

Elite ski orienteers support change and innovation

BY ERIK BORG

Eivind Tonna is convinced ski orienteering would provide added value to the Olympic Winter Games.

– The recently introduced sprint and mixed sprint relay formats would suit the Olympic program very well. GPS tracking and biometric data bring the drama of the competition to spectators and media and the events fit nicely into a 45-minute TV broadcast, Eivind Tonna says.

He is a top athlete and the leader of the IOF Athletes' Commission in Ski Orienteering.

The IOF has applied for ski orienteering to be included in the programme of the 2018 Olympic Winter Games featuring sprint and mixed sprint relay, with two athletes of each gender.

– I can't really see any other sports that can be better candidates than ski orienteering but hard work is needed to succeed. I will do my utmost to promote ski orienteering in the best way I can.



PHOTO: PIRJO VALJANEN

Eivind Tonna is the chairman of the Ski Orienteering Athletes' Commission.

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PHOTO: ERIK BORG

Eivind Tonna (left), Lars Hol Moholdt and Hans Jørgen Kvåle were celebrating their silver medal at last winter's European Championships in Romania.

– Is it right to try to get to the Olympic Games with just the sprint?

– The sport has to bring a format that suits the Olympics. Ski orienteering sprint is a very exciting format and the mixed sprint relay is extremely attractive to both the athletes and spectators, Eivind says.

Big changes

There have been big changes in both the nature of the competition and the ski orienteering international programme in the

last few years. Ski orienteering has grown considerably in terms of global spread. The growth has been boosted by the inclusion of ski orienteering into the Asian Winter Games and the CISM World Military Winter Games.

– Ski orienteering requires the combination of ultimate physical and mental performance – endurance, speed and skiing technique, navigation and route choice – which is quite exceptional. I believe that, given the opportunity, we will show that ski orienteering provides added value to the OI-

lympic Winter Games, Eivind Tonna says.

– We now have something really significant to strive for. The Olympic Games is the world's greatest sporting event and inclusion would really mean a lot for orienteering. We athletes train as much as other elite sportsmen and being able to participate in the Olympic Games would be the ultimate reward for us. With Olympic inclusion there would be much more interest in our sport and it would also be very good for recruitment.

Eivind's final winter

The 35-year-old athlete has been among the very best in the world for a long time. This winter is going to be his last.

– It will be a perfect end with the World Championships in Sweden. I will, for sure, not be an athlete that will take part when ski orienteering is, hopefully, an Olympic sport in 2018. Maybe I can be a leader, he says.

World ranking, Top 10 (as of 17 September)

Foot Orienteering

Women: 1) Simone Niggli-Luder SUI 5912, 2) Helena Jansson SWE 5851, 3) Marianne Andersen NOR 5826, 4) Minna Kauppi FIN 5762, 5) Dana Brožková CZE 5567, 6) Anne Margrethe Hausken NOR 5541, 7) Signe Søs DEN 5493, 8) Vroni König-Salmi SUI 5492, 9) Annika Billstam SWE 5476, 10) Lena Eliasson SWE 5452.

Men: 1) Daniel Hubmann SUI 5665 points, 2) Anders Nordberg NOR 5613, 3) Thierry Georgiou FRA 5576, 4) Olav Lundanes NOR 5538, 5) Matthias Müller SUI 5533, 6) Fabian Hertner SUI 5532, 7) Carl Waler Kaas NOR 5531, 8) Valentin Novikov RUS 5503, 9) Emil Wingstedt SWE 5478, 10) David Andersson SWE 5477.

Federation League (for leading 20 athletes)

Women: 1) Sweden 96925 points, 2) Norway 91326, 3) Switzerland 88362, 4) Finland 87127, 5) Czech Republic 80564,

6) Austria 62160, 7) Great Britain 60064, 8) Russia 52608, 9) Denmark 46463, 10) Germany 43217.

Men: 1) Switzerland 100207 points, 2) Sweden 98831, 3) Norway 97098, 4) Finland 96443, 5) Denmark 84715, 6) Czech Republic 82077, 7) Great Britain 80379, 8) Germany 71582, 9) Italy 68007, 10) Austria 65418.

MTB Orienteering

Women: 1) Christine Schaffner SUI 7562 points, 2) Michaela Gigon AUT 7363, 3) Anna Kaminska POL 7343, 4) Rikke Kornvig DEN 7292, 5) Marika Hara FIN 7290, 6) Martina Tichovská CZE 7248, 7) Ingrid Stengård FIN 7118, 8) Ksenia Chernykh RUS 7002, 9) Hana Bajtošová SVK 6952, 10) Maja Rothweiler SUI 6906.

Men: 1) Anton Foliforov RUS 7877 points, 2) Beat Schaffner SUI 7578, 3) Samuli Saarela FIN 7568, 4) Erik Skovgaard Knudsen DEN 7528, 5) Jiří Hradil CZE

7496, 6) Ruslan Gritsan RUS 7411, 7) Jussi Laurila FIN 7410, 8) Tobias Breitschädel AUT 7381, 9) Clément Souvray FRA 7331, 10) Radek Laciga CZE 7273.

Ski Orienteering

Women: 1) Natalya Tomilova RUS 1321 points, 2) Marte Reenaas NOR 1284, 3) Liisa Anttila FIN 1261, 4) Olga Novikova KAZ 1260, 5) Josefine Engström SWE and Anastasia Kravchenko RUS 1242, 7) Helene Söderlund SWE 1241, 8) Alyona Trapeznikova RUS 1223, 9) Olga Trifanova RUS 1196, 10) Kajsa Richardsson SWE 1194.

Men: 1) Eduard Khrennikov RUS 1323 points, 2) Andrei Lamov RUS 1322, 3) Andrey Grigoriev RUS 1306, 4) Staffan Tunis FIN 1301, 5) Kiril Veselov RUS 1299, 6) Lars Hol Moholdt NOR 1297, 7) Peter Arnesson SWE 1290, 8) Olli-Markus Taivainen FIN 1284, 9) Erik Rost SWE 1273, 10) Teemu Kōngäs FIN 1267.



PHOTO: ERIK BORG

At the World Orienteering Championships in Trondheim, Norway, three of the four finals were staged at a ski stadium some kilometres from the centre of the town. The Finnish team winning the relay: Merja Rantanen (left), Minna Kauppi and Anni-Maija Fincke.

Working together for orienteering of tomorrow

If orienteering wants TV exposure and to be a part of the Olympic Games, we need to keep up with the times.

BY ERIK BORG

– Attractive World Events is an important goal of the IOF. We orienteers know that orienteering is a great sport, but how best to present it to the rest of the world? Together with runners, coaches, organisers, media and TV, we are going to find the best solutions. Maybe we all have to make some compromises, Leho Haldna says.

The Estonian is a former elite runner, and currently Vice President of the IOF, in charge of the development of the competition programme. At the recent IOF Congress in Norway some principles for the future development of the World Orienteering Championships (WOC) were presented: the WOC week shall remain within eight days and the programme shall diversify. Norway's proposal to introduce mass start at the World Championships was carried, and a new relay with two women and two men in the team is on the way. The mixed relay addresses the demands placed on modern sport by TV and media as each leg shall be 15 to 20 minutes.

A project group is now being set up to develop a detailed programme for a new WOC week. News on the development will be published on the IOF website and a draft programme is going to be presented at the Presidents' Conference in 2011 in France. Leho Haldna will chair the group which will consist of representatives of the IOF Council, FootO Commission,

www.orienteering.org

athletes, coaches and media.

Stadium facilities important

In Trondheim, for the first time at a World Championship, the same arena was used for three finals. An important reason for that was to optimise the conditions for TV coverage. Some runners commented that it wasn't so enjoyable running in the same terrain on numerous occasions.

– Organisers of every major orienteering event must always make compromises between terrain and arena. The best orienteering terrain can sometimes be far from a stadium or the essential infrastructure. TV production sets very high demands in terms of infrastructure, and we must also be mindful of costs. To be good, an arena must be suitable for all weather conditions. Heavy TV transmission equipment must be able to access the terrain, Leho Haldna explains.

The hot spot

All WOC finals were broadcast on Norwegian TV. In Norway, there were some 160 000 viewers following the races live on TV. The finals were also broadcast in Finland, Switzerland and Czech Republic.

– The quality of the broadcast and how we deliver our sport is extremely important for TV. Orienteering must find and define our entertainment value for viewers. There are

a lot of opportunities like GPS technology that make us a modern and attractive sport, the IOF Vice President says.

The key to success

An important goal for orienteering is to get into the Olympic Games. The programme of the Olympic Summer Games in 2012 and 2016 has been decided. The first opening for any new sport to make it onto the summer programme is therefore the Games in 2020. The decision on the organiser and the sports to be included in these Games will be taken by the IOC in September 2013.

– The competition for a place in the Olympic Summer Games is very tough. To have any possibility of succeeding in our ambitions, we need to continue to develop. The total number of members, the inclusion of orienteering in multi-sport games at global and regional level, the number of member federations participating in World Championships, the media and spectator friendliness of our major events and the number of national championships are development aspects to be emphasised. All these matters are already included in IOF Strategic Directions 2006–2012 and in the Activity Plan for the current Congress period.

The work for Strategic Directions 2012–2018, for the orienteering of tomorrow, has just been started in the Council.

Fercho is working hard for orienteering and The World Games

BY ERIK BORG

12 years ago José Fernando Gomez Rueda – Fercho to his orienteering friends – discovered his sport. Now he is the Technical Delegate for orienteering at the coming World Games.

In 1998 there was an orienteering clinic at the University where Fercho was studying Physical Education. He was training for mountain biking and read, in the publicity for the clinic, that orienteering could also be done on a mountain bike.

– I thought that it would be interesting to try a new sport using the bike, but after I took part in this first clinic I simply moved to foot orienteering because there was no mountain bike orienteering in Colombia. Orienteering is the best sport in the world, especially because it is a physical and mental challenge. I also like being in touch with the natural environment. Everybody can take part irrespective of age, gender or

disability. It's really a sport for all, he says.

Fercho has taken part in international orienteering since 2001. His first race was the Finnish five days. After that there have been a lot of races. In August, he competed in Trondheim, but mostly he was there to gain information about the event.

– It was my third World Orienteering Championships, but this time I came closer to the organisation and learnt many new things about the arena, the finish area, the atmosphere and the media. I gained a lot of very useful information and experience, he says.

The Colombian is the Technical Delegate for orienteering at The World Games in Cali, Colombia in 2013.

What will the orienteering be like at The World Games?

– Quite interesting, a little similar to The

World Games in Kaohsiung last year. It will be fast terrain and the weather will also be a challenge. A normal sunny day in Cali can reach 35 °C.

On the way

Right now there are about 200 active orienteers in Colombia plus activity in the army. Fercho, who is the IOF Regional Development Delegate in South America, is doing great work for the sport both in Colombia and in the neighbouring countries. He has made about 40 different orienteering maps in Colombia, four in Panama and two in Venezuela. He also organises six events a year near where he lives. About 40 to 60 people take part each time, most of them students of physical education.

What are the challenges for the sport in Colombia?

– Firstly, orienteering is relatively unknown in all levels of society in Colombia; also there is a lack of necessary materials such as control flags and especially punches. It is not possible to get them here so this has hindered the development of the sport. Not enough trained personnel is also a challenge: we need more experience of international orienteering events. A high level competition programme is missing in Latin America. It would be good to have some regional competitions to help the runners to gain a little more experience in international events, Fercho says.

How do you see the future of orienteering in Colombia?

– We have a great advantage in having all kinds of terrains and we can do orienteering the whole year. Since people are turning to new activities, especially activities in the natural environment, I think that orienteering has great potential. Of course, an event such as The World Games will definitely increase the visibility of orienteering not only in Colombia, but also in neighbouring countries and in the whole region.

José Fernando Gomez Rueda is working hard for the sport of orienteering in Colombia.



PHOTO: ERIK BORG



PHOTO: ERIK BORG

Jean-Patrick Sissing is one of the juniors from South Africa that took part at Junior World Championships in Denmark.

results in a few years time, says Bernelle.

Immediate goals

The first major goal is to have the sport practised in at least five provinces. In five years time, there will be more than five clubs and five schools per province.

– We are at the beginning and vulnerable to several outside factors such as funding, cooperation of schools, and availability of volunteers. We also have to make the sport more representative of our demographics.

The importance of schools

An important priority is to work with schools. The aim is to map schools and combine orienteering with other subjects in the curriculum, especially geography, biology and science. Orienteering has become a component in the Life Skills programme. That consists of about 40 lessons over a year for high school students, aged 14–17.

– It has been a challenge to find the relevant contact people, but so far three provinces - Gauteng, Western Cape and the Free State have expressed interest in working with us. We will also try to get components of orienteering into practical lessons of geography, especially for the lower grades, and I would like to get orienteering into biology and ecology related subjects or outdoor education where orienteering is combined with fun quizzes, experiments and other activities, Bernelle says.

The Vice-President thinks the work that is being undertaken in South Africa can be of assistance in spreading the sport to other countries in southern Africa.

– I believe our role is to develop everything we do as a package that is designed to be exported – first to other provinces, then other countries.

The realisation of such ambitions will not only strengthen orienteering in South Africa but also in the whole region.

High ambitions with the help of schools

BY ERIK BORG

Ambitions run high in South Africa. The goal: orienteering shall be a well-recognised sport with world class athletes. The key to growth and strength lies in schools.

– Orienteering is now in the school curriculum, and that will help expose potential athletes to the sport at a young age, says Bernelle Verster, Vice-President of the South African Orienteering Federation.

The federation was founded in 1981. Now there are six clubs – four in Gauteng and two in Cape Town. In total, there are 372 members in the federation. The sport is practised in two of the nine provinces of South Africa. There are two to five events every month and about 100 people take part

in each event.

The ambition

The goal is to grow orienteering into a much more recognised sport that is practised throughout the country by ever increasing numbers of people. The talents that rest somewhere, waiting to be discovered shall be unearthed and nurtured to win a Gold Medal at the World Orienteering Championships.

– We have had a shortage of manpower but now we are about to employ our first administrator in 2011, and that will enable more efficient use of the volunteers. We have a high performance plan, a long term athlete development plan, and sport development plans that will begin to produce

PHOTO: ERIK BORG



Thierry Gueorgiou is very open to sharing experiences with his fiercest competitors. Anders Nordberg is one that has been training a lot with Thierry.

– I enjoy sharing training experiences

Thierry Gueorgiou has an open door and is not afraid of revealing his training regime to other of the world's best orienteers.

BY ERIK BORG

– I have always thought that it's a good sign that other orienteers want to train with me, says Thierry.

The incredible Frenchman with seven gold medals from World Championships 2003 on was only able to win bronze at the last World Orienteering Championships (WOC). The coming Championships are on home ground and Thierry intends to rectify that situation while other runners are ready to defend their successes in Trondheim.

Olav Lundanes, who won the long distance, in one of the highlights of this season, is one who wants to do well in France. He will join Thierry in training this northern autumn.

Not many secrets

– I have a lot to learn from Thierry. I can be better at everything. Next year the WOC is on Thierry's home ground. It will be exciting and fun to see what he and other French

athletes are doing, Olav says.

Do you think they will reveal what they are doing?

– Orienteers are very open about what they do.

Are you open?

– I don't think there is much of a secret about what I do, the Norwegian smiles.

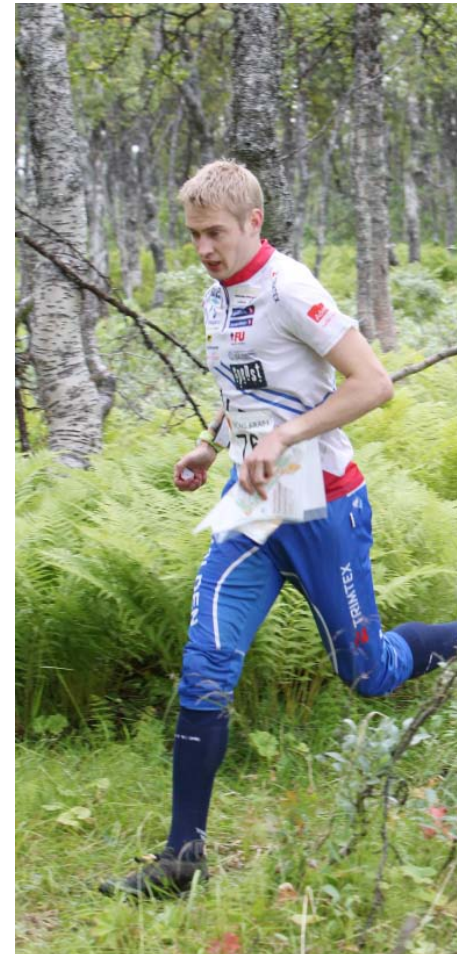
He will stay most of October in France and Switzerland, taking part in the last races of World Cup and preparing for next year's World Orienteering Championships.

No explanation for relay mistake

In the relay at the last World Championships Thierry ran directly from the 16th to the 18th control and lost the gold position he was holding together with Valentin Novikov on the last leg.

– I have replayed the race hundreds of times in my mind, but I haven't come up

PHOTO: ERIK BORG



Olav Lundanes is taking advantage of the sportsmanship in France.

with a clear answer as to why it happened. I felt I had the race under full control and wasn't stressed by any runners. I am really not used to making this type of mistake. My short and incomplete conclusion is that I am a human and mistakes happen. It couldn't have happened at a worst time, but it happened and I have to live with it now. I can't change it. The only thing I can do is just to prepare myself for the next chance and the next chance will be in France!

Championships in France in mind

In September, the king of middle distance and the Norwegian Anders Nordberg, second on the long distance at the last World Championships, spent a week together.

– We had lot of fun together and trained on WOC-relevant maps. I have nothing to hide and it is always great to have such good training company and I always make sure that they return home knowing that they still have a lot to do if they want to have a chance in my home terrain, Thierry smiles.

News in brief

Barbados new IOF member

The XXV IOF General Assembly, held on 13 August 2010 at the time of the World Orienteering Championships in Trondheim, Norway, endorsed Council's decision to approve Barbados as a member. The IOF now has 71 member federations.

One membership class

The General Assembly approved proposed amendments to the IOF Statutes. The IOF now has only one membership class. Provisional members have the same rights as members except that they may not vote at the General Assembly, nor nominate candidates for Council. All member federations can compete in all IOF events, including World Championships.

IOF Council elections

Åke Jacobson (SWE) was re-elected President of the International Orienteering Federation for the Congress

period 2010–2012. Leho Haldna (EST), Brian Porteous (GBR) and Marcel Schiess (SUI) were elected Vice Presidents.

IOF Council 2010–2012

President Åke Jacobson (SWE), Senior Vice President Marcel Schiess (SUI), Vice President Leho Haldna (EST), Vice President Brian Porteous (GBR), Michael Dowling (AUS), Vincent Frey (FRA), Jaeyoung 'Eliot' Lee (KOR), Timo Ritakallio (FIN), Astrid Waaler Kaas (NOR), Maria Silvia Viti (ITA), Laszlo Zentai (HUN).

Hugh Cameron appointed Honorary member

At the XXV IOF General Assembly, the retiring IOF Senior Vice President Hugh Cameron (AUS) was appointed Honorary Member of the IOF. Hugh Cameron was elected to the IOF Council in 1988. He became IOF Vice President in 1992 and Senior Vice President in 2004. At the General Assembly, IOF President Åke Jacobson also presented the IOF

Gold Pin No. 4 to Hugh Cameron, the IOF Silver Pin to Leho Haldna (EST) and Marcel Schiess (SUI), and the IOF Bronze Pin to Christine Brown (AUS), Michaela Gigon (AUT), Erik Nielsen (DEN), Brian Porteous (GBR), Eivind Tonna (NOR), Håvard Tveite (NOR), Thomas Wieser (AUT) and Emil Wingstedt (SWE).



Hugh Cameron was appointed Honorary Member of the IOF.



IOF Council 2010–2012: Timo Ritakallio (left), Michael Dowling, Marcel Schiess, Jaeyoung 'Eliot' Lee, Leho Haldna, Maria Silvia Viti, Åke Jacobson, Astrid Waaler Kaas, Brian Porteous, Laszlo Zentai and Vincent Frey.