

ORIENTEERING WORLD 2017



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Regimantas Kavaliauskas, Lithuania, on a hilly Middle Distance course at the World Mountain Bike Orienteering Championships in Vilnius, Lithuania. Photo: Donatas Lazauskas

A Word from the President

2017 will be remembered as a successful year for international orienteering. Together, we have invested in the visibility of orienteering and also received recognition from our partner organisations. The IOF is a strong organisation and we have ambitious plans for the coming years.

Significantly increased visibility

We have significantly increased our visibility on TV, and 2017 was the best year so far for our TV audience. Starting from the very successful World Ski Orienteering Championships, followed by the World Cup, World Championships (WOC) and World Games events in FootO, there were altogether thirteen days of high quality international TV broadcast from our events. Thirteen days of live orienteering carries a lot of cost, and the IOF is very thankful to members, sponsors and viewers who have supported our ambitions. We increased our visibility, and the live broadcast or the half hour summary from WOC reached 142 countries. I'm confident that LIVE Orienteering, our main channel for following orienteering online, has been established on the market and has good chances to be recognised also by a wider audience.

World Orienteering Day, WOD, is one of our flagship products helping us to create global visibility amongst the younger generations. We had 288 007 WOD participants in 2017, with events held in 79 countries and territories. 90 % of all participants in WOD 2017 were under 23 years old. But we won't stop here, our goal is to have 500 000 WOD participants in 2018!

Partnership and international recognition

The IOF is not alone in the international world of sports. We have signed Partnership Agreements or Memorandums of Understanding with several different organisations, including the International University Sports Federation (FISU), the International Military Sports Council (CISM) and the International School Sport Federation (ISF). For the IOF, looking to be included into Olympic Games, our partners' events and multi-sport games are extremely important. It's a perfect place to showcase our sport and we are delighted that one of our major partners, FISU, recognised our long-time good cooperation by awarding the IOF the FISU award for "Best International Sports Federation". Our partner in military sports, CISM,

organised the World Military Winter Games in Sochi, Russia, hosting competitions in seven winter sports including Ski Orienteering. The ISF Orienteering Championships in Italy were a great success, with over 600 youngsters taking part.

Strengthening the IOF organisation

At the IOF General Assembly in 2016, an IOF Council was elected for a 4-year term for the first time, instead of the 2-year periods in the past. It gives the Council more time to build up an organisation to support the IOF goals over a longer period of time. Our organisation is bigger than ever, with the total number of Commission and Council members and Office personnel reaching almost 90 people, from 29 countries. We have a lot of clever and enthusiastic people in our organisation, it's not a secret. The challenge for the President and Council is to keep everyone working towards the same goals, and to implement the decisions of the IOF General Assembly together. My personal feeling is that during this year we have acted more as a team, the IOF team. Our discussions have been more open, and consultation with different target groups, including our members, on various issues has reached a wider base. The policy of wider consultation and discussion is very important for better quality of Commission proposals and Council decisions.

Looking into 2018 and beyond

There are several important highlights for the IOF to look forward to in 2018.

WOD will have a slightly new format in 2018, and whilst World Orienteering Day will be held on May 23rd, we will offer more flexibility and allow all events taking place during the week following May 23rd to be counted as WOD events as well. The IOF is focusing on global participation in WOD and therefore some flexibility is given because of different local conditions around the world.

The World Orienteering Championships at the beginning of August in Latvia will be the very last WOC organised under the current challenging programme. Starting from 2019, we will use the split WOC model decided upon at the Extraordinary General Assembly in 2015. The new model will start with WOC 2019 in Norway, followed by the first Sprint WOC in Denmark in 2020. The IOF also decided in 2015 to introduce a completely new sprint format, which should be attractive for participants and organisers

on all levels - international, national and local. One of the challenges we are now facing is to define a new format and test it and for it to be successful at the Sprint WOC.

In October 2018, the IOF General Assembly will take place in Prague. From 2018 onwards, our Congress is disconnected from WOC and I hope to see our Member Federations' presidents attending our most important event. Preparing for GA2018 is the IOF Council's main task for the year, and on top of traditional agenda items, the IOF General Assembly will decide on the IOF Strategic Directions for 2018-2024. The preparation process of the IOF Strategic Directions, including our Vision, Mission, Values, Working Methods, Main Goals and Activity Plan, is making good progress and includes wider than ever consultation rounds with members and other stakeholders. Hopefully, the final result of our common work will be successful, and the IOF Strategic Directions for 2018-2024 will receive wide political support from the General Assembly.



Leho Haldna

Leho Haldna
IOF President

Tricky TempO final at the World Trail Orienteering Championships in Vazgaikemis, Lithuania. Photo: Donatas Lazauskas

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On Wednesday May 24th 2017 the second World Orienteering Day took place all over the world



Be part of something bigger
– **Colour the World**

World participants: **288 007**
14 % increase in participation from 2016
Female participants **51 %**
Young participants (0–23 years) **90 %**
Participants under 12 years **45 %**

The goals of World Orienteering Day are:

- Increasing the visibility and accessibility of orienteering to young people
- Increasing the number of participants in school and club activities in all National Federations, and getting new countries to take part in orienteering
- Helping teachers to implement orienteering in a fun and educational way

worldorienteeringday.com

[#worldorienteeringday](https://www.instagram.com/worldorienteeringday)

So far, over 1800 posts have been shared under the hashtag #worldorienteeringday on Instagram

Use the Evacuation Plan for Orienteering!



UTRYMNINGSPLAN / EVACUATION PLAN

TECKENFÖRKLARING LEGEND

- Utgång utrymning
Emergency exit
- Utrymningsväg till utgång
Route to emergency exit
- Brandsläckare
Fire extinguisher
- Brandalarm
Fire alarm
- Första hjälpen
First aid
- Här är du!
You are here!
- Kartans placering
Location of the map

VID BRAND ELLER ANNAN FARA

- RÄDDA**
Rädda de som är nödställda eller svårare i uppenbar fara.
- LARMA**
Ring räddningstjänsten: 112
- VARNA**
Varna övriga som hotas av faren.
- SLÄCK**
Släck branden om det bedöms som möjligt.
- UTRYM**
Utrym via markerade utgångar.
- ÅTERSAMLINGSPLATS**
Ta dig till återsamlingsplatsen och avvakta besked.

IN CASE OF FIRE OR DANGER

- SAVE**
Save those in distress or in immediate danger.
- ALARM**
Call the rescue service: 112
- Warn**
Warn others affected by the danger.
- EXTINGUISH**
If assumed possible, extinguish the fire.
- EVACUATE**
Evacuate using the emergency escape routes.
- MEETING POINT**
Head for the assembly area and wait for further instructions.

ÅTERSAMLING / MEETING POINT

ÅTERSAMLINGSPLATS:
utanför huvudentrén
MEETING POINT:
outside the main entrance

ADRESS / ADDRESS
Internationella Engelska Skolan, Kista
Isafjordsgatan 39, 164 40 KISTA
Korridor B, våning 5 / Corridor B, floor 5

© Göran Andersson, byorientering@gmail.com

Göran Andersson, Project Coordinator, WOD

During my running project at school, “Skol-Sprinten”, I have made use of the Evacuation Plan and, after some changes, I got a perfect indoor map.

With the help of photos or letters at the checkpoints, you can carry out activities whenever you want. At a school in Kista, close to Stockholm, I created a Treasure Hunt, an orienteering activity at walking pace throughout the school. The pupils were tasked with finding a letter at each checkpoint in order to put the letters together to create a clue to help them find the map of part 2. Depending on the level of ability of the pupils, the difficulty can be increased step by step.

The great thing about this activity is that you don't need to draw a new map, you can just make a copy of the Evacuation Plan at your school. All schools, and other buildings such as hotels, factories, shopping centres etc, have an Evacuation Plan, and you can easily use it for orienteering. It's a perfect opportunity to educate youngsters and a fun way to get them involved in orienteering.

World Orienteering Day – A record breaking event

In 2017, 288 007 participants at 2265 locations in 79 countries and territories were part of something bigger, World Orienteering Day. Turkey showed a fantastic result and increased their number of participants with more than 75% compared to last year. As a final result, Turkey registered 86 436 WOD participants. Amazing!

From Antarctica to Greenland, from Singapore to Cameroun, from Ecuador to Kosovo, from Indonesia to Cyprus, hundreds of thousands of youngsters participated in World Orienteering Day. Following the idea “Be part of something bigger – Colour the World”, people all over the world took part in locally organised orienteering events, and celebrated the biggest world-wide orienteering event ever. World Orienteering Day is a very important tool to attract young people to the sport of orienteering, and it has been a success even in many countries where orienteering is not so well-known.

– Trying to repeat and surpass a successful first event is always daunting, as was the prospect of World Orienteering Day 2017. A lot of hard work has gone into building on

last year's achievement, and I am very happy to see that it has paid off. World Orienteering Day would not be possible without the initiative and dedication that can be found in the orienteering community, so I want to say a great thank you to everyone who organised a WOD event, as well as to our generous sponsors who helped make the event possible for many of us. I hope you all had a great day of celebration of our sport and congratulations on beating the World Record together! says Leho Haldna, President of the International Orienteering Federation.

There are many great examples from a lot of countries with increasing participants compared to last year. Amongst them were Serbia and the young IOF member Egypt, who did fantastic work with WOD this year and increased their number of participants by 103% and 43% respectively. This is a remarkable improvement! The largest WOD event was held at Hunan University in the city of Changsha in China, with 3160 participants, and the smallest one was carried out in an apartment in the USA. This is orienteering; you can do it everywhere and anytime!



We also have to welcome new countries and territories Cambodia, Lebanon, the Philippines, Kosovo, the Isle of Man, Malaysia, Costa Rica, Kyrgyzstan, Macedonia, Mauritius, Luxembourg and Antarctica. Without World Orienteering Day it would have been quite difficult to get all these places involved in orienteering.

– The global reach of the World Orienteering Day project made it clear already last year that it is an important way to spread orienteering, especially to young people. This is particularly important as it is in line with the key objective of the IOC Olympic Agenda 2020: engaging youth through sport. It has been inspiring to follow the many events on the WOD website and to see the wide spread of events. I am already looking forward to next year's event, Leho Haldna concludes.

What was once only an idea has come to be a reality beyond what anyone could have hoped for. Schools, clubs and enthusiasts from all over the world made a fantastic contribution, and together managed to set a world record again. But we can do more!

The International Orienteering Federation's goals regarding the organisation of this annual event are as follows:

- Increasing the visibility and accessibility of orienteering to young people
- Increasing the number of participants in both school and club activities, as well as in the clubs' activities in all National Federations and to get more new countries to take part in orienteering
- Helping teachers to implement orienteering in a fun and educational way

With the collaboration between schools and orienteering clubs, the World Orienteering Day may just become the most important activity for the global development of orienteering. All clubs can make a fantastic contribution that benefits both education at school and orienteering development of the sport to recruit youngsters.

Our goal for 2018

- 500 000 participants
- 5000 locations
- 100 countries/territories

Is it possible? Yes, of course it's possible! Many countries increased the participation last time, and if countries with many orienteers, like Sweden, Switzerland, Denmark and Finland, can improve their activities next year we will reach the goal. If we get the passion and the attitude I'm sure it's possible to achieve the target!

During WOD 2016 and 2017 we had contact with 103 countries and territories, so WOD's success could help bring in new members of the IOF.

Register your event

The website is already open for registrations, so go to www.worldorienteeringday.com to register your WOD 2018 event. World Orienteering Day 2018 will be on May 23rd, but events organised during the following week will also be counted. This means you can carry out a WOD event both at school, with your club and at your work, or maybe a normal O-training can be a WOD event? Take the chance to be part of something bigger!



Natalia Gemperle and Helena Bergman embrace after their race at the World Games in Poland. Photo: Malin Fuhr

Thierry Gueorgiou's Final Triumph



Thierry Gueorgiou, France, in the Middle Distance in Vitipalu, Estonia – his final individual race at WOC before retiring. Photo: Donatas Lazauskas

Text: Clive Allen

As in 2016, the two dominant athletes in this year's world competitions were Tove Alexandersson, Sweden, with three World Championship gold medals, and the Swiss orienteer Matthias Kyburz, who won the World Cup overall by a big margin for the second year in succession. But the feats of 'King of Middle Distance' Thierry Gueorgiou, running for France in his final World Championships, stand out in a season full of top-class action.

Tove Alexandersson, FootO Athlete of the Year, is the subject of a separate article. She won individual Middle and Long Distance titles at the World Championships (WOC) together with a Relay gold, and won the World Cup overall for the fourth year in a row; she goes from strength to strength!

For Matthias Kyburz it was consistency that was the key; he won only two World Cup races, the two final races in his home country. His name appears in the top three in five of the seven World Cup races outside the World Championships, where this year he did not win a medal. Earlier a top Sprint talent but now highly proficient in all formats, a Long Distance gold has eluded him so far in both European and World Championships. These will for sure be his main goal for 2018, especially because the former are on steep terrain in Switzerland – just right for his main strengths in agility and technique.

Seven top-three runs for Natalia Gemperle

This was a year with three World Cup rounds, in Finland, Latvia and Switzerland, as well as the World Championships in Estonia and Orienteering in The World Games in Poland. The Individual World Cup had ten counting races and the Relay World Cup had five. Measured by World Cup points, the best women this year behind Tove Alexandersson were the Russian Natalia Gemperle and the Swiss athlete Sabine Hauswirth. Gemperle had a top-three position in seven of the ten World Cup races – a remarkable record. Fourth in the rankings was Helena Bergman (née Jansson), Sweden and fifth was the Dane Maja Alm, who again displayed her speed and strength in winning the WOC Sprint for the third year in succession, and showed in taking the WOC Long Distance silver medal that she has developed her navigational skills to the full too. Injury curtailed her season after The World Games, where she again won the Sprint and was a member of the gold-medal Sprint Relay team.

Norwegian Olav Lundanes came second in the men's World Cup standings. He won WOC gold medals in Long Distance and Relay, the Middle Distance World Cup race in Latvia and was second two other times. He retained his WOC Long Distance title from 2016, which he also won in 2010 and 2012.

– I am really happy I managed to win two years in a row, and also get my fourth Long Distance gold, he said.

– They are all completely different and I am proud I have been able to win in such different terrains.

Evergreen Swiss athlete Daniel Hubmann, WOC Sprint champion this year, was a close-behind third in the World Cup list. Next three places were taken by three steadily-improving athletes: Martin Regborn, Sweden, the Czech Vojtech Kral and Norwegian Eskil Kinneberg.

Team World Cup dominated by Sweden

The Team World Cup this year was an overwhelming success for Sweden. Five wins in seven races, plus a second and a third place, tell their own story! Switzerland finished second overall, and Norway third.

The two WOC Relays were both exciting affairs. The Sprint Relay in Viljandi went to Sweden, with Denmark and Switzerland taking the other medal places. Sweden (Emma Johansson, Helena Bergman and Tove Alexandersson) also took the women's Relay by a big margin over Russia and Finland, but Norway was victorious in the men's Relay, their team of Eskil Kinneberg, Olav Lundanes and Magne Dæhli getting home by more than a minute ahead of France, with Sweden third.

Eighth Middle Distance gold for Gueorgiou

The highlight of the season for this writer was none of the above: it was seeing Frenchman Thierry Gueorgiou, 38 years old and running in his final World Championships before retirement, produce a magnificent performance to win his eighth Middle Distance crown. As always he had prepared meticulously just for this occasion, compet-



Top row: Olli Ojanaho and Simona Aebersold were king and queen of JWOC. Lina Strand, Jerker Lysell, Jonas Leandersson and Helena Bergman: Sprint Relay World Champions, photo: Matias Salonen. Bottom row: Matthias Kyburz on home ground. Maja Alm claimed the World Games Sprint Gold. Photo: Malin Fuhr

ing in almost no other race at top level beforehand, and came up the finish chute to a rapturous ovation from the big crowd to win by 25 seconds.

– This is a dream come true, he said at the end, I wanted to finish on top.

He told how he was inspired to go for an 8th Middle Distance title, just as Roger Federer won an 8th Wimbledon title. Then one day later he brought the French team home to a silver medal in the men's Relay. What an end to his career!

Gueorgiou's final WOC medal tally is 14 gold, 5 silver and 4 bronze, the earliest gold coming in 2003. Add to those 3 gold, 2 silver and 2 bronze medals in European Championships, and his medal cabinet at home must be quite sizeable! He has won the World Cup overall twice, registering 30 World Cup race victories in all and he has been, and will no doubt continue to be, a wonderful ambassador for Orienteering.

First World Cup success for Belgium

An achievement of special note this season came in the first World Cup race, where Yannich Michiels from Belgium took the first World Cup win ever for his country. He has been near the top of the IOF World Sprint Rankings for a while now, and was unlucky not to achieve the feat in 2015 when recording the fastest time in a voided World Cup race, and also falling when trying to jump a fence, in sight of a WOC Sprint medal.

Big comeback for Marianne Andersen

Two other athletes worthy of special mention this season are Marianne Andersen, Norway and the Czech athlete Vojtech Kral. Andersen, 37, was a big star from 2006 until 2010 and was then effectively away from the sport from 2011 to 2015, struggling with injury. She made a big comeback in 2016 and built on that this year, her reward being a WOC silver medal at Middle Distance. She now has 14 WOC medals (1 gold, 9 silver and 4 bronze) - all but the new one from before 2011! Kral, 29, graduated in 2014 and has just this year become a full-time orienteer. As a result his performance has jumped up dramatically, with a win in the World Cup Sprint in Latvia being his best result so far.

Great World Championships in Estonia

Estonia put on a great WOC in early July, with 50 IOF member nations represented. The Sprint Final arena was in the café-lined central square in Tartu, Estonia's second largest city. The Middle Distance courses, set on an area with tricky vegetation and contour detail with many depressions and ridges, were given special praise; they utilised a very good map that was used also for the Relay. The forest terrain in general was quite slow and often diffuse, creating its own technical challenges.

Keeping focus and determination in often difficult conditions was necessary for success in the Long Distance – combined with high technical skills. As Canadian Emily Kemp said:

– You have to stay positive. Here, I needed to use my compass far more. I'm used to

Finnish terrain with many features, but here you couldn't see much, and because of the nature of the forest it was easy to deviate from the chosen line.

Maja Alm, silver medallist, thought the forest terrain was a bit like what she is used to at home in Denmark.

– But here there are more trees and undergrowth – it is greener.

Undergrowth and fallen trees and branches were clearly a hindrance to free running in parts of the Estonian forests.

Up and coming stars

Two athletes who will soon be “household names” at senior level, judging by their Junior World Championships performances, are Simona Aebersold, Switzerland and Olli Ojanaho, Finland. They have produced exceptional results in this event in the last two years, and this year they both had a clean sweep of the individual race golds – three each.

Big TV coverage for The World Games

Orienteering gained good media attention at The World Games in Wroclaw, Poland where races were held over three days. This event for non-Olympic sports is held every four years and took a big step forward in TV coverage world-wide this year. The Sprints were won by Maja Alm and Jerker Lysell, while Matthias Kyburz retained his Middle Distance crown, the women's race here going to Helena Bergman. The Sprint Relay, a format in these Games for the second time, was won by Denmark.

366 athletes representing **50** Member Federations took part
500 volunteers from **20** different countries made it happen
The newly formed IOF Digital Team worked hard on social media,
posting to Facebook a total of **162** times and Twitter **210** times
During the week, the IOF Facebook page
reached a total of **2 374 831** impressions
Orienteering giant Thierry Gueorgiou took his **14th** and final WOC gold medal
The Long Distance was the most popular broadcast on
LIVE Orienteering, attracting **4931** viewers
WOC was available to television viewers in **145** countries,
reaching over **200** million households



The races in Estonia drew large crowds; the spectators loved following the action at first hand! Photo: Malin Fuhr



TV coverage from Long Distance in Rõuge



Medals

Sweden	4 Gold, 2 Bronze
Norway	2 Gold, 1 Bronze
Denmark	1 Gold, 2 Silver
France	1 Gold, 2 Silver
Switzerland	1 Gold, 1 Silver, 1 Bronze
Russia	3 Silver, 2 Bronze
Finland	2 Bronze
Ukraine	1 Bronze

Orienteering Athlete of the Year



Photo: Malin Fuhr

Orienteering Athlete of the Year:

Tove Alexandersson

Text: Mårten Lång, Editor Skogssport – official magazine of the Swedish Orienteering Federation

In her first five World Championships (WOCs) in Orienteering, Tove Alexandersson won six silvers and three bronze medals. In her latest two WOCs she has won five gold medals.

– My WOC results in the last two years have been amazing, she says.





For the second year in a row, Tove Alexandersson, Sweden, won the Middle Distance race at the World Orienteering Championships. Photo: Donatas Lazauskas

Let's start from the end. The end of the World Cup season. With about 20 hours to go to the final World Cup race of the season, Tove Alexandersson is standing a couple of hundred metres from the finish line of the Long Distance in Grindelwald, Switzerland. After a great start to the race, Alexandersson made some major mistakes and ended 14th. That means that the Russian Natalia Gemperle is a serious threat for Tove in the fight for the overall World Cup.

– I don't think I have ever been so tired, and felt so much pain in my body, as after that race. When I was standing there after

the Long Distance, I didn't understand how it could be possible to run a tough Middle Distance the day after. And I was aware that Natalia has been running very well and consistently during the entire season, so I knew that I needed to produce a really great performance to beat her. But it turned out well, Alexandersson says with a smile.

Good at getting back on track

In the Middle Distance, less than 24 hours after climbing up and down the steep slopes on the Grindelwald Long Distance course, Alexandersson had a really strong race and won,

and even more importantly she achieved her fourth straight victory in the overall World Cup.

– I'm really proud of myself that I could recharge both physically and mentally. But getting back on track again after a bad race is something that I'm good at. It is very rare that I have two bad races in a row.

Overall victory in the World Cup was the perfect end to a season in which she was almost unbeatable. She took her club Stora Tuna to victory in Tiomila after an impressive final leg. She won O-Ringen. And, last but definitely not least, she won three golds in WOC in Estonia.

Three World Championship golds – despite difficult start

This performance is even greater since she had a really problematic start to the Championships. After the Sprint qualification she felt symptoms of an incipient cold, and couldn't start in the final.

– It was a real pity. I was in my best sprint shape ever and I had really prepared for what was expected in the final in Tartu. And I didn't even get the opportunity to start the race. But I also had in mind how my body might react to the sickness, and if it would be possible to run in the Long Distance

three days later.

It was a fight against the clock. Alexandersson won that fight too. And after that, everything worked out the way she wanted. She won the Long Distance one and a half minutes ahead of the Sprint champion Maja Alm, Denmark.

She won the Middle Distance by an even bigger margin, and that after one of the best WOC races ever. That meant that she had successfully defended both of her golds from the WOC in Sweden in 2016.

– The terrain in Estonia suited me really well. I found the flow in my orienteering. I

made hardly any mistakes at all, and that pays off extra in this type of terrain. That was one of the reasons for the quite big victory margin, says Tove humbly.

In the final race of WOC 2017, Tove was running the last leg when Sweden (Emma Johansson and Helena Bergman ran the first two legs) won their first WOC Relay for women since 2004. Sweden won by almost three minutes ahead of Russia, but it was a bit dramatic even so. When Tove was passing the arena after half the race she didn't see the correct way to start the second loop, so she was running to the finish line



Tove Alexandersson cruising towards her fourth straight victory in the overall World Cup. Photo: Malin Fuhr



Close competitors
Tove Alexandersson
and Natalia Gemperle.
Photo: Malin Fuhr

before she noticed her mistake. She turned around and took the “right way”. There was some discussion before it was clear that there would be no protests against Sweden.

First WOC as a junior

Tove Alexandersson made her debut in WOC as a junior. She was running in the Swedish relay team when they took bronze in France in 2011. The year after, in her last season as a junior, she won silver in both Relay and Middle Distance. In the two following years she took four silver and two bronze medals.

In 2015 Alexandersson had problems with a foot injury during the WOC. She had to leave Scotland without a medal; she was fourth in the Long Distance. That meant that Alexandersson after her five first WOCs had six silvers and three bronze medals. But in the last two years her already big prize collection has increased a lot. The two golds in Sweden in 2016 were followed by three golds in Estonia.

Keys to success: physical ability and meticulous preparation

There are of course several explanations for this success. Her physical capacity is one, as shown when in October she won a World Series race in skyrunning. But one must ask if the orienteering technique part is actually the biggest explanation. And there the preparation is really important.

– You need to spend a lot of time in rel-



Tove Alexandersson adds yet another WOC Gold medal to her collection. Photo: Donatas Lazauskas

evant terrain. Before WOC in Estonia I had been on four training camps, one week each. And I also had the opportunity to do my final preparations in the terrain on the days before the Championships started. But I also did a lot of preparation in Sweden. There are small areas of terrain in Sweden that are similar to the Estonian terrain. And I tried to add running-technique parts of my training, such as jumping over fallen trees and crawling under athletic hurdles, in preparing my body for what was to be expected in Estonia.

Preparing for Switzerland, then Latvia

25-year-old Tove enjoys both Orienteering and Ski Orienteering. That means that she is competing in three international championships every year. In 2018 it’s “only” the European Ski Orienteering Championships

(ESOC), but both EOC and WOC in Orienteering. The European Championships in Orienteering will be in very steep terrain near Ticino, Switzerland.

– It is a kind of terrain that we don’t have in Sweden. It is much steeper than at home. That means that I will spend quite a lot of time in Switzerland to prepare for what we can expect in the EOC. And that type of terrain also demands a different technique in orienteering compared to what we Swedes are used to. I need to work a bit on that, says Alexandersson, who will start preparing for WOC (in Latvia in August) alongside her EOC preparations.

You have won almost everything that it’s possible to win in both Orienteering and Ski Orienteering. What motivates you for new and even bigger success in the future?

– I want to improve all the time, see how good I can be. And the sports I participate in always bring something new. New terrain. New technical challenges. That means that you can always improve. And finally, I think it’s so much fun, says Tove Alexandersson.



Mass start for the women's class during the European Championships in Imatra. Photo: Malin Fuhr

A Strong Season for Sweden

Text: Clive Allen

This was a European and World Championships year, with no World Cup. The season's biggest successes were enjoyed by the two Swedish athletes Tove Alexandersson – much more about her in a separate article – and Erik Rost, with the Russian Andrey Lamov also winning several medals. It was Sweden that finished the season with the best overall medal haul, showing strength in depth in both championships.

First came the European Championships (ESOC), held in Imatra, eastern Finland in mid-February. In the Sprint races, won by Alexandersson and Lamov, a number of well-known names including Erik Rost came adrift on the technical sections of the course in forest where visibility in places was quite low, and ended well down the results lists. After a lot of earlier concern about lack of snow, conditions were ideal: the sun shone from a cloudless sky on to the very well situated biathlon stadium that provided excellent facilities for athletes and spectators alike.

Epic Long Distance in Finland

Perhaps the most epic race was the Long Distance. It featured a mass start, with loops to split competitors up in the earlier stages. Alena Trapeznikova, Russia followed up a strong performance in the Sprint Relay with a fine race to take the gold, but it was really close at the end with Tove Alexandersson, Sweden just 2 seconds down at the finish. Bronze medal went to the Russian Mariya Kechkina who finished 2.05 down on the winner.

The men's race was even tighter at the end, with Markus Lundholm, one of Sweden's up-and-coming stars, just failing to beat Andrey Lamov in an intense finish. It was again a Russian bronze medal, to Kirill Veselov. The courses were highly technical with good route choice essential for success in the undulating terrain; there were many small and sometimes steep hills in an area with no great height difference overall.

Tove Alexandersson had a convincing victory by 1.33 in the women's Middle Distance race. In the men's race there was a clear win for Lars Hol Moholdt, Norway, the first Norwegian medal of the Championships. Russian athletes took silver and bronze in both races. Moholdt made up for a disappointing week until then with a convincing performance, ahead of Russians Kirill Veselov and Andrey Grigoriev by 24 and 26 seconds respectively. The Finn Ville Petteri Saarela missed the bronze medal by 2 seconds. Andrey Lamov, gold medallist in both Sprint and Long Distance, had many problems and ended in 23rd place.

In both the Sprint and women's Relays



Andrey Lamov, Russia, won the Sprint and Long Distance at the European Championships in Imatra. Photo: Malin Fuhr

the Russian team was disqualified, but only some time after the Championships when it became known that Polina Frolova had tested positive for Meldonium – one of the extremely rare occasions that an orienteering doping test has proved positive. She has been banned from competition for four years. The eventual gold medallists were Sweden in the Sprint Relay, and Finland and Sweden in the women's and men's Relays respectively.

Well-organised World Championships

The World Championships were held in Krasnoyarsk, Russia in March. It was very obvious from the beginning that this event was a big deal. As well as being the World Championships, it was the first test event for the 29th Winter Universiade in 2019. There were big opening and closing ceremonies at the university, featuring traditional Russian dances. There was also a lot of security – apparently they were testing Olympic-style security ready for the Universiade. Flag-waving volunteers and the Universiade mascot “U-laike” (apparently a Siberian Husky, but confused by many for a wolf or a bear!) completed the set-up. This was also the first occasion that the World SkiO Championships have been televised live.

In the middle of Siberia one would think it would be freezing, even in mid-March, but for the first couple of days temperatures rose above zero during the day. The melting and re-freezing made the tracks very fast for the skiers.

Five out of nine golds for Sweden

Sweden took five of the nine gold medals on offer this week, with Tove Alexandersson claiming a personal tally of three. Alexan-



Mirka Suutari, Tove Alexandersson and Magdaleena Olsson took the medals in Middle Distance at the European Championships. Photo: Malin Fuhr

dersson and Erik Rost were the stars of the Championships, winning 3 gold and 2 gold + 2 silver medals respectively. Sweden was clearly the dominant nation at the start of the week, but suffered from illness to two of the women's team for the Long Distance and Relay races.

– We were very well prepared for this week, said Erik Rost after winning the Long Distance title.

The Russian skiers also upped their game as the week progressed and produced some impressive performances, but these were diminished in the end by the later Frolova disqualifications.

Tove Alexandersson won gold in both Sprint and Middle Distance. She enjoyed an almost error-free race over Middle Distance on a technically and physically challenging course in good skiing conditions. A little overnight snow had improved the state of the tracks in a race with a flattish first half, on the terrain used for the Sprints, and a hillier second half including one steep and



Stanimir Belomazhev, Bulgaria, has problems with his ski pole in Imatra. Photo: Malin Fuhr

energy-sapping climb. No-one else came anywhere near the dominant performance of Alexandersson, who finished in great style in taking her third gold medal of the week.

Sweden's Ulrik Nordberg won the men's Sprint, and the Long Distance golds went to Mariya Kechkina, Russia and Erik Rost. Kechkina pulled out a race almost 5 minutes quicker than second-placed Alena Trapeznikova. Tove Alexandersson's gold medal string came to an end as she was forced to retire early on in the race because of illness.

Amazing bronze medal photo finish

The lead changed constantly in an enthralling men's Long Distance, where Erik Rost pulled ahead on the final loop. Kirill Veselov made up for being disqualified in the Middle race with a sound second place, but the biggest excitement came with a frantic sprint finish for the bronze between Lars Hol Moholdt and Andrey Lamov. Moholdt literally stuck a toe out on the line to take third place by just a couple of centimetres, the photo finish camera required to separate the two. Conditions were fast and icy and there were several tumbles leading to precious lost time. The course was technical, with steep ups and downs in some places.

Special mention should go to Stanimir Belomazhev, Bulgaria, winning the first ever men's gold medal for his country in a World SkiO Championships in the Middle Distance race. His joy and celebration at the end will be remembered for a long time.

Local schools had each been given a par-



Medallists in the Sprint in the European Championships at Imatra. Photo: Malin Fuhr

ticular country to support and had lessons on that country and it's culture. Some of these students came down to the arena to watch; it was very surreal hearing Russian children cheering on Sweden and Bulgaria and asking for photos and autographs!

Vladislav Kiselev – big star of the future?

The Junior World SkiO Championships took place in Finland alongside ESOC, and proved an absolute triumph for the Russian skier Vladislav Kiselev, who won four gold medals. This is only just slightly better than 2016 – three gold and one silver, and 2015

– two gold and one silver! He is the best of a very promising group of young ski orienteers from Russia who have now won the Relay for three years in succession.

Almost as good this year was Liisa Ne-nonen, competing on home ground and winning three golds and one silver. Aleksandra Rusakova, Russia won the Long Distance gold medal.

The European Youth and World Masters SkiO Championships were also held in Finland at the same time.



Ski Orienteering Athlete of the Year

Tove Alexandersson has proved time and time again that she is world class also on skis. Photo: Malin Fuhr

Gold Medal Shower for Tove Alexandersson

Text: Mårten Lång, Editor Skogssport – official magazine of the Swedish Orienteering Federation

Three golds in the World Championships. Two golds and two silvers in the European Championships.

That is the Tove Alexandersson record in Ski Orienteering in 2017. And they were also the results that gave her the title of IOF Athlete of the Year in Ski Orienteering. “The races I had in the World Championships in Krasnojarsk, Russia, were the best ever in my career as a Ski Orienteer,” says Alexandersson.

Tove Alexandersson has been collecting a lot of medals in the different championships for several years, even before 2017. But the question is, if her speed in picking medals during February and March 2017 was her best ever.

Pole problems in Finland

It started with the European Championships in a very chilly Imatra, Finland. Alexandersson started the week in Finland with a gold already in the first event, the Sprint. And that even though she had big problems with her pole, which she broke right at the beginning of the race. The handle came loose from the rest of the pole after a fall.

– I had to take a tight grip on the pole during the whole race, so as not to lose it. It was an extra thing to have to concentrate on, and I'm really satisfied that I was so stable in my orienteering in spite of that problem. But when I had passed the last control

I dropped the thoughts about the pole, and that meant that I lost the pole just before the finish line, says Tove Alexandersson with a laugh.

In fact she had problems with her pole, another one though, also during the Relay. The race ended with a Swedish silver. On the days before that she had won the Middle and was second in the Long Distance.

– The World Championships was my biggest goal for last season. I wasn't in my best shape in Finland, but I felt that I was going the right way physically, technically and mentally, and that was important for the preparations for the World Championships in Russia.

World Championships: big expectations, perfect races

Tove Alexandersson travelled to Krasnojarsk with big expectations on her shoulders. And the high expectations were definitely fulfilled. She won the Sprint Relay (with Erik Rost), she won the Sprint and she won the Middle.

– They were almost perfect races for me. I didn't make any mistakes at all. I think they were my best races in Ski Orienteering ever. Unfortunately the last part of the adventure in Russia wasn't what I wanted. My room-mate Magdalena Olsson got the flu the day before the Long Distance. I was uncertain before the start, and I decided that if I should feel anything strange in my body during the race I would retire from the competition immediately. And that was the case, and I felt the flu for a couple of weeks afterwards.

The new season: “time for decent training sessions”

At the time of this interview Tove Alexandersson has started her final preparations for the new Ski Orienteering season. The World Cup starts in November in Ylläs, Finland, it continues with the European Championships in Velingrad, Bulgaria in February, and the World Cup finals are arranged to be in Vermont, USA in March.

– It is quite a long time between the competitions, and that makes it possible to have decent training sessions between them. And also time to reduce the training before each big competition. For me, focusing on both Orienteering and Ski Orienteering, it is great to have some weeks between the biggest goal for each season, so that I have the chance to do some running even in the winter.

The focus on two sports means that the competition programme is really intense for Alexandersson. But she considers that it is an advantage in the training:

– Since I can vary my training with for instance running and roller skiing, I can train harder without struggling so hard. For instance I think that I'm pretty good at feeling my body and changing from running to roller skiing if I'm sore in the body after running. But of course it is sometimes tough to compete in two sports, but that's something that really suits me, says Tove Alexandersson.

And with her results from 2017 in mind, there is no reason to doubt that.

New Mass Start Format Introduced to World Championships



Olga Shipilova Vinogradova, Russia, on the last leg of the Relay at the World Mountain Bike Orienteering Championships in Vilnius, Lithuania. Having started fifth on the last leg, Shipilova Vinogradova managed to fight back and win the bronze medal for the Russian team. Photo: Donatas Lazauskas

Text: Clive Allen

It was in the months from June to August in 2017 that the world's top mountain-bike orienteers aimed to be on peak form. A World Cup round in Austria in June was followed by another in France at the end of July, and the season culminated with the World Championships in Lithuania in late August. Top athletes this season were Emily Benham Kvåle, Great Britain and Krystof Bogar, Czech Republic.

MTBO Athlete of the Year, voted for by the MTBO Athletes Commission, is Emily Benham Kvåle, the subject of a separate article. She continued her fine form from last year, winning five of the ten races counting for the World Cup including the two World Championships (WMTBOC) Long races and finishing with a lead of 45 points over second-placed Martina Tichovska, Czech Republic. Olga Shipilova-Vinogradova, Russia ended third.

The margins were much closer in the men's World Cup races, with seven different winners in the ten competitions. Krystof

Bogar won two, including taking the Middle Distance crown at WMTBOC. The other double winners were Luca Dallavalle, Italy and Rasmus Sogaard, Denmark. Bogar became the World Cup overall winner, followed by Anton Foliforov, Russia in second and Jussi Laurila, Finland third. Bogar was far more consistent this year than last, whilst Foliforov seemed to struggle for form for much of the season.

Strong first round for Czech Republic
The season started at Zwettl, Austria with

three individual races. Martina Tichovska, and Luca Dallavalle (Italy), were the top athletes in the Middle Distance; both won by over half a minute. Anton Foliforov, Russia, the best male rider overall in 2016, had a bad start to his 2017 campaign, being disqualified in this first race.

In the Sprint the women's 1-2 was the reverse of the previous day, with Emily Benham in front of Tichovska by 19 seconds. The men's race featured a convincing victory for Krystof Bogar. On a hilly course with a mix of terrain, Benham didn't have it all her own way,

and had to work very hard for her win after a poor second leg on which she was 39th fastest. Benham took her second win of the round in the Long Distance, finishing the fastest by almost 4 minutes. The Czech Republic team achieved a victory in each of the three races, this time through Vojtech Ludvik.

This World Cup round will have given valuable experience to the organisers; Austria hosts the World MTBO Championships next year.

Team races in France
Orleans, France was the venue for Round 2,

with three individual and two team races. No rider won more than one individual race: the women's winners were Tichovska (Sprint), Benham (Middle) and Shipilova-Vinogradova (Long), whilst the men's victories were taken by Cedric Beill, France, Jussi Laurila, Finland and Rasmus Sogaard. Also, no rider achieved a top-three position in every race! Most impressive win was that of Shipilova-Vinogradova who won the Long race by 3.46; at the other end of the scale, the margin for Laurila over Estonia's Lauri Malroos in Middle Distance was just one second.

Emily Benham Kvåle:

A Very Special Year

Text: Erik Borg

2017 was again an incredible year of sport for Emily Benham Kvåle, but the biggest happening of all was not at the sports ground.

– Getting to marry my best friend was the best and happiest day of my life. I gained a husband, a new surname and have the best in-laws one could wish for, wrote Emily on Facebook just after her wedding with the Norwegian Hans Jørgen Kvåle on September 9th.

The British rider and Hans Jørgen, who for years was one of the best in the world in Ski Orienteering, became a couple in 2011.

– About seven months later I went to Norway and Sweden for what was meant to be a two months trip. Two months has now become five years, Emily smiles.

The wedding was in Nes Church close to where they are living in Norway.

– It was so much fun to get married! On the day, I didn't know what to do. I felt nervous as I do before races, but with no warm up or race I wasn't sure how to handle these feelings! After a while I was excited and couldn't wait to get to the church and marry my man.

Their closest friends and family took part in the wedding.

– It was lovely to share the weekend with them. We didn't organise any training, but we did have a BBQ for all our guests the night before the wedding at our house, and then breakfast the day after the wedding. We knew on the day we wouldn't have much time to interact with anyone, so we made it a weekend, which was great. It gave us more time to laugh and joke with the people who are important to us.

The newly married couple live in Brandbu, a little town a couple of hours drive north of Oslo where Hans Jørgen has grown up.

New race successes

Regarding MTBO, Emily has simply become better and better, and 2017 has again been a remarkable year.

– To be honest I'm not sure how I managed to do so well this year. My motivation for orienteering at races was really low, and I had to work really hard to get myself into the right mind-set before each and every race. Hans Jørgen was a huge part of that, and he always knows what to say or do to help me get there. Apart from the ten World Cup races, I only participated in two other MTBO races, which may seem a bit strange but it allows me to keep my focus on the races that matter and put all my mental energy into those.

Most of the 28-year-old's races were not perfect in the way Emily would have wanted.

– But two came close this year - the Long Distance in Austria at WOC and the Middle Distance at the Europeans. For me, these two races were really controlled and good fun to be racing. The Austrian Long Distance was interesting because I didn't feel at any point as if I was doing anything special, but yet, for the final 25 percent of the course, I had the feeling it was a winning ride.

A new standard

Even though there hasn't been so much MTBO, Emily's standard has risen to a new peak. As in 2016, she won two golds at the MTBO World Championships. She medalled also in every World Championship race she started, and the World Cup was won for the fourth time in a row. She has more World Cup wins in MTBO than any other athlete, according to Wikipedia, and is the MTBO Athlete of the Year.

– The reason for getting to a higher level this year is mostly just through physical training, but I spent 2012-2015 doing extensive theoretical map training in preparation for the major races. One year I did 600 hours of purely theoretical work on my computer, using Catching Features and constantly riding with the upcoming race maps. It's given me a really good base to work from, and something I reap the benefits from now.

How is it to practice MTBO at your standard in Norway?

– I'm lucky that we have a few good/great MTBO terrains within two hours of us, but after living here for five years, we have to come up with new ways to use terrain we know very well. Having been doing MTBO for ten years and FootO for eight years before that, I have a decent bank of experience to draw upon at races. It doesn't seem to have been a disadvantage at all to move to a country where there is no interest in MTBO.

What's the next goal?

I have no idea. After the season I was first biking for fun and then there came a long break from biking. The wedding was the end of the year for me, and I didn't give any consideration to what would happen after that! We've brought home a gorgeous male Golden Retriever, so a big goal right now is to train him really well, and eventually have him Search and Rescue trained.

Enjoying map-making

Emily is educated as a physiotherapist and worked with that for a few years, but she failed to find much satisfaction.

– After coming to Norway, I did some more mapping and really enjoyed it. It's become my main job here, even though I only work in the autumn until early spring. I love being



MTBO Athlete of the Year Emily Benham Kvåle.

in the forests, breathing the fresh air and finding the details to put on the map. I find it refreshing to be out there, completely alone and returning home for a hot shower after a cold day.

How is it to be Benham Kvåle?

– I wanted to keep Benham as part of my name, so in Norwegian style I moved it to my middle name. I gave it a lot of thought, and always thought I would be Benham-Kvåle, but when I thought five or ten years into the future, I wasn't sure that would be the name I would want to use. A good compromise was to be Emily Kvåle, and have Benham as a middle name. I only intend to use Benham Kvåle for racing though.

Commission work

The world leader, who is from Salisbury in Wiltshire, England, is also in the MTBO Athletes' Commission in IOF.

– MTBO is at a time where there aren't any major rule changes going on. Mostly we're just tweaking things as the sport develops. We've had five years now with a lot of development in the formats and structure of races. The main issue at the moment is how do we deal with rule breaking, primarily where short-cutting is involved in terrain where we are not allowed off track. There doesn't seem to be the consistency the athletes need in how the rules are applied, but it's proving challenging to write the rule in a way that isn't ambiguous.

Anton Foliforov, Russia, fighting a muddy track during the Long Distance at the World Mountain Bike Orienteering Championships in Vilnius, Lithuania. Photo: Donatas Lazauskas

The first team race was a Sprint Relay, teams of one woman and one man riding alternately to complete 4 laps in all. Here the winning team was the Czech combination of Tichovska and Bogar who were the favourites for victory, although it was only on the final leg that they prevailed over second-placed Finland. France finished third. The day after, there was a standard 3-person Relay for women's and men's teams, both races won by the Czech Republic. Lithuania took a creditable second place in the women's Relay with Denmark third; second and third places in the men's race were taken by Russia and Denmark. Best performance of the day came from Martina Tichovska who stormed into the lead on the final leg to take a comfortable victory.

Impressive results from Junior Dane

This event was also the Junior World Championships, in which the Danish rider Thomas Steinthal won three gold medals: in Sprint, Mass Start and Long. Certainly a name to look out for in the future! Elvira Larsson, Sweden, won the women's Long by just 2 seconds after 20.3 km of riding. The other gold medallists were Vilma Kralova, Czech Republic, Adrian Jaeggi, France, Viktorija Michnovic, Lithuania and Olga Mikhaylova, Russia.

Live TV from World Championships

And so to Vilnius for the World Championships, well organised by the Lithuanian hosts. The Sprint was the first MTBO race ever to be televised live – it was transmitted on Baltic TV and on Facebook – and the whole Championships was covered live on

IOF LIVEorienteering.com. The Sprint races were won by Marika Hara, Finland and Grigory Medvedev, Russia, both riders taking their only wins of the season. The race was in various parts of old Vilnius, which included a lot of climb. The organisers had set up some inflatable obstacle courses, bouncy castles and free coffee, to encourage locals and tourists to stay out of the competition area until the race was over. The central location of the arena meant it was stumbled upon by many groups of unsuspecting tourists too.

Mass Start format – mixed Middle, Sprint and Long

The WMTBOC 2017 featured the first ever Championship race in the new Mass Start format, after several test runs. Despite this, it was difficult to know what to expect, especially with the forkings. Katherine Bett, event commentator, takes up the story:

– Some people thought the course would be like running all three legs of a relay, with three loops going out from the start/finish arena. Instead it was one long course with two sections of loops. The distance of the course overall was between Middle and Long distance, so it was also tricky to know what to expect there. Several athletes afterwards commented on how the sequence of a Middle Distance section (1:10,000) followed by a Sprint section (1:5,000), and then a Long Distance section (1:10000), forced them to constantly change technique and adjust to the map scales.

– The loops and 5 separate maps also made it difficult for the riders to see who was in the lead. But there were no loops on

the Long section, making it a thrilling ride to the end. In the women's competition, this was a race between Olga Shipilova-Vinogradova and Emily Benham Kvåle. The Russian was the faster rider and made a gap on Benham, but a mistake on the final control saw the Brit take the lead. The men's race saw 7 men powering up the hill to make it to the finish line first - they all finished within 7 seconds of each other, and 13 men finished within a minute of the winner Luca Dallavalle.

Stationary warm-ups

– One thing that was noticeable (or rather audible) this year was the number of riders using rollers to warm up whilst being stationary, reports Katherine.

– The hum of the cylinders going round was much louder than you'd expect. They were definitely useful in some of the smaller arenas or quarantines. Apparently Emily Benham was the first to use them a couple of years ago, and now they're everywhere!

The Middle Distance champions at WMTBOC were Olga Shipilova-Vinogradova and Krystof Bogar, and the standard Long Distance titles went to Emily Benham Kvåle and Rasmus Søgaard. The Relay races produced comfortable victories for Finland (Ingrid Stengard, Antonia Haga, Marika Hara) and the Czech Republic (Vojtech Stransky, Vojtech Ludvik and Krystof Bogar). Next year the spotlight falls on Hungary (European and World Masters Championships, end of June) and Austria (World Championships – Senior and Junior, August), both also counting as World Cup rounds. The final World Cup round will be in Portugal in late September.

Ricardo Pinto, Portugal, on the 2nd day of PreO competition at the World Trail Orienteering Championships in Aukštadvaris, Lithuania. Photo: Donatas Lazauskas

World Championship Medals for Father and Son

Text: Clive Allen

Never before have both father and son won medals in the same world orienteering championships – but this year it happened in TrailO, where father Lars Jacob Waaler took the PreO Open class crown whilst son Martin Aarholt Waaler was silver medallist in the TempO competition.

Hard-fought World Championships

The Waaler family from Norway is no stranger to success in TrailO, Lars Jacob winning the TempO at last year's World Championships and being well-known as one of the fastest decision-makers on the circuit. He is also very consistent with an excellent technique. In the World TrailO Championships based at Birštonas, Lithuania he finished the two days of PreO with the same points score as the Finn Pinja Mäkinen and 7.5 seconds quicker at the timed controls. Bronze medalist was the Norwegian Geir Myhr Øien with one point fewer. Martin Aarholt Waaler was second in the TempO competition to another young Norwegian, 27-year-old Vetle Ruud Bråten, by the very narrow margin of 4 seconds. Here it was Ján Furucz of Slovakia who took bronze; he is the course planner for the European TrailO Championships next May.

The Open Relay competition was won unexpectedly by Slovenia, whose three athletes all produced their best form on the day, with silver medals to Norway and bronze to the Czech Republic.

The Paralympic classes at WTOC were also very hard fought, the seasoned competitor Ola Jansson, Sweden winning the 2-day PreO. As in the Open class, the difference between first and second was the timed controls, where Vladyslav Vovk, Ukraine made several mistakes. The Czech Jana Kostová finished in bronze medal position with one point fewer than the leading pair. Ukraine won the Relay, followed by Czech Republic and Norway.

Well-attended European Cup

Five events were used for this year's European Cup in TrailO (ECTO) with 299 competitors taking part in one or more of the ten competitions. The overall winner was 26-year-old Marit Wiksell, Sweden who won three of the four TempO competitions, an unusually fine record. Geir Myhr Øien won the two PreO competitions in Sweden, but in the overall standings he was beaten into third place by the Finn Antti Rusanen. Wiksell finished with an 11-point margin over Rusanen, who had 32 points more than Øien. The Italian Remo Madella and the Swedes Erik Stålnacke and Martin Fredholm took the next three places in the final standings.

Remo Madella won the first ECTO PreO



The World Trail Orienteering Championship Relay took place on a golf course at Capitals Golf Club, Lithuania. Photo: Donatas Lazauskas

competition in Lilica, Slovenia in March, where Lennart Wahlgren, Sweden won the TempO. It was in the second ECTO weekend in Espoo, Finland at the end of April that Marit Wiksell got into her stride, winning the overall FINTrailO event for the fourth year in succession, an exceptional record. Here it was Martin Fredholm, Sweden who came out on top in the PreO.

Espoo provided contrasts: winter had its final fling in the night before Day 1 of the PreO competition, leaving a good layer of snow across the terrain and providing a headache for the organiser, who had to get the wheelchair users up a steep track to the start. The day after, it was 20 degrees and bright sunshine!

The other ECTO events were held in Latvia in July, Sweden in September and Slovakia in late October. In Daugavpils in Latvia, where the World Championships will be held next year, Marit Wiksell got her second TempO success and the PreO was won by the Swedish expert Stig Gerdman.

Difficult conditions in Slovakia

In Slovakia the final day, a TempO competition, was close to cancellation because of the near-hurricane winds forecast.

– The first hour was very stressful due to the heavy rain and strong winds, says Event Director Dušan Furucz.

– We have to thank competitors for helping us secure one large tent at the start.

– Later, we had trouble with an electricity blackout in the whole village, and Internet connectivity was not accessible due to the connection failure of both major mobile operators. My brother had to go to the neighbouring village to load and calculate the results.

Fortunately the wind was a little less than predicted and the competition survived, just – won again by Marit Wiksell. Antti Rusanen won the Slovakian PreO.

Trail orienteers are a hardy bunch. TrailO doesn't require strength – unless you are a wheelchair pusher on a steep or muddy

path. Nor does it require speed through the terrain, the mental challenge being far greater than the physical, so as a competitor one tends to be quite aware of the weather conditions. And in international events this year, competitors have encountered almost every type of weather. Not many calm and bright days but with no sun, the best conditions one can hope for.

Mixed weather in Lithuania

The weather gods did their best to affect the World TrailO Championships in Lithuania. The TempO Final was held in a thunderstorm, bringing heavy rain for the closing stages and the prize-giving. The event administration retreated to a nearby hotel foyer; fortunately the hotel had sponsored the event and was therefore sympathetic! But there was no room there for the prize-winners who, together with the awards team, had to go through the ceremony out in the pouring rain.

The first PreO day was characterised by heavy rain throughout, and it reached cloud-burst proportions on several occasions; memories of the Croatia mud two years ago surged back, but fortunately the area being used here was a tourist attraction, a replica country village with firm gravel and asphalt paths. Not that this made sighting the flags any easier. At the Relay, held on a golf course, where the inevitable long quarantine wait for some competitors was considerably extended because of a delay at the start, it was thankfully warm sunshine and light winds throughout the day.

Numbers taking part in international TrailO are increasing steadily, and from several countries a healthy stream of young orienteers are coming forward, especially enthused by the speed challenge of TempO. World Rankings in TrailO are being introduced next year, when the highlights of the season will be the European and World Championships in Slovakia and Latvia respectively and a full ECTO programme across five countries.

Pinja Mäkinen, Finland, on the second leg of the Relay at the World Trail Orienteering Championships at the Capitals Golf Club, Lithuania. Photo: Donatas Lazauskas

Pinja Mäkinen, Finland:

Mother of Three and World Championships Medallist

Text: Erik Borg

Pinja Mäkinen has three children between two and six years old and is working almost full-time – and yet this year she has won a World Championship medal again.

The Athlete of the Year in Trail Orienteering grew into orienteering as a young child.

– I started in my club Koovee when I was three years old, she tells.

As a teenager she won three medals in Junior World Championships.

– I was a bit introvert, and a smart girl; I had one thing I could do very well and which I really enjoyed: orienteering. So I used my

free time mostly for training, and I had good conditions to do it. I achieved quite a good level in orienteering skills. But after all that, I found in the senior class I was not fast enough to reach the top level.

Right from her young days she has been known for her good skills as a Foot Orienter. Pinja's former name was Satri. She got as far as representing Finland in the World Cup.

Changed to a new sport

In 2011 her oldest girl Venla was born. Mother Pinja felt she could not reach any higher level in FootO with a family, so she stopped her career as a FootO athlete.

– I still had a hunger for top-level orien-

teering and all the mental challenges and experiences it offers. It was my father who suggested TrailO. It sounded good for me because my strength has always been the technical and mental parts of orienteering, and it was possible to train and even compete in TrailO with a baby or a little child. My father Kari has taught me how to orienteer and has coached me since I was a teenager.

Pregnant medal winner

She took part in her first TrailO competition when Venla was one month old. Pinja read the TrailO rules and ways of doing things while breastfeeding her oldest daughter. Now she has three daughters – Elsa 2 years old, Leila aged 3 and Venla 6.

– On week days I normally have short TempO training sessions when going to or coming back from work. At weekends I have more time for training, but every time I have to think about who is taking care of the children. Overall TrailO is quite easy to combine with family life: I won the WTOC TempO gold in Vuokatti in 2013 whilst I was pregnant, I have had Leila as a baby in the start quarantine area to give her breast milk before the start, and sometimes I have children with me in the smaller competitions. Venla has already started doing TrailO herself. And to be positive: When life is full of family and work, I feel very happy and free when Trail Orienteering. It is an optimal situation for good performance.

2017: first PreO medal

In 2017 she again became a World Championship medallist.

– First when I started TrailO I was mostly a TempO specialist, because TempO is more like FootO thinking than classical TrailO. Now after six years training I have got enough experience for assessing the correct locations of flags in PreO too. So this year I achieved my first World Championship medal in PreO

with a silver.

A secret of her success is that she is mentally very strong. She really enjoys being in big competitions and only concentrating on orienteering.

– Then I can get into my “flow”, and the bigger the competition, the better is my rank in the result list. In small Finnish competitions I actually often lose even to my husband Vesa!

Pinja is an environmental ecologist, making environmental impact assessments for different projects. She works 80% of full time on average, but sometimes she works much more than that.

What's your goal for the future?

– To get a World Championship gold medal also in PreO, to become a good course planner, and to continue having enjoyable experiences when Trail Orienteering.

Pinja's training

Pinja is very analytic and was one of the first Finns to train for Trail Orienteering not only by mapping but also by doing similar examples as at the events. Her most common training is TempO, speed TrailO training

without any flags. Her father Kari, who has two big interests in life – his family and orienteering – is helping Pinja a lot. He is her coach and normally prepares five maps for a training session.

– The first of them shows the place where I should stand and the direction I should look in, and the other four have one control circle each in that area. Then I decide as fast I can where the correct place is for each control. This training is partly mental training, because I have to imagine control descriptions and flags. Sometimes I do well-prepared and flagged TempO or PreO training with other trail orienteers.

– I also train PreO without flags, but for PreO training it is very important to study old competition and solution maps on the internet. Maybe the best PreO training is to be a course planner. Then you best understand how difficult it is to set a flag that is in every way in the correct place. And you learn to be more tolerant in competition situations and not to answer zero – when a flag is in an incorrect place – when you would like to have seen the flag just 1 metre from where it is.



Mother Pinja Mäkinen and her three daughters. The photo is taken at WTOC in 2017 in Lithuania. Photo: Anneli Junttila



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From Facebook to Orienteering

Text: Erik Borg

Just two years after Stella Efstathiou started orienteering, she took part in the World Championships. Both last year in Sweden and this year in Estonia she took part in both Sprint and Middle Distance.

– Estonia has very interesting terrain and a completely different kind of forest from my country. It was a challenge for me to run in this kind of terrain, Stella tells.

She took also part in the IOF Development Clinic at the World Championships (WOC).

– The Clinic was a nice experience, because I met athletes from other countries and I learned some new orienteering techniques.

Stella started orienteering three years ago. She read about an Orienteering event on Facebook and decided to go.

– When I had finished the race I was very excited about the sport and I decided to start training and learn more about Orienteering.

The 23-year-old Cypriot tries to train three or four times per week, and competes in Cypriot Orienteering events whenever they are held.

– Michalis Savvides, the founder of Orienteering in Cyprus, and Christos Aliferis, our national coach, gave me a huge opportunity to participate in WOC in Estonia. I'm very glad about that and I really appreciate it. I try to give my best in every race and to improve my Orienteering skills every day.

Stella grew up and lives in the town Larnaca in Cyprus. In Larnaca there are two maps, one of a park and another of a school.

– We try to develop orienteering here and in other towns. We will make one or two more maps to give students a variety. In Nicosia we already have an Orienteering park, and we organise many Orienteering events for elite and for amateurs and everyone has the opportunity to participate.

What's your next goal?

– It's to win the Cypriot Championship. To achieve that I need to train hard, because I know that everything is possible with hard work and being focused on your goal.

Seven years of orienteering in Cyprus

Orienteering in Cyprus started in 2010 and is growing rapidly. Thousands are trying the sport every year.

– In the early years, our efforts were focused on acquiring equipment, some decent maps and making the sport known to the general public. More recently our efforts have changed and we are concentrating on two distinct objectives, Michael Savvides says.



Stella Efstathiou has been orienteering for only 3 years, but the Cypriot has already gained a lot of experience. Photo: Malin Fuhr

– The first goal is to spread the sport in schools, and a lot has been done in that direction. We have the support of the Ministry of Education as well as the Cyprus Athletic Organisation. Each year around three to four thousand students get to know the sport in a simple event at school.

The secondary aim is to get more people to become deeply interested in the sport.

– Things are not easy, because a lot of time and dedication is required both from the federation and new athletes. Also there is a lack of funds. There is a core of interested people, and in the years to come we hope to have a continuous presence at various events around the world. At this point I would like to thank IOF and the countries that invited our athletes to WOC events. During our stay we have gained valuable experience, Michael Savvides tells.

At present around 40 people take part in national events. There are four or five such

events a year. But many other events are organised for those who wish to simply enjoy and want to get to know the sport. Many of these events are held in traditional villages, and are sprint events for organised groups of people, usually scouts, students, teachers etc.

– There is no doubt that the biggest challenge in Cyprus is the total lack of culture in map reading. In Cyprus, large or middle scale (1:50,000 or 1:25,000) maps do not exist. I have personally made a few maps for hikers at the scale 1:25,000, but people don't know how to read them. Students are not taught map reading in schools, and when invited to come to events, they are scared they will get lost even in a village and as such they feel embarrassed. So we are creating a map-reading academy to alleviate the problem, Michael Savvides says.

Gave the Sport a Try – and Made History!



Michael Crone from South Africa – success in Sprint orienteering. Photo: Malin Fuhr

Text: Erik Borg

Michael Crone got into orienteering because one of his brother's friends was in charge of the sport at university. In 2012 he made orienteering history at the World Championships in Lausanne, where he is now living.

Crone grew up in Johannesburg in South Africa. His orienteering life started at the University of the Witwatersrand in his home town in 2009.

– I was looking to start a new sport that I could continue throughout university. One of my brother's friends ran the orienteering club there, and I thought I would try it. Obviously orienteering is quite frustrating at the beginning, especially when you are able to run faster than you can navigate, but with a little perseverance it quickly became my favourite sport, the 27-year-old athlete says.

In South Africa he competed about once every two weeks throughout the year. When he moved to London two years ago to complete his Masters degree he felt he was lucky, because sometimes he could orienteer up to three times a week.

Now studying in Lausanne

Now he has just started a five-year spell in Lausanne in Switzerland, studying for a PhD.

– It's strange sometimes how life works. I ran my first World Championships (WOC) Sprint Final in Lausanne, and now I will be studying here for the next five years.

He expects to be able to compete quite frequently, and the sprint terrain is also something that he is really looking out for.

– Generally do running training six days a week, and try and fit in terrain-specific training where I can, he says.

New landmarks in South Africa

How is orienteering developing in South Africa?

– Orienteering has typically been confined to the major urban centres, primarily Johannesburg and Cape Town. We have struggled to grow orienteering both in those centres and in the rest of the country. The federation has made some progress by identifying interested individuals and helping support them to grow orienteering in their respective areas. The best example is the Polokwane Orienteering Club, where a few very motivated individuals have helped to bring orienteering to a new city and province and get growing interest from schools in the area.

What are the biggest challenges?

– It remains very difficult to convert participation at a primary or high school level to club level and beyond. The challenge is also to attract newcomers to the sport, when there is a lot of competition from parkrun, trail running and obstacle course races. I believe that newer events such as the Red Bull Altitude (held in Switzerland in August) will change the traditional perception of orienteering, and could be what the sport really needs to get people to try it.

2017: Sprint Final for the second time

Michael was the first South African ever to qualify for an A-final, at WOC 2012 held in Lausanne. He finished 43rd on the Sprint Final course in central Lausanne. This year in Estonia he was again in the Sprint Final. He thinks an important reason for this success is how he has focused.

– I decided quite early on that I would never be able to compete at an elite level in the forest. South Africa has some of the best sprint terrain and maps in the world, and so I decided to focus on improving my sprint technique with the resources that I had access to.

In 2017 he hadn't initially planned to attend WOC, but when he got an invitation in May to attend the WOC clinic, he changed his training to focus on the Championships.

– The clinic was great, because we had access to coaching and management staff that I haven't had the opportunity to interact with in the past. At WOC anything can happen on the day of the race, no matter how well you prepare, but I think that coaches can play a critical part in ensuring that athletes are mentally ready to race. That definitely had a profound impact on me, and it showed me the importance of good athlete support structures.

A "magical" qualification race

He didn't want his performance in Switzerland in 2012 to define the rest of his orienteering career, so that he would always be seen as an athlete who had one "lucky" race and qualified.

– It's strange how an entire year of training is focused on just over ten minutes of racing, and one mistake is enough to rule you out of the Final. However, I had another "lucky" race. The way that I can best describe my qualification race is probably as only something that other orienteers can understand. There is a feeling that you get when you pick up the map and everything just makes sense, you spend what feels like milliseconds making route choices and you have (almost) perfect flow throughout the course. If magic exists, that's the best way that I can describe it and it's a feeling that I strive for in every race. I finished in 15th place and qualified for my second WOC Sprint Final.

The qualification was his racing highlight of the WOC week. He didn't have the best of runs in the Sprint Final, where he again finished 43rd.

IOF's Support for Athletes from Small Nations

The IOF WOC Clinic is an initiative from the IOF, together with WOC, to support countries that don't have enough resources, so that they can bring athletes to WOC. The project also aims to give the opportunity to the participants of improving their technique, through using experienced coaches and lecturers, as sometimes they don't have such support like this in their own countries.

The first IOF WOC Clinic was held in France during WOC 2011. On that occasion the French Government made a contribution and prepared a special budget, mostly in order to achieve their main goal, to attract more participants and countries to be present at WOC.

– Since this project always depends on a budget made by the WOC organisers, we have changing numbers of participants from year to year, Zoran Milovanović says. At the Clinic in Estonia in 2017 there were seven participants from two continents, Africa and Europe, and six countries, Azerbaijan, Moldova, Cyprus, Serbia, Egypt and the South African Republic. Zoran Milovanović and Jaroslav Kacmarcik were working as coaches at the Clinic.

– So far the programme concept of the



All members of the IOF clinic. Photo: Malin Fuhr

Clinic has usually been the same every year. Arrival is three to four days before the official WOC week events start, and in these days all WOC Clinic participants have the opportunity for intensive training sessions and lectures.

– One of the important aims is to encourage those participants and Federations to make improvements in athletes' performance in WOCs in the future. Unfortunately

there is no capacity at the moment for following up closely what is happening with those participants and countries, but this is something to be considered in the future as well.

– For the 2018 WOC Clinic in Latvia, we most probably will be able to invite 12 participants. We will change the criteria and concept a little bit, but not much compared to 2017, Zoran says.

We All Felt Like We Were One Nation

Text: Erik Borg

When Nikola Bilic saw some people running "wild" in the countryside, it was a sight that changed his life.

He became involved in orienteering at the age of 14.

– As a kid I was a member of the mountaineering club. One time, when I was walking with other mountaineers, I noticed some "crazy people" running through the forest. I was wondering what on earth they were doing. Soon I became one of them myself, Nikola smiles.

The 22-year-old Serbian was one of the athletes taking part in the Clinics at this year's World Championships (WOC), and he also took part in WOC.

– The WOC Clinic was great and everything was well organised. There were many nationalities there, but we all felt like we were one nation. Zoran Milovanović and Jaroslav Kacmarcik are great people and all the time spent with them was inspiring.

30 events per year in Serbia

He has lived all his life in Belgrade, the cap-

ital city of Serbia.

– When it comes to competitions, I do my best to go to all the competitions that are not so far away. There are around 30 every year in Serbia. Besides them, I sometimes go to other countries such as Hungary, Croatia and Bulgaria, as well as further destinations like Sweden. I try to train as regularly as possible, so I can say that I practice five to six times a week.

WOC provided some new challenges

– Middle and Long Distance required a lot of preparation with map in the field in order to be successful. Here in Serbia, I don't have much forest and landscape similar to that in WOC. In any case, not much of the terrain is covered by orienteering maps. But I can say that I am very pleased with taking part and I did my best. I am extra pleased with the Long Distance as it was my longest race ever.

Nikola is improving, and working hard to reach new levels.

– 2016 was the first year where I took training more seriously. Then I continued with the same in 2017. My goal for 2018 is to achieve better results. I want to be stronger, read the map better and faster and



Serbian Nikola Bilic is improving all the time. Photo: Malin Fuhr

minimise my mistakes. I will be patient and keep on training when it's hardest! At the end, the best races and best results always come when you least expect them.

Galina Ribediuc – Developing Orienteering in Moldova

Text: Erik Borg

Through taking part in the Development Clinic and the World Championships in Estonia, Galina Ribediuc has gained more knowledge that is not only important for her, but also for orienteering in her country.

– Invitations for athletes to the clinic and WOC play an important role in developing the sport in Moldova, Galina says.

– The athletes share experience with other athletes, and knowledge is brought back home to the whole nation.

The Moldovan thinks participation in the clinic at the WOC, together with some trips to the big international occasions, such as Tiomila and Jukola, and frequent trips to competitions in Russia, are giving her important knowledge and experience.

– It's very important to compete in difficult terrain and high-level competitions, she says.

Started orienteering aged 12

The 28-year-old Moldovan was born, grew up and started orienteering in the city of Bender. – I did a lot of things in my childhood, from dancing to swimming, judo and water slalom. At the age of 12 I got acquainted with orienteering.

– As for any child, it was very interesting. In other sports I have just got bored with the monotony. In orienteering you simply can't get bored. That is why I am still doing it. Every start is always a new challenge. In addition I really love forests, and fresh air and mountains. It is impossible not to fall in love with it!

From the age of 14 she started to run much more.

– I did well and wanted to continue. In 2006 at the age of 17 I began to train with a coach, Severuhin Andrey. We found every opportunity for training, and in 2007 Moldova (with me in the team) took part in WOC for the first time.

She was just 18 years old at her first WOC.

Few forests in Moldova

In Moldova it is a challenge that there is only a small number of forests.

– Therefore we try to go to the competitions in other countries nearby. But here, the problem is the lack of financing for athletes. Both with fees for taking part in other countries and for trips to the competitions for the national team. Only a few of the athletes work and can afford to go to international competitions. My dream is that our country will be able to enter a new level of orienteering, and be able to send the whole national team!



Galina Ribediuc has become very keen on orienteering. Photo: Malin Fuhr

Changes in her daily life

Ribediuc moved to Moscow not long ago.

– It is far away from my birthplace, so I don't come back home so often. But it isn't difficult to run for the national team of Moldova, even though I'm far away from the country. I go to some qualifying races.

For 1½ years now she has had some problems with her feet.

– Now I also have problems with my back.

I really hope I can cope with all the injuries, find more time for training and get to more International starts next year. I hope IOF will invite me to the clinic at WOC 2018 and I will be able to take part in the competitions with new progress.



Foot Orienteering

- 2018**
European Orienteering Championships
IOF Orienteering World Cup Round 1
Switzerland, Europe, 5 May - 13 May
- European Youth Orienteering Championships**
Bulgaria, Europe, 28 Jun - 1 Jul
- World Masters Orienteering Championships**
Denmark, Europe, 6 Jul - 13 Jul
- Junior World Orienteering Championships**
Hungary, Europe, 8 Jul - 15 Jul
- Nokian Tyres World Orienteering Championships**
IOF Orienteering World Cup Round 2
Latvia, Europe, 4 Aug - 11 Aug
- North American Orienteering Championships**
Canada, North America, 18 Aug - 21 Aug
- IOF Orienteering World Cup Round 3**
Pre WOC 2019
Norway, Europe, 31 Aug - 2 Sep
- IOF Orienteering World Cup Round 4**
Czech Republic, Europe, 4 Oct - 7 Oct"
- South American Orienteering Championships**
South American Youth Orienteering Championships
Uruguay, South America, 5 Nov - 11 Nov
- Asian Orienteering Championships**
Hong Kong, Asia, 22 Dec - 27 Dec
- 2019**
European Youth Orienteering Championships
Belarus, Europe, 30 May - 2 Jun
- IOF Orienteering World Cup Round 1**
Finland, Europe, 7 Jun - 11 Jun
- World Masters Orienteering Championships**
Latvia, Europe, 5 Jul - 12 Jul
- Junior World Orienteering Championships**
Denmark, Europe, 6 Jul - 12 Jul
- Nokian Tyres World Orienteering Championships**
IOF Orienteering World Cup Round 2
Norway, Europe, 13 Aug - 18 Aug
- IOF Orienteering World Cup Round 3**
Switzerland, Europe, 26 Sep - 29 Sep
- Oceania Orienteering Championships**
Australia, Oceania, 28 Sep - 6 Oct
- IOF Orienteering World Cup Round 4**
China, Asia, October
- 2020**
Junior World Orienteering Championships
Turkey, Europe, 28 Jun - 5 Jul



Trail Orienteering

- 2018**
European Trail Orienteering Championships
Slovakia, Europe, 28 Apr - 1 May
- World Trail Orienteering Championships**
Latvia, Europe, 4 Aug - 11 Aug
- 2019**
World Trail Orienteering Championships
Portugal, Europe, 23 Jun - 29 Jun
- 2020**
World Trail Orienteering Championships
Hong Kong, Asia

Meetings 2018

- IOF Council Meetings**
18-21 January, Warsaw, Poland
6-7 April, Namur/Brussels, Belgium
14-15 June, Helsinki, Finland
6 August, Sigulda, Latvia
4-7 October, Prague, Czech Republic

IOF Joint Meeting
18-21 January, Warsaw, Poland
All IOF Commissions meet in a joint meeting

IOF General Assembly
4-7 October, Prague, Czech Republic

Nokian Tyres World Orienteering Championships
Denmark, Europe, 7 Jul - 11 Jul

World Masters Orienteering Championships
Slovakia, Europe, 7 Aug - 15 Aug

2021
World Orienteering Championships
Czech Republic, Europe, 4 Aug - 10 Aug

Ski Orienteering

2017 – 2018
IOF Ski Orienteering World Cup Round 1
Finland, Europe, 28 Nov - 4 Dec 2017

European Ski Orienteering Championships
IOF Ski Orienteering World Cup Round 2
Junior World Ski Orienteering Championships
European Youth Ski Orienteering Championships
Bulgaria, Europe, 3 Feb - 8 Feb 2018

IOF Ski Orienteering World Cup Round 3
World Masters Ski Orienteering Championships
USA, North America, 6 Mar - 10 Mar 2018

2018 – 2019
European Ski Orienteering Championships
Turkey, Europe, 4 Feb - 12 Feb 2019

World Ski Orienteering Championships
World Masters Ski Orienteering Championships
Junior World Ski Orienteering Championships
European Youth Ski Orienteering Championships
Sweden, Europe, 18 Mar - 24 Mar 2019

Partner Events

2018
World University Ski Orienteering Championships
Estonia, Europe, Feb 20 - Feb 25

World Cadet Games
Indonesia, Asia, 28 Apr - 6 May

World University Orienteering Championships
Finland, Europe 17 Jul - 21 Jul

2019
FISU Winter Universiade
Russia, Asia, 2 Mar - 12 Mar

World Schools Orienteering Championships
Estonia, Europe, 29 Apr - 5 May

European University Orienteering Championships
Czech Republic, Europe, 25 Jul - 29 Jul

CISM World Games
China, Asia

MTB Orienteering

2018
European MTB Orienteering Championships
IOF MTB Orienteering World Cup Round 1
European Junior MTB Orienteering Championships
World Masters MTB Orienteering Championships
Hungary, Europe, 27 Jun - 1 Jul

World MTB Orienteering Championships
IOF MTB Orienteering World Cup Round 2
Junior World MTB Orienteering Championships
European Youth MTB Orienteering Championships
Austria, Europe, 5 Aug - 12 Aug

IOF MTB Orienteering World Cup Round 3
Portugal, Europe, September, 20 Sep - 23 Sep

2019
European MTB Orienteering Championships
IOF MTB Orienteering World Cup Round 1
Poland, Europe, 8 Jun - 10 Jun

IOF World MTB Orienteering Championships
Junior World MTB Orienteering Championships
IOF MTB Orienteering World Cup Round 2
Denmark, Europe, 27 Jul - 3 Aug

IOF MTB Orienteering World Cup Round 3
World Masters MTB Orienteering Championships
European Junior MTB Orienteering Championships
Germany, Europe, 2 Oct - 6 Oct

2020
World MTB Orienteering Championships
Czech Republic, Europe, 17 Aug - 23 Aug

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Photos: Donatas Lazaukas, Malin Fuhr

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IOF Regional and Youth Development Commission



The RYDC is working hard to spread orienteering among young people. Photo: Malin Fuhr.

Text: Erik Borg

The IOF Regional and Youth Development Commission, or RYDC, was set up to support development in IOF member federations and to encourage youth participation in the sport of orienteering. Johanna Mikkela and Ingrid Okkenhaug are two of the latest members to join the commission.

Johanna Mikkela is working hard to get young orienteers interested in all sides of the orienteering environment

– For me the best decision during the last year was when it was decided to take in some new members to the RYDC, and that it was also decided to take in a new younger member like me. I think that the spread of younger and older people within the commission is a great combination, and it's important with different ages because we all have experiences of youth orienteering and have different inputs about it, she says.

You are quite young compared to most of the other members!

– To be younger among the others is only positive for me, because I can learn from them and together we can learn from each other. My opinion is that in a group like RYDC we need the experience from all different ages. It's just a good mix of people. We work well together.

What's the most important way to get more youngsters and young people into the sport?

– It's important to meet the youngsters where they are right now with technology, social media and, most importantly, in social life. Youngsters need a place to go where they feel visible and appreciated. We not only need to see increasing numbers of youngsters participating and competing, but we also need those going in my direction, who want to help and develop the sport in one way or another. If we want the sport to grow among both youngsters and adults, there is a need for more trainers, map-makers and so on. Therefore, it's important that we support youngsters with different interests in the sport.

– My goal now is to help the RYDC in developing the sport. I like the spirit in RYDC. I really feel that everyone wants to make a difference and work for developing orienteering. I really like the mix of both younger and older people. We complement each other.

Ingrid Okkenhaug wants to make orienteering an even more popular sport across the whole world

Ingrid Okkenhaug became a member of the RYDC in October, and in January she will meet the other members for the first time. She is very much looking forward to the work of getting the sport better-known and more popular among young people. An important issue in the work world-wide is to



Ingrid Okkenhaug. Photo: Erik Borg

have committed voluntary workers.

– I have grown into the sport, and it has been normal for me to do a lot of voluntary work, she says.

How do you see the future perspective for orienteering?

– I think it's looking very good. People are getting more individually focused. That makes orienteering a sport for the future, because you are doing it individually.

Even if the sport is individual, Ingrid is sure there will always be volunteers who will work for free, who, like her, find their reward in their love for orienteering.

Together with the other members of the RYDC, Ingrid and Johanna will continue to work for the development and growth of orienteering all around the world.

The Athletes' Commission:

From the Runners' Point of View

Text: Erik Borg

Jan Petrzela is looking forward to giving more thought to how the third Sprint format in the World Championships shall be organised. He is also looking forward to being injury-free and doing his very best at the coming WOC.

Petrzela, an elite orienteer from the Czech Republic, has been one of the six members in the IOF Athletes' Commission since December 2016.

– We discuss topics about the future development of IOF from the runners' point of view, usually by emails and now and again face-to-face, the 25-year-old says.

Most important topic – the third Sprint format

Lizzie Ingham from New Zealand is Co-ordinator of the Athletes' Commission. The members are Emily Kemp, Ida Bobach, Florian Howald, Gustav Bergman and Jan Petrzela. From his first year working in the Commission, Jan is most satisfied with the reaction to the proposal for the third Sprint format at WOC.

– We didn't have much time to discuss it, but we managed to send a good summary of our concerns. I believe we have contributed to the fact that the "knock-out sprint" format has not been finalised yet and there has to be more testing. Now we have to keep working so that we choose the best option also for the runners. That's the main task for 2018 as I see it.

– It has already been decided it would be some kind of knock-out sprint; now we have to decide the final form of it, one that will be easy to understand for media, not extremely complicated for organisers and as fair as possible for runners. From the runners' point of view I would insist on a concept where we eliminate the risk that the winner would be someone who is not capable of an individual performance. It is a question of if some kind of forking is needed or if an individual qualification would be enough.

How are the Commission's views passed on?

– We are only an advisory body for the FootO Commission so we don't have any real power, and can basically only give feedback from the runners' point of view and then hope our thoughts will be heard. On the other hand it is nice we know what's going on in the IOF, and we can try to influence the development of elite orienteering in the most important aspects for runners.



Jan Petrzela finishing the Sprint at WOC in Estonia, where he ended 25th. Photo: Erik Borg

Training for 2018

At the Junior World Championships in 2012, held in Slovakia, Petrzela took silver medals in Sprint and Middle. Two years later in Portugal he got silver in the European Championships Relay, and two years after that he added bronze in the same race on home ground.

The law student in Brno has recently struggled a bit with knee injuries.

– I'm just trying to solve my knee problems so that I can train injury-free towards WOC in Latvia. If I manage that I will be more than happy. The main goal is to be in top

shape after a good winter and spring training. Then I believe I'm capable of being in the top ten in individual races and can fight for a medal in the relays.

Near the end of his studies

Jan is in the last year of his law studies, and is now writing his thesis about anti-doping and EU law. He is also working with the Czech Olympic Committee as a legal consultant.

– I was doing my internship there in the autumn and I really liked the place. I hope I can combine running and a part time job there in the next few years.

Focus on Anti-Doping:

First Case for the IOF



Photo: Donatas Lazauskas.

Text: Kirsty McIntyre

During 2017, the IOF was faced with its first case where the Results Management process led to the athlete being charged with an Anti-Doping Rule Violation (ADRV). In many ways, it was the first test of the system. But what happens when an athlete tests positive for a Prohibited Substance?

The Results Management Process

The Laboratory Results for all collected samples are reported through the WADA Anti-Doping Administration and Management System known as ADAMS. If a test should return a positive result for any Prohibited Substance, a so called Adverse Analytical Finding (AAF), the IOF Anti-Doping Officer immediately conducts a review to determine if the athlete has an applicable Therapeutic Use Exemption, or whether there is any apparent departure from the International Standard for Testing and Investigations (ISTI), or the International Standard for Laboratories (ISTL), that may have caused the AAF.

If this is not the case, the IOF Anti-Doping Officer promptly notifies the Athlete, the Athlete's National Federation and WADA of the situation.

Athlete cooperation

The athlete is informed of their rights, for example their right to request and attend the analysis of the B Sample, their right

to request a hearing, their right to provide a written explanation about the overall circumstances of the case or to dispute the assertion that an Anti-Doping Rule Violation (ADRV) has occurred, as well as of the imposition of a mandatory or optional provisional suspension (depending on the substance involved). The athlete is also given the opportunity to promptly admit the ADRV and consequently request a reduction in the period of Ineligibility, as well as the opportunity to co-operate and provide Substantial Assistance in discovering or establishing Anti-Doping Rule Violations, i.e. whistleblowing.

An Athlete against whom an ADRV is asserted may waive their right to a hearing, and accept the Consequences that are mandated by the IOF Anti-Doping Rules. If the athlete requests a hearing, then the case shall be referred to the IOF Doping Hearing Panel for hearing and adjudication.

IOF Anti-Doping Panels

The IOF Anti-Doping Officer chairs the IOF Doping Review Panel, which prepares the IOF's case for the hearing. Both the IOF Doping Review Panel and the IOF Doping Hearing Panel are put together on a case to case basis based on a pool of persons with experience in Anti-Doping, taking into account such factors as the nationalities of the panellists and the athlete respectively and any possible Conflict of Interest, as well as the specific nature of the case matched with the areas of expertise of the panellists.

During the hearing, each party has the

Anti-Doping Rule Violations:

1. Presence of a Prohibited Substance or its Metabolites or Markers in an Athlete's Sample
2. Use or Attempted Use by an Athlete of a Prohibited Substance or a Prohibited Method
3. Evading, Refusing or Failing to Submit to Sample Collection
4. Whereabouts Failures
5. Tampering or Attempted Tampering with any part of Doping Control
6. Possession of a Prohibited Substance or a Prohibited Method
7. Trafficking or Attempted Trafficking in any Prohibited Substance or Prohibited Method
8. Administration or Attempted Administration to any Athlete In-Competition of any Prohibited Substance or Prohibited Method, or Administration or Attempted Administration to any Athlete Out-of-Competition of any Prohibited Substance or any Prohibited Method that is prohibited Out-of-Competition
9. Complicity.
10. Prohibited Association

Kirsty McIntyre, IOF Anti-Doping Officer.
Photo: Donatas Lazauskas.

right to be represented by counsel, the right to present evidence, including the right to call and question witnesses. The IOF Doping Hearing Panel shall act in a fair and impartial manner towards all parties at all times.

Decisions and sanctions

The IOF Doping Hearing Panel shall issue a written decision within 30 days of the hearing, describing the full reasons for the decision, as well as any sanctions imposed. Possible sanctions include a Period of Ineligibility and Disqualification of Results.

The results management process is much the same for any Doping Case. What varies is the evidence, for example analytical cases are based on the analytical results of doping tests, whereas other cases may be based on other evidence.

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