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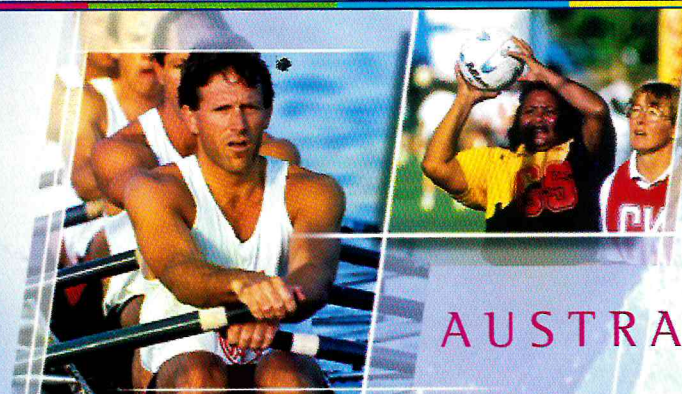
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# WORLD MASTERS GAMES 2002

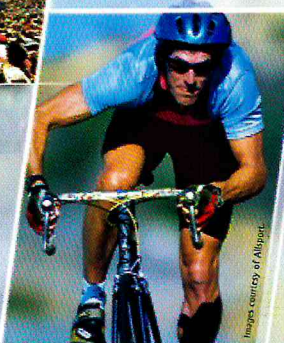
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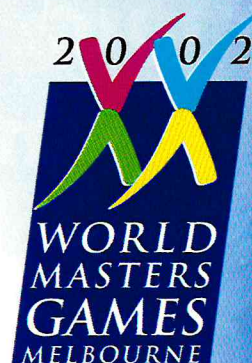
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## PUBLICATION NOTES

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**Front cover:** The inclusion of orienteering in the Akita World Games meant the debut of the sport in a major international multi-sports event.

Photo: Ola Gustafsson.





**V**isibility is a must for any sport. Without visibility it is difficult to get the money needed to develop the sport – to obtain sponsor-

ship, funding, and recruits. Consequently, "Raising the profile of the sport" has been identified as an important route to the further spread of orienteering. The inclusion of orienteering in the 2001 World Games in Akita, Japan, meant the debut of the sport in a major international multi-sports event. For the first time ever, orienteering had the opportunity to benefit from the media attention generated by this high-level event organised under the patronage of the IOC.

Next year, yet another dimension of orienteering will be exposed to the international sports world. The World Masters Orienteering Championships is one of the 29 sports on the programme of the 2002 World Masters Games. As with the World Games, this presents a unique opportunity for orienteering to demonstrate the positive attributes of the sport. The recent General Assembly decision to introduce annual World Orienteering Championships and World Cup is also a means of raising the profile of the sport. More frequent and extensive publicity for our pinnacle orienteering event will enable us to get more media attention which, in turn, will assist in attracting sponsors and recruits.

The organisers of the 2001 World Orienteering Championships introduced several innovative features which added considerable value to the event revealing the secrets of orienteering to the public in a way that has never been done before. We have taken an important route choice decision and taken the first steps towards the desired goal – greater visibility for orienteering. A lot of hard work still remains to be done by all of us, though. Let's continue on the route now taken.

*Barbro Rönnberg*





# Being part of multi-sport games is rewarding

SUE HARVEY,  
IOF PRESIDENT

**T**his first year of the new millennium is proving very significant for the world of orienteering. Our sport made its debut in world-wide elite multi-sport games when it featured on the programme of the 8th World Games in Akita, Japan in August 2001.

There are big rewards for a sport in being part of a multi-sport games. Media coverage is one. There was 20 minutes of coverage of the orienteering competition on one day and a news item on the other day of competition. This in itself is not much, but it is a start.

And, very importantly, media producers who do not have any prior experience of orienteering start learning how to make the most of orienteering as a TV sport.

Another reward is the prestige of the sport among other sports people. The moment when IOC Vice President, Kevan Gosper, congratulated the gold medallist, his Australian compatriot Grant Bluett, was a golden media moment for orienteering.

It puts orienteering on the map in the eyes of other sports leaders. Remember that any decision on the programme of the Olympic Games is decided by IOC members who come from all nations and all sports.

That sort of incident can also bring more state support for a national team. Support from either a state government or a sponsor is much dependent on media interest – often generated by incidents such as that one.

The major reward for being part of a multi-sport games is for the athletes. Marching into a stadium with 30,000 people applauding is a new experience for most orienteers. Meeting up with athletes from your own country, and

being able to enjoy the success of compatriots in other sports, adds a new dimension for our top runners.

Next time, at the World Games in Duisburg in 2005, athletes will come as national delegations (as they do in the Olympics), and they will march out as national teams. Winning medals in those circumstances has a whole new significance.

This new significance may also help us to retain in orienteering outstanding athletes who might otherwise be tempted to divert into athletics for its greater prestige. Orienteering needs to attract and retain gifted recruits just as much as it needs supportive sponsors and good course planners.

These are some of the rewards, but they do come at a price. Those involved in the organisation of the World Games 2001, and those now preparing for the World Masters Games 2002, will have encountered a number of challenges.

Some are due to the fact that orienteering, in common with other natural-environment sports, has no arena or court already built to stipulated standards.

Others are due to the fact that we plan a long way ahead, though our time scale is not unusual if you take into account sports that require infrastructure constructed before an Olympic Games. There is an enormous amount of extra coordination needed to bring together 20–30 sports into a single programme, each with its own special requirements.

The format of a multi-sport games also means that an individual sport loses control of all but its technical aspects. Transport, drug testing, accommodations etc all come under central con-



trol, and both athletes and officials have to handle quite new challenges.

On the whole I believe these challenges were well handled in Akita. Our 78 athletes performed with verve and flair, despite jetlag, heat, transport hitches and the like, and officials from other sports who came to watch, though not always fully able to understand what was going on, were universally impressed by the obvious physical condition of our men, and even more, our women runners. I was proud to be there to hear their admiration.

As to the future, there is still a lot to do. We have to focus on arena design. We have to concentrate on adjusting our competition format to make it more comprehensible for spectators, while still retaining the essence of 'real' orienteering.

We have to attract funding to ensure we always have a big screen, so that our commentators can provide the viewer (whether in person or on TV) with an exciting story to follow.

Finally, we have to take into account a new audience – other sports and sports people.

How will others see our sport – whether they are gifted athletes choosing a sport to specialise in, or officials choosing which events to include in the programme of future games.

Finding the solution to all these aspects is orienteering's challenge for the first decade of the new millennium.



# The attraction of multi-sport Games – being part of something bigger

By PIRITTA FORSSTRÖM



Multiple World Champion, Hanne Staff of Norway, was chosen to carry the IOF flag at the World Games opening ceremony.

PHOTOS: ERIK BORG

**H**undreds of different multi-sport events are organised throughout the world every year. World championships in a certain sport event are definitely not the only form of big sport events.

Everybody knows the Olympics and many will have heard of the World Games, but how many know about the Commonwealth Games, Maccabi Games, Pacific School Games or Super Games. All aspects of life seem to be represented in the surprisingly long list of various multi-sport games where people from different but yet somehow similar backgrounds come to compete in all kinds of sports.

Most often events are established on a regional basis, but also on language, ethnic origin, religion, age or sex, occupation, different disabilities and various combinations of these.

What is it that draws people to the multi-sport events, why do different sports want to get together?

Despite the worldwide and regional championships maybe it's the feeling of being part of something bigger and a larger entity, the chance to meet athletes from other sports and to have the opportunity for an exchange of culture. Each multi-sport event gives its participants that unique extra value, which one can't find from any other event.

## A globally-known brand

The Olympic Games is the most prestigious multi-sport event in the world. Millions of people follow the games through different forms of media and this growth of visibility has multiplied the financial value of the games.

For athletes winning the Olympic gold is the most valuable goal they can achieve. Being an Olympic winner often makes an athlete a national hero.

Honour, prestige, glory, admiration, achieving privileged status, and nowadays also money, make athletes say that they would be prepared to sacrifice everything, even their health and

life, if they could only win the gold medal in the Olympics.

Being in the Olympic programme also gives a sport a substantial advantage when negotiating with sponsors.

Since 1894 when Pierre de Coubertin re-established the Olympic Games, the basic values of the games derive from the Greek philosophy that competitive sport is not simply a means of developing a healthy body and providing entertainment but also of educating.

The Olympic Movement is the philosophy that sport can teach the human race as a whole "fair play" by observing the rules of combat, treating the losers with honour and respecting the winners.

The Olympic Movement is also a belief that sport can break down barriers of language, culture, nationality, age and sex and build bridges between people all over the world as a means of promoting world peace.



Even though the Olympic Games has changed a lot since Coubertin's time the initial concept of the Games and the values of the Olympic Movement have managed to maintain and even raise the respect for and the high status of the event.

With the inevitable growth of commercialism and price tags the Olympic Games has become the most highly valued sport event among the athletes, the federations and the event organisers.

The symbols of the Olympics – the rings, the flag and the motto “citius, altius, fortius” – represent a brand which is among the most known and wanted all over the world and which gives unique extra value one cannot get anywhere else.

All this considering, it's no wonder why none of the sports in the Olympic programme wants to leave and why most of the non-Olympic sports want to be included.

### **A premium event of tomorrow**

In 1980, a group of 12 international sports federations joined forces by forming the World Games Council, later to be renamed the International World Games Association (IWGA).

The purpose of the organisation was to create a multi-sport event for sports (and/or disciplines of sport) that were not included in the programme of the Olympic Games. This aimed, among other things, at creating more exposure in the media and increased interest from spectators, which would assist the federations in developing their sports.

This initiative came during an era when international sports, including the Olympic Games, were yet to become the great television success – and thus the sponsorship vehicle – they are today.

In spite of having a purpose and objectives of its own, the World Games has been considered as a stepping stone to the Olympics. This was not maybe the original plan but when looking back one can see that has actually happened in quite a few instances.

Now, about 20 years later, some of the founding sports are no longer involved in the IWGA and the World Games as they are now – provisionally or otherwise – included in the Olympic programme (badminton, baseball, softball and tae kwon do).

Similarly, beach volleyball, triathlon, women's water polo, weightlifting and individual trampoline were all at one

time included in the programme for World Games events but are now also a part of the Olympic Games. The IWGA is among the IOC-recognised organisations. Besides this recognition, the IOC has also given official patronage to the World Games and gives the event financial support for doping controls.

The support from the IOC has made the World Games a true part of the Olympic Movement. It has raised the profile and status of the World Games so that in the future the event can offer the prestige and value many of the sports are seeking by aiming at the Olympics.

The World Games will not just be a substitute or a mini-version of the Olympics, but a parallel world class multi-sport event with high standards and top results. As the IOF President Sue Harvey says.

– It will take a while for this new situation to filter through the layers of the Olympic Movement, but the inclusion of the World Games as a major official part of the Olympic structure means that orienteering is now in, not out.

### **References:**

IOC: <http://www.olympic.org/>,

IWGA: <http://www.worldgames-iwga.org/>.







IWGA President Ron Froehlich (left) and IOC Vice President Kevan Gosper congratulating Hanne Staff on her World Games win.  
PHOTO: ERIK BORG

PRESIDENT RON FROEHLICH'S VISION:

## World Games only surpassed by the Olympic Games

BY BARBRO RÖNNBERG

**T**he 2001 World Games in Akita, Japan, are now already history. Since the founding of the International World Games Association (IWGA) in 1980, and the first ever World Games held in 1981 in Santa Clara, U.S.A., many things have changed.

Under the leadership of President Ron Froehlich, the IWGA and the World Games are now in a period of rapid and steady development.

It has become a true member of the Olympic Movement.

The relationship between the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the IWGA has continued to develop ever since the opening of the 1997 World Games in Lahti, Finland, when the then IOC President Juan Antonio Samaranch declared the World Games to be a part of the Olympic Family.

The principles of further co-operation between the IOC and the IWGA were confirmed with the signing of an agreement between the two organisations in October 2000, and the IOC granted its patronage to the Akita World Games.

### Significant IOC support

– The main principles of the Memorandum of Understanding that we signed between the IOC and IWGA



were related to the relationship between the IOC and the IWGA, and support for the organising committees of the World Games.

– I think that the most significant of the issues pertaining to the World Games in Akita was that we had the full support of the IOC, says the IWGA President Ron Froehlich.

– With the result of President Samaranch writing to the National Olympic Committees (NOC) we found that we had some 20 NOC's involved in some way or another in the World Games, which is fifteen more than we had previously.

– Also, we had some twelve IOC members visit the World Games during the period.

– Our future co-operation with the IOC will be with greater participation by the NOC's and the IOC members, as well as the IOC working closer with us as to what sports could perhaps be considered to go into the Olympics and if there would be any events that are coming out of the Olympics that we could accommodate, continues President Froehlich.

When the decision to establish the World Games was taken, it was based on the belief that this multi-sport event would be a promotional plat-

form for lesser known sport not included in the programme of the Olympic Games, and assist them in their development.

Throughout the years, the World Games have developed into a multi-sport event of global significance.

However, to fully achieve the goals set up in 1980, the image of the World Games will need to be further strengthened.

### **Athletes' appreciation required**

– One of my messages to the International Federations would be that it is very important that they get their athletes and everyone concerned to understand that the World Games is in actual fact a bigger event than their own World Championships.

– If we can achieve this, then the World Games will be on a level where only the Olympic Games supersedes it, says Ron Froehlich.

International television coverage is a must in order to achieve maximum exposure for the Games, the sports and the athletes.

The organisers of the Akita World Games reached an agreement with the Japanese television company NHK for daily summaries of 52 minutes, and

also secured international coverage through Trans World International.

– The 2005 World Games will be organised in the German city of Duisburg. For the first time ever, the bid of a candidate city included a letter of intent from a host broadcaster, West Deutsche Rundfunk (WDR), which will help guarantee the exposure of the Games.

### **Perfect close for the Akita World Games**

– The Akita World Games was pretty close to 100% perfect and when I look back at the weeks in Akita, I can tell you that the final results certainly met our expectations.

– There are aspects of the organisation which were exceptionally good and we have put out a circular to all our member federations asking them to complete the data so that we can get an overall picture of what our federations, our athletes and the administrators thought of it in terms of what can we do to make it even better in Duisburg 2005.

– My overall impression of the World Games in Akita was that they were great and I am looking forward to seeing what we can do to improve it in Duisburg 2005, concludes President of the International World Games Association (IWGA), Ron Froehlich.



Photo: OLA GUSTAFSSON



# World Games – a great competition

By Erik Borg

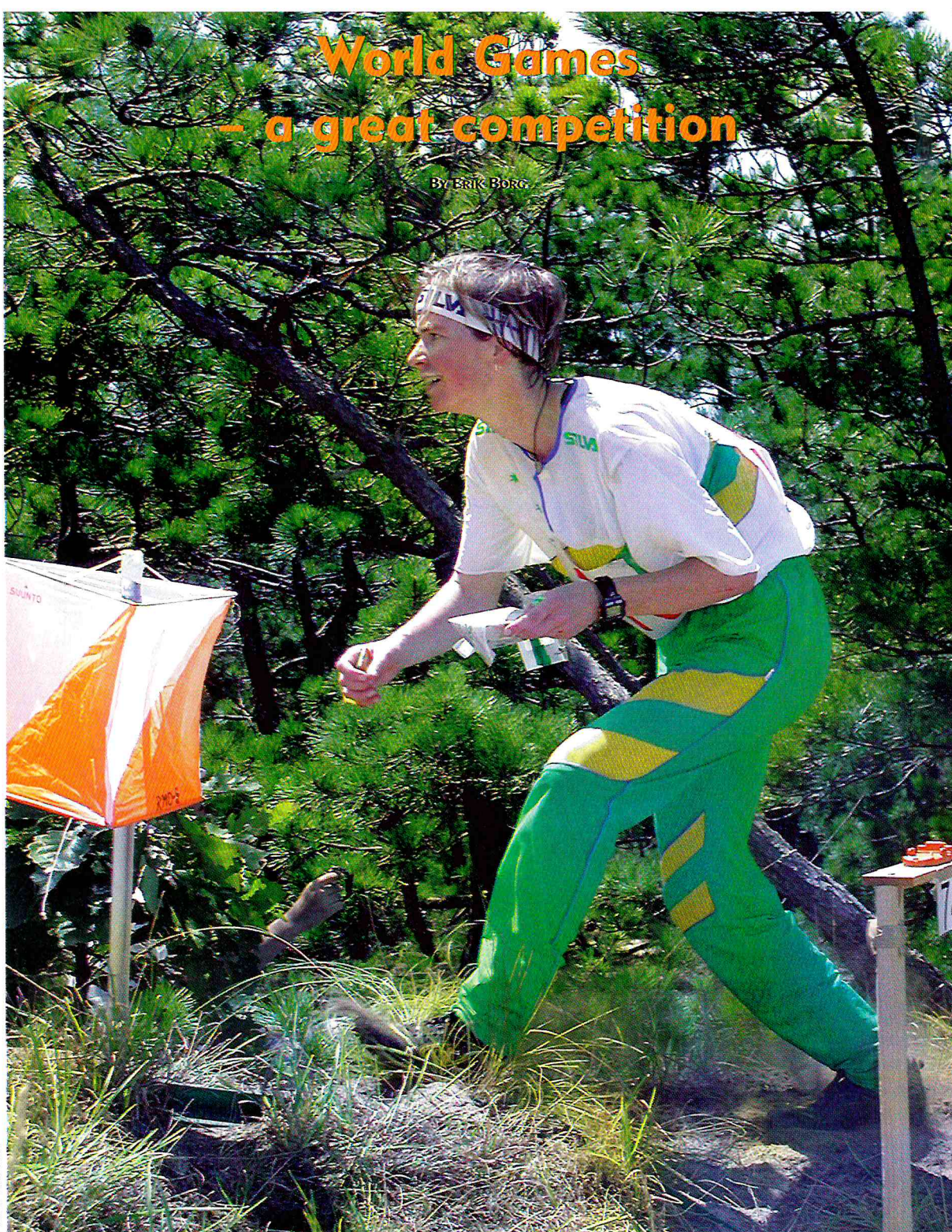


PHOTO: ERIK BORG

**T**he Australian elite orienteer Jo Allison is very pleased to have been selected for the Australian team to the World Games. In her opinion it was a very high level and important event, and the Japanese organisers did a fantastic job as the host nation.

The 25-year-old Australian had a really tough competition period in July and August. She stayed in Finland for one month to prepare prior to the World Orienteering Championships in Tampere and then she ran in the championships themselves.

After these intensive six weeks she went home to Australia for a short visit before travelling to Japan and the World Games in Akita.

## **Athletes were well looked after**

– I thought the World Games in Akita was a great competition. It was good that although the World Championships in Finland was the major focus of the elite orienteering year, and that orienteering was included in the World Games for the first time, the participating countries sent

strong teams thus making it an important and exciting event.

– Japan did a great job as the host country and the athletes were looked after extremely well, says Jo Allison.

Jo Allison thought it was appropriate that the races were reasonably short, particularly as the World Championships had only just finished. It also made for some fast and exciting racing. Jo also much appreciated that the map was quite detailed in parts thus providing some challenging orienteering.



– I also thought the World Games orienteering events were successful because the races were held on “neutral” terrain so that no country had the advantage of home terrain, as apparently the terrain was not even typical for Japan.

– Therefore we were all “in the same boat” and only had the opportunity to train on similar terrain three days before the races. It was great to see orienteers from many different countries achieving good results, Jo says.

### **Inspired by an exciting competition**

Jo Allison finished in thirteenth place in the individual race. In the relay she had a very good run, starting in ninth place and bringing her team up to fifth place at the changeover.

– I was quite tired both physically and mentally after the World Championships and the training in Finland beforehand. I went home to Australia after the championships and before the World Games and had a rest so I would feel ready for the races in Japan.

– There was a lot of travelling and before the individual race I still felt a bit tired, especially as it was so hot, but when I picked up my map at the start and felt the excitement of the competition I somehow found some extra energy.

– I made a few small mistakes in the individual race. It was difficult in the areas with thick vegetation and I soon learnt it was better to use the tracks as much as possible. I was particularly happy with my relay run.

– After the individual race I knew I had to be careful in the green areas and be accurate in the control circle. I had a very clean run and I was very pleased to bring the team up to fifth place, comments Jo.

Jo Allison had focused on the World Championships in Finland, but she had also had the World Games on her mind. Because it was first time that orienteering was part of the World

Games she didn't quite know what to expect or what to aim for.

– However, it was important to me because it was a competition with a high standard field of competitors. I was selected as one of only four to represent my country so I really wanted to get a good result and run well in the relay, she says.

### **Heading for future success**

The Australian girl believes it's good for orienteering to be in the World Games. It helps orienteering to be recognised internationally as an elite sport.

In the future she would like to see included a few more countries with teams sufficient in size to make relay teams, but without increasing the number of competitors by too much in order to avoid the need for organising qualifying races.

Jo is now feeling very inspired and she is training hard for future competitions. Her first big goal is the World Orienteering Championships in Switzerland in 2003 – and she is also looking forward to a certain competition in Duisburg, Germany – the World Games 2005.

PHOTO: ERIK BORG

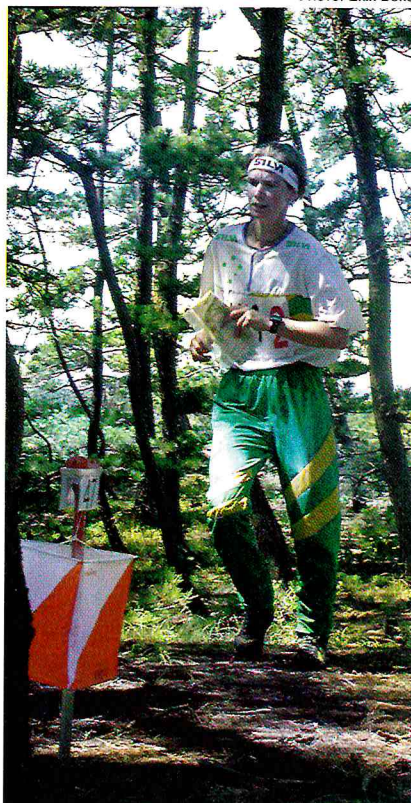


PHOTO: ERIK BORG



### **Heather wanted to see more**

**T**he British runner Heather Monro felt that the World Games was a good event. However, she would have liked to see more of the other sports events and to meet other elite athletes.

– It was a pity that the schedule didn't allow for more contact with representatives of other sports. It was almost as if we had participated in a World Cup event. I missed the feeling of being part of a major multi-sport event, says Heather.

Heather Monro was very pleased with the orienteering events. She liked both the individual competition and the mixed-team relay. Heather is not convinced that the World Games is the gateway to the Olympics, but regardless of this would like to see orienteering included in the World Games programme in future years too.

– World Games in itself is a good event, Heather Monro concludes.



# Scope for further improvement

By ERIK BORG

**T**he coach of the Danish national team, Signar Eriksson, thought the maps and courses in Japan were top class, but he can see many necessary areas of development for the other aspects of the event.

- We were taking part for the first time and we were really beginners in this context, comments Signar.
- Participation in the World Games

was a step forward for orienteering, but it was not so easy for the World Games to have to follow right after the best World Orienteering Championships of all time, says Signar.

It was also a disadvantage for the World Games that there was such a short time interval between the Championships and the World Games.



*Signar Eriksson, coach of the Danish orienteering team, felt that participation in the World Games was a step forward for orienteering.*

PHOTO: ERIK BORG

Eriksson believes that it is important that the IOF exerts its influence so that the international race programme is not as intensive as this year's.

## **Orienteering can still do better**

In relation to the orienteering events in Akita, Signar can see many aspects which can be improved for future World Games.

- We were staying in the wrong location. We should have been in the city, not all alone in the vicinity of the competition area. Both prize-giving ceremonies should have been held in the city, not just the one after the relay, and instead of the relay there should have been a sprint race right in the city area so that orienteering would have been more visible, states Signar Eriksson.

Signar missed the big screen with live action pictures that was such a feature of the World Championships. He would also have forced the runners into the stadium area during the race so that the spectators could have seen more live action.

- It felt rather low key compared with the World Championships, but then orienteering does not have the same status in Japan as it does in Finland, adds Signar.

## **National level network needed**

Signar Eriksson also thinks that the opening ceremony lacked co-ordination somewhat. He believes that the orienteers should have been better profiled as a unit. He also feels that, at least in Denmark's case, there was a lack of co-ordination within the national teams among the different sports taking part.

For example, in comparison the Hungarian World Games team had team clothes which had been paid for by the Hungarian Olympic Committee.



– A network should be created at a national level, and there could for example be a joint press conference for the different sports before the World Games, Signar Eriksson suggests.

Although Eriksson sees many opportunities to develop participation in the World Games in Duisburg, he is not really sure whether orienteering should actually be one of the sports represented there.

– I am a bit uncertain of whether the World Games can provide the focus that is required for orienteering to be included in the Olympic programme. The new IOC President, Jacques Rogge, has indicated that there will be fewer sports in future Olympic Games.

– I think the IOF ought to focus on and develop the events that the IOF itself has a more direct influence over – such as the World Championships. The World Championships are a tool with which to develop the sport of orienteering, and the IOF must learn from what the Park World Tour is doing. A big party or the opening ceremony are not by themselves sufficient justification for taking part in the World Games, states Signar Eriksson.

He does not have any complaints about the actual technical aspect of the event in the forest, but he can see many areas of improvement in the overall organisational aspect of orienteering at the World Games.

### **A good format**

Australian orienteering will receive extra funding as a result of the fine results at the World Games.

– The World Games were good for Australian orienteering states Bob Mouatt, the Vice-President of the Australian Orienteering Federation and also its National Development Director.

– I liked the formats but I don't think that the World Games did much to advance the cause of orienteering, except that Grant Bluett's win was



*Leho Haldna, member of the IOF Foot Orienteering Committee and leader of the Estonian team, feels that orienteering should continue its efforts to be included in multi-sport games.*

PHOTO: ERIK BORG

timely, given the presence of Australian Kevan Gosper (the Vice-President of the IOC), states Mouatt.

– There wasn't really a great deal of attention at home in Australia. "Grant Bluett's win attracted only a few column inches in some national daily papers and a brief mention on TV. The victory did not have too much impact on the Australian media. As a major sporting carnival the World Games did not rate in Australia, he adds.

Mouatt came to Akita directly from the World Championships in Finland via Canada. The Australian believes the World Games orienteering races were of good quality.

– There were not many periods when a runner was not in view or the commentator was not able to provide updates from the course. I like the paired-loop race as it reduces the period of a race and has the potential to provide a lot of excitement with close finishes, especially if the pairings are fairly even. There were, however, "moon shot

anxiety" moments (e.g. like Apollo XIII) when you are waiting for people to appear, comments Mouatt.

The size of the teams is something Mouatt would like to see changed.

– I think there should be a limit of two competitors per nation and there should be some form of seeding, says Mouatt.

### **Well-organised event**

The Norwegian national coach, Egil Johansen, believes that the World Games were well-organised and a very good event.

– If anything was brought up at the team leaders' meetings, it was fixed straightaway, he states.

### **"Is the World Games worth focusing on?"**

– The Olympic Games are the goal now, and I believe that the World Games are a small step on the way. We must invest more effort in the work to



achieve our Olympic goal. What the IOF is doing is one thing; what every individual national federation must do is something entirely different. In Norway, for example, Richard Heiberg, the Norwegian IOC member and Bjørge Stensbøl, the Director of Norwegian Elite Sport, should have come with us to Akita. Each individual country must seek to influence its own influential figures in the sports world, as lobbying activity is very important. Just competing and putting ourselves forward is not enough, states Egil Johansen.

When asked about participation in the World Games, Egil would have liked to have experienced more of all the other things going on in Akita.

– We could have stayed there a few days after the end of the orienteering races, he concludes.

### Good to be together with other sports

Leho Haldna was the leader of the Estonian orienteering team at the World Games in Japan. He felt that the Games offered a lot of positive things.

– The conditions were equal for everybody – accommodation, food and services. Also the terrain was neutral, and



Bob Mouatt, Vice-President of the Australasian Orienteering Federation, asked Grant Bluett to give a detailed report of his great win.

PHOTO: ERIK BORG



Egil Johansen was happy about the success of the Norwegian orienteering team.

PHOTO: ERIK BORG

there had been no special training camp for the event. Equally, I believe that it was very important for orienteering to be seen together with other sports.

– We orienteers were not at all familiar with some of the sports included in the World Games programme and they were quite difficult to understand, Leho Haldna says.

In future he would also like the orienteering competition to be easier for people to understand and to follow.

– Orienteering should continue its efforts to be included in international multi-sports events. The format of the individual event was good. If we have a one minute start interval and loops in the forest, I believe that the event is fair to the runners.

– If we want to include a relay in future Games, it should be a three-leg event separate for men and women, not a mixed team relay. We could also consider not having a relay event at all, but to add a second individual event with a mass start instead, concludes Leho Haldna.

### Valuable experience for orienteering

Ove Gasbjerg, chairman of the IOF

Foot Orienteering Committee, was not present at the World Games in Akita himself. Gasbjerg regards the inclusion of orienteering in the programme as having been a very valuable experience for orienteering.

– It showed us what kind of costs a sport has to pay in order to be part of a multi-sport event, he says.

– The IOF member federations have decided that inclusion in the Olympic Games is the ultimate goal of the IOF. The World Games showed us some of the aspects of such an inclusion, that is, what kind of compromises are required to fit into the programme.

The next World Games will be held in Duisburg, Germany, in 2005.

– That is also the year when the IOF will have to submit an application to the International Olympic Committee for orienteering to be included in the Olympic Summer Games in 2012, providing that the members still want to obtain this goal.

– If some nations feel that the price to be paid for inclusion in the Olympic Games is too high, they would need to raise the matter for reconsideration at a future General Assembly, Ove Gasbjerg says.



Contour Interval 2.5m

Scale 1:10,000

Stand 2001



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World Games

Relay

9.AUG.2001

Mapper 1999.4-2001.7

Hatori Kazushige 羽島和重

Murakoshi Shin 村越 真

Tanaka Toru 田中 徹

Robert Plowright (AUS)

Yamakawa Katsunori 山川克則

IIJIMA SAND DUNE

飯島沙防林

秋田市・天王町

M-A

WORLD GAMES 2001 AKITA ORIENTEERING 16-19 AUG



# Orienteering is different

By ERIK BORG

**O**ne person was more involved than anybody else in organising the orienteering events included in the programme of the World Games in Japan. Shin Murakoshi was everywhere.

He considers that the co-operation with the World Games organisation went well, but orienteering is different from other sports...

– It was very important – and very time consuming – to ‘teach’ the Akita Organising Committee (AOC) staff responsible for orienteering what orienteering is all about and how the competitions should be organised, says Shin Murakoshi.

It certainly helped a lot that Seiki Watanabe, who was responsible for

orienteering within the AOC, was very enthusiastic and eager to find out as much as possible about the sport. On his own initiative he visited the IOF web page, the Japanese orienteering web page, and picked up the necessary information from these and other sources.

– The exchange of information made us realise how distinct and different orienteering is compared to other sports. It is also essential for us to realise the uniqueness of orienteering, if we want to have continued success in multi-sport games. It is very important that we communicate our requirements to the organisers, but we should also be very flexible and try to understand their situation, says Shin Murakoshi.

Even if orienteering was a new sport for a lot of people, Shin Murakoshi believes that the events went well and he feels that orienteering was regarded as one of the more successful events by the World Games organiser.

## Scattered accommodation not ideal

One of the essential features of the World Games is that no new arenas or other facilities are allowed to be built just for the Games.

Shin Murakoshi believes that this was a challenge and also the main problem for the Akita World Games.

– No “competitors’ village” like the one at the Olympic Games can be constructed for the World Games. This



Seiki Watanabe (left) and Shin Murakoshi came to realise how different orienteering is compared to other sports.

PHOTO: ERIK BORG



means that if the existing accommodation capacity is not big enough to host all the participants, the competitors have to stay in separate places.

– This dilutes the feeling of being part of a multi-sport games. This was also the case in Akita, where some orienteers regarded the event as being similar to a world cup competition except for the opening ceremony, the prize-giving ceremony, and the banquet, Shin Murakoshi comments.

Shin Murakoshi would also like to see a further improvement of the profile of the World Games.

He feels that it is regrettable that some elite runners were not able to come because of fixtures clashes or financial reasons. In future, the competition calendar must be well taken into consideration.

– Fundamentally, the relation between the IOF and the national federations could be improved.

– The World Games is different from the World Championships and any other major IOF event as the IOF is responsible for the event organisation rather than the national federation.

– The Japanese Orienteering Association had not itself actually applied for the World Games events but was asked to take on the organising task.

– This fact means that the IOF has to take more initiatives in relation to the orienteering events at the World Games than for other international orienteering events.

– More could perhaps be done in relation to the spectator friendliness of the competitions. In order to achieve this, the IOF should continue to help the local organiser, both financially and technically, Shin Murakoshi says.

### **Good for the sport**

Shin Murakoshi supports the inclusion of orienteering in multi-sport games. More people will get to know the sport



*The World Games staff spent a busy two weeks ensuring that the participating athletes, coaches, media representatives, invited guests and spectators had a good time in Akita and that they got the services they required.*

PHOTO: ERIK BORG

because of this. In Japan, the competitions were broadcast every day.

– There were some articles in nationwide newspapers as well as a lot of publicity in local newspapers. Of all the Japanese athletes participating in the World Games, only three were locals and, luckily for us, one of them was an orienteer. That caught the attention of the media.

– When one of the Japanese orienteering team members went to see a doctor after the World Games, she was astonished to find out that he knew about orienteering because of the media publicity. Such things very rarely happen in Japan.

– However, it is not enough just to take part in the World Games.

– That is something we have already attained, and it is important to further investigate how best to benefit from this.

– I cannot say that orienteering has grown in popularity in Japan after the World Games.

– However, we have been, and are, very enthusiastically targeting the general public not only in relation to the World Games, but also for the 2005 World Orienteering Championships in Japan, and in many other aspects too.

– The World Games contributed, as a part of this campaign, to raising the profile of orienteering in the public eye, concludes Shin Murakoshi.





## Orienteers impressed by the Opening Ceremony

BUT MORE CONTACT WITH OTHER SPORTS IS DESIRED

By OLA GUSTAFSSON

Orienteering has now become part of a multi-sport event. The sport's debut in the World Games will hopefully lead to an even bigger event, i.e. the Olympic Games themselves. The orienteers who were in Akita did not perceive any great difference in terms of the sporting aspects from what they are used to at other major international orienteering events.

However, the athletes did not have much time to see other sports disciplines, even though a few attempts were made to do this. Simone Luder, the newly-crowned World Champion from Switzerland, was one of the few who found time to fit in a visit to another sports venue.

– There was time on Friday afternoon to do something so I went to see a roller hockey match.

Simone and her partner and fellow national team member, Matthias Niggli, watched a group match

between the host country Japan and Portugal.

– It was fun and interesting to watch. I have never seen roller hockey before, but it wasn't that exciting as Portugal won by 23–4.

There were a total of 31 different sports (26 ordinary and 5 demonstration sports) on the World Games programme, and the number of competitors was around 2 400, representing 91 countries. The other sports included fin swimming, billiards, bowling, bodybuilding, parachuting, boules, sumo wrestling, aikido, karate and ju-jitsu. Gateball (croquet) was one of the demonstration sports (!).

### More contact with other sports

– It would have been fun to have come into contact with other sports. It was only at the opening ceremony and the closing party that we were able to meet other competitors. For example we met

some bodybuilders at the closing party, comments the slender Swiss orienteer, who in this context seems even more so than usual.

One major disadvantage in respect to the opportunities to meet competitors from other sports and to watch other sports too was the accommodation. There was no question here of accommodation along the lines of that at the Olympic Games or similar. The World Games was dispersed around Akita and the orienteers stayed at a sports centre 20 km away from the centre of Akita. The race terrain was right next to the accommodation, so it was quite practical from that point of view.

– That's why we felt as though we were at just another World Cup race. We haven't really noticed any of the other sports during the race days, says Emil Wingstedt from Sweden.

– It was a bit disappointing that our accommodation was so far away. We



orienteers had already lived together for a week at the World Championships in Tampere earlier in the summer.

The 31 sports also took place during different periods of the World Games, which in total covered ten days of competition. The orienteering was already over by the third day and the orienteers then left Akita.

– It would of course have been fun to have managed to watch some other sports, but this was difficult to manage in practical terms, says the World Championship silver medallist Jenny Johansson of Sweden. I would have liked to have had a look at sports aerobic, but as we were staying so far away from the aerobics venue it was difficult with transport, so I didn't manage to do it, she adds.

### Impressive opening ceremony

The opening ceremony did at least impress all the orienteers. It was



*Emil Wingstedt enjoyed the spectacular opening ceremony.*

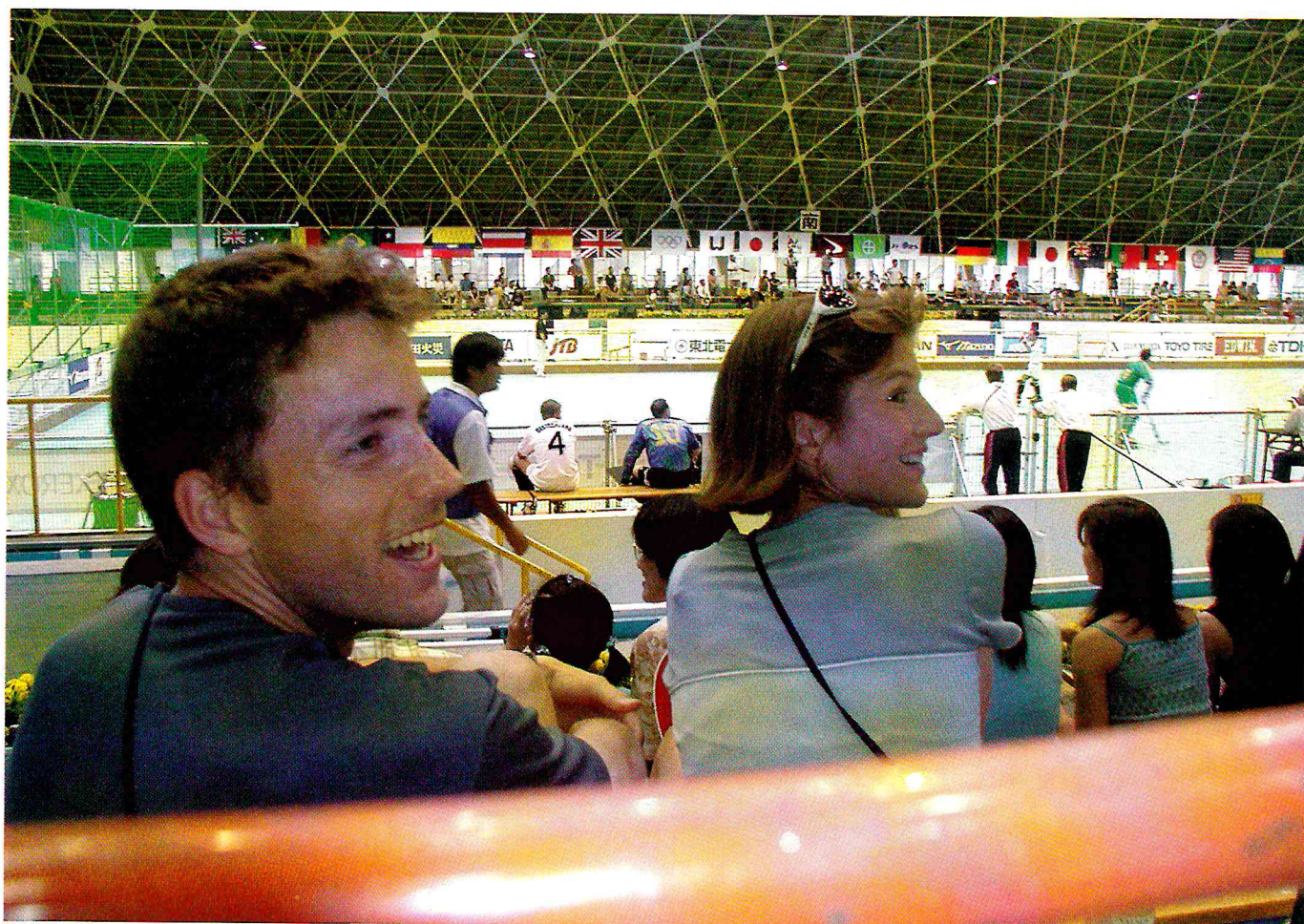
PHOTO: ERIK BORG

something totally different from what they were used to at the World Orienteering Championships.

A packed stadium of 20 000 spectators followed the competitors as they marched into the arena and the subse-

quent hour-long cultural programme which included 300 drummers, hundreds of dancers, parachutists and a whole lot more besides.

– Really fantastic, commented Simone Luder.



*Simone Luder and Matthias Niggli found time to watch a roller hockey match between Japan and Portugal.*

PHOTO: ERIK BORG



# Orienteering accomplished the main World Games goals

BY ERIK BORG

**A** well-oiled machinery was required to coordinate the activities of all the twenty-six official and five demonstration sports on the programme of the 2001 World Games in Akita.

To secure a smooth communication between the Akita Organising Committee (AOC), and the organisers of the separate sports, the AOC had appointed a contact person for each of the sports.

Seiki Watanabe, in everyday life an English teacher at the Akita high school, had been appointed contact person for orienteering.

Together with the technical delegate Shin Murakoshi, the IOF Controller Oivind Holt, and all the event organisers, he worked tirelessly for several months in order to secure the success of the orienteering events.

**Seiki Watanabe, what did you know about orienteering before you were appointed contact person for the World Games orienteering events?**

**I** had only experienced orienteering once when I was an elementary school pupil. It was a kind of group activity during a summer camp. Except for this, orienteering was totally new to me.

**What do you know about orienteering now?**

**F**irst of all, I have found orienteering to be a very demanding and competitive sport. To win a race, you need two essentials: physical strength to run and navigational skills.

You are required to do many things at the same time during a race.

That makes an orienteering race very exciting and difficult.

**How can the competitions be improved – what kind of changes would you recommend?**

**T**his question is rather difficult for me to answer. I know that all of you have been working on improving orienteering competitions.

However, in my opinion, orienteering should not lose its uniqueness as a sport even when you try to show races to spectators at the race venue or on TV. Sometimes a spectator-friendly event doesn't necessarily mean a good and satisfying race for the competitors.

Still, I know that if orienteering is not appealing to spectators, it will be difficult to reach the final goal, inclusion in the Olympic Games programme – if that is what you really want.

It might be necessary to consider other ways of being open to media coverage, observing the rules and regulations of orienteering, especially paying attention to fairness aspects. To strike a balance between these two factors is indeed challenging but it has to be done.

**What was it like to have orienteering as a sport inside the World Games?**

**I** suppose it was quite successful. The World Games is a multi-sport event, which has two main goals to accomplish. One goal is that it provides an opportunity for the very best athletes from all over the world to participate every four years.

As for orienteering at the WG this time, the top athletes gathered in Akita and gave their best performances during the competitions, even though they must have been exhausted from the World Orienteering Championships in Tampere, which had been held just two weeks prior to the World Games. Since in Japan orienteering itself is not as

popular as in European countries, this really helped to attract many spectators and also make this sport better known in Japan.

The other goal of the World Games is to hold various cultural-exchange events centred around the sports events. This time orienteering provided a variety of different events to meet the various needs of the spectators.

For example, in the event for beginners, as many as 100 elementary students enjoyed orienteering under the direct instructions of the participating athletes. In addition, there was another cultural exchange to be noted.

Local junior high schools cleaned up the orienteering terrain two months before the World Games in order to welcome the participants from all over the world. I heard that not only the IOF but also some athletes sent a letter of thanks to the high schools by e-mail. The students also handed over welcome messages to all the athletes.

The IOF President Sue Harvey gave them a commemorative gift before the medal ceremony for the relay race as a token of gratitude, representing all the participating orienteers. I am sure that no other sport in the World Games attained these goals as successfully as orienteering.

**How was it to co-operate with the orienteers?**

**S**ince I knew almost nothing about orienteering at first, I was at a loss for what to do. Every day, I made inquiries even about trivial things to the technical liaison delegate for the orienteering events, Shin Murakoshi.

Despite always being extremely busy, he was kind enough to explain from A to Z about orienteering to me. Fortunately, before the World Games, I



also had a few chances to meet Oivind Holt, the IOF Controller of the events and discussed various matters face to face.

As the contact person in charge of orienteering at the AOC, I tried to accept as many of the IOF's requests as possible. However, as you can imagine, for financial or sometimes technical reasons on our part, I couldn't say "YES" to all the requests.

For me, these were the toughest moments, as I was also hoping for the success of the events. Through frank discussion we were able to understand the other's position and to co-operate with each other. The staff of the IOF and the Japanese Orienteering Association were also very kind and co-operative.

With no boundaries between the parties, we listened to, respected and helped each other and worked together

as one team to make the orienteering events successful.

I am deeply appreciative of all the help the orienteers gave us. Besides, I am amazed by the outstanding organisational abilities of orienteers and the effective use of high-tech devices to run the events.

#### **What about orienteering as a sport – compared with e.g. bowling?**

**O**utside – inside. Map and compass – ball. Non-smokers – smokers! They are very different in many ways. I believe that the orienteering event is one of the most difficult ones to prepare and organise.

As the races take place in natural terrain, it takes a vast amount of time and energy to explore the area by foot, make a map, draw up reasonable courses in the terrain and do many other things. As there can be no indoor

venue, you are required to prepare everything from scratch.

I have found one thing in common between orienteering and bowling. Though these sports are both enjoyable to experience, it could be difficult for spectators to enjoy watching. (I am fully aware that originally, a sport is something to do, not to watch!)

#### **Any other comments?**

**T**he IOF Controller Oivind Holt said to me that world orienteering is like a "family". I now understand the true meaning of his words.

I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to all the orienteers at the Akita World Games 2001 for their efforts and support to ensure that the orienteering events were successful.

I will never forget meeting all of you in my entire life. Thank you!



*A newcomer to orienteering and his 'teacher': Seiki Watanabe (left) and Shin Murakoshi worked closely together in order to secure the success of the World Games orienteering events.*

PHOTO: ERIK BORG



# With the result in our hands: Orienteering and the World Games

By OLA GUSTAFSSON

**T**he status of the World Games varies greatly around the world. The event has built up a name for itself in some parts of the world, but the event still appears to pass by in most parts of the world without an eyebrow being raised.

It is the same situation for the sport of orienteering. Most of the world is completely unaware of what the sport entails.

Can the inclusion of orienteering in the World Games give any positive effects to our sport? And above all, can it assist us on our path to the top table – the Olympic Games themselves?

After following orienteering's debut at the World Games in Akita, Japan I am convinced that the answer is yes. But it will take time. We can forget the 2008 Games, we must adopt a more long-term goal.

In all probability the status of the World Games will increase in future years and it will then be important for orienteering to be among the leading sports. It would be correct to say that orienteering's debut in the World Games was not a great success, but it did provide many lessons from which to learn for the future. Experience from this year's event will be valuable when it is time for the next Games in Duisburg, Germany in 2005.

Two orienteering races were organised at the World Games: an individual race over a medium distance with starting in pairs, and a mixed relay with two men and two women in the team.

Both disciplines were new to most competitors. One can well ask the question whether the IOF does not have any belief in the established distances we have today, since completely new distances were preferred at the World Games.

The races which were held were fair from a sporting perspective. The neutral terrain in Akita provided a much greater international spread to the top of the results list than was the case at the World Championships in recent years, which were held in particularly Scandinavian terrain.

On the other hand, there was a great deal that was missing in terms of the non-sporting side of the events: an aspect of orienteering that has undergone significant development over the last year. Both the start and changeover took place in the finish area, but the whole event was organised in such a way that it was difficult to understand for people who did not already know was going on.

The changeover/map exchange, for example, took place in one corner of the sports field, and in the relay runners could take a route choice where they were not visible to the spectators. New ideas are definitely needed in this respect, and IOF will have to revise its policy towards controlling how such events are organised.

With expert professional assistance from the IOF, most organisers would manage to hold good quality events. Traditionally, IOF controllers have focused all their efforts on the technical side of the event and spent all their time in the terrain checking the map and controls, but an attractive and functional arena is also required if we want our sport to be noticed.

Those of us who had the privilege of going to Akita almost straight from the World Championships in Tampere, naturally missed the big screen with live pictures from the terrain. In future, a high quality production on a big screen will be more important than a spectator control near the finish area. Tough action pictures from the forest where one can feel the real tenseness

of the race situations and see the grimacing faces of the runners as they run through the terrain will be a requirement at our major international races in the future. At least if we want to achieve our ambition of inclusion in the Olympic Games programme.

At future World Games, orienteering will also have to take advantage of the PR opportunities that are provided. The opening ceremony is a good example. The orienteering group did not make any special impression, but on the other hand nor did many of the other sports.

For example, we should consider what clothes we ought to be wearing. National kit should be a requirement, and why not a sponsor who could supply a few thousand small advertising compasses to distribute to the spectators.

One detail to consider for tracksuits in the future is to print "orienteering team" after the country name. The orienteers themselves thought of this, as when they met competitors from other sports one had to guess what sport they belonged to.

The next World Games will be held in July 2005 in Duisburg, Germany. I share the view of the IOF President Sue Harvey, who commented during the World Games that: "If we want to demonstrate our seriousness in applying for inclusion in the Olympic Games, then all nations must give priority to the World Games as their primary goal in 2005."

At the same time, it requires that the IOF – in co-operation with the German Orienteering Federation – organises an event that surpasses everything we have seen so far at our orienteering races.

*The author of this article is the editor of the Swedish orienteering magazine Skogssport.*



# Duisburg to host the 2005 World Games – orienteering events in Bottrop?

BY BARBRO RÖNNBERG



**T**he preparations for the seventh edition of the World Games have already begun.

At the closing ceremony in Akita the Japanese organisers handed over the World Games flag to Ms. Baerbel Zieling, Mayor of the next host city – Duisburg in Germany.

Duisburg is the eleventh largest city in Germany and, according to Ms. Zieling, it has a very positive attitude towards sports. The best example of this was the well organised World Student Games back in 1989.

– Duisburg is now ready to organise another major sports event, the World

Games, she stated.

The Games will be organised in co-operation with the three neighbouring towns Oberhausen, Mülheim on the Ruhr, and Bottrop.

## Number of participants to be increased

For the World Games in 2005, the total number of athletes and officials will be increased to 3,000 in order to allow further development of the programme.

The question of adding new sports or new events in the program will be addressed by the IWGA Executive Committee and the Duisburg organisers.

Although the final decision on the sports is yet to be taken, there is reason to believe that orienteering will be on the programme in Duisburg in four years time.

A delegation from Duisburg visited Akita with the purpose of studying the arrangements and gaining experience for their forthcoming task of preparing and staging the World Games.

One of the delegation members was Mr. Walter Rossnegger, who had the special task of acquainting himself with the orienteering events.

– I am very familiar with orienteering, he says.

– My son is a national elite level orienteer.

The orienteering events are likely to be organised in Walter Rossnegger's home town Bottrop, situated some 25 km north-east of Duisburg.

Hans Breckle, head of the German Orienteering Technical Committee within the Deutscher Turner-Bund DTB, has already declared the Committee's support for orienteering at the World Games.

– We would like to focus our attention on what I am certain we all agree to be of highest importance for the orienteering sport, the World Games, he states.

The dates of the World Games in Duisburg have been set to 14–24 July, 2005.



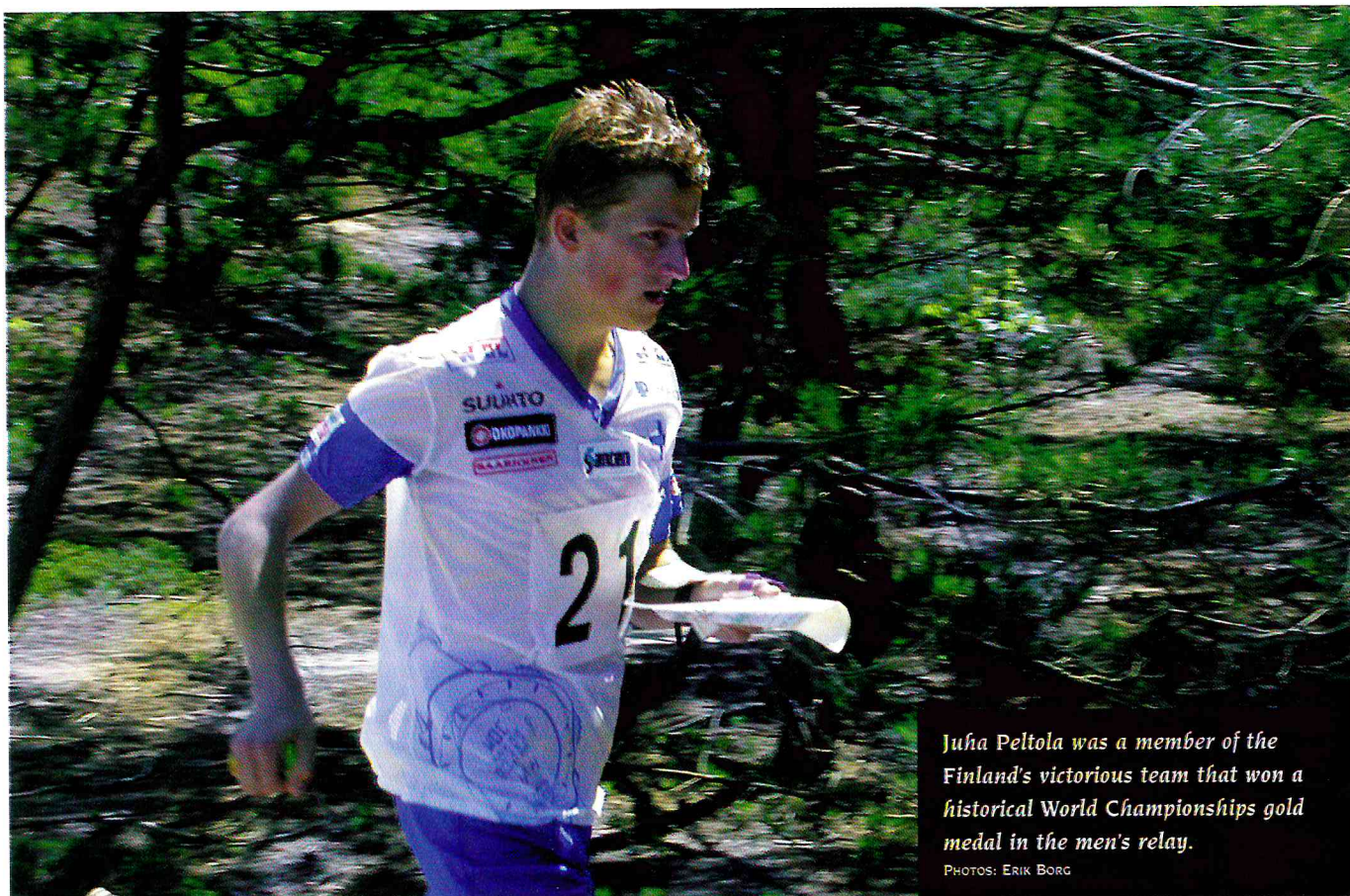


# Simply the best

Acknowledging the significance of orienteering being included in the programme of the 2001 World

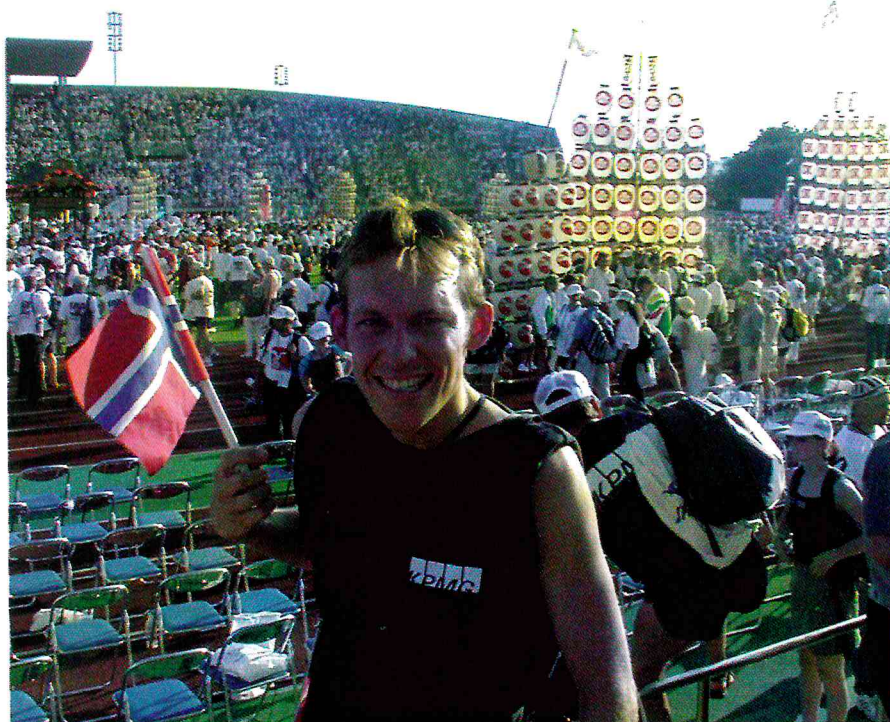
Games, the national orienteering federations had nominated their very best athletes for the events.

World Championships medallists and World Cup winners were to be seen all over the orienteering venue in Akita.



*Juha Peltola was a member of the Finland's victorious team that won a historical World Championships gold medal in the men's relay.*

PHOTOS: ERIK BORG



Tore Sandvik, World Championships short distance silver medallist.



Liisa Anttila...





*Simone Luder (SUI), the newly-crowned World Champion in the classic distance.*



*Multiple World Champion, Hanne Staff (NOR).*



*... Reeta Kolkkala, and...*



*... Johanna Asklöf (FIN) won the women's relay at the 2001 World Championships in Tampere.*



*Jarkko Huovila was one of the members in the victorious Finnish relay team in Tampere.*







Marjo Matikainen-Kallström

- Member of the European Parliament since 1996
- Vice-President of the European Energy Foundation
- Member of the IOC Co-ordination Commission for the XIX Olympic Winter Games in Salt Lake City in 2002
- Vice-President of the Finnish Olympic Committee
- Member of three different committees of the International Ski Federation
- Member of the Board of the Finnish Ski Federation

OLYMPIC WINNER AND WORLD CHAMPION, AND MEMBER OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT  
MARJO MATIKAINEN-KALLSTRÖM BELIEVES THAT:

## Ski orienteering would fit well into the Winter Olympics

BY NINA VANHATALO

I see no reasons, why ski orienteering could not be part of the Winter Olympics, states Marjo Matikainen-Kallström, Member of the European Parliament, and member of the IOC Co-ordination Commission for the XIX Olympic Winter Games in Salt Lake City. Matikainen-Kallström also is a double Winter Olympic Champion herself.

Marjo Matikainen-Kallström's sporting career was primarily in cross-country

skiing, but she has always been very familiar with orienteering, too.

She included orienteering in her summertime training and at one point she was a frequent participant in one of the biggest orienteering events in the world, the Jukola relay in Finland. She hasn't yet tried ski orienteering herself, but she has some friends among the athletes.

– I am familiar with both skiing and orienteering and a sport which com-

bines both of them must be a great sport, states Marjo Matikainen-Kallström.

Still, she also knows that the route to the Olympics is not an easy one. Orienteering will need to do a lot of hard work to be part of the Olympic Summer Games, because there already seem to be too many sports in the programme.

The route to the Olympic Winter Games could be easier and



Matikainen-Kallström finds many reasons why ski orienteering could be included in the programme of the Games.

– First of all, I support all the outdoors sports becoming part of the Olympic Games. Lately, there has mostly been an increase of the sports which take place indoors. Being a former skier I would prefer sports that promote people's exercise outdoors, Matikainen-Kallström says, stressing the health aspect.

Because of her experiences gained through membership of the IOC Co-ordination Commission for the 2002 Olympic Winter Games, Marjo Matikainen-Kallström has come to the conclusion that ski orienteering as a sport could easily be added to the programme of the Games.

– Ski orienteering doesn't require any new buildings or structures. It would

be rather easy to organise a ski orienteering competition. The organisers could use the tracks and the arenas used for cross-country skiing and biathlon for ski orienteering too.

The Ski Orienteering Committee of the International Orienteering Federation (IOF) has already developed ski orienteering into a more arena-like sport. Nowadays many of the events use the existing net of ski tracks.

Marjo Matikainen-Kallström also considers ski-orienteering to be a good asset to the programme of the Olympic Games, as its inclusion would not mean any major increase of the number of participants, which has also been one of the issues in the Winter Olympics.

– Ski orienteering would add some spice to the range of sports and yet it wouldn't amount to any significant load in terms of the numbers of addi-

tional athletes, not for instance as some team sports.

Being involved with both the International and the Finnish Olympic Committees, Marjo Matikainen-Kallström is, however, well aware of the fact that it won't be easy for any new sport to make it onto the programme of the Olympic Games and she emphasises that the only possibility is to first become a demonstration sport.

But who knows, maybe that will happen already in Torino, in 2006...



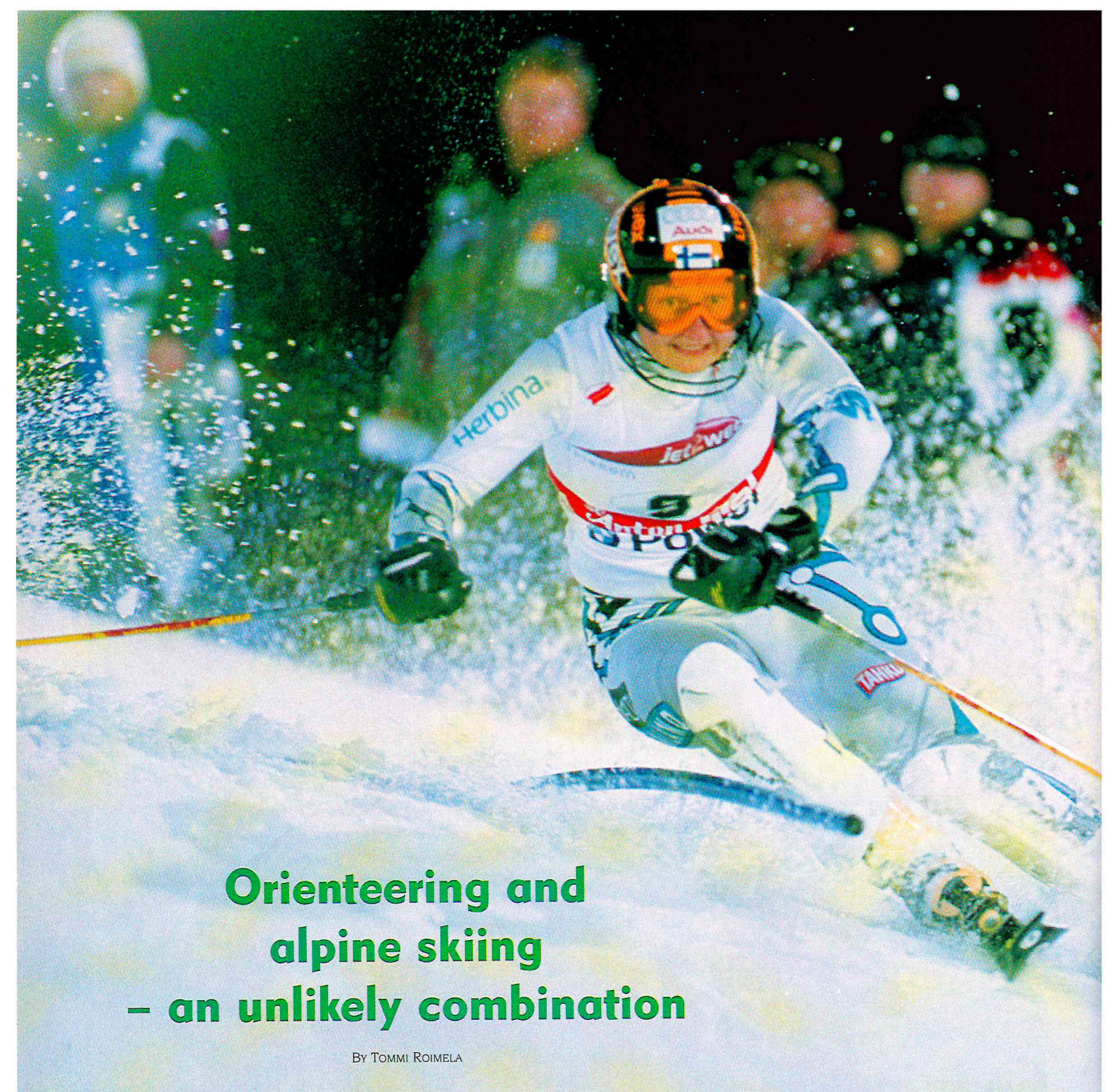
**Marjo Matikainen-Kallström**

**Best cross-country skiing results:**

- Olympic gold and two bronze medals in Calgary 1988
- Bronze medal in the Olympic Games in Sarajevo in 1984
- World Champion and silver medallist in 1987 in Oberstdorf
- Double World Champion, one silver medal and two bronze medals in 1989 in Lahti

PHOTO: PENTTI PEKKALA





## Orienteering and alpine skiing – an unlikely combination

By TOMMI ROIMELA

Orienteering and alpine skiing don't seem to have too much in common. Yet orienteering can be a hobby or even a way of training also for a top alpine skier, as Tanja Poutiainen demonstrates. Tanja is one of the best alpine skiers in Finland and also a keen orienteer. Orienteering competitions have been a regular part of her summer training during the last couple of years.

– Every summer, practically whenever I'm in Rovaniemi (where I come from), I take part in the regular Tuesday

evening events. My elder brothers used to take part in these races and they got me along for the first time about four years ago. Orienteering is just so much fun, says Tanja about her orienteering background.

A year ago she was persuaded to try a "real" orienteering competition. Poutiainen took part in the Mountain Fell Orienteering Race in Saariselkä, in the heart of Lapland. The competition was a great experience for her and it made the young alpine star want to compete again this year too. Her

objective for the o-season was naturally the best known Finnish orienteering event, the Jukola relay where she ran for Ounasvaaran Hiihtoseura and Ranuan Peurat in the Venla women's race.

– That was a fantastic and unforgettable experience which I definitely want to do again, even though I was present only during the women's competition and therefore didn't follow the Jukola race through the night, relates Tanja who ran the second leg for her team.





PHOTO: COURTESY: FINNISH SKI FEDERATION

She missed the Mountain Fell Orienteering this year because of her injured ankle. "That was really unfortunate because last year's race was so much fun", she adds.

### **She's not scared of getting injured**

Orienteering is not only a great summer hobby for her but she also believes the sport actually helps her performances on the slopes.

– Endurance is also required in alpine skiing and therefore I consider orien-

teering to be a proper part of my training. In the summer I always include Tuesday's evening race in my training plan and in the winter I also do quite a lot of cross-country skiing, she reveals.

Poutiainen and orienteering is an interesting combination when one considers her background of leg injuries. She was near ending her career already at a very early stage when she broke her tibia a couple of years ago and was unfortunate enough to repeat the trauma one year later. Injuries have not prevented her from getting in to the woods, though it's clear that orienteering is not the most risk-free sport.

– I'm not afraid of running in the forest. As a matter in fact slightly uneven and soft terrain suits me better as a running surface than asphalt roads or sawdust tracks, comments Tanja.

– Orienteering also strengthens your joints and ligaments since you have to have to take stronger steps when running in the forest, she continues.

### **No rush for success**

As an orienteer she won't perhaps reach the top of the world but as an alpine skier she's already arrived. Only injuries have slowed her progress since

winning the Junior World Championship in 1997. Last winter she posted consistent performances throughout the whole season and finished several World Cup races in the top ten. The very top of the results list is still awaiting her arrival, and she is tipped to take that final step to success soon.

– Of course my goal is to reach the top of the world in alpine skiing. Now is the time to work hard and success will come when I'm ready. I don't consider any single race or event as a goal for the future and therefore the Winter Olympics, for example, is not a special objective for me. One thing I know is that the potential is there to achieve a top performance already this next season, believes Tanja.

Poutiainen has concentrated seriously on alpine skiing for several years. She went to high school in Gällivaara in Sweden because there it was easier for her to combine training with her school work. Currently she's studying at the University of Lapland in Rovaniemi.

– I'm majoring in Economics. I haven't gained too many credits yet because right now I'm concentrating fully on skiing, concludes Tanja Poutiainen.



Top alpine skier Tanja Poutiainen considers orienteering to be a proper part of her training.

PHOTO: JUKKA JUVANKOSKI



# Olympic Speed Skating Champion

## – a PR figure for orienteering

BY PER NYLANDER

**H**e began to compete in speed skating at the age of twelve. That same spring he was tempted into joining in the orienteering activities organised by IFK Eskilstuna, and he was immediately successful at both sports.

If he had not been so unlucky as to catch glandular fever which ruined the 1975 orienteering season for him, the double Olympic champion and World Champion speed skater Tomas Gustafson might have chosen to concentrate on orienteering instead of the sport that took him to the top of the podium at the Olympic Games in Calgary 1988.

Two years before, Tomas Gustafson had finished 6th in his class H13–14 at the Swedish O-ringen five-day event in Dalarna.

– I did very well in speed skating in the wintertime and even though orienteering is an exciting and enjoyable sport with continual challenges, it was the successes of the wintertime that meant that I chose speed skating as my main sport, states Thomas.

### Still loves orienteering

When we ask Tomas Gustafson, now 41 years-old, what his views are of orienteering's position in the world of sport, it is clear that he still loves the sport even if he has not had time over the last few years to compete as often as he would like.

– Orienteering is a great big adventure – a real challenge. It is one of the most physically demanding of sports, and then in addition you have the actual orienteering element which demands quick decision-making under pressure.

– This requires both physical and mental abilities combined with advanced technical skills, comments Tomas who really misses competing in the sport.

– From the social perspective too orienteering provides experiences that other sports cannot offer to the same extent.

– Youngsters, elite runners and older competitors of both sexes compete at the same venue. The club's new recruits can catch a glimpse of the club, district or even international stars both in the forest, in the changing area and at the finish area. They might even have the opportunity to talk to them and get to know them.

– After moving to Örebro in 1993 I haven't been able to orienteer as often as before. I had hoped to go to Mårsta for the Swedish O-ringen but didn't have enough time after all. Maybe it will be different when we have completed our move to Uppsala and William gets older, says Tomas as he is right in the middle of moving when Orienteering World calls him.

His primary school teacher in Vilsta had laid the foundation for his interest in the woods and fields even before a speed skating club leader first took him on the first hunt for the red and white controls.

– She took us out into the forest during school lessons and we also had the woods as our playground outside school too, relates Tomas who also enjoyed orienteering on permanent courses together with his friends.

– I remember that there was a control that everyone had great difficulty in finding. But my friend and I didn't want to give up and we searched for several hours before we managed to find it, recalls the Olympic champion, with a smile.

With regard to orienteering's future place in the wonderful world of sport he hopes that it will live on in the form it has today even if he realises that this

will be hard in an era when the comfort level and "laziness" of the general public is increasing at the same time as fitness levels are falling.

Even though he understands why park orienteering has been developed and is pleased with the success achieved by the Park World Tour, both in respect to media coverage and the spread of orienteering around the world, he himself prefers to run "proper" orienteering courses in the forest. He admits though that it was a personal boost for him, and many other orienteers too, when short distance orienteering was introduced.

### Orienteering provide many benefits

When asked if other sports could benefit from including orienteering in their training programme, he states that all endurance sports can of course use orienteering as an alternative form of training.

– Regardless of your sport you will always benefit from a good basic fitness and the ability to take swift and correct decisions. And orienteering definitely provides good training in making decisions, states Tomas who also adds a comment on the benefit of orienteering as a form of exercise.

– You take part at your own speed and you are encouraged towards the overall objective, reaching the finish, by achieving sub-objectives, i.e. finding each control, says Tomas, who now earns his living as a lecturer and motivator for companies and organisations.

He has the opportunity to use orienteering exercises as a pedagogical tool in his job.

– Among other things to demonstrate that one has to have access to the same language and knowledge in order to communicate well with each other,



states Thomas who recalls one exercise particularly well.

It was a co-operation exercise where the task of the group was to agree on its route between the controls before starting out. The route choice could not then be changed without the agreement of the whole group. A problematic situation occurred immediately they went out of the door of the conference centre and some of the group wanted to climb up a vertical cliff on top of which the control was located, instead of taking a long route of almost two kilometres along safe tracks. And there was a lot of discussion before agreement was reached.

– The observer in the group had a lot of material for the subsequent discussion, notes Tomas who also has a clear memory of what orienteering can mean for the development of both people and society from a “missionary trip” to China.

– I was there with Jörgen Mårtensson and Gävert Wååg to teach orienteering at universities and colleges, and we were going around as a group when one of the participants suddenly asked: Can you do this by yourself?

– I then realised the scope of what orienteering can mean for cultures where the individual has to give way to the interests of the group.

### Important to stress the orienteering aspect

With regard to orienteering's Olympic plans, he believes that we must show the actual orienteering aspect so that people can understand it.

– As long as you have to be an orienteer in order to be able to understand what is happening on the large screen in the finish area, orienteering will not be interesting from the IOC's perspective. Some people believe that it is just another form of running, explains Tomas, who himself is a member of the IOC Athletes Commission.

Running is of course already included in the Olympic programme – in many different sports disciplines. And more

disciplines within the same main sports branch is not something the IOC is aiming at in today's climate in which efforts are being made to prevent the Games growing even more.

A few years ago Tomas tried park orienteering in Laxå when two different scales were used, 1:5 000 and 1:1 000. A concept that stimulated the idea to combine classic orienteering and park orienteering.

– One possible way to clearly demonstrate the orienteering aspect to the general public at an Olympic Games and still retain the original tough, adventurous characteristic of the course could be to construct stands for about 30 000 spectators around a defined area in which the runners have to change to a different map scale and tackle a “park race” element in the middle of the race, suggests Tomas,

who is one of the two vice-chairmen of the Swedish Olympic Committee.

Otherwise the advice he has to give in respect to the future of orienteering is to retain small local events which are easy to organise, i.e. the events that create a broad base for the sport.

– In Eskilstuna, for example, a local “5-day” event was organised on weekday evenings at the beginning of August. This was an event with starts between 17.30 and 18.00, and proved to be very popular attracting 200–300 runners every evening. We need more of these types of event, entreats Tomas Gustafson.

– The competitive element is important. That's what provides the “spice” for our sport. At least for me, concludes the Olympic champion.

### Facts:

**Name:** Sven Tomas Gustafson

**DOB:** 28 December 1959

**Family:** Wife Elisabeth (Curling World Champion) and son William

**Occupation:** Motivator, lecturer.

**Hobby:** Photography

**Best speed skating results:** Triple Olympic Speed Skating Champion - 1984 in Sarajevo (5000 m) and 1988 in Calgary (5000 m and 10 000 metres).

**Best orienteering result:** 6th in H13-14A at the Swedish O-ringen in Dalarna in 1973.

**Orienteering clubs:** IFK Eskilstuna, Tunafor SK and Eskilstunafor SK.



The double Olympic speed skating champion Tomas Gustafson (third from the right) has many good memories from his “orienteering missionary trip” to China. He was joined by another Olympic gold medallist, Anders Gärderud (second from the right), and by top elite orienteers. Here the lecturers pictured together with a group of university students.

PHOTO: ERIK BORG



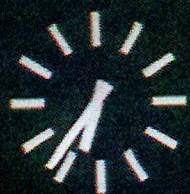
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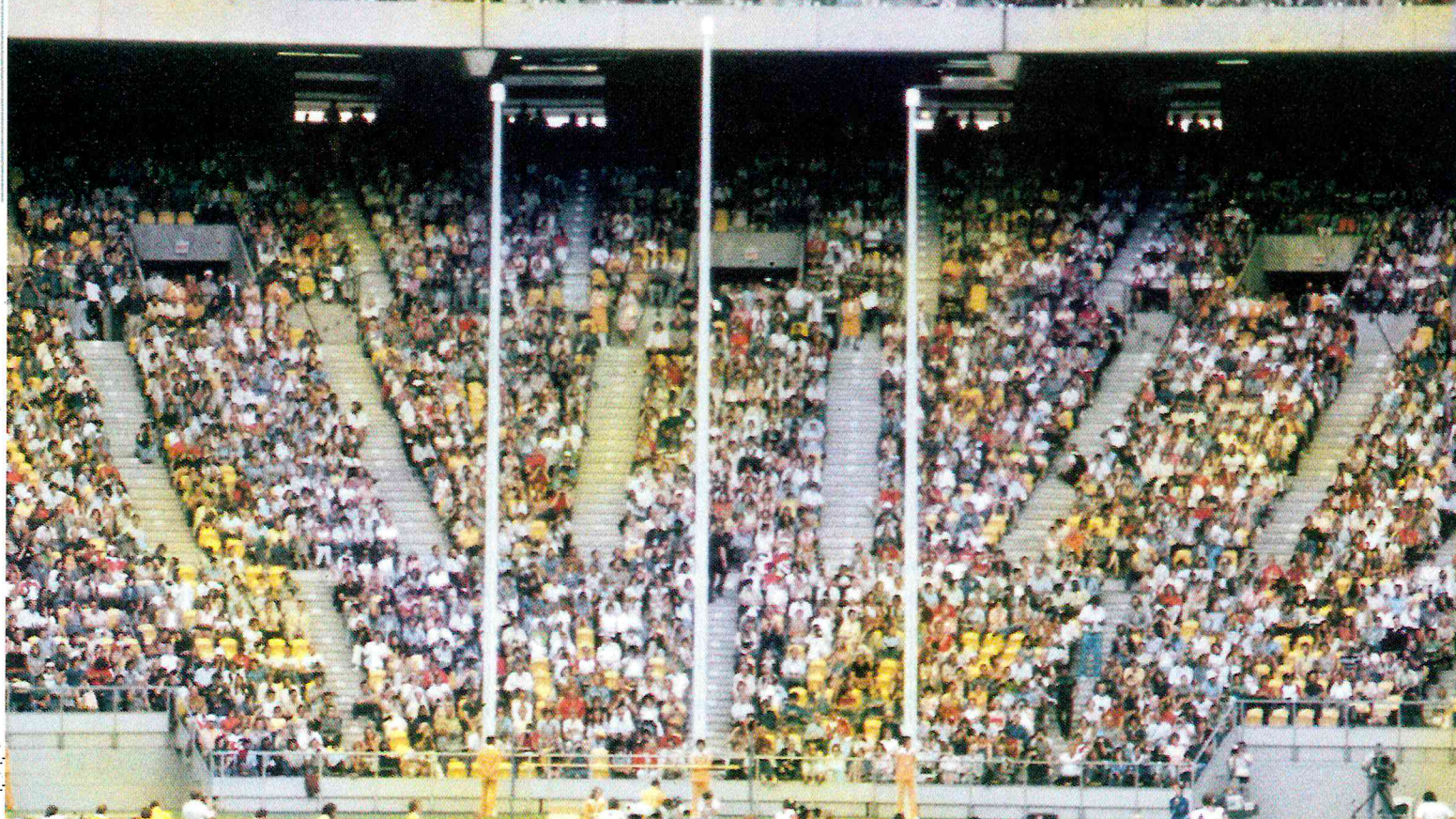
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# "Retain the essence of orienteering"

BY PER NYLANDER

**O**n 26 July 1976, 25 years ago, Anders Gärderud won the 3000 metre Olympic gold medal. He won in a new world record time of 8.09 which is still the Swedish record. The organisers of this year's Swedish O-ringen in Märsta celebrated the event by having a water jump on the run-in for the elite competitors at the fourth stage which took place on the anniversary date.

Like Olympic speed skating champion Tomas Gustafson, Anders was a keen and talented orienteer as a youngster.

– You could say that I was born with orienteering in my blood. My father orienteered and I acquired a taste for orienteering at an early age. There were also many good orienteers in IFK Lidingö at that time and Marthe Andersson was the big star, relates Anders.

Like many other youngsters in the 1950s and 1960s he had the time and opportunity to take part in sport in a completely different way than today's youngsters.

## **The demands were less in earlier times**

– The tempo of everyday life was slower then, and within the sport's world too so we had the opportunity to try more things, and the demands on us were also less than they are today, comments Anders who continued to run orienteering races even after he decided at the age of 16 to concentrate on athletics.

*A golden moment for Anders Gärderud: Olympic gold at the 3000 metre steeplechase competition in a new world record time. (Left)*

PHOTO: KEITH SAMUELSON

*Anders Gärderud is an adviser to Fredrik Löwegren, who finished fifth in the classic distance at the 2001 World Orienteering Championships. (Right)*

PHOTO: PER NYLANDER

There were two main reasons why Anders chose pure running.

– Partly because of the status of the different sports. There is a certain internal ranking among the various sports, a ranking where athletics was and remains above orienteering. And also partly because I felt that track running was more fair.

– In orienteering I could run very well and then lose time because the map wasn't right or a control was not in the right place, Anders recalls.

However he has never lost touch with orienteering. He often ran in orienteering races up until the older junior classes and he achieved good results at senior level on several occasions.

Running for Sweden in the Nordic Orienteering Championships in Denmark in 1975 and winning the Swedish Relay Championships are indications that Swedish orienteering missed out on a top international orienteering talent when Anders chose a

different sporting path at the beginning of the 1960s.

## **Comradeship and adventure were the attractions**

– It was and is the attitude of orienteers to their sport and comradeship in combination with the adventure and toughness aspects, and above all in relays, that attracted me the most, comments Anders who for a number of years has assisted and advised Fredrik Löwegren, IFK Lidingö's and Swedish orienteering's only full-time professional orienteer who was 5th in the classic distance at this year's World Championships in Tampere, Finland in the summer.

Anders Gärderud is concerned about orienteering's chances of surviving as a sport with its own unique image and special characteristics.

He believes that the IOF is forgetting the uniqueness of orienteering. In the hunt to capture the interest of the media and a place in the Olympic programme the toughness of our forest





sport is being abandoned and the demands on the competitor in terms of technical ability and quality are being lowered.

– The new sprint distance for example. Allowing competitors to reconnoitre the race terrain for three hours the day before the race for then to be able to run in familiar terrain is as close to normal cross-country running that you can get.

– Football also has its publicity forms such as 5-a-side beach football and other similar matches and tournaments because they are fun.

– But football does not try to create new official forms of competition that transgress the “proper” game of football with eleven players on a full-size pitch.

– It is the same with orienteering, believes Anders.

– Of course the Park World Tour, like other park and street orienteering, is a good PR vehicle and has become an accepted feature of orienteering. But it is just good publicity, nothing more.

He believes that in many parts of the world park orienteering provides the only chance to actually orienteer and that it can also be a good way of attracting new people to the sport.

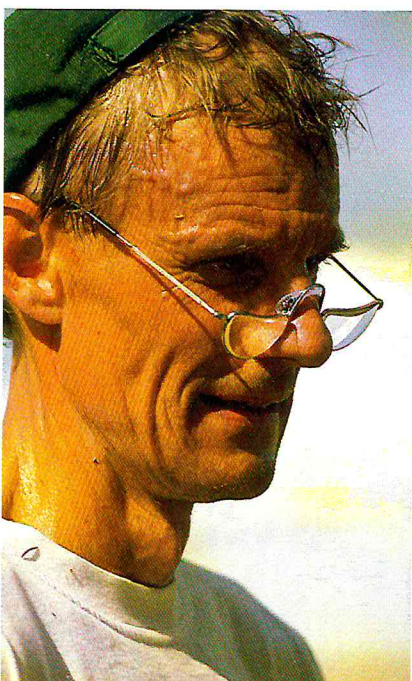


PHOTO: PER NYLANDER



PHOTO: PER NYLANDER

### Personal details:

**Name:** Anders Gärderud

**DOB:** 28 August 1946

**Family:** Wife Annika

**Occupation:** Expert commentator, lecturer.

**Best athletics results:** Olympic 3000 metre Steeplechase Champion in Montreal in 1976 in a world record time. Sixteen Swedish Championships in athletics.

**Best orienteering results:** Ran the last leg for Mälarhöjdens IF when the club won the Swedish Relay Championships in 1977. Member of the Swedish team to the Nordic Championships in 1975.

**Orienteering clubs:** IFK Lidingö, Enebybergs IF, Soltorps IF, Mälarhöjdens IF.

– But I think it's wrong to give championship status to this type of orienteering, states Anders who is absolutely convinced that the sport of orienteering will be able to attract new people just with its original concept.

– There will always be people who like a tough battle and who will not be afraid of the physical challenge of classic orienteering.

### Preserve the spirit of orienteering

He finds it difficult to combine the original idea of the sport with a place in the Olympic Games programme.

– It is a fundamental Olympic concept that the same opportunities shall exist to practice an Olympic discipline all over the world.

– In order for this requirement to be met, orienteering must take place in parks or maybe even in urban environments, reasons the Olympic steeplechase champion.

– And if this path is chosen, it could ruin our wonderful sport for good without actually being certain of achieving Olympic status.

He hopes that the IOF are not prepared to sacrifice the spirit of our sport on the altar of populism and media interest.

– If we continue on that road, there is the risk that orienteering will soon not exist as a sports discipline – other than as a subsection of athletics with just as little status and prestige as cross-country running.