A Word from the President

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

Significantly increased visibility

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

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

Partnership and international recognition

The IOF is not alone in the international world of sports. We have signed Partnership Agreements or Memorandums of Understanding with several different organisations, including the International University Sports Federation (FISU), the International Military Sports Council (CISM) and the International School Sport Federation (ISF). For the IOF, looking to be included into Olympic Games, our partners’ events and multi-sport games are extremely important. It’s a perfect place to showcase our sport and we are delighted that one of our major partners, FISU, recognised our long-time good cooperation by awarding the IOF the FISU award for “Best International Sports Federation”. Our partner in military sports, CISM, organised the World Military Winter Games in Sochi, Russia, hosting competitions in seven winter sports including Ski Orienteering. The ISF Orienteering Championships in Italy were a great success, with over 600 youngsters taking part.

Strengthening the IOF organisation

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

Looking into 2018 and beyond

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

The World Orienteering Championships at the beginning of August in Latvia will be the very last WOC organised under the current challenging programme. Starting from 2019, we will use the split WOC model decided upon at the Extraordinary General Assembly in 2015. The new model will start with WOC 2019 in Norway, followed by the first Sprint WOC in Denmark in 2020. The IOF also decided in 2015 to introduce a completely new sprint format, which should be attractive for participants and organisers on all levels - international, national and local. One of the challenges we are now facing is to define a new format and test it and for it to be successful at the Sprint WOC.

In October 2018, the IOF General Assembly will take place in Prague. From 2018 onwards, our Congress is disconnected from WOC and I hope to see our Member Federations’ presidents attending our most important event. Preparing for GA2018 is the IOF Council’s main task for the year, and on top of traditional agenda items, the IOF General Assembly will decide on the IOF Strategic Directions for 2018-2024. The preparation process of the IOF Strategic Directions, including our Vision, Mission, Values, Working Methods, Main Goals and Activity Plan, is making good progress and includes wider than ever consultation round with members and other stakeholders. Hopefully, the final result of our common work will be successful, and the IOF Strategic Directions for 2018-2024 will receive wide political support from the General Assembly.
On Wednesday May 24th 2017 the second World Orienteering Day took place all over the world.

Be part of something bigger – Colour the World

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

The goals of World Orienteering Day are:
• Increasing the visibility and accessibility of orienteering to young people
• Increasing the number of participants in school and club activities in all National Federations, and getting new countries to take part in orienteering
• Helping teachers to implement orienteering in a fun and educational way

worldorienteeringday.com

#worldorienteeringday
So far, over 1800 posts have been shared under the hashtag #worldorienteeringday on Instagram.
Use the Evacuation Plan for Orienteering!

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

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

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

World Orienteering Day – A record breaking event

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

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

– Trying to repeat and surpass a successful first event is always daunting, as was the prospect of World Orienteering Day 2017. A lot of hard work has gone into building on last year’s achievement, and I am very happy to see that it has paid off. World Orienteering Day would not be possible without the initiative and dedication that can be found in the orienteering community, so I want to say a great thank you to everyone who organised a WOD event, as well as to our generous sponsors who helped make the event possible for many of us. I hope you all had a great day of celebration of our sport and congratulations on beating the World Record together! says Leho Haldin, President of the International Orienteering Federation.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Our goal for 2018

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

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

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

Register your event

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

Göran Andersson, Project Coordinator, WOD

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Natalia Gemperle and Helena Bergman embrace after their race at the World Games in Poland. Photo: Malin Fuhr
**Seven top-three runs for Natalia Gepermee**

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

**Team World Cup dominated by Sweden**

The Team World Cup this year was an overwhelming success for Sweden. Five wins in seven races, plus a second and a third place, tell their own story. Switzerland finished second overall and Norway third. The two WOC Relays were both exciting affairs. The Sprint Relay in Viljandi went to Sweden, with Denmark and Switzerland taking the other medal places. Sweden (Emma Johansson, Helena Bergman and Tove Alexanderson) also took the women’s Relay by a big margin over Russia and Finland, but Norway was the minor Relay, their team of Eski Kinneberg, Olav Lundanes and Magne Dæhli getting home by more than a minute ahead of France, with Switzerland third.

**Eighth Middle Distance gold for Gueorgiou**

The highlight of the season for this winter was the season’s first World Cup race, where Yannich Michiels from Belgium took the first Middle Distance title from 2016, which he also won in 2010 and 2012. – I am really happy I managed to win two years in a row, and also get my fourth Long Distance gold, he said. – They are all completely different and I am proud to have been able to win in such different terrains.

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

**Big comeback for Marianne Andersen**

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

**Great World Championships in Estonia**

Estonia put on a great WOC in early July, with 50 IOF member nations represented. The Sprint Final arena was at the centralised 500 IOF member Nations cross-country course set on an area of tricky vegetation and contour detail with many depressions and ridges, given special praise; they utilised a very good map that was used also for the Relay. The forest terrain in general was quite slow and often diffuse, creating its own technical challenges. Keeping focus and determination in often difficult conditions was necessary for success in the Long Distance – combined with high technical skills, as Canadian Emily Kemp said:

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

**Big TV coverage for The World Games**

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

**Top row:** Oli Ognahra and Simona Astersdolfi were king and queen of MOC, Lina Strand, Jerker Lysell, Jonas Leanderson and Helena Bergman: Sprint Relay World Champions, photo: Mattias Salomon. Bottom row: Matthias Kyburz on home ground, Maja Alm claimed the World Games Sprint Gold. Photo: Malin Fuhr

**Thierry Gueorgiu’s Final Triumph**

Thierry Gueorgiu, France, in the Middle Distance in Viljandi, Estonia – his final individual race at WOC before retiring. Photo: Donatas Lazauskas
366 athletes representing 50 Member Federations took part. 500 volunteers from 20 different countries made it happen. The newly formed IOF Digital Team worked hard on social media, posting to Facebook a total of 162 times and Twitter 210 times.

During the week, the IOF Facebook page reached a total of 2,374,831 impressions.

Orienteering giant Thierry Gueorgiou took his 14th and final WOC gold medal. The Long Distance was the most popular broadcast on LIVE Orienteering, attracting 4931 viewers.

WOC was available to television viewers in 145 countries, reaching over 200 million households.

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

Medals

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Orienteering Athlete of the Year:

Tove Alexandersson

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

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

— My WOC results in the last two years have been amazing, she says.
Three World Championship golds – despite difficult start

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

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

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

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

– The terrain in Estonia suited me really well. I found the flow in my orienteering. I made hardly any mistakes at all, and that pays off extra in this type of terrain. That was one of the reasons for the quite big victory margin, says Tove humbly.

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

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

**First WOC as a junior**

Tove Alexandersson made her debut in WOC as a junior. She was running in the Swedish relay team when they took bronze in France in 2011. The year after, in her last season as a junior, she won silver in both Relay and Middle Distance. In the two following years she took four silver and two bronze medals. In 2015 Alexandersson had problems with a foot injury during the WOC. She had to leave Scotland without a medal; she was fourth in the Long Distance. That meant that Alexandersson after her five first WOCs had six silvers and three bronze medals. But in the last two years her already big prize collection has increased a lot. The two golds in Sweden in 2016 were followed by three golds in Estonia.

**Keys to success: physical ability and meticulous preparation**

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

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

**Preparing for Switzerland, then Latvia**

25-year-old Tove enjoys both Orienteering and Ski Orienteering. That means that she is competing in three international championships every year. In 2018 it’s “only” the European Ski Orienteering Championships (ESOC), but both EOC and WOC in Orienteering. The European Championships in Orienteering will be in very steep terrain near Ticino, Switzerland.

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

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

– I want to improve all the time, see how good I can be. And the sports I participate in always bring something new. New terrain. New technical challenges. That means that you can always improve. And finally, I think it’s so much fun, says Tove Alexandersson.
First came the European Championships (ESOC), held in Imatra, eastern Finland in mid-February. In the Sprint races, won by Alexandersson and Lamov, a number of well-known names including Erik Rost came adrift on the technical sections of the course in forest where visibility in places was quite low, and ended well down the results lists. After a lot of earlier concern about lack of snow, conditions were ideal: the sun shone from a cloudless sky on to a very well situated biathlon stadium that provided excellent facilities for athletes and spectators alike.

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Five out of nine golds for Sweden**
Sweden took five of the nine gold medals on offer this week, said Erik Rost after winning the Long Distance. In the men’s race there was a clear win for Lars Hol Moholdt, Norway, the first Norwegian medal of the Championships. Swedish athletes took silver and bronze in both Sprint and Middle Distance. She enjoyed an almost error-free race over Middle Distance on a technically and physically challenging course in good skiing conditions. A little overnight snow had improved the state of the tracks in a race with a flattish first half, on the terrain used for the Sprints, and a hillier second half including one steep and
**Gold Medal Shower for Tove Alexandersson**

Text: Mårten Lång, Editor Skogs-sport – official magazine of the Swedish Orienteering Federation

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

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

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

**Pole problems in Finland**

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

– I had to take a tight grip on the pole during the whole race, so as not to lose it. It was an extra thing to have to concentrate on, and I’m really satisfied that I was so stable in my orienteering in spite of that problem. But when I had passed the last control I dropped the thoughts about the pole, and that meant that I lost the pole just before the finish line, says Tove Alexandersson with a laugh.

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

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

**World Championships: big expectations, perfect races**

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

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

She has won the Relay for several years, even before 2017. But of course it is sometimes tough to combine running and roller skiing, I can train harder without struggling so hard. In fact I think that I’m pretty good at feeling my body and changing from running to roller skiing if I’m sore in the body after running. But of course it is sometimes tough to compete in two sports, but that’s something that really suits me, says Tove Alexandersson.

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

The new season: “Time for decent training sessions”

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

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

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

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

And with her results from 2017 in mind, there is no reason to doubt that.
New Mass Start Format Introduced to World Championships

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

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

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

Strong first round for Czech Republic

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

In the Sprint the women’s 1-2 was the reverse of the previous day, with Emily Benham in front of Tichovska by 19 seconds. The men’s race featured a convincing victory for Krystof Bogar. On a hilly course with a mix of terrain, Benham didn’t have it all her own way, and had to work very hard for her win after a poor second leg on which she was 39th fastest. Benham took her second win of the round in the Long Distance, finishing the fastest by almost 4 minutes. The Czech Republic team achieved a victory in each of the three races, this time through Vojtech Ludvik.

Olga Shipilova Vinogradova, Russia, on the last leg of the Relay at the World Mountain Bike Orienteering Championships in Vilnius, Lithuania. Having started fifth on the last leg, Shipilova Vinogradova managed to fight back and win the bronze medal for the Russian team. Photo: Donatas Lazauskas
ORIENTEERING WORLD • 2017

Emily Benham Kvåle:
A Very Special Year

Text: Erik Borg

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

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

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

– About seven months later I went to Norw

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

Hard-fought World Championships

The Waaler family from Norway is no stranger to success in TrailO, Lars Jacob winning the TempO at last year’s World Championships and being well-known as one of the fastest decision-makers on the circuit. He is also very consistent with an excellent technique.

In the World TrailO Championships based in Birstonas, Lithuania he finished the two days of PreO with the same points score as his son, both equalled by Finns Pirja Mäkinen and Jari Järvi, 3.5 seconds quicker at the timed controls. Bronze medalist was the Norwegian Geir Myhr Øien with one point fewer. Martin Aarholt Waaler was second in the TempO competition to another young Norwegian, 27-year-old Vetle Tuft Bråten, by the very narrow margin of 4 seconds. Here it was Ján Furucz of Slovakia who took bronze; he is the course planner for the European TrailO Championships next May.

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

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

Well-attended European Cup

Five events were used for this year’s European Cup in TrailO (ECTO) with 299 competitors taking part in one or more of the ten competitions. The overall winner was 20-year-old Martin Wikseller, Sweden who won three of the four TempO competitions, an unusually fine record. Geir Myhr Øien won the second PreO competition in Sweden, but in the overall standings he was beaten into third place by the Finn Antti Rusanen. Wikseller finished with an 11-point margin over Rusanen, who had 32 points more than Øien. The Italian Remo Madella and the Swedes Erik Stålnacke and Martin Fredholm took the next three places in the final standings.

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

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

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

Difficult conditions in Slovakia

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

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

We have to thank competitors for helping us secure one large tent at the start. Later, we had trouble with an electricity blackout in the village, and internet connectivity was not accessible due to the connection failure of both major mobile operators. My brother had to go to the neighboring village to load and calculate the results.

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

Trail orienteers are a hardy bunch, TrailO doesn’t require strength – unless you are a wheelchair pusher on a steep or muddy path. Nor does it require speed through the terrain, the mental challenge being far greater than the physical, so as a competitor one tends to be quite aware of the weather conditions. And in international events this year, competitors have encountered almost every type of weather. Not many calm and bright days but with no sun, the best conditions one can hope for.

Mixed weather in Lithuania

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

The first PreO day was characterised by heavy rain throughout, and it reached cloud-burst proportions on several occasions; the second day brought good sunshine and light winds throughout the day.

Numbers taking part in international TrailO are increasing steadily, and from several countries a healthy stream of young orienteers are coming forward, especially enthused by the speed challenge of TempO. World Rankings in TrailO are being introduced next year, when numbers taking part in international TrailO events are being well-known as one of the fastest decision-makers on the circuit. He is also very consistent with an excellent technique.

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Pinja Mäkinen, Finland:

Mother of Three and World Championships Medallist

Text: Erik Borg

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

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

– I started in my club Koovee when I was three years old, she tells. As a teenager she won three medals in Junior World Championships.

– I was a bit introvert, and a smart girl; I had one thing I could do very well and which I really enjoyed: orienteering. So I used my free time mostly for training, and I had good conditions to do it. I achieved quite a good level in orienteering skills. But after all that, I found in the senior class I was not fast enough to reach the top level.

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

Changed to a new sport

In 2013, her oldest girl Venla was born. Mother Pinja felt she could not reach any higher level in FootO with a family, so she stopped her career as a FootO athlete.

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

Pregnant medal winner

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

– I also train PreO without flags, but for PreO training it is very important to study old competition and solution maps on the internet. Maybe the best PreO training is to be a course planner. Then you best understand how difficult it is to set a flag that is in every course planner. Then you best understand how difficult it is to set a flag that is in every control circle each in that area. Then I decide as fast I can where the correct place is for each control. This training is partly mental training, because I have to imagine control descriptions and flags. Sometimes I do well-prepared and flagged TempO or PreO training with other trail orienters.

– Then I can get into my “flow”, and the bigger the competition, the better is my rank. – I also train PreO without flags, but for PreO training it is very important to study old competition and solution maps on the internet. Maybe the best PreO training is to be a course planner. Then you best understand how difficult it is to set a flag that is in every control circle each in that area. Then I decide as fast I can where the correct place is for each control. This training is partly mental training, because I have to imagine control descriptions and flags. Sometimes I do well-prepared and flagged TempO or PreO training with other trail orienters.

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

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

– Then I can get into my “flow”, and the bigger the competition, the better is my rank.

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

Pinja’s training

Pinja is very analytic and was one of the first Finns to train for Trail Orienteering not only by mapping but also by doing similar examples as at the events. Her most common training is TempO, speed TrailO training without any flags. Her father Kari, who has two big interests in life – his family and orienteering – is helping Pinja a lot. He is her coach and normally prepares five maps for a training session.

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What’s your goal for the future?

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

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From Facebook to Orienteering – Gave the Sport a Try – and Made History!

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

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

- She took part in the IOF Development Clinic at the World Championships (WOC).
- The Clinic was a nice experience, because I met athletes from other countries and I learned some new orienteering techniques.

Stella started orienteering three years ago. She read about the Orienteering event on Facebook and decided to go.
- When I had finished the race I was very excited about the sport and I decided to start training and learn more about Orienteering.

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

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

Stella grew up and lives in the town Larnaca in Cyprus. In Larnaca there are two maps, one of a park and another of a school.
- We try to develop orienteering here and in other towns. We will make one or two more maps to give students a variety. In Nicosa, we already have an Orienteering park, and we organise many Orienteering events for elite and for amateurs and everyone has the opportunity to participate.

What’s your next goal?
- It’s to win the Cypriot Championship. To achieve that I need to train hard, because I know that everything is possible with hard work and being focused on your goals.

Seven years of orienteering in Cyprus

Orienteering in Cyprus started in 2010 and is growing rapidly. Thousands are trying the sport every year.
- In the early years, our efforts were focused on acquiring equipment, some decent maps and making this sport known to the general public. More recently our efforts have changed and we are concentrating on two distinct objectives, Michael Savvides says.

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

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

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

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

- At present around 40 people take part in national events. There are four or five such events a year. But many other events are organised for those who wish to simply enjoy and want to get to know the sport. Many of these events are held in traditional villages, and are sprint events for organised groups of people, usually scouts, students, teachers etc.

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

He expects to be able to compete quite frequently, and the sprint terrain is also something that he is really looking forward to.
- Generally do running training six days a week, and try and fit terrain-specific training where I can, he says.

New landmarks in South Africa

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

What are the biggest challenges?

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

A "magical" qualification race

He didn’t want his performance in Switzerland in 2012 to define the rest of his orienteering career, so that he would always be seen as an athlete who had one “lucky” race and qualified.
- It’s strange how an entire year of training is focused on just over ten minutes of racing, and one mistake is enough to rule you out of the Final. However, I had another “lucky” race. The way that I can best describe my qualification race is probably as something only other orienteers can understand. There is a feeling that when you pick up the map and everything just makes sense, you spend those few milliseconds making the right decisions and you have (almost) perfect flow throughout the course. If magic exists, that’s the best that I can describe my qualification race. In that I haven’t had the opportunity to interact with in the past. At WOC anything can happen on the day of the race, no matter how well you prepare, but I think that coaches can play a critical part in ensuring that athletes are mentally ready to race. That definitely had a profound impact on me, and it showed me the importance of good athlete support structures.

15th place and qualified for my second WOC in Lausanne.

Crone got up in Johannesburg in South Africa. His orienteering life started at the University of the Witwatersrand in his home town in 2009.
- I was looking to start a new sport that I could continue throughout university. One of my brother’s friends ran the orienteering club there, and I thought I would try it. Obviously orienteering is quite frustrating at the beginning, especially when you are able to run faster than you can navigate, but with a little perseverance it quickly became my favourite sport, the 27-year-old athlete says.

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

Now studying in Lausanne

Now he has just started a five-year spell in Lausanne in Switzerland, studying for a PhD.
- It’s strange sometimes how life works. I ran my first World Championships (WOC) Sprint Final in Lausanne, and now I will be studying here for the next five years.

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10th place and qualified for my second WOC Sprint Final.

The qualification was his racing highlight of the WOC week. He didn’t have the best of runs in the Sprint Final, where he again finished 3rd. 
IOF's Support for Athletes from Small Nations

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

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

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

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

– One of the important aims is to encourage those participants and Federations to make improvements in athletes’ performances in WOCs in the future. Unfortunately there is no capacity at the moment for follow-up closely what is happening with those participants and countries, but this is something to be considered in the future as well.

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

We All Felt Like We Were One Nation

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

He became involved in orienteering at the age of 14.

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

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

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

30 events per year in Serbia

He has lived all his life in Belgrade, the capital city of Serbia.

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

WOC provided some new challenges

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

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

– 2016 was the first year where I took training more seriously. Then I continued with the same in 2017. My goal for 2018 is to achieve better results. I want to be stronger, read the map better and faster and minimise my mistakes. I will be patient and keep on training when it’s harshest. At the end, the best races and best results always come when you least expect them.

Changes in her daily life

Bilic has become very keen on orienteering.

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

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

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

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

– The Moldovan says. At the clinic, all international athletes, and knowledge is brought back home to the whole nation.

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– The Moldovan says.

Started orienteering aged 12

The 28-year-old Moldovan was born, grew up and started orienteering in the city of Bender.

– I did a lot of things in my childhood, from dancing to swimming, judo and water slalom. At the age of 12 I got acquainted with orienteering.

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

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

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

Few forests in Moldova

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

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

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

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

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

Changes in her daily life

Ribedic moved to Moscow not long ago.

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

– For 1st years now she has had some problems with her feet.

– Now I also have problems with my back.
Foot Orienteering

2018
- European Orienteering Championships Switzerland, Europe, 20 May - 2 Jun
- European Youth Orienteering Championships Bulgaria, Europe, 28 Jun - 1 Jul
- World Masters Orienteering Championships Denmark, Europe, 6 Jul - 13 Jul
- Junior World Orienteering Championships Hungary, Europe, 8 Jul - 13 Jul
- Nokian Tyres World Orienteering Championships
  - IOF Orienteering World Cup Round 2 Latvia, Europe, 4 Aug - 11 Aug
- IOF Orienteering World Cup Round 3 Pre WOC 2019 Norway, Europe, 31 Aug - 2 Sep
- IOF Orienteering World Cup Round 4 Czech Republic, Europe, 4 Oct - 7 Oct
- South American Orienteering Championships Uruguay, South America, 5 Nov - 11 Nov
- Asian Orienteering Championships Hong Kong, Asia, 22 Dec - 27 Dec

2019
- European Youth Orienteering Championships Belgium, Europe, 20 May - 2 Jun
- IOF Orienteering World Cup Round 1 Finland, Europe, 7 Jun - 11 Jun
- World Masters Orienteering Championships Latvia, Europe, 5 Jul - 12 Jul
- Junior World Orienteering Championships Denmark, Europe, 6 Jul - 12 Jul
- Nokian Tyres World Orienteering Championships
  - IOF Orienteering World Cup Round 2 Norway, Europe, 13 Aug - 18 Aug
- IOF Orienteering World Cup Round 3 Switzerland, Europe, 26 Sep - 29 Sep
- Oceania Orienteering Championships Australia, Oceania, 28 Sep - 6 Oct
- IOF Orienteering World Cup Round 4 China, Asia, October

2020
- Junior World Orienteering Championships Turkey, Europe, 28 Jun - 5 Jul

Trail Orienteering

2018
- European Trail Orienteering Championships Slovakia, Europe, 28 Apr - 1 May
- World Trail Orienteering Championships Latvia, Europe, 4 Aug - 11 Aug

2019
- World Trail Orienteering Championships Portugal, Europe, 23 Jun - 26 Jun

2020
- World Trail Orienteering Championships Hong Kong, Asia

Meetings 2018

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

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

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

Ski Orienteering

2017 – 2018
- IOF Ski Orienteering World Cup Round 1 Finland, Europe, 28 Nov - 4 Dec 2017
- European Ski Orienteering Championships
  - IOF Ski Orienteering World Cup Round 2 Junior World Ski Orienteering Championships
  - European Youth Ski Orienteering Championships Bulgaria, Europe, 3 Feb - 8 Feb 2018
- IOF Ski Orienteering World Cup Round 3 World Masters Ski Orienteering Championships USA, North America, 6 Mar - 10 Mar 2018

2018 – 2019
- European Ski Orienteering Championships Turkey, Europe, 4-Feb - 12 Feb 2019
- World Ski Orienteering Championships
  - World Masters Ski Orienteering Championships
  - Junior World Ski Orienteering Championships
  - European Youth Ski Orienteering Championships Sweden, Europe, 18 Mar - 24 Mar 2019

MTB Orienteering

2018
- European MTB Orienteering Championships
  - IOF MTB Orienteering World Cup Round 1
- Partner Events
  - European Junior MTB Orienteering Championships
  - World Masters MTB Orienteering Championships

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

2020
- European MTB Orienteering Championships
  - IOF MTB Orienteering World Cup Round 2 Denmark, Europe, 27 Jul - 3 Aug

Partner Events

2018
- World University Ski Orienteering Championships Estonia, Europe, Feb 20 - Feb 25
- World Cadet Games Indonesia, Asia, 28 Apr - 6 May
- World University Orienteering Championships Finland, Europe 17 Jul - 21 Jul

2019
- FISU Winter Universiade Russia, Asia, 2 Mar - 12 Mar
- World Schools Orienteering Championships Estonia, Europe, 29 Apr - 5 May
- European University Orienteering Championships Czech Republic, Europe, 25 Jul - 29 Jul
- CISM World Games China, Asia

2021
- World Orienteering Championships Czech Republic, Europe, 4 Aug - 10 Aug
The IOF Regional and Youth Development Commission (RYDC) is working hard to spread orienteering among young people. Photo: Malin Fuhr.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Ingrid Okkenhaug wants to make orienteering an even more popular sport across the whole world. Ingrid Okkenhaug became a member of the RYDC in October, and in January she will meet the other members for the first time.

She is very much looking forward to the work of getting the sport better-known and more popular among young people. An important issue in the work worldwide is to have committed voluntary workers.

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

How do you see the future perspective for orienteering?

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

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

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

The Athletes’ Commission: From the Runners’ Point of View

Text: Erik Borg

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

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

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

Most important topic

– the third Sprint format

Lizzie Ingham from New Zealand is Co-ordinator of the Athletes’ Commission. The members are Emily Kemp, Ida Bobach, Florian Howald, Gustav Bergman and Jan Petrzela. From his first year working in the Commission, Jan is most satisfied with the reaction to the proposal for the third Sprint format at WOC 2018.

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

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

How are the Commission’s views passed on?

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

Training for 2018

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

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

– I’m just trying to solve my knee problems so that I can train injury-free towards WOC in Latvia. If I manage that I will be more than happy. The main goal is to be in top shape after a good winter and spring training. Then I believe I’m capable of being in the top ten in individual races and can fight for a medal in the relays.

Near the end of his studies

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

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

First Case for the IOF

Anti-Doping Rule Violations:
1. Presence of a Prohibited Substance or its Metabolites or Markers in an Athlete’s Sample
2. Use or Attempted Use by an Athlete of a Prohibited Substance or a Prohibited Method
3. Failing, Refusing or Failing to Submit to Sample Collection
4. whereabouts Failures
5. Tampering or Attempted Tampering with any part of Doping Control
6. Possession of a Prohibited Substance or a Prohibited Method
7. Trafficking or Attempted Trafficking in any Prohibited Substance or Prohibited Method
8. Administration or Attempted Administration to any Athlete In-Competition of any Prohibited Substance or Prohibited Method
9. Administration or Attempted Administration to any Athlete Out-of-Competition of any Prohibited Substance or Prohibited Method
10. Prohibited Association

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

The Results Management Process
The Laboratory Results for all collected samples are reported through the WADA Anti-Doping Administration and Management System known as ADAMS. If a test should return a positive result for any Prohibited Substance, a so-called Adverse Analytical Finding (AAF), the IOF Anti-Doping Officer promptly notifies the Athlete, the Athlete’s National Federation and WADA of the situation. For the IOF, the athlete is informed of their rights, for example their right to request and attend the analysis of the B Sample, their right to provide a written explanation about the overall circumstances of the case or to dispute the assertion that an Anti-Doping Rule Violation (ADRV) has occurred, as well as of the imposition of a mandatory or optional provisional suspension (depending on the substance involved). The athlete is also given the opportunity to promptly admit the ADRV and consequently request a reduction in the period of ineligibility, as well as the opportunity to cooperate and provide Substantial Assistance in discovering or establishing Anti-Doping Rule Violations, i.e. whistleblowing.

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

IOF Anti-Doping Panels
The IOF Anti-Doping Officer chairs the IOF Doping Review Panel, which prepares the IOF’s case for the hearing. Both the IOF Doping Review Panel and the IOF Doping Hearing Panel are put together on a case to case basis based on a pool of persons with experience in Anti-Doping, taking into account such factors as the nationalities of the panelists and the athlete respectively and any possible Conflict of Interest, as well as the specific nature of the case matched with the areas of expertise of the panelists. During the hearing, each party has the right to be represented by counsel, the right to present evidence, including the right to call and question witnesses. The IOF Doping Hearing Panel shall act in a fair and impartial manner towards all parties at all times.

Decisions and sanctions
The IOF Doping Hearing Panel shall issue a written decision within 30 days of the hearing, describing the full reasons for the decision, as well as any sanctions imposed. Possible sanctions include a Period of Ineligibility and Disqualification of Results. The results management process is much the same for any Doping Case. What varies is the evidence, for example analytical cases are based on the analytical results of doping tests, whereas other cases may be based on other evidence.