

Informal IRF Meeting

Northstar Resort Truckee, USA.

28 July 2023

Attendees

Matt Bixley IRF President, New Zealand
Julie Quinn IRF Vice-President, Australia
Robin Gardner IRF Treasurer, Australia
David Baldwin, Australia
Lauri Leppik, Estonia
Pablo Alonso, Spain
Carolina Llop, Spain
Janne Snellman, Finland
David Rowlands, Australia
Timmo Tammemae, Estonia
Bud Laird, USA
Peter Graube, USA
Kevin Matrosovs, Canada
Jaroslav Najman, Czech
Volodymya Lipka, Ukraine
Jon Sutcliffe, Australia
Christine Brown, Australia
Thorlene Egerton, Australia
Guntars Mankus, Latvia
Vladimir Gusiatsnov, USA

Matt welcomed everyone to the informal meeting of the IRF.

Finances of the IRF

Rob Gardner made the following points:

- \$AUD 1,712 income.
- \$ AUD 2,949 expenses, mainly due to the WRC2023
- Current bank balance is approximately \$AUD 50,000AUD.
- No fees or levies have been requested due to Covid. Going forward, countries in a strong positions will be asked to pay levies again.
- Australia and NZ paid levies because they were in a position to do so.

WRC2025 - SPAIN.

- The next WRC will be in Spain.
- Pablo and Carolina briefly spoke about the event and location.
- It was noted it was a very popular area for orienteering.

- Matt will make an announcement at the prize giving of the WRC2023.
- Matt offered for one of the Spain hosts to talk for 5 minutes at the prize giving.
- IRF will try to appoint an adviser for the WRC in the next 6 months.

WRC2027

- The IRF will open bids in January 2024.
- Rotation is normally Europe, North America, Australia/New Zealand, other. It was suggested that maybe Australia could look at bidding as it will be nominally the turn of Australia/New Zealand.
- Rotation is to try to get a mix around the world.
- The IRF is keen to get the regularity of champs back on schedule.
- The IRF sees that it is important to get bids from a variety of countries to be able to promote the sport in these countries.

European Coordinator/Executive

There is a need to seek a replacement European coordinator for Lauri Leppik. Jan Tojnar has found a person for this – Jaroslav Najman. Jaroslav prefers to be called Kaiman. His background is in adventure racing, rogaining, refereeing for rogaining, organising events in Spain.

- Lauri has agreed to explain the role.
- Matt would like the role come into the executive. This will need a vote by the IRF. Matt will propose with Julie seconding. This will be done formally through normal IRF processes.

Jan Tojnar wants to bring the European champs into a more formalised role, with a hosting agreement.

Lauri: in Europe at the moment there are only 5 active countries with Russia and Ukraine out. All of these countries have hosted recently but will just need to rotate at the moment. The challenge is to bring in other countries where events can be held. Lithuania and Italy have been tried, but have struggled with organising a quality event. People with adventure racing organising experience could deliver such events.

David Baldwin suggested a similar approach to what occurs in Australia for rotation of Australian champs and helping the smaller states when it is their turn.

There are other countries in Europe, such as Poland, holding similar events such as 100km mountain bike and foot races involving navigation. We are unsure though whether they are interested in holding a rogaine with the rules of the sport as we have it.

Scandinavians (Norway, Sweden) have lots of orienteering but not interested in rogaining. Next ERC likely to be Latvia or Estonia.

IRF Executive

Rob Gardner has indicated he would like to stand down from his role as Treasurer.

Under the constitution, the President and Vice-President have to stand down after one more year as their 2 x 3 year terms will be completed. Matt has asked a few people but without any interest in the executive roles at this time.

Matt could continue in the President's role. He noted that any discussion about another term would need to occur without Matt present because he declared a financial interest. Matt has been receiving reimbursement of air fares to attend WRCs.

IRF is legally constituted and financially bound to a bank in Australia. It would be useful to have the Treasurer in Australia and possibly another member for approval on the bank account transactions. Matt noted that Julie had suggested she could take the role of Treasurer, living in Australia.

Communications

- There is a new website but needs some additional content and completion to get this put in place.
- A weakness of the IRF is the lack of a high-quality website with results. Is a crucial thing for the sport.
- Alan Mansfield manages the IRF Facebook site. David Baldwin will contact Alan to get access for various key people. This should be a priority over the next few months. Will be essential for the European Coordinator.
- There needs to have a dedicated person whose sole role is for communications. This role was created as an executive role but is currently vacant.
- Matt suggested making the IRF communications role into the European Coordinator. However, the people at this meeting felt that the Executive still needs a communications person as well as the European Coordinator.
- Suggestions for improvements to the website included:
 - Web coordinator - someone who is paid to develop.
 - Just using FB for content and not bother with the website.
- Lauri reminded people that the IRF requested each country to nominate a key person to provide content. This fell through as only a few countries nominated a person and even then no content was received.
- Of the 10 countries there is always a rogaine happening. It was recommended that these should also be posted to the IRF site, however there is a challenge of translating local content to English for the IRF site.

ACTION: Matt undertook that within 2 months the Exec will report back to the IRF on a communications plan.

Six-hour Events

Some countries would like to have formal sanctioning of 6-hour events as well as 24-hour events.

- This is to enable countries to access funding.
- This will also align with the strategic plan for growth.
- The Executive will progress the sanctioning in the next little while.

Comments:

- USA looked at hosting a 6-hour event as their champs but there was reluctance from competitors to travel long distances for the shorter event. Instead USA are looking at a

points system with a series of 6-hour events. 4-6 hour events can provide a bridge to longer events for people.

- Another option is embedded shorter champs within a 24 hour, such as for juniors. At present the IRF is only about 24-hour events. The longer events can be a barrier for orienteers with other events coming up.
- Latvia organises 2,4 and 6 hour events as a series.
- Canada (western) runs 4-6 hour score events in orienteering. Call them adventure runs.
- Could be interesting to run a European League with a variety of events across countries. All of the countries have the shorter events that could be part of this.

Matt noted that the IRF strategic plan is now old and in 2024 will be reviewed. The review will be led by Matt Bixley.

- This will include how to be able to provide support to smaller countries to run events.
- Potentially simplify some of the rules for shorter events where they may remove barriers.

General business

Matt welcomed Ukraine and emphasized support for rogaining in the country. Volodymyr emphasized that they are keen to hold an international event in the Ukraine as soon as this is possible.

Question from 2019: why are events being held at the middle of summer?

Putting restrictions on when people can hold the event will potentially limit who is willing to host an event. Perhaps the IRF can provide guidance about whether off-peak times can be used to minimise costs while providing a safe event.

Question: why was the registration for this event so expensive?

Matt explained that, yes, it is expensive but this is what it has cost the organisers. Covid and inflation has raised the prices. An example expense for the USA is permits to use forest areas can be thousands of dollars.

- In Europe, there are minimum and maximum fees that can be charged, and organisers are asked to explain any discrepancies.
- To date, the WRC bids have not had a budgets that include the cost to participants.
- The cost of the WRC2023 will be included in the review of the event.
- Numbers of competitors are low possibly because of the cost of the event. 2004 and 2014 events in the US had more teams.

Sergey Yashchenko (Russia) would like to have discussions on the use of GPS units. GPS units are a way to attract the interest of family and friends to the sport. The IRF needs data on how spectators and competitors use GPS. Potentially could be trialed in Europe.

Question from Finland (raised by Janne): are there any discussion going on about the rules and consequences of what should happen to competitors if they break the rules?

- Matt invited Finland to raise specific rule issues.

- Matt also noted that the IRF wants to keep the rules as open as possible. Allow individual organisers to add additional components.

There have been informal discussions on

- transgender competitors (Australia has put into rules used in that country) - this may need to be formalised by the IRF in the next year or so.
- Whether there should be an exact time stated for Rule B17(b) The organisers may set a requirement that all team members record a visit to a checkpoint within a pre-defined time limit for a team to gain points for that checkpoint. Such a time limit shall be announced by organizers in the pre-event information.
- Punching after the official finish time to maximise points is also an issue for some countries.
- Keeping rules simple is good but can also make them open to interpretation. Some things do need to be defined.
- There could be some guidance on how to set the rules for championship events.

Matt thanked all people at the meeting for attending and sharing ideas.

Meeting closed 5:10pm.

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