



SOUTH AFRICAN ORIENTEERING FEDERATION

President's Report 2009

President

As the first new president in 16 years I had to consider the role and responsibilities of the President before I took any further action. The position has changed remarkably in the past 4 years with more funding coming through and with this in mind I defined my position as being the pursuit of the stated aims and objectives in the Constitution of the SAOF using any means lawful and ethical. To ensure that the SAOF committee is functioning as required in the Constitution and that all Vice Presidents perform their functions and duties as stipulated therein.

The aims and objectives of the Federation are:

- (a) to promote the interests of orienteering and its orienteers, and to uphold the rules relative to amateur status and the eligibility of orienteers to compete under the rules of the SAOF and IOF;
- (b) to administer orienteering falling under the jurisdiction of the Federation;
- (c) to enquire into such irregularities as may have occurred during orienteering competitions or in the course of the administration of orienteering and have been submitted to the Federation or have come to its notice;
- (d) to hear appeals against the decisions of Members, and to pronounce upon such appeals;
- (e) to commission and supervise annual National and Provincial Championships and IOF sanctioned events;
- (f) to attend to the selection of orienteers who are to represent the Federation;
- (g) to provide for official records of performance;
- (h) to maintain the principles of freedom of participation on an equal basis and of non-discrimination, in respect of race, sex, religion, political views and HIV status;
- (i) as a sport recognised by the International Olympic Committee and the South African Sports Confederation and Olympic Committee (SASCOC), to respect the Olympic Charter.

I have opted to have an even more inclusive and open management style inviting more input from all interested parties. All the SAOF's efforts are designed to open discussions and not to have a top-down or instruction based system. We hope that all members will have input in all the various developments of the sport and will utilise the new "WIKI" page to share their views. This committee is there to manage the day to day business of the sport. It is my sincere hope that the members will participate in giving us the directives needed to achieve this.

Special AGM

We kicked 2009 off with a Special AGM where the SAOF made a presentation to the clubs revealing our new motto and the essence of our plan for taking orienteering forward. Our focus is captured quite simply by the motto "Development, Growth, Excellence". At this AGM we took the first positive step on this quest, by introducing the YOC project. We also approved the proposal submitted by Tania Wimberley with respect to the "following rule", which was stood down for further consideration from the previous AGM held in September 2008.

Development

YOC as developed by Tania Wimberley, ably assisted by Cally De Klerk and Leila Venter is a fantastic training program to help all newcomers understand the sport of Orienteering better. The target market is junior and pre school children and the structure has proved to be a massive success among children and parents alike. Tania has not offered to retain her position in the SAOF, but we will still have the benefit of her dedicated pursuit of this program into the future.

Tania has prepared an excellent proposal for the development portfolio which we believe will assist the SAOF in obtaining both development and growth and eventually excellence. This proposal was submitted to Sports and Recreation South Africa (SRSA) and found such huge favour with them that they have increased our financial assistance by R20 000 to fund these specific developments. Some of this money has already been allocated to ensure that JP and Ropafatso, two of our most talented young men, could compete in these championships.

Tania hands over a well managed portfolio and her efforts will not be forgotten. I hope to have the benefit of her keen insight and eager hands for years to come, if not within the SAOF committee, at least as an administrator within the YOC program.

Technical Portfolio

Tabula Rasa, literally means blank slate and with respect to this portfolio Garry Morrisson effectively had a blank slate to do with as he thought fit. The early part of the year was spent debating the way forward. SRSA and SASCO require structures with respect to the technical elements of the sport. Training of officials is highest on their list of their requirements. Although we have had training seminars in the past, government requires training structures with certification and testing. There is even a SETA which we can use to ensure that our members receive a national diploma when they complete the various courses.

We have identified three key areas to develop in this regard and they are mapping, event coordinating and coaching. Garry spearheaded the coaching program by presenting basics training at Wits every Wednesday for the greater part of the last year. Tania has now taken the leap and is also presenting training at RAC on Thursday nights. We hope that this example will inspire more members to host their own training sessions.

In September Garry hosted the first technical structures seminar setting out his technical plan and allowing a debate of the proposed structures. The seminar was fairly well represented with various key individuals participating and lending their considered opinions to the plan. This first step will hopefully blossom into sub committees where all the interested parties can give their input, experience and expertise to the sport for the benefit of the sport.

He has also taken steps to have an expert in coaching and athlete development present a seminar to our new coaches in December this year.

Administration.

The Administration portfolio is probably the only portfolio that has had a clear cut and well defined role and it was admirably performed by George Van Jaarsveld. The financials were always available at the drop of a hat and despite some minor hiccoughs every task was completed timeously and professionally.

Marketing.

This is quite possibly the most vague portfolio and I personally would not mind seeing this portfolio quietly disappear from the Constitution. The marketing portfolio has no budget to do any actual marketing of the sport and if there ever is a marketing budget we would in all likelihood probably outsource that function to a marketing agency. It must however be said that Ricky did his best to promote the sport and I was very pleased to see a letter from Ricky in the Compass Sport magazine (a UK Publication) advertising the new WRE which was presented by RACO.

WRE

We kicked off with an IOF event Advisors clinic and followed up with RACO doing months of hard and valuable work to help the SAOF fulfill its ideal of hosting a World Championships level event within the next 10 years. RACO must be thanked for its tireless effort and will always be remembered for laying the solid foundation upon which the future of international participation in RSA events will be based.

SRSA

As stated earlier Mandy Van Der Laan, our manager at SRSA, was extremely pleased with our progress and we have managed to double our grant from R30 000-00 per year to R60 000-00 per year. I recently met with her again and there is some very exciting news. Government gives each municipality a rather large amount of money to spend on "facilities" and these municipalities are notorious for under spending. Our maps amount to facilities and should a club associate itself with a particular municipality it could convince that municipality to pay the costs of making maps within that municipality. This has to be done on application, but I have the booklets available to assist in this process.

SRSA is concerned with getting more South Africans to play. Affirmative policies are very important to SRSA and reach and scope is vital to them. We

are required by SRSA to develop clubs in 5 provinces. That is a project that I have earmarked and budgeted for to be commenced in 2010.

SASCOC

They are the High Performance arm of South African sport. They promote the coaching aspect and have managed to establish themselves as a go-between the National Lottery Distribution Trust Fund (NLDTF) and the various sports federations.

Through their negotiations with the NLDTF, the SAOF is now capable of applying for R1 500 000-00 per year to fund our projects. I submitted an application for the full R1.5million this year and we await a favorable response from the NLDTF.

I have attended two SASCOC general Meetings and still have to attend another two this year. These meetings have been exceptionally professional and informative. They have presentations by top sports coaches and officials on various topics, which have proven invaluable in our quest to develop our structures.

Conclusion

I tried to keep this as short as possible and will only mention in conclusion that I am extremely proud of all the runners who represented us internationally. We had some surprisingly good results and all the runners represented us well giving us their best in European conditions. I hope that we can develop the structures to assist our current crop of Juniors to one day qualify at a WOC final.

There is marked progress in the sport and whilst structures are still being developed and things seem to be moving along slowly, you can rest assured that this committee is going to start producing some astounding results, hopefully following in the footsteps of the YOC program. Behind the scenes there have been thousands of emails discussing, debating and developing the policies that we believe will help us achieve our stated goals.

Finally, I know that orienteering is not a business and therefore one cannot simply give instructions and expect them to be complied with. The committee is wonderful tool wherein all stakeholders can have say in the proposed efforts of the federation. This multi view way of doing things means that more people own orienteering and therefore more people have a vested interest in developing the sport. We have tried to comply with the principles of transparency and accountability. Thus we see for the first time, since I started orienteering, a budget being presented to the AGM for approval. We hope that this conveys to the membership that the SAOF is there to serve the members and that the members, through the AGM, do have the final say on how this sport is run.

Eugene Botha
SAOF President
22/09/2009