



CHAIRPERSONS REPORT 2017

Challenging! That is what makes our sport so special. The USP (unique selling point) of Orienteering is that it offers a mental and physical challenge no matter what level you are competing at. The irony of this is the skill set required to be competitive in our sport reflects the competencies necessary for the successful administration of Orienteering in Ireland. Choosing the correct path, dealing with adversity and having the flexibility to find alternatives when necessary. All with the aim of successfully completing the challenge. Isn't that just why we love it!

As we are a volunteer based, not for profit organization, the efforts of everybody who contributed to the activities of the Irish Orienteering Association in the past twelve months is much appreciated. It is very easy for us to meet the "not for profit" element but it is through people "putting up their hands " and helping in any and all ways that ensured our capacity to deliver the Orienteering challenge over the past year.

There are a number of distinct areas we, as a committee, are trying to guide Orienteering.

1. As with all outdoor adventure sports we are competing for limited resources. Also, the people we wish to attract to our sport are the same as those looking at the other options available. That is why, in an effort to raise our profile, we would like to establish a "Brand recognition" and I would ask that you use the Logo as attached at the top of this document when you produce maps, organise events and when interacting with other organisations. If we are consistent and recognisable then people will associate us with all things orienteering. Logo and guidelines available from the Comms. Officer.

2. The necessity for the improvement of standards right across the board can only be beneficial for all involved. This is not just levels of performance at elite level. It means we need to ensure we develop our standards of event organisation, course planning and controlling in order to ensure enjoyment for all, irrespective of what level we compete at. I am not for a minute suggesting we don't do this now but, in an environment where we are competing with other sports, we cannot afford to rest on our laurels.
3. In the challenging financial environment we operate in if the growth of Orienteering requires more funding then in conjunction with getting our "Brand" out there we are also dependant on our elite squads, both senior and junior, to perform at the highest level and achieve performances that highlight our sport. The Irish Orienteering Association continues to support these squads but, as in all other sports, the more funding we receive the better opportunities we can give these athletes.
4. The Association could not, and would not, exist without the clubs and their members. The real heroes of our sport are those people who give of their time to look after "car-parking", stand at starts and finishes for hours in all weather conditions, and do all those jobs that ensure everybody else has an enjoyable day out. For the clubs to grow and flourish it is important that the IOA and its clubs continue to support each other for the development of the sport.

Along with all these activities the Executive committee have engaged with Government Departments, Sport Ireland, National bodies, and organisations which impact on Orienteering. Some of these interactions are more successful than others but all are done with the best interests of Orienteering at their core.

With all the emphasis on a "Healthy lifestyle" there are many opportunities for the development of Orienteering in Ireland. Schools Orienteering continues to show good numbers but we need to streamline this and be coordinated in our approach and development of this. Along with the Schools Orienteering we would like to develop MTBO and look at organisations such as scouting etc. We are

restricted only in our capacity to provide people to develop these areas
- if you would like to get involved let us know.

This year the IOA were successful in submitting a proposal for government funding through the Dormant Accounts Funding mechanism. This is a major undertaking for our sport and gives us an opportunity to showcase our sport and raise our profile. You will have noticed (hopefully) the -
"Ready to go Orienteering" tab on the homepage of the website. This project is targeted at schools we have not been able to access previously and, under the direction of Áine Joyce and Eoin Browne, will deliver orienteering to new people. Please support this initiative and track its progress. The level of interest so far would indicate we may need to look for a second phase to meet the demand.

I would like to acknowledge and thank both Sport Ireland and the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport for their continued support. Their assistance both financially, and through their resources, are essential to our viability.

This year we will see some changes to the national executive committee. It is healthy for an organisation to have changes in personnel and perspective. Two members have chosen not to stand for re-election this year. Both Harold White and Mike Long have made considerable contributions over the last number of years. I thank them for everything they have done for Orienteering in Ireland. They leave a considerable body of work behind them.

I would also wish at this point to acknowledge all of the work done on our behalf by all the officers of the national executive committee. This work is done quietly and efficiently and is very much appreciated. In addition I would like to thank Dr. Bernard Creedon (Anti-Doping), Barbara Foley-Fisher (Child Protection) and Martin Flynn (Or, website & forum). A significant thank you also to Áine Joyce who despite my best efforts keeps us focused and on the straight and narrow. Huge thanks also to the O'Sullivan-Hourihan's - some of those telephone conversations can be challenging!

IOC 2016 was superbly organised by WAT O and I thank them for their efforts. This year WEGO are responsible for IOC 2017 and I wish them

every success with the event. Next year Fingal will be responsible for IOC 2018 and we will support their efforts as appropriate and look forward to the Orienteering challenges they will set.

Wherever you Orienteer continue to enjoy it. If you see an opportunity to have a positive impact on the development of the sport please step forward - you will be supported.

And the next time you are standing in the start box, on the side of a mountain, shivering with the cold and the rain lashing down - SMILE. Enjoy the moment and be happy you are not the person telling you when to GO with the rain dripping off their hood onto their nose - this time!

Happy Orienteering
Paul

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