

**REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE
MARATHON RACING COMMITTEE
IN THE PERIOD 2007 -2008**



**Report from Jorn Cronberg
Marathon Racing Committee Chairman
For the XXXII. ICF Congress in Rome, 2008**

Members:

Robin Belcher (AUS), Ruud Heijselaar (NED), Alan Laws (GBR), Maria S. Llevot (ESP)

Advisers:

Tim Cornish, (RSA)

2. MEETINGS

The committee has held one ordinary annual meeting and in addition short meetings during World Championships primarily about calendar issues:

- 13-15 April, 2007 in Brandenburg, Germany
- 6 September, 2007 in Győr, Hungary
- 22-24 February, 2008 in Singapore
- 18 September, 2008 in Tyn, Czech Republic

3. CONTENT OF THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

The work of the committee has been focused on

- Developing the rules and competition concept,
- Composing a calendar of World Cups and World Championships competitions,
- Inspecting venues, guiding organisers of ICF competitions, and controlling those competitions when taking place.

3.1. DEVELOPMENT OF RULES AND COMPETITION CONCEPT

Development of the competition concept with the purpose of **seeking ways of making the marathon competition more interesting and attractive for spectators and media** has been a major objective for the committee.

3.1.1. Course concept

Many of the traditional marathon competitions started in one place and ended in another place, and so did the first ICF competitions as well. This however has slowly changed over the years, and for decades ICF marathon competitions have started and ended at the same place.

To avoid the difficulties for supporters and spectators to move around to be able to follow the race and to concentrate action we now have

- **Start, portage and finish at the same place.**

We are using a lap course, and we have step by step reduced the lap distance. Quite recently we have reached a milestone by reducing the lap distance to 4.2 km in order to make it possible to also have

- **ICF marathon competitions on regatta courses.**

This is one of the issues we have discussed with team leaders, and this step has been generally accepted as a success. For spectators this means that they are able to follow most of the race from the start and finish area.

Another issue which it has been decided to introduce to organisers of World Championships and eventually also to World Cup organisers is to make it

- **Compulsory to have a big television board showing actions along the course.**

This was in fact also requested by team leaders when we discussed the future at the World Championships.

At the same time we wish to

- **Focus on the commentary during competition.**

We are working to set some standards for this to give the best possible information to spectators, and introduced an ICF commentator at the 2008 World Championships.

3.1.2. Competition time schedule

Changing the course concept however influences other aspects of the marathon competition. **So far we have a two day competition programme** with up to three classes competing at the same time in a morning and an afternoon session. By reducing the lap length the potential of interference among different classes increases.

This year we have tried to solve that problem by

- **Separating into three sessions a day.**

This has worked reasonably well, however looking forward to increasing the number of World Championships classes we are not sure this will be enough. Another issue is that racing days may be quite long, so we wish to have the possibility to

- **Increase the time schedule to 3 days.**

This issue was also discussed with the team leaders. There were different opinions, but basically the concerns expressed by teams are of financial nature. We have tried to meet this concern by having a two day programme for each age group, but overlapping in a 3 day programme, i.e. juniors on day 1 and 2, seniors on day 2 and 3.

3.1.3. World Cup competitions

We are suffering from low participation at the World Cups. This is not a new situation, but is a clear indication of lack of financial support to marathon teams in many federations since marathon is not an Olympic discipline.

The committee has tried different things over the years like

- having cups for men's kayak, for women's kayak, and for Canadians,
- and using the place of the following years World Championships for the teams to come and test the venue,
- choosing only two World Cups a year to keep costs low,

but it hasn't had the result we hoped for.

The issue has been discussed with the team leaders, but no one seems to have the formula we need for changing this situation, so we must go on looking for new ideas.

3.2. WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

3.2.1. The World Championships 2007 in Győr, Hungary, suffered from extreme weather conditions and flood. Despite these extremely difficult circumstances the organisers did an outstanding performance in carrying through the competition.

The course had to be modified, we had to take out the portage, but all involved parties showed discipline and sportsmanship, and at the end of the day we can say that we had excellent competition of a very high standard. Competitors from 29 countries of 4 continents participated.

Statistics

	Participants in Junior classes					Participants in Senior classes					
	K1 M	K1 W	C1 M	K2M	K2 W	K1 M	K1 W	C1	K2 M	K2 W	C2
No	29	23	12	24	19	37	19	22	29	16	10

Medals	Gold	Silver	Bronze
1. HUN	5	5	2
2. ESP	3	4	3
3. DEN	1	1	0
4. GBR	1	0	2
5. RSA	1	0	1
6. CZE	0	1	2
7. IRL	0	0	1

3.2.2. The World Championships 2008 in Tyn nad Vltavou, Czech Republic, was very successful. Unlike 2002 where we had to cancel and move to Zamora, the weather conditions this time were good. Participants from 30 countries of 5 continents showed excellent competition with a competition concept that seems as if we are moving in the right direction. It was positive to see increasing numbers in C-boat classes where we have suffered in the past.

Statistics

	Participants in Junior classes					Participants in Senior classes					
	K1 M	K1 W	C1 M	K2M	K2 W	K1 M	K1 W	C1	K2 M	K2 W	C2
No*)	30 / 21	22 / 16	15 / 10	25 / 15	20 / 14	43 / 23	28 / 19	19 / 15	36 / 24	16 / 12	12 / 8

*) = number of boats / number of countries

Medals	Gold	Silver	Bronze
1. HUN	4	2	7
2. GBR	2	-	-
3. ESP	1	2	1
3. CZE	1	2	1
5. RSA	1	1	1
6. DEN	1	-	-
6. ITA	1	-	-
8. AUS	-	1	-
8. FRA	-	1	-
8. BEL	-	1	-
11. CRO	-	1	-
12. AUT	-	-	1

3.3. LONG TERM CALENDAR

As part of the work of the committee we are seeking to plan a long term calendar. So far we have plans for World Championships in the years to come including 2011.

Singapore has been allocated the 2010 World Championships, but because of Singapore's success in getting the Youth Olympics that same year we have agreed with their national federation to try to arrange for a swop with the 2011 event which was given to Spain. Both federations have expressed their willingness to make the change, however a technical inspection of the new proposed venue in Spain remains before all formalities are in place for a Board decision.

Jorn Cronberg,
Chair Marathon Racing Committee, September 2008