
Consultation about World Masters Games /World Masters Orienteering Championships

Background

The World Masters Games (WMG) is held every 4 years (the year following a summer Olympiad). The next versions of the WMG will be held in Auckland, New Zealand in April 2017 and then in Kansai, Japan in 2021.

Orienteering has been part of the WMG for the past 12 years and plans for the 2017 event are well-advanced. Our participation has meant that the IOF has organized our annual World Masters Orienteering Championships (WMOC) as a part of the WMG every 4th year.

At the IOF General Assembly in Trondheim, Norway in 2010, the member federation Italy raised a proposal that the WMOC should not be an integral part of the WMG. The General Assembly voted in favour of keeping the WMOC part of the WMG at that point in time.

The IOF Council now feels that this decision should be re-visited and is seeking consultation guidance from all member federations. This consultation will lead to a Council decision regarding the 2021 WMG and WMOC. The 2017 WMOC/WMG is unaffected by this. Such a decision needs to be made prior to the next General Assembly in 2018, due to application deadlines for WMOC 2021 and WMG 2021 planning timelines. Any decision made by Council, based upon this consultation, will need to be confirmed by the General Assembly in 2018.

Analysis

The IOF Strategic Directions include activities to strengthen the IOFs position on the world sporting stage. One of these activities is the increased participation with orienteering in multi-sport games such as The World Games, the FISU Universiad, and the World Masters Games. The strategy behind this has been to showcase our sport among other Olympic and non-Olympic sports, and strengthen our position regarding potential inclusion in the Olympic program. Being involved in the World Masters Games has had effect in this respect and it is still the view of Council that orienteering should be among the sports at the World Masters Games.

However, having the WMOC as part of the WMG has proven to create difficulties both organisationally and financially. IOF member federations who have had organiser responsibility have met challenges in dealing with the WMG Local Organising Committees (LOC). These challenges have been felt to be to the detriment of the competitions. Financially, entry fees for WMOC in WMG years have been quite a bit higher as there is a need to cover also parts of WMG organising costs. Finally, WMOC is an important source of income to the IOF and in WMG years this income is significantly lower.

Recent discussions with the IOC Sports Department indicated that although the IOC looked favourably upon orienteering's inclusion in the WMG, they were not of the opinion that WMOC needed to be part of the WMG. They noted in the discussion that several other sports were in the WMG yet organised their own Masters Championships in parallel with WMG. In fact, in 2017 orienteering is the only sport which organises its own Masters Championships within the scope of WMG.

A suggested approach

Council has in its analysis reached the conclusion that WMOC should be organised as an annual, stand-alone IOF major event, yet we should strive to maintain the presence of orienteering as a sport in the WMG. Efforts should be made to promote WMG orienteering competitions in addition to the WMOC.

Council feels that this approach would:

1. Make the cooperation between WMG LOC and local organisers easier since the requirements and financial burden of the WMOC would no longer need to be taken into consideration.
2. Orienteering can be fully integrated in the WMG structure in a consistent manner with other sports.
3. The organisation of WMOC and WMG orienteering competitions every 4th year would give masters competitors additional opportunities to compete and travel.

Note: since this was previously a general Assembly proposal, any Council decision about this will require agreement via this member federation consultation, and that the International Masters Games Association (IMGA) agree to the above continued inclusion of orienteering in the WMG without WMOC status.

Consultation questions

Do you support the Council approach that WMOC should be organised as an annual, stand-alone IOF major event and orienteering should maintain its presence as a sport in the WMG?

Do you have any other comments about the decision?