ExCo Member

"It is nice that there were so many nations there. And it was interesting to be in Colombia. It seemed that they took the security issues really seriously; it felt almost that they were overreacting, as there were policemen on every corner, and everywhere in the parks. You couldn't run off the map as there was a line of policemen waiting for you! They even wanted to escort us when we just needed to cross a street from the hotel. We refused the police escort!"

Kiril Nikolov (BUL), 4th in Sprint

"The Austrian orienteers pulled off an absolute sensation in the Mixed Relay: Gernot Kerschbaumer, Anna Nilsson-Simkovics, Robert Merl and Ursula Kadan ran in Cali to a historic bronze medal placing. It is the first time ever that medals have been won by Austrian orienteers in a major relay. The quartet ran from the start with the top teams and managed to orienteer almost without mistakes through the 98 controls."

Austrian Olympic Committee



"Besides our competitions there was also some time to watch other sports or explore the city. The people in Cali were very friendly and enthusiastic. All athletes were treated like stars, countless photographs were taken and autographs signed. Thanks Cali for a great week and for the many wonderful memories that I have taken home with me!"

Daniel Hubmann (SUI), silver medallist in Middle Distance

I like the feeling of being part of something big, and The World Games is a good way to experience that. There definitely is Olympic spirit in this event!

Edgars Bertuks (LAT), World Champion 2012



The World Games online

Karol Galicz is a 27-year-old orienteer from Warsaw, Poland. He has been orienteering since 2010. "Earlier I trained for athletics, but now orienteering is the sport of my life", he says, and continues: "I was following The World Games for the first time in my life. Actually, thanks to orienteering I now know what The World Games is!"

The IOF created a special website for following The World Games orienteering events through video, live GPS tracking, online results, and chat. Reports were also posted on

Facebook. After the events, the best athletes answered fans' questions in live chats on the website.

"I was following the GPS tracking, video and results by internet. Even though the courses seemed surprisingly simple, it was still the best orienteers who won. The Games were very exciting to watch", Karol says. Sven Hommen (38), a former German national team orienteer and Event Director for The World Games orienteering events in 2005, agrees: "The online service was good!" he says, "The

Mixed Sprint Relay was especially interesting".

New fans for Colombia

Karol says there is one thing he remembers particularly well from the events: "I was impressed by the speed of the runners from Colombia in the first and the last metres of the race; I have never seen any orienteer run so fast before. It was quite funny, but I was really supporting them and hoping that they would get satisfying results. Their starts and finishes were incredible!"



Mariana Stella Torres Pinto, John Jairo Cardenas Carreno, Oscar Andres Rodriguez Sanabria, and Jhenny Carolina Pinilla Moya were excited to take part in The World Games. Photo: Anna Jacobson.

"It was a tough fight to get into the team. We had several qualification races, and both military and civil orienteers took part. We are so happy to be here and to be able to represent Colombia in this huge event. We have all orienteered for 1–5 years, and The World Games gave us a lot of motivation to train and to work harder to get new orienteers interested. In addition, due to the Games, we get several new orienteering maps drawn by a professional mapper. This is a huge advantage for us!"



This was the second time the IOF had an online centre dedicated to following The World Games. The site was visited by more than 4500 people from 70 countries and the visitors' comments were very positive, commending the good service and the exciting races.

"I thought The World Games were fantastic... what a feeling to take part in such a sporting event! It also looks like some progress is being made on not keeping orienteering as 'sport's best kept secret!'

I thought the organisers made use of the best terrain possible in Cali and even though it might not have been as pleasant as some places, they really showed that orienteering can be done anywhere in the world."

Scott Fraser (GBR)



World Masters Orienteering Championships

– the annual veterans' highlight – incorporated every fourth year into The World Masters Games

Written by Clive Allen

The World Masters Orienteering Championships (WMOC) is one of orienteering's most prestigious annual events. It provides an opportunity for orienteers of every standard, from every part of the world, to meet up and compete in their standard age groups, from 35-year-olds upwards in 5-year bands. It has become hugely popular, and for many veterans it is an annual excursion to unfamiliar terrain and culture for which they spend months preparing.

WMOC has also become a vehicle for showcasing our sport to a broader audience; it was a major break-through for IOF when it succeeded in negotiating the inclusion of World Masters Orienteering Championships in the World Masters Games programme, for the first time in 2002 in Australia. This year was the fourth in which orienteering has been a part of the World Masters Games, the venue this time being Turin in Italy, with the orienteering centred on the town of Sestriere.

Small beginnings in 1988

But back to the beginning and a bit of history. There had been unofficial events for Masters in Scandinavia for a number of years before the first official Veteran World Cup (VWC), as it was called initially, was held in Åmal,

Sweden in 1988 with 1,638 competitors from 19 nations ranging in age from 35 to 85. The pattern of two qualification races leading to a final, introduced at Åmal, still holds good today. Scandinavian orienteers swept the board medals-wise on that occasion; non-Scandinavians complained they "hadn't a chance" in the very typically Swedish terrain. But that situation began to change as subsequent VWC's were held at two-year intervals in Hungary, Tasmania and Scotland.

The event got a rise in status in 1996 when its title was changed to World Masters Orienteering Championships. That year, Spain was the host nation and 2,700 competitors took part. The legendary pioneer of orienteering in Spain, Martin Kronlund, was the course planner for all the races – at the age of 80!

From 1996 onwards WMOC has been held every year, and by 2016 in Estonia it will have been staged in 20 different nations. The event has been held more than once only in Australia (3 times), Hungary and Italy (twice each). Participation numbers have been up to 4,000 in the most popular years: last year in Germany there were 3,958 entries (plus 367 non-veterans in the Harz Cup) from 43 nations. M65 (men aged 65–69 incl.) was the largest men's class with 445 entered, and for the women it was W60 with 259 taking part.

From 2008 there has been a Sprint competition with qualification and final as well as the traditional Long distance event, and the WMOC week includes model events, opening, closing and medal ceremonies and a range of social activities to suit everyone.

Media focus on the eldest and the famous

A fascination of every WMOC is the age and energy of the very oldest participants, who attract lots of special media attention. This year was no exception; 95-year-old Rune Haraldsson from Sweden was the sole entrant in his class, and successfully completed all his races. He was winner as an M90 in 2008 and 2010. "This was my best day at WMOC", he said as he got to the finish line of the Long race, looking a little exhausted after almost an hour on his course, "but I am ready to do better next year in Brazil!"

Three other names stand out for their success and longevity over the years: Bertil Nordenfelt and Arthur Lindkvist from Sweden in the VWC and early WMOC years, and Erkki Luntamo from Finland who had a string of victories in the most senior class more recently.

Several former world champions regularly compete in WMOC. One such – no stranger to

Sestriere main square was the arena for the sprint final. Photo: László Zentai

orienteering journalists – is Norway's Sigurd Dähli. Gold medallist in the World Championships relay in 1981 and classic race bronze medallist in 1983, he was the M35 winner in the very first WWC in 1988. Twenty years later in Portugal, as an M55, he won the inaugural WMOC Sprint! With many other successes in between, of course. Then in 2010 in Switzerland he won the Long distance final in his class by 2 minutes.

The special World Masters Games years

Inclusion in the World Masters Games since 2002 has raised the status of the World Masters Orienteering Championships still further. It has been a very important step forward, along with inclusion of elite orienteering competition in The World Games, in getting orienteering properly recognised in the wider sporting world for its value as a highly-competitive and now media-attractive sport. For the orienteering participants too there are new opportunities arising from being part, for a while, of a much bigger sporting community and being enabled to attend the impressive ceremonies and other events.

Orienteering is one of two of the participating sports to hold its own Masters' World Championships at the World Masters Games. This is a big plus for the Games since it results in orienteering being the participant sport with by

far the largest 'foreign' contingent, if not the largest in attendee numbers overall. In 2009 it was possible to get maximum publicity from this very positive statistic, because the Sprint races were held in the middle of Sydney – the Final taking place in the Olympic Park with lots of spectators and media attention.

This is what we hope to achieve in the future too. In the other World Masters Games years so far, the orienteering organisers – in order to utilise the best terrain available in the area – have held the races away from the World Masters Games Event Centre and the competitions in other sports. Through careful choice of race venues and in other ways, the aim for the future is to provide good quality events for the orienteers coupled with the sport having a strong and visible presence in the World Masters Games – a great combination with benefits for all parties.

This aim should be realistically achievable at the next World Masters Games, scheduled for Auckland, New Zealand in 2017. There is very good terrain for orienteering in the city and in the countryside around, so good that a World Cup event was held in a nearby forest in 1994. And the Auckland Orienteering Club is one of the biggest and most active in the country.

2013 and 2014

Sprint racing in the streets of Sestriere, chairlift rides into the mountains and steep slopes on the Long courses, and fine arenas built for the Torino Winter Olympics in 2006 – those are some of the memories that this year's



Forte di Fenestrelle near Sestriere. Photo: László Zentai

competitors took home. The Italian organisers overcame some difficult organisational hurdles to provide competitors with the intense and challenging orienteering racing they have come to expect. "A good spacious Event Centre, well generalised maps and well planned courses" was the verdict of experienced Hungarian orienteer Laszlo Zentai, IOF Council's representative at the WMOC.

One of the Sprint winners in Sestriere was Jörgen Mårtensson, Sweden in the M50 class – best known for his World Championship victories at classic distance in 1991 and 1995.

And so the bandwagon moves on again, to Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil where WMOC will be held in November next year. This will be the first time that a full IOF Event is held on the South American continent, and the signs are that many large groups of veteran orienteers from all over the world have a visit to Brazil in their competition plans for 2014.

95-year-old Rune Haraldsson aims at even better results next year in Brazil. Photo: Pietro Illarietti Press Office FISO



Simone Niggli – a legend in orienteering

Written by Sverker Tirén

The Swiss orienteering legend Simone Niggli retired from international competition at the World Cup Final in Baden in October. She went out on a high – winning her last two races after achieving a clean sweep of individual medals for the third time in her illustrious orienteering career at the World Championships in Finland in July. Her final tally of World Championship gold medals is an amazing 23; she has also won 10 European Championship golds, one Junior World Championship gold back in 1997, and the World Cup overall 8 times, finishing first in 64 World Cup races. It is difficult to envisage such outstanding results ever being achieved again.

In the late autumn she was interviewed for *Orienteering World* by the Swedish journalist Sverker Tirén. Translation by Nick Barrable.

Simone lives with her husband, elite orienteer Matthias Niggli, and their three children in idyllic Münsingen, a small town 130 kilometres south-west of Zurich. Quite impressive wooded hills rise next to the town. Her home has a modern and airy feel; here you find bright and inviting spaces. Simone is remarkably amicable and patient in the face of the variety of questions that I put to her now that she has declared, at the age of 35, that her elite career is over.

“A very sporty family”

As in an orienteering race, we begin at the start:

“I had a harmonious upbringing – great! I have two older sisters and we still have close contact with each other. The oldest is a teacher, the other is a pharmacist. My parents are both teachers and we were, and are, a very sporty family”. Simone adds that in her youth her family was often out in the countryside – walking, downhill skiing and also out in

the wild. A feeling for the forest – which was to become her arena – appears to have been founded during these very early years.

She particularly notes her experiences whilst out walking with the family and also with her cousins. It seems to have been an ‘outdoors’ childhood, not a passive one sat in front of digital screens. Simone appears to have had a strong feeling for, perhaps even a love of the countryside her surroundings offered. It is not difficult to imagine that from the outset, in the middle of this idyll, there was an instinctive urge to climb obstacles.

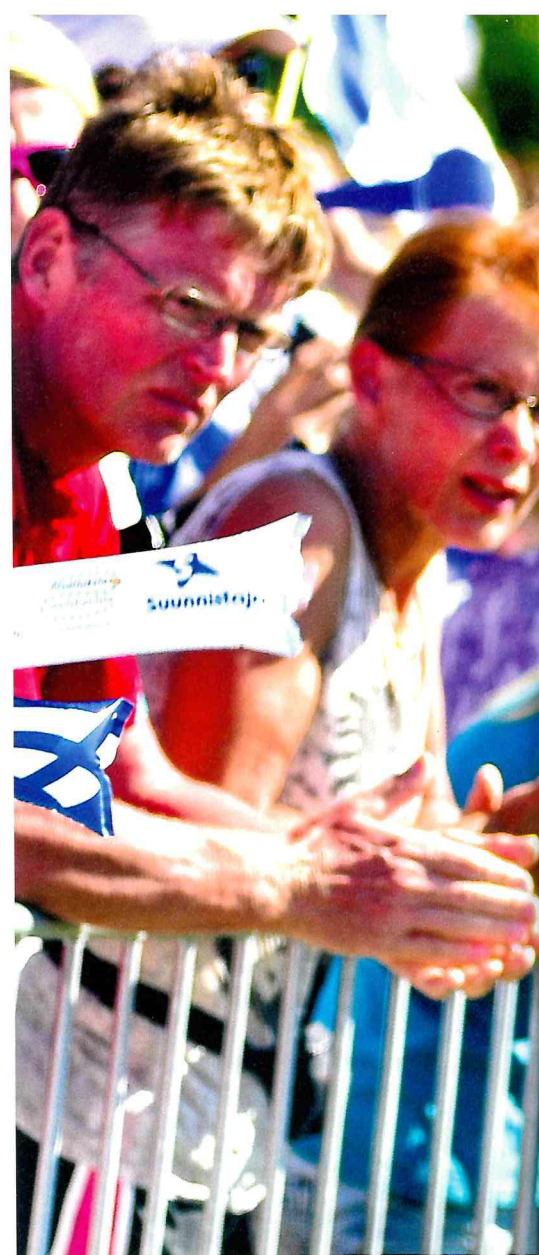
When Simone grew into her teens she dreamed of becoming a flight attendant – an idea that she is grateful never materialised: “Of course I travel a lot but I don’t actually like flying...!” She soon saw that there were many alternative careers. Her interests were plentiful and she found learning easy in all her subjects. But what was particularly attractive was biology, which she read further at university. She believes the basis for this choice was connected to her childhood and her many forest walks, as well as having an inspiring biology teacher who had the ability to create curiosity and a desire to learn more.

At the same time Simone was interested in sport of many different kinds – and she also remarks that she had a strong reading habit, ploughing through not just homework books but also fiction.

Off alone into the forest at the age of 10

When and how did orienteering come into her life?

“I came into orienteering via my parents. At first we ran in the Family class where for me, it was mostly about being able to punch at controls and pick flowers ... it was exciting! I



Simone Niggli at the World Championships 2013. Photo: WorldofO.com

ran my first race by myself when I was 10”.

“It became apparent early on that I had unusual talent. But of course I had most fun just being immersed in the orienteering world. My friends were there and that was important! During my junior years I often found myself high up in the results, but not until I became Junior World Champion in 1997 did I realise how good I could be”.

“As a junior it was fun and enjoyable to navigate and also to compete. But it was not the same competing at senior level, which was much more based on preparation and peaking for the important races. And to succeed at senior level was altogether a much more intense experience”.

Orienteering is a sport that requires absolute independence - only you can decide what steps to take in the woods. At the same time, orien-



Simone with her daughter Malin in 2010.
Photo: Erik Borg

teering is described as a team sport. Is there a tension between individualism and the team?

"Although there are three or more competitors in a relay team, we all need to have our own race. But I have always had the feeling that performance is improved by having a good atmosphere in one's team. Succeeding with a team is extra enjoyable, and it is also fun to be able to prepare together".

Looking back on a long career

In all your years at such a unique world level, have you ever doubted the value of continuing? Thinking perhaps that there were many other things that you were neglecting?

"No, not really, and it amazes me... But I've had everything I needed within orienteering: in the middle of a fun sport and with many fine friends. Of course I also had need of my other friends at home, and they were very decent and realised that it was a little harder to get in touch with me. We had to organise our meetings in advance... I have not had any career other than orienteering, but I am so happy and grateful that I could

make my hobby into my job, and I was able to live off it".

It is obvious that a World Championship Gold gives a feeling of success. Was it for you sometimes more one of relief – that a failure had been avoided?

"Both! In the early years of my career the feelings of success were strongest. Over time, pressure increased substantially, both from myself and from the media and the public, and so it was always a relief when I succeeded in winning. Before the last World Championships I thought: 'So far I have managed to win at least one gold every time... It would be very sad if the trend should be broken!' Consequently I was very relieved when I won gold in the very first race, the Sprint".

Why did you settle in Sweden for a period?

"Before the World Championships in Sweden in 2004, Matthias and I decided to move there for half a year and prepare ourselves the best



Photo: Joaquim Margarido

we could. It was a great adventure for us and one we will never forget! We knew Jenny Johansson and thus came into contact with Ulricehamns OK who were very interested. It was fun to stay and compete for UOK – it became like a second home for us!”

What did the years in Sweden give you?

“Sweden was an important part of my development as an orienteer. Maybe this was not so directly apparent in my results at the World Championships in 2004, but it was to be so in the following years. I became more stable and secure in Nordic terrain and I gained a great deal of good experience”.

Is there a difference in mentality between Sweden and Switzerland, with regard to sport but also outside of it?

“The mentality does not differ so much, and maybe that was why we thrived and still thrive so well in Sweden. The people are nice and they have a deep relationship with the outdoors, stronger than in Switzerland actually. The Swedes have a more romantic relationship with the forest”.

Pretty soon you became an idol, someone many wanted to get near to I guess. But it also creates a distance – many people recognise you, but this perhaps prevents relaxed contact: one does not want to disturb you or reflect in the glory. Does this then make it more difficult to have natural social relationships, be a ‘man amongst men’?

“I have not had any problems with it. I have many positive relationships and contacts which were established not only before but also during my career. And I’m very glad that my friends also see me as an ordinary person, not just as an athlete. With them I can talk about anything and everything, not just about sport, and this is important for me. I never had the feeling that I’m someone special... Although sometimes my friends say that other people are pointing at me and commenting when we walk around in town...”

Still focussed after childbirth

To have had 3 children right in the middle of your sporting career must be more important than all the medals. Were you sure, after their respective births, that as a mother you could continue to compete at world level?

“No, I was not! Before the first child I was not

at all sure. But during pregnancy I felt that I had the motivation and hunger left to fight on at world level. When the twins were born I was more certain, because the World Championships being in Switzerland the following year was so appealing. So then I had already decided beforehand that I would try to be at my best for the Championships again”.

In that case, were there certain conditions, e.g. that the children’s father would be very much present as a parent?

“As Matthias works from home a lot, we thought it would be possible and had carefully discussed how our family would function and how everyday life would be organised. But it’s not the same in Switzerland, compared with say Sweden, in terms of the father’s role during your children’s infancy. We have not developed parental leave which enables both the father and the mother to stay at home and care for young children”.

There are examples of elite sportswomen performing even better after childbirth – did that apply to you too?

“I think almost so! After the twins’ arrival I ran my best treadmill test ever, which is really fascinating! I do not know how much it affects my physical fitness, or if it’s just the mental side that allows one to perform even better. After each birth I had a different approach to sport. Of course it was still important, but it was my family that had the highest priority. Maybe I was a little calmer and realised that everything does not have to be perfect ...”

“My children do not perceive it as a catastrophe if I am unsuccessful in my orienteering, they only care about whether their mother will return!”

Five-year-old daughter Malin has defined what orienteering means to her: “It’s when everyone runs in the woods and Mummy wins.”

Have you changed your training in any major important way in the last ten years?

“As a junior I had a good level of training, but in my early senior years there was still room to increase the amount. This margin was important and helped me to be able to avoid major injury and overloading my body during my career. I don’t think I changed how I train in any radical way, but there has always been something to improve upon. Strength train-

ing for example has developed considerably over the years, and not least after I gave birth to the twins I believed in it greatly together with Vroni König-Salmi, my coach & former national runner. Over time, alternative workouts became more important to avoid injury”.

How did you train e.g. in 2013? How often and in what way?

“I had a long spell during the winter with a muscle problem in my thigh. For about a month and a half I could not run, and during this time I only cross-trained. Then things improved and I could return to my planned training. Mostly that means two sessions per day: one session of running or orienteering and a second consisting of strength, spinning or aqua-jogging. We also went on a three-month trip to Sweden and Finland, which meant a lot of specific orienteering training in preparation for the World Championships in Finland”.

“When I’m at home, in addition to a daily gym class I usually run a circuit of at least one hour with about 300 metres height difference. Being Swiss, I’m not so easily frightened by height differences, and I have also completed an alpine marathon with 1,800 metres of climb”.

As you learned to speak Swedish so astonishingly quickly, it would seem that you are also a talented linguist?

“I really like languages, and that was perhaps why it went so well with Swedish when we moved to Sweden. I had a textbook with me, but the most important thing above all was to spend time with fellow Ulricehamn club-mates. A friend helped me a little to learn Swedish by talking extensively about orienteering and about everything written in the newspapers. But it was also important that we did not allow them to speak English with us! If you are forced to try to understand and express yourself in a new language, you learn it much faster. And you must not be afraid to express yourself incorrectly! You should dare to try, in spite of making mistakes and not being perfect”.

Maybe something similar to learning how to orienteer?

“It is clear that there must be some talent if you are going to go far. But one must not underestimate the importance of preserving the joy and enthusiasm for sport. And of be-



Matthias and Simone at the World Cup Final 2013. Photo: Erik Borg

ing ambitious and serious about it! I also think that it’s about intuition to some degree: when and how to interpret the map correctly and see exactly where a control is. But this intuition might be based on long experience”.

The foremost people in Simone’s life

Which people, inside or outside orienteering, have been crucial to you?

“First and foremost my parents, who introduced me to orienteering. They were also always a great support to me throughout my career, and have been a crucial support when it comes to taking care of the kids. My husband Matthias is of course one of the most important people to me. We have gone on this whole trip together and he has always been the first person I talked to and consulted. He is also the best father... Then there are many additional people who also had and have great significance: all the coaches during my time, not least Fritz Aebi, who was my personal coach 1996–2010, and then Vroni König-Salmi in 2011–2013”.

Now that you have finished your orienteering career, does it matter that you will gradually lose contact with a world you long lived in the midst of - do you already know that there are many people and situations that you will miss?

“I will miss all the great contacts I have in elite circles. Obviously I do not want to lose all my friends and contacts, but it is of course more difficult when you do not go away together any more. It was noticeable in the final World Cup race in the autumn in Baden, what a great atmosphere there was amongst the runners! And it was really great for me that everyone praised me in the way they did!

Maybe I will also miss the feeling when you come into the finish having done everything you could, to be told that you have won”.

“But I think you can actually almost get that feeling as a ‘hobby’ orienteer even if it isn’t quite the same, having not prepared yourself in quite the same manner and therefore not be as relieved if the result is as expected”.

Nervous before the start

With just seconds remaining to the start – what do you feel then? Confidence, self-belief, nervousness?

“I was always pretty nervous. I could feel doubt that my preparations were right or good enough. And what kind of terrain and course were out there? As much as I tried to prepare myself there was a lot of uncertainty. ‘Maybe I hadn’t done enough!’ And how would my rivals perform? I have always had great respect for them. But in that respect perhaps lies an answer as to why one can succeed; you never underestimate anyone, not least yourself”.

“Most importantly however was that in spite of the uncertainty, I could keep my concentration up, run offensively and attack the course. And most of all I looked forward to the challenge and saw it as a positive thing that awaited me”.

When on the rare occasions you lost contact with the map and didn’t know where you were – can you describe how you felt? And the way you acted?

“A good example is the World Championships Middle Distance in Switzerland when I ran to the wrong control. When I noticed my big

mistake, it was like a volcano that erupted: 'No, it cannot be true! Not in the World Championships!' At first I was almost ready to cry, but then came an opposite response. I wanted to show people that I could handle this too!"

"But it was immediately apparent in my body that something special had happened. For the next few minutes I had very heavy legs and I felt incredibly strange. It was as though a shock had hit me, not only mentally but also throughout my body. But despite the mistake I managed to finish in fifth place. But that's the only time I threw my map away after finishing..."

"The reaction I had during the race – of still wanting to overcome the mistake – I have experienced several times after other less successful competitions. I wanted to show that I could do better – and invariably in the next competition, it was almost always much better".

Can you describe the feeling in the Swiss national team? No-one challenged that you ran virtually all the distances at a Championship. But may be there is tension between runners who compete for places?

"I think we had a perfectly normal dynamic when it came to relay teams. It is obvious that everyone wants to run.... And it was not always

easy being the big star. Almost all the media attention turned towards me, something I could not prevent. But I really hope that the rest of the team got something positive out of this media interest, and also as a team, it benefitted us all!"

An icon in Switzerland

You are a national hero in Switzerland, an icon, by virtue of your huge and long-lasting success. But what are the other qualities that make you so popular?

"I think you need more than medals. It takes more than just sporting prowess, perhaps it's important too that you are friendly to the media. It's hard to describe this... Maybe you have to have an ability to communicate well, otherwise you will be less popular".

Will you miss this role, being at the centre?

"No, absolutely not. It has never been my big thing even though I got many interesting contacts by all the attention. It was not this that drove me. Sometimes there was almost too much fuss and I was happier being at home with family".

"I also think I will get various kinds of invitations for a few more years..."

What will you do for work in the future, and besides work, how will you fill your free time – even though the children might take most of it?

"It's obvious that I'll be more free to be with the kids, something I'm really looking forward to. In addition, I will work as a coordinator of the "Nationales Leistungszentrum Bern (NLZ)." Almost every day at NLZ we organise a training session for elite orienteers: two strength workouts, two orienteering sessions and two interval workouts. It's exciting to be on the other side, not to train but to be a coach. I can also imagine being active as a coach in the future. And Matthias and I are responsible for the 2016 Junior World Championships in Switzerland!"

A World Champion orienteer should preferably be on top in all disciplines: Sprint, Middle and Long. Do you think it will be possible in the future to be such a 'complete orienteer', or will you have to do as Thierry Gueorgiou who in 2013 opted out of all the Sprint races in the World Cup?

"We'll see!" Simone explained that she was occasionally asked to run 5,000 metres on the track, but she noticed that her running style – which seems so incredibly smooth and effective – was always better off-road than on tartan. She has a best time of 16.55.

The best and worst moments

What was the biggest disappointment of your orienteering career? And the opposite – the moment of greatest joy?

"Such a hard question to answer! There are so many great memories, and every gold medal has its own story! Maybe nevertheless it was the two World Championships on home terrain in 2003 & 2012, especially memorable because I succeeded in front of my home crowd. But the World Championships in Finland in 2013 was also huge. In fact I can say that the whole of this year, ending with the Sprint in Baden, was absolutely amazing! To be successful in my last race and in my home country too!"

"My biggest disappointment is perhaps the Middle Distance race in Switzerland in 2012 when I went to the wrong control. And then there was the relay at the World Championships in Hungary in 2009, when I went out in a medal position and then completely lost it trying to find a control in green... I was in the lead together with Finland's Minna Kauppi, but minutes disappeared in the green area. Although I thought I had a safe attack point, I managed to miss the control kite. Had someone punched right in front of me I would probably have seen it", says Simone who picks up the year's map file, pulls out the map and points to where the drama was played out – and indeed it looks to be both difficult and rather tricky.

Do you think there are elite orienteers out there who will be grateful that they will avoid racing such a dominant competitor as you?

"Maybe... But I have also received many messages expressing regret and saying it will never be the same without me!"

Will you ever be forgotten in your lifetime; in the orienteering world and amongst the wider public in Switzerland?

"It does not bother me. And I think it might be quite hard to forget me so quickly ..." Simone points to three identical statuettes in the room - indication that she was three times



Simone Niggli (SUI)

Born January 9, 1978

Married to Matthias Niggli. Three children: Malin (2008), Anja & Lars (2011)

World Championships: 23 gold medals

The World Games: 2 gold medals

World Cup: 9-fold overall winner

Swiss Sportswoman of the Year in 2003, 2005, and 2007





voted winner of Switzerland's Female Athlete of the Year competition.

Rows of medals

A proper appreciation of her unique performances over so many years can, I say to myself, best be achieved by a sight of all her Championship medals. How does she keep them? She leads me light-footedly to the upper floor of her home and points to a wall where they hang in neat rows. I ask if I may take a picture of them, asking her also to stand beside them, and she does so with an amused smile, that smile we have become so used to seeing over the years.

The row of medals will not get any longer, and Simone points out with a laugh that it would be difficult to fit more on the wall!

When we return downstairs she says it is a relief not being an international runner any more, as she does not have to worry about her training programme this winter and how the 2014 competition season will be. "But it will be fun to run Tiomila and Jukola / Venla", she says – and the bright smile is convincing. She is unlikely to run last leg, but the fact that she is part of their relay team will mean a great deal for her present club OK Tisaren. She will also no doubt be well trained – when we part company, she immediately goes off to do a gym session.

Even though Simone Niggli has put on her national team kit for the last time, she will still carry on making the most of her amazing ability, effortlessly and flawlessly orienteering through the ever-changing countryside.

Japanese youngsters inspired by Simone

Written by Clive Allen

Eight years ago, in the 2005 issue of *Orienteering World* (reproduced above), a picture was included of "Simone surrounded by her Japanese fan club". The picture shows Simone together with 6 young girls, waiting for the prize-giving after the Long distance final in the World Championships which were held in Japan that year.

Two of these girls, Saho Miyakawa and Natsuki Yamagishi, were so inspired by the attention they were given by Simone that they dreamt that some day they too would be really good orienteers and take part in the World Championships.

And this year, in Finland, that dream came true.

Saho takes up the story: "In 2005 I was eleven years old. To see the World Championships was really big for me. Some day, I said to myself, I would like to run in such a big event".

And Natsuki: "My parents had been competitors in World Championships". (Her father, Rinya Yamagishi was in the Japanese relay team in Norway in 1978; it was the first time Japan participated in the World Championships Relay.) "So I started orienteering too. In 2005, I was nine years old; I remember that the races were exciting and the competitors bright and colourful".

Forward to 2013: competing alongside Simone!

Saho is now the 2013 Japan champion at Middle distance and has competed in the last 5 Junior World Championships. Natsuki is 2013 Japan Junior champion at Long distance and has run in 3 Junior World Championships. So this year they were selected for the Japan team and got to run in the same races as their long-time idol.

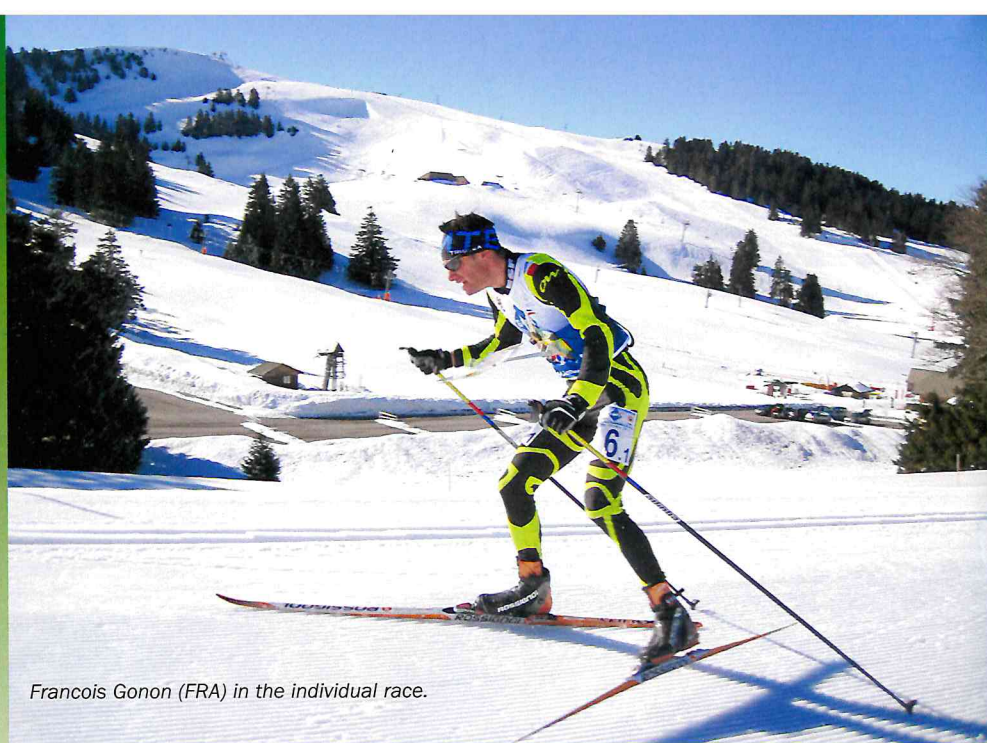
So how was it, I asked, to be running in the same Championships as Simone?

Saho: "When I was a little girl, Simone was a hero for me. I have got her autograph, I had a photo taken with her – and got a hug! The autograph is displayed in my room still now. This year I met Simone at the Middle distance race – her start time was 4 minutes after mine. I felt how wonderful this is, now I am running the same course as Simone! She is still my hero; she has a big influence on my orienteering. Simone won 4 medals just as in 2005, and I thought: she is the ultimate champion".

Natsuki: "The terrain in Finland was very difficult, I had never run on such a type before. And I was astonished to find how big the World Orienteering Championships event was! This year I met Simone, but I couldn't find a chance to talk with her. In 2005 she was the very big super-star for me. She is the super-star still, but now I have run the same course as her in the Middle distance and relay, I feel I am little closer to her".



Norway, Russia, and Finland in the relay prize-giving ceremony.



Francois Gonon (FRA) in the individual race.

Written by Anna Jacobson; Photos by Eivind Tonna

Asian Winter Games in 2011, CISM Military World Winter Games in 2010 and 2013, and now Winter Universiade in 2019 and the World University Championships in 2016. Ski orienteering is definitely in a strong tail wind at the moment!

Friendship through sport at Military World Games

Ski orienteering became a permanent sport in the CISM World Games this year. The ski orienteers are extremely happy to have the chance to become a part of the CISM family. "Both CISM World Winter Games I have attended have had a great atmosphere, and the CISM manages to follow the slogan "Friendship through sport" very well. At the same time I feel that ski orienteering really fits under the CISM umbrella. We have very good relationships between nations and athletes, and we are, above all, friends", says Eivind Tonna, the

Ski orienteering more visible than ever

Chairman of the IOF Ski Orienteering Commission. He is a former elite ski orienteer as well.

Students' sport

The International University Sports Federation (FISU) took a decision this year to stage World Ski Orienteering University Championships in the future. In addition, ski orienteering will be part of the Winter Universiade 2019. IOF Ski Orienteering Athletes' Commission chair Hans Jörgen Kvåle was involved in the process when applying for the World Ski Orienteering University Championships. He is very happy with the decisions because he says orienteering is a students' sport: "Most of our athletes, even the top athletes, are students or have finished higher education. More than half of

the top ranked athletes in ski orienteering were students last winter, and therefore I find it natural that ski orienteering will be a part of the Winter Universiade and also that we will organise University Championships."

Much to offer for multi-sport games

According to Eivind Tonna, ski orienteering is a very suitable sport for multi-sport games: "Our sport can be organised almost anywhere: The track network can be dense and extremely technical, or we can organise the event from a cross-country skiing stadium without any extra tracks being needed. Some competitions have a more physical aspect while other competitions have a track network with an amazingly complicated network of tracks. This makes it challenging for the athlete, and they need to develop both technical and physical skills to cope with this variety."

The 2014 European Championships will be broadcast on TV. "We have a sport with action and high speed with decisions all the time that influence the result. The audience can watch this live via GPS tracking in the arena or at home. We continuously work to develop our sport as a media sport, and I believe that we have good stories to tell," Tonna says and concludes: "I strongly believe we can bring something new to the winter sport coverage on TV."



The official relay prize-giving ceremony.

IOF at SportAccord Convention

This year the IOF had a booth in the SportAccord Convention exhibition area for the first time. The SportAccord Convention is where the sporting world meets – it is a 6-day gathering of over 2000 leading representatives from international sport. The convention provides the global sports community with an excellent opportunity to gather in an exclusive networking environment, and to build relationships.

The IOF's presence at the SportAccord Convention was beneficial, and many new contacts were established. The IOF booth received many compliments, and the orienteering video made by Timo Mikkola was much appreciated as it "showed the essence of the sport". Several delegates commented on how



Eivind Tonna (IOF Ski Orienteering Commission Chair) and Anna Jacobson (IOF Assistant Secretary General) at the IOF booth.

"orienteering really is a fantastic TV sport".

Next year's SportAccord Convention will be held at the beginning of April in Belek, Turkey, and the IOF will be present there as well.

2013 World Orienteering Championships an international messenger for clean sport

The message of clean sport was on display at the World Orienteering Championships, symbolised by the Golden Baton which travels around to international sports events organised in Finland. The event organisers, the International Orienteering Federation, the World Anti-Doping Agency WADA and the Finnish Anti-doping Agency FINADA were working together to bring forth the message of clean sport.

The Golden Baton of Clean Sport challenges its receiver to promote fair play. The baton arrived at the World Orienteering Championships from the World Ice Hockey Championship, which was held in May in Finland and in Sweden.

"Ice hockey and orienteering are very different sports: we move around inside while orienteers are surrounded by nature. But we still share common values: fair play is at the heart

of it all. Both athletes and spectators have the right to clean sport. If we abandon that, we will also abandon the core and the key idea of sport," notes Matti Nurminen, Managing Director of the Finnish Ice Hockey Association.

"For us orienteers the direction is clear: clean athletes deserve all the glory!" says top orienteer Minna Kauppi.

A Clean Win Programme information stand was open at the Championships events. At the stand, you could chat with athletes about the use and consequences of doping, test your knowledge of anti-doping questions and win great prizes. The medallists in the Championships also took a stand for clean sport by signing the petition: their public commitment to clean sport could be seen on the poster near the awards platform, where all medallists wrote their names.

Unofficial Sprint Relay World Cup to be introduced in 2014

The IOF Council has decided to introduce an unofficial Sprint Relay World Cup series in the year 2014. Sprint Relay will be part of the World Orienteering Championships programme for the first time in Italy next year, and it has been

decided that the event format will be tested in advance in conjunction with the 2014 World Cup. The unofficial Sprint Relay World Cup will consist of four races to be organised in Turkey, Finland, Italy, and Switzerland.

IOF now has 76 members

The IOF has gained two new member federations this year: Cameroon and Iran. This means that the IOF now has 76 members. Iran has previously taken part in ski orienteering in the Asian Winter Games, and in orienteering in the CISM Military World Games. Now they will be able to participate in IOF Events as well.

Organisers of future World Championships appointed

Estonia has been appointed to organise the 2017 World Orienteering Championships. The World Masters Orienteering Championships in 2016 will also be held in Estonia.

The 2015 World Ski Orienteering Championships will be held in Norway, and the World Mountain Bike Orienteering Championships in 2016 will take place in Portugal. Switzerland is the organiser of the Junior World Orienteering Championships in 2016.

The IOF Council has appointed Croatia as the organiser of the 2015 World Trail Orienteering Championships. The competitions are planned to be held in the capital city, Zagreb.

World University Ski Orienteering Championships will be a reality

World University Sports Federation (FISU) has decided to stage World University Ski Orienteering Championships biennially from 2016 on.

IOF President Brian Porteous commented: "This is great news. Orienteering is a very popular sport amongst students, and we are delighted that the World University Sports Federation has agreed to our proposal for a World University Ski Orienteering Championships every two years from 2016. We have excellent relationships with FISU and I am delighted for this major new vote of confidence in our sport. This will be another important step forward for our global ambition to achieve further growth in ski orienteering around the world."

Kemira

Foot Orienteering

Leonid Novikov:

“Gold medals? Way beyond my dreams!”

Written by Erik Borg

Leonid Novikov from Russia had not in any way dreamt about winning gold - but he was the only athlete, apart from Simone Niggli, who enjoyed more than one victory at the World Orienteering Championships in Finland this summer.

“I have always felt that I had great potential in orienteering, but I didn't really believe that I could do so well”, he says. Leonid, who will be 30 years old in January, enjoyed his first big success in the Middle final, where the Russian finished the course nine seconds faster than the favourite, Frenchman Thierry Gueorgiou. “I have learnt to understand that everything is possible, but I also had some luck. There are several guys who were stronger than me, but just in the World Championship race they didn't put everything together”, he says.

Hard navigation in Middle distance

Leonid started the World Championships finals with 25th position in the Long distance. Thierry Gueorgiou won that, and then said he was looking forward very much to the more technical Middle distance. In the Long distance there was a lot of high speed running in the open pine forest, whereas in the Middle the navigation was more difficult. Early in the race the Frenchman failed to notice a path in the terrain and lost almost a minute. Leonid got a time advantage here that he held all the way to the finish.

Relay gold the next day

The day after the Middle final came the Relay: Leonid ran the first leg for the Russian team. His brother Valentin ran the second leg, and Dmitry Tsvetkov won the battle with Gustav Bergman on the last leg, finishing just 1 minute ahead of the Swede – gold medals for



World Champions 2013

Women: Simone Niggli, Switzerland won all individual formats – Sprint, Middle and Long. Norway won the relay.

Men: Sprint: Mårten Boström, Finland. Middle: Leonid Novikov, Russia. Long: Thierry Gueorgiou, France. Russia won the relay.

Russia, so a second gold for Leonid!

Big brother Valentin said afterwards that it had always been his dream to win a World Championships gold together with his nine-year younger brother.

A close family

The two brothers in the winning relay team both live in Belgorod. They are also both fathers with one child. Valentin and Julia No-



Leonid Novikov runs into victory on the middle distance. Photo: Erik Borg

vikova got daughter Sofiya in June 2012, whilst Maria, the daughter of Leonid and wife Yelena, is five years old. “Next year she will try orienteering”, says Leonid. Mother Yelena was a top Russian junior orienteer and is still very active. She trains almost every day and competes regularly.

The two brothers train together about once a week when they are at home. Father Yuri coaches both of them. “My father made me who I am today”, Leonid says. “For that I am very grateful to him”.

Next steps

Now Leonid is planning how to develop his elite orienteering career further. There will be some adjustments to his training: “Last season I just ran in the woods and worked to be stronger on soft ground, since the main goal was the Middle distance in Finland. For the coming season I will combine forest and track-and-field training. I plan to get faster and I want to give Sprint a try, and still do Middle distance”.

Valentin, soon 39 years old, is not thinking of retiring just yet. The brothers can again be very central in the Russian relay team. “If no major changes occur we will aim to race together in the relay team again”, Valentin says.

The Russian relay team Dmitry Tsvetkov (in front), Valentin Novikov (left) and Leonid Novikov celebrate victory at the finish. Photo: Erik Borg

Lizzie Ingham – up-and-coming New Zealand star

Written by Erik Borg

At the beginning of the year, Lizzie Ingham enjoyed the biggest moment of her orienteering life so far. She's one of the many young New Zealanders starting to perform well on the world stage.

New Zealand had achieved only one winning result in a World Cup race prior to January 8th 2013. Alastair Landels won a World Cup race back in 1994, the previous time there was World Cup competition in New Zealand. That race was near Auckland.

Lizzie Ingham's big success was in the Sprint Final in Wellington. "I still can't believe I managed to pull off a top three finish in my home city!" Lizzie says.

New Zealand hosted a great World Cup round with varied and challenging terrain, and also with good home results. "I am really proud of the World Cup events that we put on. Three completely different terrains, awesome Event Centres and good courses. The atmosphere at the races was amazing, and it was really special to have the support of a large home crowd, including non-orienteering friends. I'm not sure I can quite express in words just how proud I am of the events and everyone involved", says Lizzie.

The best day and place

In the race at Wellington, only the Swedes Tove Alexandersson and Annika Billstam

finished before Lizzie. Just 12 seconds was the gap between the winner and Lizzie on the 3.0 kilometre long course with 16 controls.

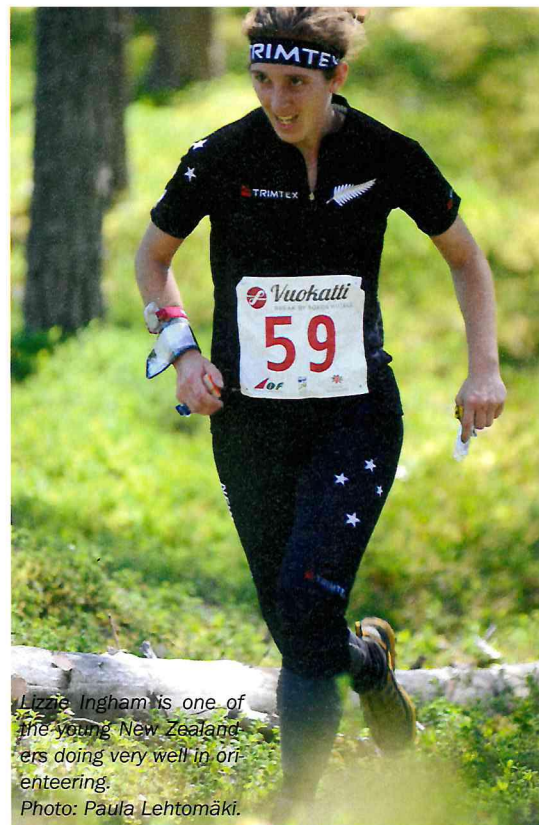
"I and my closest supporters have believed for a while now that I have the potential to finish on the podium. But I couldn't have chosen a better day to get it right and pull out a podium race. I've never felt so elated on finishing a race, it's an utterly amazing feeling. It was so special to do it in front of the home crowd. There were so many people in that crowd who have supported me through the years, and got me to where I am today, so it felt amazing to give something back in the form of performing on the day", she says.

Other New Zealand's young runners are also doing well. At the Junior World Championships in the Czech Republic Tim Robertson took bronze in the Sprint. Last year Matt Ogden won at Middle distance at the Junior Championships. Other runners like Angela Simpson have also gained very good international results.

"NZ orienteering is on the rise on the world stage. Achieving top results in international races helps others aim for the same thing in the future. I think that gives huge motivation – especially for the juniors – to commit to the sport and train harder and smarter to achieve the goals".

Growth and inspiration

25-year-old Lizzie believes that hosting the



Lizzie Ingham is one of the young New Zealanders doing very well in orienteering.
Photo: Paula Lehtomäki.

World Cup has had a two-fold impact. "Firstly, it's exposed all New Zealand orienteers to top level international orienteering; most haven't travelled outside Australasia for orienteering, and wouldn't have otherwise experienced it. I think for a lot of local orienteers it's been eye-opening, and hopefully they've been motivated to get out and experience more large international events. It's given our sport valuable publicity within NZ, which, given how small our sport is, is important".

"Secondly, it's given the world the opportunity to see what NZ has to offer. Not just orienteering-wise, but in general. Most of our international visitors took time off to travel around our country a bit, and see just why it's the best place in the world to live! Hopefully, we'll see a few more international orienteers coming to NZ. Finally, hosting the World Cup and supporting events has shown what level of events we're capable of putting together. As a result we've already seen a rise in the quality of regional and local events".

Move to Europe in prospect

Next year Lizzie will be working hard to complete her PhD, but orienteering will remain high priority and the World Championships in Italy is of course in her mind. And January 2015 is a time she is already thinking about – it is then the World Cup comes to Tasmania in Australia.

And after Tasmania? "I plan to make a move to Europe, find an appropriate club, and focus mainly on orienteering for a year or two. I can't wait!"

"A surreal feeling"

Lizzie Ingham got her first top three placing in an international race when the World Cup came to her home town – in a terrain she's not at all familiar with, even though it's in the city where she has grown up.

"It was a very surreal feeling to drive on the roads I have used hundreds of times before, but rather than go to work or training I was heading to run a World Cup race, see the world's best doing some training in the sort of areas I have myself grown up training in, and see the local club orienteers chatting with international stars".

"I think the stand-out memory of the Sprint day for me, though, was jogging to the pre-start on Mt. Victoria. I looked out over the city, a view I've seen dozens of times before, and realised that I was about to set off to run the biggest race of my life, not just on a training run. It was an incredibly emotional moment, and I think it set me up for the race ahead".

The 2013 World Championships arenas:

“The excitement was tremendous”

Karl Johan Emanuelson always likes to be at the World Orienteering Championships, and the Norwegian journalist thinks it has become more and more exciting to be a spectator.

“The whole field at the stadium for the Long distance final was filled with people and the excitement was tremendous”, wrote Karl Johan in his newspaper Agderposten.

At the Sprint this year the local Finnish baseball stadium was also full to capacity with 7,000 spectators, and the hordes of flag-waving locals got full value with Mårten Boström winning the men’s class. “It was terrific to be present, and the tracking together with a map on the big screens has made it even better and more exciting to be amongst the crowds in the arena. If you understand a bit of the map, it gives added value to being a spectator. Orienteering has now really become a

spectator sport”, says Karl Johan.

Free entry to the arenas

Thousands came to watch the Championships in Finland. Entry to the arenas was free; that was a surprise to some, for example the sports journalists for the Finnish paper Hufvudstadsbladet. “For me it was a big surprise that the spectators didn’t have to buy tickets to watch the events. How is it possible that such a very professionally organised competition can be free of charge”, the journalist Fanny Fröman commented. “It is good that there is a real priority for portraying the sport and making it interesting, and letting the young have the chance to see their idols in competitions, instead of thinking about making a profit”.





Photo: Joaquim Margarido

The first-ever TempO World Champion

second baby should be born in January 2014, so next summer will be an adventure when we travel to Portugal and Italy as a family and I have to think both TrailO and taking care of a little baby. Fortunately I have good supporting troops, but they can't breast-feed ... The truth is that it was only through being a mother that I ever started Trail Orienteering, so having another child gives me even more motivation as a Trail Orienteer.

Joaquim Margarido

When, within a month, Pinja Mäkinen gives birth to her second child, she will have a beautiful story to tell. The one about that July 12th on which, with the baby in her womb, she became the first athlete in the history of Trail Orienteering to win the world TempO title.

At the end of the first-ever World Championship TempO event, you are back home with the gold medal on your chest. Did you anticipate this?

– I couldn't really expect to win the World Championship already in Vuokatti. Of course it was my dream, but realistically I considered that maybe a medal could be possible, and a podium place would be a good performance for me. I didn't believe I was fast enough for taking the gold. But I was ready to enjoy the competition and the challenging tasks.

Would you like to share the memories of that unforgettable day?

– The previous night I couldn't sleep well because my two-year-old daughter stayed awake. But I knew that one poor night wouldn't be enough reason to spoil the competition. Before the qualification course in the morning I was a bit nervous, but at the same time I was ready and confident. I believe that it's important to be a little bit nervous, then you know that you are charged up to do your best at the control stations. During the competition I managed to concentrate on the tasks and each time think logically and

systematically until I knew the answer.

After the qualification I had such a big lead that I knew that in the final I could take extra care and even make one mistake... and still win. In the few minutes before the final I was a lot more nervous than I was in the morning. Again I said to myself: "Enjoy the tasks!", but I have to admit that when I viewed the most difficult problems at the control stations there was a thought on my mind: "You have to answer something!" I managed to complete the final without a mistake. When I had answered at all the controls and walked to the finish joining all the other finalists, I got a little hysterical after this thrilling day, not least when it was announced after a while that I was the winner!

Is Trail Orienteering's future in TempO?

– I think that TempO and PreO should be equally important variants of TrailO. TempO thinking is nearer to Foot Orienteering thinking, and it might be an easy way for Foot Orienteers to familiarise themselves with Trail Orienteering.

And what about yourself? Are you going to repeat such a fine performance next year?

– I will go for it. But we can expect the competitions next year to be a bit different from those in Vuokatti. I have to develop my ability to think out 'easy' direction and point selection tasks really quickly. Furthermore my



TempO on the Internet

The Internet TempO Game is a project born in Italy, created by Marco Giovannini. It is an online game simulating a TempO course with real images and maps and an unmerciful time-piece, so testing the skills and speed of decision of the players. With two on-line competitions now held, the most recent last May, Giovannini has succeeded in gathering around the Game virtually all the big names of Trail Orienteering all over the world, a set whose number has amounted to more than one hundred participants.

A source of learning and sharing experience by excellence, the Internet TempO Game is already an unmissable event - and it is with eager anticipation that the third edition is awaited. For those who missed the emotions of the two previous events, it's always possible to recover some of the lost time and navigate to www.trailo.it. There are 42 challenges waiting for you.



A year to remember for the Czech Republic

Written by Joaquim Margarido

It has the complexity, the whim, the vanity – but above all the charm! – that newer and smaller things always have. This is Trail Orienteering, a challenging and at the same time a versatile discipline, which stubbornly asserts itself by its quality, variety and novelty.

Young daughter of a noble family, trail orienteering has a smaller number of fans than the other orienteering disciplines. Let us in fact call them addicts who find in trail orienteering a facet of life fully able to satisfy their taste, not to say passion, for orienteering. The fact that they are smaller in number doesn't mean that their discipline is in some way less structured than the others – quite the contrary! Trail orienteers are like other orienteers: generous, interventional, supportive, but also passionate, combative, sanguine, and incessantly and constructively opining on their own little world.

Tenth World Championships in Finland

Early in July, 87 trail orienteers converged on Vuokatti in central Finland in order to

participate at the World Trail Orienteering Championships' 10th edition. To face the challenges as successfully as possible is, of course, every competitor's goal. But they know that the level of challenge has a direct relationship with the quality of the trail orienteering terrain; the best combines complex ground and contour detail with water and vegetation features to demand skills of map interpretation at the highest level. And it was precisely this that was waiting for the participants upon their arrival in Finland. Drawing on the richness of detail of a beautiful forest, an attentive and careful organisation skilfully put together a set of unforgettable challenges that led to the crowning of the three new individual world champions and the country winner of the team competition.

Although the "home factor" put Finland in pole position in the fight for the top placings, it was Sweden that was seen as favourite for gold, being credited with eight gold medals in the nine editions of the Championships before this year. And while Norway, Denmark, Russia, Czech Republic and a couple of other countries were ready to grab the opportunity to get on the podium, countries like Hungary,

Poland, South Korea and Portugal participated with the single purpose of gaining experience and knowledge.

Golds for Turto and Kostová

The results in PreO, until this year the one standard form of trail orienteering, illustrate the tight struggle for victory in the Open and Paralympic classes. In the first case, the expectations were borne out with Swedes and Finns occupying the top five places over two days. From "Alpha" to "Echo", on a map crossed by a multitude of contour lines, a maximum 45 points for the two-day competition gave the Finn Jari Turto the chance of showing why he's known as "Mr. Contour Lines". His performance earned him the World title, but he had to wait until the last control point to see that he could be the winner, eventually decided on the amount of time spent on the Timed Controls. Jari was 54.5 seconds quicker than the Swede Martin Fredholm; both dropped only one point out of the 45.

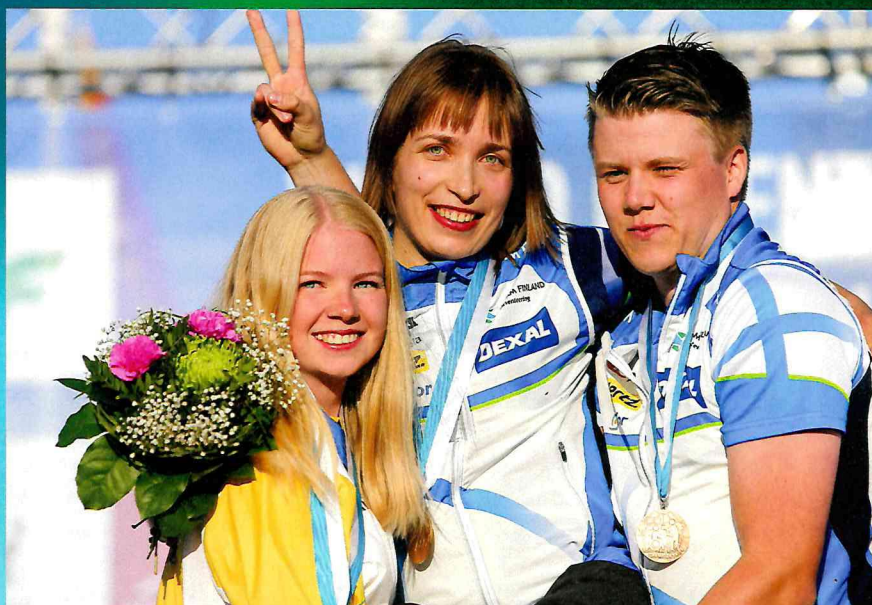
In the Paralympic class, Jana Kostová provided the Czech Republic with its first-ever trail orienteering medal, a triumph in the

making after the first day of competition. The Czech athlete overcame the pressure to hold her lead, confirming on the second day a very satisfying victory, with her compatriot Pavel Dudík occupying second position.

The Swedish team enjoyed a delightful revenge in the team competition, regaining a title that escaped to Finland in the two previous editions.

First time for TempO

This edition of the World Trail Orienteering Championships brought with it the new World TempO Championship, a variant made up exclusively of timed controls that is seen by many as the main focus for Trail Orienteering in the future. And if we look at the Championship podium, we realise why! The medal-winners are so young; TempO can so much more readily attract youngsters to this discipline. Here too, Finland and Sweden measured forces at the highest level, with the Finnish athletes being the stronger again, Finland's Pinja Mäkinen taking victory over the Swede Marit Wiksell.



The three best in TempO: Pinja Mäkinen (FIN), Marit Wiksell (SWE), and Lauri Kontkanen (FIN).

With a new season opening up, it is with hope and optimism that we face the future. "Innovate to improve" seems to be the motto of the IOF's Trail Orienteering Commission, which has just published a new edition of the Competition Rules for IOF Trail Orienteering

Events. Bringing in PreO Relay courses will win more fans for TrailO, and the unofficial European Cup in TrailO is extended for its second year to six countries with events between May and October. All good reasons to be confident about the future.

A beginner's guide to TempO

TempO is the sprint version of TrailO, consisting of timed controls throughout. You are called up to each control station individually and are seated – or if in a wheelchair, placed at the same spot – with a view out over terrain with usually 6 kites visible on different mapped features. You are asked to confirm that the 6 kites are visible, and are then given a stack of small map extracts, each aligned in the direction of view and showing one control circle. Initially a cover sheet hides the first map from view.

An official then says "Your time starts now". You remove the cover sheet and study the first map. The centre of the control circle is a distinct feature in the terrain – your task is to decide if there is a kite there or not, and if there is, which one it is of the six you can see. You have to picture the terrain when looking at the map, and then transfer this picture rapidly to the terrain in front of you. Your answer, given verbally or by pointing to one of the letters printed in large type on a card, is one of A to F (starting from the kite furthest to the left), or Z if you think there is no kite at the site the circle shows.



Quickly on to the next map in the stack – same map, but circle in a different place; same task. And so on to the others. The timing is stopped when you've given your final answer. There is a maximum allowed time, usually 30 seconds per task, and for each wrong answer you are penalised by having 30 seconds added to your elapsed time.

You return the stack of maps to the officials

manning the control station, and then you walk to the next control station and go through the same procedures again. Usually in TempO there are at least 5 control stations, with up to 5 tasks at each. Back at the competition centre, all your accumulated times (including penalty times) are added together, and the winner is the person with the lowest time overall.

A story of four seasons

Written by Joaquim Margarido

The 2013 mountain bike (MTB) orienteering season started in the European spring in Poland, continued in the summer in Estonia and concluded in the autumn in Portugal. The Czech Republic, Great Britain and Sweden can look back on a season with historic achievements for their countries.

Even though the MTB orienteering season concentrates on spring, summer, and autumn months, it is the preparation in winter that leads to the medals of summer. Also in winter, the rules and regulations are prepared.

A new set of rules was adopted for the 2013 season, and the month of March brought with it the decision by the IOF to reduce the number of scores used to calculate the overall scores in the MTB Orienteering World Rankings to four. The reason behind this change is to get the MTBO World Ranking specification aligned with the one for foot orienteering, and to help those athletes with fewer chances to take part in MTB Orienteering World Ranking Events to have a full overall score.

European Championships in Poland

It was with the European summer knocking on the door that Poland hosted the first major event of the season, the European MTB Orienteering Championships. Inaugurated here in 2006, the event successively visited Italy, Lithuania, Denmark and Russia before returning again to Poland this year. And it was in Zamosc in the south-eastern part of the country that 111 athletes from 20 countries spent a week competing for the European titles of Sprint, Middle Distance, Long Distance, Relay and, for the first time in the history of the Championships, also the Mixed Relay in the Sprint variant.

With performances clearly above all the others, the Finn Jussi Laurila won the individual titles of Sprint and Long Distance along with victories in the Relay and Mixed Sprint Relay. Another of the big names of the competition was the Finn Marika Hara, thanks to three titles won, but also worthy of mention are the triumphs of the Briton Emily Benham and the Swede Cecilia Thomasson, Middle Distance and Long Distance European champions respectively, both providing their countries with their first-ever gold medals in Elite MTB

orienteering competitions. In the men's competition, the Russian Valeriy Gluhov won the Middle Distance title, reaching 1350 points for his World Ranking personal account, the highest score of the season.

Summer in Estonia

From Polish spring to Estonian summer there was the space of two months. A time in which the best in the world recovered from the effort expended in Poland and trained to be in their best shape for the most important clash of the season. Near the capital Tallin and the Gulf of Finland, in the north of the country, the ancient and green city of Rakvere hosted 162 athletes from 26 countries for six beautiful days of competition at the highest level. Also here, Marika Hara showed her superiority over the other competitors, winning three of the four world titles – very clearly the 'Queen of the Championships'. World Champion at Middle Distance in 2009 in Israel, the Finnish athlete had to wait four years to get back up again to the highest place on the podium in an individual distance. This happened twice in these Championships, again in the Middle Distance and also in the Long Distance. The other world title was achieved in the Relay – her third World Championships Relay gold.

By winning the Sprint and the Middle Distance titles in the men's class, the Estonian Tõnis Erm became a true national hero. The Swede Cecilia Thomasson was again a major presence in the Championships, winning the Sprint world title, but here too there has been a historic achievement of great significance: despite being strong in MTB orienteering from its start, the Czech Republic had never achieved a gold medal in the previous ten editions of the Championships. Here Kryštof Bogar was crowned Long Distance World Champion and on the last day of the competition, the Czech men's team took the world Relay title.

In the Junior World MTB Orienteering Championships, held at the same time, the Frenchman Cédric Beill won everything there was to win: four world titles in a row for the "golden boy" of Strasbourg. Clearly a shining star arising here!

Autumn in Portugal

Another two months more and we move from the Estonian summer to the autumn

in Portugal: a beautiful, warm and sunny autumn in the very pretty region of Costa Alentejana on the south-west coast. Here no European or World titles in dispute, but the World Cup's final round getting the attention of 83 athletes from 17 countries. The Russians Anton Foliforov and Olga Vinogradova won on the first day of competition, on the second the winners were the Finn Susanna Laurila and the Czech Kryštof Bogar, and the Czech Republic won the last day's Mixed Relay.

At the same time, Portugal organised the World Masters MTB Orienteering Championships and also here a mention of another national hero, Carlos Simões, who won the Sprint, Middle Distance and Long Distance titles in the M40 class. A prize not only for the athlete's efforts, but also for the Portuguese Orienteering Federation, which has the responsibility of organising the European Championships in 2015 and the World Championships the year after.

Returning to the Elite, the World Cup overall was won by Anton Foliforov and Marika Hara, while Finland won the Mixed Relay. Next year's MTB Orienteering World Cup will start in Denmark in the middle of May, followed by round two in Sweden in conjunction with the O-Ringen. And everything will end with the final in August in Białystok, Poland, the venue for the 12th edition of the World MTB Orienteering Championships.

Written by Joaquim Margarido

It was in 2009 in Ben Shemen, Israel, that Sweden had its first presence in a World MTB Orienteering Championships. Despite the modesty of his results, Patrick Gunnarsson was a true pioneer of a beautiful story, one with a magnitude that is beginning to impress the MTB Orienteering world. In fact who could imagine that, four years later, Sweden would be in the highest podium placings at the European and the World MTB Orienteering Championships? Magnus Wallenborg, a member of the IOF MTBO Commission and one of those most responsible for the growth of MTBO in Sweden, says: "MTBO has developed fast in