



Irish Team Report

WORLD ORIENTEERING CHAMPIONSHIPS 2015

Scotland

1. Introduction

This year the World Orienteering Championships (WOC) were held in the closest country to Ireland, Scotland, with the venue in Scotland a significant distance north as it was based in Inverness.

The team for this year had a mix of athletes, some on the team had ran in the last World Orienteering Championships held in Scotland in 1999, but also an athlete who ran at this years Youth Orienteering Championships in Romania. In total 4 members of the team were making their WOC debuts which represented $\frac{1}{3}$ of the team (not including the reserve).

In alphabetical order the men and women selected to represent Ireland at WOC 2015 were:

Women

Niamh Corbett – Reserve
Ciara Largey – Middle & Relay
Roisín Long – Sprint & Sprint Relay
Toni O'Donovan – Long & Relay
Niamh O'Boyle – Sprint, Sprint Relay & Relay
Caoimhe O'Boyle – Sprint

Men

Darren Burke – Sprint & Sprint Relay
Eoin McCullough – Sprint, Sprint Relay & Relay
Colm Moran – Middle
Marcus Pinker – Long
Conor Short – Middle & Relay
Nicolas Simonin – Sprint, Long & Relay

Team Officials

Paul O'Sullivan-Hourihan
Susan Lambe
Kevin O'Boyle – Physio

The current WOC Programme includes 5 medal races:

1. Sprint
2. Sprint Relay
3. Middle Distance
4. Relay
5. Long Distance

But based on a decision made at the IOF EGM during WOC with a proposal to introduce a split WOC, this will change with there being a Forest WOC and Sprint WOC on alternate years starting in 2019.



Back row, L to R: Paul O'Sullivan-Hourihan (Team Official), Marcus Pinker, Eoin McCullough, Conor Short, Nicolas Simonin, Darren Burke
 Front row, L to R: Niamh O'Boyle, Toni O'Donovan, Ciara Largey, Caoimhe O'Boyle, Roisín Long, Niamh Corbett, Susan Lambe (Team Official)

2. Sprint

The first race at WOC this year was the Sprint Qualification held in housing estates on the edge of the town of Forres. Tricky start to the courses, long leg into a housing estate, and it didn't get any easier after that. But this was what the team had been prepared for after selection races in June in a similar type of area near Stirling, and the Irish Championships World Ranking Event in Lisburn would also have been excellent preparation.

There were 3 heats with the top 15 in each heat qualifying for the Sprint Final. Advancing to the final is not an easy task with the standard being incredibly high.

	Heat 1		Heat 2		Heat 3	
Women	1 st	Maja Alm (DEN)	1 st	Tove Alexandersson (SWE)	1 st	Minna Kauppi (FIN)
	23 rd	Niamh O'Boyle	28 th	Roisín Long	26 th	Caoimhe O'Boyle
Men	1 st	Yannick Michiels (BEL)	1 st	Kristian Jones (GBR)	1 st	Jerker Lysell (SWE)
	10 th	Nicolas Simonin	26 th	Eoin McCullough	23 rd	Darren Burke

Sprint Qualification Results

The finish to the qualification race was in a school with spectators all around, both in the school grounds and on the run in. The support could be heard as you approached the last couple of controls and certainly gave a boost to our athletes.

Nick was the only member of the Irish team to qualify for Sunday's final which was held in the centre of Forres. Like the Sprint Relay and Relay, this race was televised live on BBC Alba, the Scottish equivalent of TG4, so it was good to see our sport being brought to a new audience. In the final Nick finished in an excellent 30th position.

Men		Women	
1 st	Jonas Leandersson (SWE)	1 st	Maja Alm (DEN)
2 nd	Martin Hubmann (SUI)	2 nd	Nadiya Volynska (UKR)
3 rd	Jerker Lysell (SWE)	3 rd	Galina Vinogradova (RUS)
30 th	Nicolas Simonin		

Sprint Final Results

3. Sprint Relay

Nairn was the location for the Sprint Relay and before the race began the opening ceremony was held, with the parade of athletes lead by a pipe band, which I'm sure wouldn't have surprised anyone, this being Scotland after all. Our full team wasn't represented in the opening ceremony as the Sprint Relay team was in the pre-race quarantine.

This was the second year that the Sprint Relay has formed part of the WOC Programme. The team is made up of 2 women and 2 men, with the running order of Woman-Man-Man-Woman. Niamh ran 1st leg, Darren 2nd, Eoin 3rd and Roisín 4th. The race had a variety of terrain types, starting in some flat sand dunes with bushes, a tricky network of small streets, and some park lands. Route choices also involved going through the gardens of a couple of houses, with the agreement of the owner. This was not a surprise as a control was placed in the garden of a house in Thursdays' model event.

The Irish team finished in 24th place, an improvement of three places on 2014.

1 st	Denmark
2 nd	Norway
3 rd	Russia
24 th	Ireland

Sprint Relay Results

4. Middle

Held in the forests surrounding Darnaway Castle, this race was the first forest race of the championships. We had 2 men running in this race having been promoted to Division 2 following WOC 2014 and 1 woman.

Seeing Colm approach the finish was a bit of a surprise as he had not shown up on any of the radio controls. Issue with that was that he had to be given a

replacement SI AIR card before he started so it wasn't recognised by the system. Solid runs by both Colm and Conor saw them finish in 61st and 59th respectively. Ciara also ran well to finish in 63rd place.

SI AIR which is a touchless version of the system was used for all races. Up until now it had mainly featured in sprint races, but it was also used in the forest races. After some teething difficulties earlier in the year like at the World Cup Sprint Race in Sweden, there were no serious issues during WOC.

Time lost on the 2nd last control in the middle distance affected the results with medals being lost out on, with much debate on WorldofO.

Men		Women	
1 st	Daniel Hubmann (SUI)	1 st	Annika Billstam (SWE)
2 nd	Lucas Basset (FRA)	2 nd	Merja Rantanen (FIN)
3 rd	Olle Bostrom (SWE)	3 rd	Emma Johansson (SWE)
59 th	Conor Short	63 rd	Ciara Largey
61 st	Colm Moran		

Middle Distance Results

5. Relay

Darnaway Castle was again the setting for the relay, with the forest to the east of the castle being used, an area west of the castle was used for the Middle Distance. The mass start for both relays was in front of the castle with the change-over and finish located in the field below the castle, with the same run in as the Middle Distance.

The relay has increased significance for countries like Ireland in recent years due to the division qualification system now in place for the Middle and Long Distance Races. There are more points available from the relay so the better your team does the more it contributes to whether your country gets promoted/relegated.

The Women's race was held first and the team did incredibly well, just missing out on a top 20 finish.

The Men also performed well finishing in 24th place, similar to the Sprint Relay in that was an improvement of 3 places from 2014. Eoin just lost out to the Italian team in what was probably the closest finish of the day. 1 second separated Ireland and Italy on the line, and 1 second also separated Russia and Spain.

The Danish women and Swiss men had comprehensive victories with the battle for the other podium positions being fierce. Neither of our teams had to be prompted to punch the last control, which again there has been some debate regarding its position following the championships.

Women's Team – Toni, Niamh & Ciara

Men's Team – Nick, Conor & Eoin

Men		Women	
1 st	Switzerland	1 st	Denmark
2 nd	Norway	2 nd	Norway
3 rd	France	3 rd	Sweden
24 th	Ireland	21 st	Ireland

Relay Results

6. Long

Having being used to travelling east of Inverness, with Forres, Nairn and Darnaway all in that direction, the long distance race was held in Glen Affric which is to the southwest of Inverness. Glen Affric hosted the Classic Distance Race in 1999.

There was a 20 minute delay to starts during the middle of the race due to an incident involving a bus taking athletes to the start.

TV pictures from the forested and open mountain terrain were amazing and gave a good picture of the toughness of the race. Before the finish both courses crossed an open field before coming down to the finish. The cheers from the Irish fans for our athletes could be heard all that distance away by the runners.

Men		Women	
1 st	Thierry Gueorgiou (FRA)	1 st	Ida Bobach (DEN)
2 nd	Daniel Hubmann (SUI)	2 nd	Mari Fasting (NOR)
3 rd	Olav Lundanes (NOR)	3 rd	Svetlana Mironova (RUS)
30 th	Nicolas Simonin	48 th	Toni O'Donovan
45 th	Marcus Pinker		

Long Distance Results

Following the long distance race a few of the team who hadn't run that day went for a short run around the hostel where we had been staying for the duration of WOC, ensuring that they were properly hydrated both before and after their run. The winners of this informal beer relay were the Irish.

After that it was on to the Athlete Party in Eden Court.

7. Conclusion

GPS tracking of all races and links to the IOF tv coverage can be found on this webpage:

<http://livecenter.orienteering.org/>

Photos of the team in action courtesy of WorldofO.com:

<https://facebook.com/WorldofO/albums/10155963361135541/>

The team would like to thank all our supporters who helped contribute to the success of the team this year.

Before each race the last encouragement before the start came from our team officials, and at the finish the first congratulations came from our team officials, which was appreciated by all the team, and for this Paul and Susan must be thanked. Susan probably drew the short straw for the long distance race being at pre-start as I believe there may have been a few midges present! The team this year also had the benefit of a physio who worked hard massaging the team before races and helping them recover afterwards, thank you Kevin.

Next year the World Orienteering Championships are being held in Stromstad, Sweden, at the end of August. Our Men's team will be back in Division 3 next year which means 1 place in the Middle and Long Finals. With results like we had this year in Stromstad next year from both our Men and Women, we can realistically think about promotion for both teams to Division 2 for 2017 in Estonia.

Darren Burke
Director of High Performance Orienteering
Irish Orienteering Association