



Mr John Treacy,
Chief Executive Officer,
Sport Ireland,
Top Floor, Block A,
Westend Office Park,
Blanchardstown,
Dublin 15.

23rd January, 2017

Re: Submission on Women in Sport

A chara,

I refer to your letter of 14th December 2016 inviting the Irish Orienteering Association (IOA), as the National Governing Body (NGB) for orienteering in Ireland, to make a submission on the role of Women in Sport and on mandatory quotas for women on the boards of NGBs. Further to this, the IOA sent a representative to a special meeting for all NGBs with the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport Mr Shane Ross TD on Friday 16th December 2016. This was a very informative and reassuring meeting, and we would like to thank you and the staff in the Department for inviting us to attend and for the opportunity to make a submission on the subject.

While the IOA is not in favour of a mandatory quota or number of women on its Executive Committee, it is fully supportive of encouraging women of all ages and abilities to participate in the sport of orienteering at all levels, and this has been the case since its foundation in 1969. It does so via a combination of means:

- Offering orienteering courses of equivalent levels of difficulty to all ages, both male and female;

- Acknowledging and rewarding achievement by both sexes equally;
- Supporting equal representation by men and women in international competition such as the World Orienteering Championships (WOC);
- Participating in the mixed urban sprint relay event in WOC, which is a new competitive discipline since 2014;
- Organising training camps for its Senior and Junior High Performance Squads where men and women can train to the same level.

Forty percent of competitors at the Leinster 3-Day 2016 orienteering event held in June were female. This is an indicator of a high level of participation of women in our sport. In 2015 two of our female athletes came first and second, respectively, at the W20 class at o-ringen, the world's largest orienteering event. This bodes well for the future of Irish representation in orienteering at an elite level by women.

It is our opinion that following a policy of ensuring that orienteering can be enjoyed by any individual and rewarded achievement by men and women equally will encourage female participation. We will continue to do so and hope to see the rewards of this at all levels of our organisation in the future.

Is mise,



Sarah Ní Ruairc

Treasurer