

O-zine

International Orienteering Federation

On-line Newsletter

Issue 2 – July 2008

The world orienteering festival in the Czech Republic fast approaching



BY BARBRO RÖNNBERG

It is now only days away – the start of the world orienteering festival in the Czech Republic. The host towns Olomouc and Prostějov are ready to welcome orienteers from all parts of the world to the 25th World Orienteering Championships, to the 5th World Trail Orienteering Championships and to the 24th IOF Congress and General Assembly.

With seven days to go, 40 countries have entered a team for the World Orienteering Championships, while 18 nations have registered for the World Trail Orienteering Championships. 33 national federations have accredited delegates for the IOF Congress and General Assembly.

Experienced organiser

The sport of orienteering has a long tradition in the Czech Republic. This is the third

time the World Championships have been organised in the Czech Republic, making the Czech Orienteering Federation one of the most frequent and most experienced organisers of these Championships, together with Finland and Sweden.

The organisers have spared no effort in making the World Championships a worthy challenge for all competitors and a thrilling experience for spectators and media. With the most comprehensive TV and internet

In this issue: The world orienteering festival in the Czech Republic fast approaching; “Smola could do well at the World Championships”, says Finnish trainer Janne Salmi; No relaxation for Hausken; A long, long road home for the Novikov couple; Radka Brozkova – Pluses and minuses with WOC on home ground; Love makes orienteering easier for Australian Grace Elson; Janne Salmi: “Being a trainer is tougher than being an athlete!”

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Good reading!

BARBRO RÖNNBERG
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

coverage ever of the different events, the World Orienteering Championships in Olo-mouc provide a great opportunity to market our sport on a world wide basis.

Realising the vision

The IOF General Assembly held in Aarhus, Denmark, in August 2006, adopted Strategic Directions 2006 – 2012. By endorsing this document, the Assembly agreed, among other things, upon a vision for orienteering.

The vision is that orienteering be recognised as a truly global sport, attractive to all and with presence and credibility on the world sporting stage.

During the past two years, significant progress has been made on a number of fronts. The agenda for the 24th General Assembly in Prostějov includes several items, in particular the proposed Activity

Plan 2008–2010, aimed at increasing the momentum so that our vision becomes reality.

Enlarged Council

The 2006 General Assembly decision to increase the number of members on the IOF Council, and the requirements relating to gender and geographical spread, will be implemented at the Council elections in Prostějov. The Council to be elected for the Congress period 2008–2010 will consist of 11 members instead of 9 and include two members of each gender, and two persons from outside Europe nations.

As requested by the member federations at the 2006 General Assembly, Council will present to the General Assembly delegates, a new Council election procedure. The aim of the changes is to increase transparency, and to ensure a sufficient number of candidates and the election of both men and

women with appropriate competencies and attributes. Further, as commissioned by the federations at the 2006 General Assembly, the Council also proposes to revise the membership fee structure for full IOF members.

Five proposals have been received from member federations. Norway, Australia and Sweden have made proposals relating to various aspects of the World Orienteering Championships. Finland has proposed some changes to the World Trail Orienteering Championships and Spain has proposed that the IOF recognise Adventure Sports as an official IOF discipline.

In addition to the General Assembly on 18 July, the IOF Congress programme also includes a Pre-General Assembly Seminar and an orienteering event for the Congress participants, VIP and media representatives, both of which will take place on 16 July.

“Smola could do well at the World Championships”



PHOTOS: ERIK BORG

Michal Smola is from the Czech Republic and he could do very well at the World Championships in his home country.

Right: The Swiss Daniel Hubmann is strong in everything he does.

BY ERIK BORG

The Finnish trainer Janne Salmi expects a lot from his own runners, of course, but there are also a lot of other runners who he thinks will be among the very best, for instance Michal Smola from the Czech Republic.

The Finnish head coach is in fact not that interested in speculation. He prefers to wait for the results, but he is giving away a few opinions.

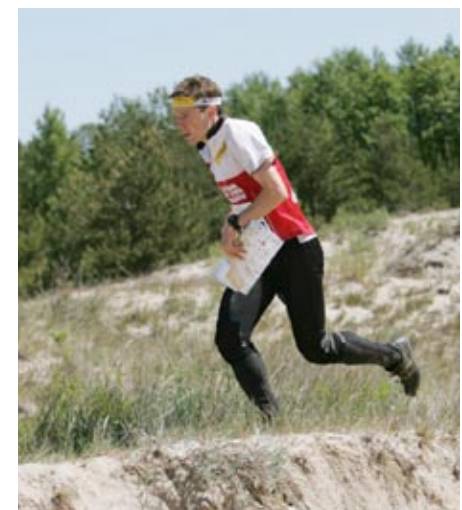
– Daniel Hubmann especially looks strong; he is doing well at all distances. Michal Smola can also be a very strong runner on the terrain in his home country. Thierry Gueorgiou is of course also strong, especially in middle distance, he says.

He is not so sure about the Norwegian and Swedish men expect for Emil Wingstedt, but the Russians could do well and in the Finnish team there are three-four runners who can fight for the very top positions.

– There are many runners who can be among the best in the men's class, he says.

Among the women Janne considers that four runners are at a level above the others: Anne Margrethe Hausken, Norway, Minna Kauppi, Finland, Heli Jukkola, Finland, and Tatiana Ryabkina, Russia.

Other runners he believes could do well are Helena Jansson and the other Swedes, Marianne Andersen, Norway, Signe Søres, Denmark, the sisters Radka and Dana Brozkova, and Merja Rantanen, also Finland. Merja had a remarkably good European championships in Latvia.



No relaxation for Hausken

BY ERIK BORG

Anne Margrethe Hausken will take part in all the races at this year's World Championships (WOC). She is stronger and better than ever.

– It's good to have as many chances as possible. And racing gives me more mental strength, says the Norwegian.

The goal is a gold medal, something she still lacks at WOC level. Earlier this year she got two golds at the European Championships (EOC) in Latvia.

Anne Margrethe took part in everything at WOC last year too, but she wasn't really at her best in the relay and the sprint at the end of the championships; the tough programme had some effect on her.

But a lot has changed since last year. The Norwegian has won three of the five races so far in the World Cup this season. Her performance has taken a big leap forward from last year and she is doing better than ever before.

Why? She cites three reasons:

- In her preparations for this season everything has gone well; she has had no periods with injury. In previous years she has had to do a lot of alternative training.
- She has done a lot more technical training. It has also been helpful with a change of club. In Halden (she was previously in Bækkelaget) she has been given more varied orienteering training than before.
- Her partner Anders Nordberg is very good technically, and she considers he has a strong influence on her performance.

There will be seven races in eight days in the Czech Republic. The Norwegian coach Göran Andersson had in fact considered not allowing any athlete to run all distances in WOC. He thought it best for everyone to get a break at some stage.

– But Anne Margrethe is doing so well



PHOTOS: ERIK BORG

Anne Margrethe Hausken will run all distances at WOC.

right now. She has trained to a high level and she has enormous self-confidence, says Andersson.

For Hausken and Nordberg, orienteering dictates their lives at present. There's no doubt they help each other to improve their orienteering skills. They also have a little bit of work that's not connected with orienteering, but not a lot. Just now their top priority is to do well in sport.

At the second last World Cup race before WOC they both won. Anne Margrethe's victory was her third World Cup success this year, whilst for Anders it was his first. In the Czech Republic, Anders will run all distances except the sprint.



Partners in private and success in sport – Anne Margrethe Hausken and Anders Nordberg.

A long, long road home ...

BY ERIK BORG

It was the day after the European Championships (EOC) was over. On the road from Ventspils to Riga, one of the regular buses on the route contained many members of the Russian team. Julia and Valentin Novikov were among them; they were at the start of a two-day journey home.

After the first leg with the bus to Riga the journey was by train to Moscow, but the couple, who is one of the best orienteering couples in the world, were still a long way from home. In fact they didn't reach home until the evening of the day after they started the journey. Valentin didn't complain at all about the long journey; it's

just how it is, if money is short.

Hired cars and a plane to and from home were probably the most used forms of travel at EOC, but the easiest ways of travelling and plenty of money in the wallet didn't influence the results. Resources do have an influence, but the sport of orienteering is a sport with opportunity even when the wallet isn't very full. It's a question of will - and some talent.

Valentin Novikov had a gold medal in his luggage when he went home; Russia had again won a major championship relay. He had again run the last leg and done so in a remarkable way. Just as he also did some weeks later when he brought

his Finnish club Delta into victory at the Jukola relay.

The Russian has run the last leg in the World Championships relay two years in succession now, done it very well and on both occasions come first into the finish. Can it be a third time in a row? Most certainly it can! The Russians are again among the strong candidates for the gold and they showed at EOC that they can still get a top result.

Orienteering is a sport of will. If you try hard enough you can do great things, as Valentin demonstrates. He has been among the very best in the world for a long time now. His break-through was when he won two gold medals by big margins at the EOC in 2000. It looked as though the orienteering world had found a new king, at that time in Truskavets in Ukraine.

Since then Valentin has been among the best all the time, but he has also had some tough days. Very warm days in particular give him bigger challenges, but he hasn't given up at all. Valentin is a man with a lot of will. That gives results!

Left: Valentin Novikov has been one of the very best for a long time now.

Julia and Valentin Novikov is a well-known couple in the orienteering world. Valentin will be in the team defending the relay victory in the Czech Republic. Julia is one of the best Russian women.



PHOTOS: ERIK BORG



World Championships 2008 – Olomouc, Czech Republic

Pluses and minuses with WOC on home ground

BY ERIK BORG

Radka Brozkova has of course a lot of terrain knowledge, with the World Championships being on home ground. That's the big plus, but there is also a minus with having WOC in the Czech Republic.

– For Czech runners it's a big advantage to run in the Czech forests – good knowledge of our vegetation, the way areas are mapped and the typical features of our terrain. But it's important to be very strong mentally, because the pressure will be much bigger, says Radka.

The 24-year-old Czech has been one of the positive surprises this season. She has been among the very best and was sixth both on sprint and long in the EOC in Latvia, the start of this year's World Cup.

– The good results really surprise me, she says.

How have you been able to take such a step up this year?

– I wasn't injured last winter and spring, so I was able to do my training 100 per cent. I also started to think more about regeneration and relaxation. And for the last two years there have been some extremely good training camps for the Czech team. There has also been less stress at college, she says.

She has in fact done better than her elder sister Dana, who won bronze in the long distance at WOC in 2006. At the European Championships, Dana's best individual result was her eighth place on the long distance.

What does Dana say when you are doing even better than her?

– She knows that it's also good for her, because this is what can improve her performance too. We do some athletic training

Radka Brozkova is one of those expected to fight for the top positions at the World Championships. Radka has proved to be one of the very best this season.

together, compare split times from races and talk about future competitions. Our co-operation is good for both of us, says Radka.

Radka grew up about 170 kilometres north-west of Olomouc, in an area known as the Czech paradise. She studies medicine and finished her fourth year about three weeks before WOC. She is studying in Prague.

What is your goal for WOC?

– Middle is my strongest discipline, but I don't think about results, she says.

For Dana, long distance is the favourite and she is one of those expected to finish among the very best.

– Thanks to the benefits of home-ground terrain, perfect physical condition and strong will, she is really prepared for winning a medal, says the younger sister.

Even though it is four years since the Czech Republic was awarded WOC 2008, the championships haven't been that big a goal for Radka for very long.

– It's maybe a surprise, but I started to believe in the possibility of a good result only in May this year, she says.

In May she also proved to herself that she can be among the very best. For Radka it looks likely to be an enjoyable championship on home ground.



PHOTOS: ERIK BORG

Love makes orienteering easier...

BY ERIK BORG

The young and talented Australian Grace Elson has settled down in Europe. That's makes it easier to prepare for the big competitions which mostly are in Europe. But, her partner Matt Crane, is the big reason for moving.

– Because of visas Matt couldn't work in Australia, so we've moved to Great Britain for the time being. I also liked the idea of living overseas for a change. The fact that I can do more orienteering here is an added bonus! I have run some World Cup races this year in Latvia and Norway, an opportunity I wouldn't have had if I had been living in Australia. I like being able to travel to a different country for the weekend, and run some big races other than the World Championships, says Grace.

The 24-year-old Australian girl is from Hobart on Tasmania, just like Hanny Alston, who will not take part in WOC this year. Grace is now taking part in her third WOC. Before this year's championships her best results are 27th place at middle distance and fourth place in the relay in 2006.

– The relay result was incredible, it was completely unexpected for me anyway and standing on the podium at my first WOC was amazing. My goal for this year is to get a top-20 placing. I think it is easily achievable, it's just a matter of getting it together on the day.

Half a year in Europe

The Australian met Matt Crane, a national team member in Great Britain, at the World University Championships in Slovakia in 2006.

– I visited the UK at the end of the year. Then Matt spent half the year in Australia in 2007, but we decided to move to the UK in February this year. Now we have our wedding to plan for next year, she says.

The Australian Grace Elson has lived in Europe for six months and has gained a lot more experience. Her target is to be among the 20 best at WOC.



PHOTO: ERIK BORG



PHOTOS: ERIK BORG

The move from Australian summer to UK winter was a bit of a shock, but she feels at home now.

– I have competed in races in Britain this year and I am getting used to the terrain here. It is quite different to the fast-running terrain in Australia. The vegetation is tougher and I haven't been used to reading vegetation on the map. In Australia it is mainly contours and boulders I concentrate on! But it has meant I've become a stronger runner and am getting better at longer courses, so I think my fitness, more than my speed, has improved, she says.

Is it easier to reach a high level settled in Europe?

– The domestic competition is good at home, but it is much harder to attend in-

ternational competitions. When you're a senior and only go to Europe for a couple of weeks each year for WOC there is added pressure to have a good run, because it's likely to be the only international competition all year.

More competitions

Grace is working full time as an accountant, but she is also taking part in a lot of competitions.

– It is definitely easier to take orienteering more seriously over here, simply because I can attend more races and there are more things to focus on other than WOC. My plan before WOC 2009 is to take time off from work leading up to the championships, so that I can do some good training in relevant terrain, she says.

What's your goal?

– I think I can keep on improving, so the big goal is to continue racing until I am regularly in the top 20. Over the next couple of years while I am still in the UK I will commit more time to orienteering so that I turn up to a WOC feeling really fit and really confident. I will be satisfied when I have a fast clean run at WOC, and whatever the result, I will be happy.

The hotter the better

She has already got a lot of WOC experience from taking part in 2006 and 2007 and she knows what to expect in a lot of ways.

– I think the weather in the Czech Republic should be nice - the hotter the better! The terrain should be fun too, and will suit Australians more than if WOC was in Scandinavia. I will hopefully feel confident in the terrain after a few days training there. I have not done the preparation I would have liked because of work, but the experience I gained at the European Championships in Latvia gave me the confidence to know I can run in unfamiliar terrain and handle it well, and there is definitely room for improvement so I'm looking forward to WOC 2008.

Matthew Crane is a good orienteer from Great Britain and the big reason for Grace Elson to settle down in Europe. Here is Matt in action in a World Cup race in Great Britain.



Merja Rantanen was the big surprise at the European Orienteering Championships in Latvia. Janne Salmi was at her side when she had finished.

BY ERIK BORG

Janne Salmi thinks it's much more challenging to be a trainer than an athlete. The Finn is in the super-class at both things.

– As an athlete I could only think about myself. Now there are 13-14 runners to think about, and when I come home from a championship I am much more tired than I was when I was an athlete, says Janne.

In 1997 Salmi won the gold medal in middle distance at the World Orienteering Championships (WOC). As a trainer for the Finnish national team for almost three years now he has been responsible for a very successful team, and he also has a very strong team this year.

The Finn also has a lot of administrative tasks to do and life is often hectic, but he likes the work. – I think this is the best job I can have, and I learn a lot all the time, so that over time I do the things I have to do better, he says. In June he signed a contract for two more years, up to WOC in Trondheim, Norway in 2010.

The final days

Janne gets into a WOC frame of mind just a day or two before the championships. At that moment his kind of contribution becomes more important than anyone else's.

– At that time I help runners to cope with too much self-confidence, too little self-confidence and many other things. Everybody is different. And there are of course also big differences in how much I am in contact with each of the runners. My goal is to help so they get to do their best. This exciting and challenging part of the work is also the best part, says Janne.

In good shape

Janne is still in good shape himself. He was third – and the best Finn – to the first change-over at the Jukola relay recently. His strength was a surprise, even to himself. He wasn't training all that much for a long time, but for the last three months he has been training five-six days a week.



PHOTOS: ERIK BORG

It's tougher being a trainer than an athlete!

To be out in the forest with a map is not only to get in a better shape.

– It's good to see what the runners have to deal with, he says. Sometimes he also shadows them out in the forest.

Salmi is everywhere – to help the runners.

Janne Salmi shows his joy with the Finnish men after they had taken bronze at the relay at the European Championships in early June.

