

Helsinki, 15th March 2011

To the Member Federations of the IOF

WOC in the future – proposal from the IOF project group

1. Background

Following decisions at the 2010 IOF General Assembly in Trondheim Norway, the IOF Council appointed a project group to deal with the matter of the future World Orienteering Championships program. The composition of the project group is found in Appendix 1.

The remit given to the project was to develop a program on the basis of

- a) The decision at the 2010 General Assembly to include a mass start in WOC
- b) The Council's report stating that the future WOC should diversify and include a mixed gender relay while still being held within 8 competition days

2. Principles for a new WOC program

The project group has concluded on a few principles to guide the forming of a new program.

Qualification events should be removed from WOC with the exception of sprint

The demand to create a more diverse program, having a mix of team events, individual events and first-to-finish events, while still meeting the demand of staging WOC within an 8-day period, calls for a need to create more room for finals than in the current program. For this reason, it is proposed that the current qualification events for both Long and Middle are removed. Qualification for Sprint is proposed to stay in the program.

Every event day should be a medal day

To further raise the attraction of WOC to media and spectators, it is proposed that every competition day should end with World Champion titles being awarded.

The number of medals to be awarded should be extended to six

It is found important to develop WOC in keeping with tradition. For this reason, none of the existing competition formats is proposed to be removed. Development is accommodated by adding two new events to the program.

Support the attendance of new and developing orienteering nations

The revised IOF membership model opens up the possibility for many new orienteering nations to attend WOC. This needs to be reflected in the program model. It should be possible to attend only part of WOC (e.g. first part), and events needs to be grouped to accommodate this. In addition, all runners who complete a course should have a place in the result list of a final.

3. Program

WOC should be divided into three blocks, "Sprint", "Middle" and "Traditional". The order of the blocks should be fixed, with the Sprint block first. The order of events within the Sprint- and

Traditional blocks is free to be decided by each organisers, whereas the order of events in the Middle block should be fixed. Between each block is a rest-day where the organisers, TV, etc. are given enough space to re-group equipment and set-up in a new arena.

Day	Block	Event	Alternative
1	SPRINT	Sprint individual (qualification+final)	Sprint relay
2	SPRINT	Sprint relay (mixed teams)	Sprint individual
3	Rest day		
4	MIDDLE	Middle individual	
5	MIDDLE	Prologue + Chasing start	
6	Rest day		
7	TRADITIONAL	Long individual	Relay
8	TRADITIONAL	Relay	Long individual

The Sprint block

The Sprint block includes Sprint in its current format and a Sprint relay with mixed teams (2 women + 2 men). The environment for Sprint relay should be urban- or park-style, not forest. The WOC Opening Ceremony should take place before the first final.

The Middle block

The Middle block starts with an individual interval start event in the format for Middle as is known today. The second day has a prologue in the morning in the form of an individual time trial, followed by a chasing start in the late afternoon or evening. The technical details of the Prologue and Chasing start, such as the length of the respective competition, the starting models etc. is subject to further development and has not been finalised at this stage.

Notably, the proposal means introducing a chasing start rather than a mass start, which was part of the project remit. The reason for this is that in consultations with TV and other media it has been concluded that a chasing start has considerable advantage over a mass start concerning production economy and the possibility for spectators and commentators to understand the development of the race, while still offering the element of “first-to-finish”. (A mass-start is foreseen to need complicated forking models to make it fair.)

The Traditional block

The Traditional block includes Long with individual interval start and Relay with three legs and separate men’s and women’s classes as we know them today.

4. Participation and Qualification

In addition to forming a proposal for a new program model, the project group has also discussed the matter of who can run in WOC and how to qualify. The general idea is to provide more opportunities than in the past for nations to be represented in WOC finals.

In the discussions, it has been concluded that starting-slots should be awarded to nations, and that nations themselves should select the athlete(s) to enter.

Participation

It is proposed to maintain the rule that maximum three (3) athletes per nation can participate in a final, likewise today. On top of that is proposed that the reigning World Champion is given a personal free place, meaning that in some cases in fact four runners from one nation could participate.

The below table summarises the proposal.

Format	Participation	Qualification based on
Sprint	Qualification: 3 per nation + reigning Champion Final: According to results of qualification	- Qualification at current WOC
Sprint- relay	1 team of 2 women+2 men per nation	-
Middle**	1 per nation Additional based on nation's strength + reigning Champion	- WRL or WOC*
Chasing start	Prologue: 3 athletes per nation + reigning Champion Final: All athletes completing the Prologue	-
Long***	Based on nation's strength + reigning Champion	WRL or WOC*
Relay	1 team per nation (men + women)	-

***) WRL or WOC?**

The project group has found two main alternatives for comparing federations' strength in order to award starting slots. The first alternative is the World Ranking system. This model reflects the overall activity and strength of a nation over an entire season, and is therefore seen as a realistic measure. The second alternative is to use the nation's performance at WOC (the last WOC or latest WOC's) which compares a nation's ability to perform at WOC specifically. It has not been possible to conclude on a united view within the project group in this matter, though there seems to be a stronger support for using the World Ranking system.

*****) Middle individual final**

It is proposed that each federation can enter 1 man and 1 woman to the final. Additional starting slots are based on the nation's strength (see above). The number of nations receiving additional slots needs to be balanced by the size of the start field which should not exceed 75 starters.

******) Long individual final**

In the Long final, it will not be possible to award one starting slot to each nation. It is proposed that a nation needs to have at least one athlete meeting a quality demand (defined by World Ranking points) to earn a start place for the nation. Additional starting slots are based on the nation's strength (see above). The number of nations receiving additional slots needs to be balanced by the size of the start field which should not grow significantly larger than in the current model.

5. Conclusion and request for feed-back

This report has been made to inform about the work of the project group "WOC in the Future", and to give the IOF member federations an opportunity to give feed-back, positive as well as negative. We request that such feed-back is given as much as possible in the form of the Federation's view, not the view or preferences of individuals.

Address and latest date

Please send feed-back by email to IOF Sports Director Björn Persson, bjorn.persson.iof@orienteering.org no later than **10th April 2011**.

On behalf of the project group,

Leho Haldna, IOF Vice President, project chairman
Björn Persson, IOF Sports Director, project coordinator

Appendix 1

Composition of the "WOC in the Future" project group

Chairman: **Leho Haldna** EST, IOF Vice President

Coordinator: **Björn Persson**, IOF Sports Director

Members:

- **Vincent Frey** FRA, IOF Council member
- **Mike Dowling** AUS, IOF Council member
- **Konrad Becker** SUI, chairman of the IOF FootO Commission
- **Emil Wingstedt** SWE, chairman of the IOF FootO Athletes' Commission
- **Sarah Rollins** GBR, international athlete
- **Thomas Bühler** SUI, former national team coach and international athlete
- **Jörn Sundby** NOR, media- and event adviser
- **Karel Jonak** CZE, TV-director
- **Shin Murakoshi** JPN, former IOF Council member and international athlete
- **Edmond Szechenyi** FRA, former IOF Vice President and member of EEP and EEE projects
- **Sören Jonsson** SWE, five times IOF Senior Event Adviser for WOC and World Cup