

Minutes

Event: IPC Nordic Skiing Sport Forum

Date: 29 January 2015

Place: Cable, USA

Participants	Name	Position	(Initials)
	Rob Walsh	Chairperson	RW
	John Farra	Vice Chairperson	JF
	Len Apedaile	Head of Technical Control	LA
	Dimitrije Lazarovski	Head of IPC Snow Sports	DL
Not present	Tor Undheim	Head of Competition	TU
	Dia Pernot	Head of Classification	DP
	Alexey Kobelev	Head of Biathlon	AK

Purpose of the Meeting A meeting of the IPC Nordic Skiing Sport Technical Committee, IPC Management and nations participating at the IPC Nordic Skiing World Championships to discuss the items on the agenda.

**Executive
Summary/ Main
Outcomes**

Agenda

Event: IPC Nordic Skiing Sport Forum 2015

Date: 29 January 2015

Place: Cable, USA

- 13:00**
- 1 Opening**
 - 1.1 Welcome
 - 1.2 Roll Call
 - 1.3 Adoption of the Agenda
 - 2 Report from the Chairperson**
 - 3 Report from the Head of IPC Snow Sports**
 - 4 Other relevant reports**
 - 4.1 Classification
 - 4.2 Head of competition
 - 4.3 Factors
 - 4.4 Equipment
- 14:30** Coffee break
- 14:45**
- 5 Recommendations from NPCs**
 - 6 Recommendations from IPCNS STC**
 - 7 Motions from NPCs**
 - 8 Other relevant issues**
 - 9 Closing**

Summary

1. Opening

1.1 Welcome

The Chairperson (RW) welcomed all members to the meeting. RW encouraged the members to open fruitful discussions and pointed out the importance of the joint sessions like the Sport Forum.

1.2 Roll Call

See participant list.

1.3 Adoption of Agenda

Discussion

The agenda was adopted as circulated.

2. Issues Arising from Previous Meetings

2.1 Adoption Minutes of Previous Meetings

Discussion

The draft minutes of the last Sport Forum meeting held in Solleftea (March 2013) as reviewed and approved by the Chairperson were approved by the nations.

3. Report from the Chairperson

Discussion

After the Sochi 2014 PWG call for nominations for new Sport Technical Committee members was sent to all NPC's that are practicing Nordic Skiing. The Governing Board at their meeting in October approved the new Sport Technical Committee members.

New Sport Technical Committee and roles:

1. Rob Walsh, Chairperson
2. John Farra, Vice Chairperson
3. Len Apedaile, Head of Technical Control
4. Tor Undheim, Head of Competition

5. Dia Pernot, Head of Classification

6. Alexey Kobelev, Head of Biathlon

After many years of service as members of Sport Technical Committee two persons retired:

1. Hans Peter Neeser
2. Kaspar Wirz

Colette Bourgonje is also recognized and thanked for her help as STC Athlete Representative for the past 2 years.

The Athlete Representative position in Sport Technical Committee was scheduled to have an election this week, but the four candidates discussed and decided to nominate just one candidate for the STC: Akzana Abdikarimova, LW 10.5 from Russia.

There will also be an Athletes' Working Group led by Akzana and including Nils Erik Ulset, Zebastian Modin, Mark Arendz, and Roman Petushkov. Akzana's nomination to the STC will be sent to the IPC Governing Board for approval.

All STC positions are for a 4 year term that matches the quadrennial cycle of the PWG.

In addition to the Sport Technical Committee we have formed several working groups in order to provide more detailed input and information on different subjects to the STC. These currently include:

- Biathlon Working Group, which is responsible for further and detailed discussion on changing shooting system from air rifle system to full electronic system. In addition to this work the BT Working Group will also be asked to look at rule changes related to BT.
- Classification Working Group, which is responsible to review all research studies and provide detailed information to STC on further development and rule changes in athletes' classification area.

Action(s)

-

4. Head of IPC Snow Sports Report

Discussion

Report contains data for period March 2013 – January 2015.

In short:

- we have a new staff member – Barbora Kohoutova, IPC Winter Sports Administration Assistant, working for all winter sports and mostly responsible for classification and other administrative tasks
- we had Paralympic Winter Games in Sochi which brought great exposure and media coverage for IPC Snow and Winter sports to the world
- new elected Sport Technical Committee members, and chairperson is Rob Walsh

What was accomplished from office perspective:

- IPCNS points are calculated directly in SDMS
- Ranking for World Cup points is coming from SDMS
- Online entry system, which is connected with sport results system
- Providing assistance to Factor Working Group in order to provide more detailed analysis and help in final factor calculation
- New software solution totally integrated in SDMS system with direct upload results from competitions.

Relationships with other international sport organisations:

- IPC: we are governed by IPC and we are pleased that we are in position to use the structure of IPC in our day by day operations. This gives the needed strength to sport and accuracy.
- FIS: we have working agreement which is helping us to assign Technical Delegates for Alpine and Snowboard events. Beside that we are able to use all technical documents and FIS can always provide us any kind of technical assistance. Over FIS Alpine and Snowboard Technical Delegates commissions group we are able to educate TDs around the world through TD update seminars each year.

- IBU: we are trying to establish good communication channels with IBU Race Director and other staff, as the PWG Korea will be held on biathlon stadium. First joint visit will be in May 2015.

WADA and Anti-Doping rules:

- IPC Nordic Skiing Rules and Regulations are WADA compliant and the yearly update of the rules was done in December, after the release of the new WADA Code. In accordance to that, all contracts and other official documents will be updated.

IPC Nordic Skiing World Championships:

In order to provide great experience to spectators as well as perfect venue to athletes, the 2019 WCH bidding process will be initiated in the next month. Long term strategy with draft calendar until 2018 will only help in further promotion of sport, as well as commercialisation (sponsorship) of sport, which is our first priority. Our goal is to have sustainable organisation by year 2018.

Possible next step in Snow Sports World Championships organisation is joint organisation of all IPC Snow Sports, maybe including Ice Sledge Hockey. Furthermore, we have to create bigger awareness for Nordic Skiing in media, and next World Championships organiser will help us with it.

IPC Nordic Skiing World Cups vs IPCNS low level competitions:

The development of IPC Nordic Skiing currently does not have a clear strategy. There is no consistent athlete pathway from grassroots to the elite athlete. The World Cup circuit is often where many developing athletes appear and gain their first competitive experience. Strengthening regional communication and increasing the number and level of regional competitions is one of the first steps in popularisation of the Nordic Skiing. Developing athletes should be able to start their pathway at lower level competitions from club level to IPCNS sanctioned events such as regional cups and National Championships. Classification has to be attached to lower level sanctioned competitions where we will have most developing athletes coming for first time to try to compete in IPC Nordic Skiing.

In order to accommodate this, the STC made a decision and support

regional competitions such as the North America Cup (NorAm), European Cup (EC), Asia Cup (AC) and National Championships etc.

Furthermore, Nations are encouraged to make proposals to Agitos Foundation for support for development camp and other development activities. IPCNS staff and STC are more than welcome to help you in accommodating the proposal for Agitos Foundation.

The Competition Calendar is very stable. From season to season we have had a similar number of competitions. Additionally, in the past two years, USA, CAN, FRA and GER have sanctioned regional and national competitions under the IPCNS in order to help their developing athletes gain experience and achieve first IPCNS points.

Media coverage:

IPC Snow Sports have very strong media coverage as of diversity of sport (Alpine, Nordic and Snowboard) as well very structured competition schedule. In numbers this looks like below:

Season 2013/2014:

Alpine Skiing 37 competitions and approx. 110 race days

Nordic Skiing 8 competitions and approx. 40 race days

Snowboard 8 competitions and approx. 20 race days

TOTAL race days: 170

Season 2014/2015:

Alpine Skiing 40 competitions and approx. 130 race days

Nordic Skiing 11 competitions and approx. 42 race days

Snowboard 9 competitions and approx. 25 race days

TOTAL race days: 197

This championships show us that we are capable out of PWG to attract the media attention. As of today we are on similar number of media exposure as of last year during the Sochi games. IPC Nordic Skiing has an audience and we need to bring sport to them.

Future of the IPC Nordic Skiing sport:

We hope that some of decisions of the current sport forum will be made in order to provide better media exposure and to bring the sport to the cities and bigger audiences. IPC Snow Sports Management is ready to serve the sport and bring sport to next level.

5. Classification report*Discussion*

Even though there was no classification at the PWG, there was classifier work during Sochi PWG

- Classifiers took notes and shared ideas on future course of IPCNS Classification
- Classification Working Group will put all ideas together in order to STC make final proposal for IPCNS Classification Rules.

Expert Meeting in fall of 2014:

In August there was a classification expert meeting in Bonn to discuss the future of classification. Participants included: Athletes, Coaches, Researchers, Classifiers, STC members, and the IPC Medical department. During three days of work we also had a chance to discuss steps towards the potential inclusion of ID classes in IPC Nordic Sport.

Sit Ski research continued in Vuokatti – results will be reviewed in spring

First set of research data from Vuokatti research (2013/14) was delivered to the expert meeting and STC in fall 2014. Subsequent research results are expected to be delivered this spring (2015) and any conclusions assessed for implementation during the spring STC meeting.

VI Classification meeting (Jan 2015):

In January 2015 IPC held, across sports, a VI Expert meeting in Amsterdam. Participants included Paralympic sport representatives (including Rob Walsh representing Nordic skiing), classifiers, athletes, researchers, and the IPC Medical & Scientific Director. Many good issues and questions were brought to the table and discussed, and an

action plan is expected in the next few months. Teams and NPC's involved in Nordic Skiing are encouraged to provide any input on this subject: ipcnordicskiing@paralympic.org.

Inclusion of ID athletes in IPCNS:

Rob Walsh attended the INAS World Championships, held in Estonia, after Sochi, and a full report was delivered to the Sport Technical Committee during the fall meeting. Inclusion of ID athletes is not yet close to being ready.

The IPCNS classifiers have proposed a name change for classes from LW to NS, in order to not confuse the classes with alpine skiing which also uses LW. Historically these were the same classes but they are no longer so it is planned to change the naming system to be sport specific.

Classifiers brought new proposal on class name and this is expected to take effect next season.

6. Competition report

Discussion

New IPCNS Points proposals:

The STC has proposed two recommendations on this topic and these will be discussed during next section of the sport forum.

Percentage factor update:

Every two years we update the percentages for different sport classes. The last one was done in September 2014 after reviewing all four years in last Paralympic cycle.

Competition Schedule Plans:

Currently we have DRAFT competition schedule until PWG Korea 2018. In this competition schedule we have included WC, WCH and PWG as well test event in Korea 2017. Draft competition schedule will be published during February 2015.

7. Technical control report

Discussion

Rulebook update efforts:

For the past two seasons we have a stand-alone IPC Nordic Skiing Rulebook that no longer refers to FIS or IBU rules as it did in the past. This season's updates included ongoing editorial changes, clarifications, relevant FIS updates as well as a complete re-organisation of the biathlon rules section and inclusion of applicable IBU elements (including sanctions). The points rules (IPCNS & WC) and the TD Education Guidelines, and Homologation Guidelines were also updated. Nations are encouraged to provide input and suggestions. The rulebook is maintained each year during the summer and finalised after the TD seminar in September. The rulebook, points rules and related guidelines (TD Education, Homologation, Jury Guidelines) are published on the IPC Nordic Skiing webpage, under the Rules and Regulations section.

New on the Rules:

In 2015 we will work on a new set of guidelines for organisers aimed at improving consistency of events and services and to assist organisers with their planning and delivery. These will include:

- Technical expectations
- Services expectations

Those two documents will be attached to the current IPC Nordic Skiing World Cup contract template.

TD Education:

After Sochi 2014 PWG we had the retirement of long time officials (Ruedi Keller and Olaf Gruhn). Recruitment and education of new IPC TD's is an ongoing process and will be a focus over the next few years to ensure an adequate and stable supply of qualified TD's. There are currently 3 licensed IPC TD's, and four candidates.

The recruitment, education and retention of biathlon IR's has also been added to the education guidelines. There are currently 4 persons on Biathlon IR list of which 2 have been active and further recruitment will be required to sustain staffing levels. In 2015 as we begin to

sanction regional competitions we will introduce a new level of National or Regional TD to support regional and national competitions and provide a further basis for the recruitment of new TD candidates to work at the WC, WCH, and PWG level.

Equipment Inventory:

The new equipment inventory system for monitoring and controlling adaptive equipment was implemented this season and is in place. All athletes that are competing at the WC and WCH have submitted forms for adaptive equipment. Until now we have 15 nations that have submitted adaptive equipment forms primarily related to sit skis, prostheses, and rifles.

Further work will be done in consultation with the Biathlon Working Group to review and define reporting expectations for rifles as there remains some variation in the submission of rifle data.

2018 PWG, planning process:

A first technical inspection visit was made to PyeongChang in May 2014. The site inspection confirmed that there are as of yet no Paralympic courses defined, and that the cross-country and biathlon events will be staged out of the biathlon stadium in 2018. There is a lot of sport capacity and development work to be done in Korea and liaison and planning work is ongoing with POCOG, the Korean Paralympic Committee and newly formed Korean Nordic Sport Federation for the Disabled who will be responsible for hosting test events and athlete and sport development for Nordic skiing. Currently we are working on competition schedule that would include a regional Asian Cup in 2016 and the test event in 2017. A course planner/designer is to be hired by POCOG in the next weeks and begin work on the Paralympic Courses this spring. The next site inspection will take place in May 2015.

On a related topic, the IOC (and IPC) has implemented a new policy for future games that requires organisers to seek IF approval for the proposed venues and to oversee that all operations and rules are accommodated at the bid stage. In recent months, IPCNS has reviewed the Beijing and Almaty bid documents and venue plans and in both cases because of a lack of information regarding Paralympic

courses, and in particular sit ski courses, both sets of plans were initially rejected. Beijing has since responded to our satisfaction and we are still waiting for updates from Almaty. More work will need to be done on this.

8. Report from the Vice Chairperson

Discussion

Development:

In less than one year being involved as IPCNS Sport Technical Committee member, the strong feeling is that the sport needs to grow, and in near future we need to increase number of athletes. This growth needs to be done conjointly with nations and federations together. As we will go over recommendations from nations as well as from STC a few of them make me happy as they are all in the interest of development, and I hope all of them will be accepted by majority. In order to promote and ensure the growth of the calendar in low level races STC made decision that the sanction fee for Continental cup and National Championship will be 250EUR for entire competition. Beside that we can use a National TD which is good strategy in saving the costs and helping the LOC to deliver competition each year.

Please be proactive and approach me with ideas and suggestions, as we need to work on this as one team. There are ideas among us, and we should use coaches meetings and other opportunities to help us and make the sport better.

9. Report from the Biathlon Working Group

Discussion

Rob Walsh provided a report from several meetings of the Biathlon Working Group and thanked all people that participated in important work on electronic shooting system development during the summer and fall. The discussion about electronic rifle focused on what we would like to have for our sport.

Over the course of the discussions about what an electronic system should include the working group looked at two systems that seemed good candidates:

1. Kurvinen system in addition to our existing VI shooting system and
2. HORA system which is laser based system.

These two systems are totally different systems and are not compatible with each other. Kurvinen is camera based system and HORA system is a laser based system.

The working group discussion about rifles concluded that electronic rifles should be as similar as possible to 22 rifles (look, feel, action etc).

The targets should be the same for both systems (VI and PI) so that we can use a full range for either competition and then also have race formats such as mass start or pursuit.

During the fall IPCNS Sport Technical Committee meeting presentations and a demonstration were made by both suppliers that provided a basis for comparison and preliminary assessment of both systems.

HORA presented a good system (rifle and target) that looked, felt, and sounded much like an IBU 22 system with Fortner action. One disadvantage is that they do not have VI system in place. Also, there is some question that the laser system may be less accurate in rain & snow situations. We had hoped to borrow one of these systems during this season for testing, but unfortunately HORA did not have one that was available.

Kurvinen showed us a variety of rifle/stock types including inexpensive plastic molded stocks intended for development. The proposed specifications and features that we would like to see in an IPC WC rifle were communicated to Kurvinen and a WC rifle is under development. Kurvinen provided a prototype WC rifle system and a dozen electronic barrels that are compatible with existing VI system and which were used in the test event in Vuokatti.

In Vuokatti, FIN during the World Cup we tested electronic shooting. The idea behind the test was to collect all data from real time competition in order to make further development and continue our discussion on implementation electronic shooting in PI classes or not.

Discussion:

JPN: Feels that 22 is the future for IPC Biathlon.

LA pointed out that the electronic rifle initiative is about developing the sport in the long term which includes reaching out to more countries and providing options for more athletes to participate in biathlon sport.

Joe Bajan (IPC Biathlon referee): it is too early to make final decisions based on the Vuokatti test and based on the discussion about alternatives to electronic my suggestions is to also make one test with .22 rifles in Vuokatti, and after that test we can make final decision on directions (air versus electronic versus .22) where to go with our sport.

RW: there is yet no final decision, we need to continue developing the system that will accommodate all our needs, and we need to continue with testing in next seasons. The way where we should go is to make decision in 2016, and adopt the changes from 2018.

Hans Peter Neeser (former Head of Biathlon and former Head of Technical Control: lot of teams in past had problems with air rifles as we are using indoor equipment outdoors. In last few seasons we have adapted and not had as many of these problems so it is less urgent to switch from air rifles quickly.

CAN: avoid constant change. Athletes like to have stable rules (incl. equipment), good venues, competitions, courses and fast, accurate timing. They also want to have a defined competition calendar well in advance. We propose keeping air rifles through 2018 PWG. Any decisions about the future should be made sooner than later and all changes be effective after 2018. CAN also supports going to 22. If IBU goes electronic then IPC could go electronic.

JF: it will not be easy to find venues for 22 shooting system. To develop the sport we need to expose our sport more to the public and we need to go to cities, but I understand that we are collecting proposals on all ideas.

NOR: supports a 22 test with no WC points. Pointed out that IBU has no intent to go electronic and are no longer working on this. Also described new Megalink target system under development in Norway.

KW: after the World Cup in Vuokatti, we saw that the electronic system worked and that the environmental concerns associated with electronic rifles (cold, snow, fog, light etc.) have been alleviated. There was a lot of good input and ideas that will provide a solid basis for further development. In the meantime we should stay with air rifles until we are sure about where we want to go in the future.

UKR: Test events should not count for WC points.

RW: put these advisory motions on voting, which will be delivered to Biathlon Working Group

Motion #1 - Stay with air rifles through 2018.

YES: 12 AGAINST: 0 ABSTAIN: 1

Motion #2 - Hold a test event using 22 rifles next season (not counted as a World Cup. This motion assumes we can find an organizer that is willing to host this):

YES: 8 AGAINST: 3 ABSTAIN: 0

NOTE:

HP: safety is great concern and we need to get from each nation that athlete and coach are trained and know how to operate a 22 rifle safely before we can have an event.

10. Recommendations from the NPCs

Discussion

1. Finland

If continuing using air rifles in biathlon competitions, should target size be 12mm instead of 15mm

Discussion:

FIN: coaches think that the target is too big and shooting is too easy

GER: this was proposed 4 years ago (2011 15-13mm)

NOR: supports reducing the size but prefer 13mm instead of 12mm

due to angles (referred to GER research)

UKR: not in favour. Feels shooting success is more related to the difficulty of the track. Eg. WCH we had harder tracks and the # of clean targets is not so high. Feels 15mm is still appropriate otherwise we will just have athletes doing penalty loops.

Question to France: why 12mm, what is this based on?

Joe Bajan: if objective is to be closer to IBU (relative size), mathematical analysis shows that the target size should be just under 14mm.

CAN: pointed out that this proposal would affect the entire field equitably versus the UKR proposal which would only affect those with arm disabilities.

After discussion Finland reconsidered their proposal and amended it it so that the new proposal is to reduce the diameter of LW targets to 13mm.

YES: 8 AGAINST: 4 ABSTAIN: 1

2. France

Adopt a factor list based on each handicap and race format (as in Alpine Skiing)

Rationale:

This will permit to adjust athletes' abilities with the length and format of each competition.

Discussion:

CAN: similar recommendation as in 2013 with vote to study, why no action yet?

UKR: asked for clarification

NOR: problem is B2+B3 can see target when aiming – support GER recommendation (blinder) as a cheap and easier solution to implement than a percentage solution. Also pointed out that there have been proposals on this issue 4 and 2 years ago and again now and asked

why this has not been implemented.

JF: concern that the blinder solution would still be subject to trainability by B2,B3

KW: pointed out that Russia already has a solution (blinder system used for training) and demonstrated it in 2013 in Sochi.

USA: asked how the calculation is done (GER proposal)

GER: our own research was based on 2013 Vuokatti shooting time data demonstrated that the variation in shooting time between B1 & B2/B3 was greater than the percentage difference between B1 & B2/B3. There is more data now with which to create a better analysis.

As the proposal is similar to the one from NPC GER after discussion NPC FRA withdrew the proposal and there was no vote.

3. Germany #1

We suggest the sub-division of the class L5/7 into three different classes each rated with different percentage:

We suggest the introduction of these three classes subdividing LS/7:

L5: both upper limbs affected above elbow Classic 79%, Free technique 87%

L5/7: both upper limbs affected, one above elbow, one below elbow Classic 80%, Free technique 88%

L7: both upper limbs affected below elbow Classic 81%, Free technique 89%

Rationale for the recommendation:

To our opinion it is common sense, that the use of arms and therefore its length/weight has got an influence on an athletes' performance in both techniques.

At first the use of arms gives a starting impulse at the beginning of every motion cycle. Obviously the length and weight of each arm has got a different momentum and therefore impact on performance. Secondly coordination and balance is influenced by arms and of course obviously dependent on length and weight.

This knowledge leads to the subdivision of the class L6/8 into two classes 5 years ago.

Discussion:

RW: this question was also brought up during the Classification expert meeting in August 2014 and is on the classification agenda. Rob also pointed out that discussions about classification and percentage are separate issues and that percentage is derived from results information in the usual manner.

YES: 12 AGAINST: 0 ABSTAIN: 1

4. Germany #2

To prevent everyone in the visually impaired classes B1-B3 from visually aiming at the targets and getting a time advantage from this. We recommend that everyone in the B1-B3 classes has to wear goggles while shooting or it should be installed a visual obstruction.

For reasons of fairness even the B1 athletes would have to wear them. The goggles should be kept by the Marshall at the shooting range and be given to the athlete after arriving at the stand. The athlete has to put it on before getting the rifle out of the holding device.

Rationale for the recommendation:

This is because we figured out that B1 athletes' shooting times even with the 15% advantage are much longer than the shooting times of B2-B3 athletes.

We therefore recommend that in the first competitions of next year we should have a test competition that way.

Discussion:

GER: pointed out that this has been under discussion for 4 years and suggests testing it this season.

UKR: asked how this would be evaluated: answer was through analysis of shooting times (for first shot)

KW: supported blinder system and pointed out potential for marketing on blinder

HP: from a jury point of view, prefer that we not use goggles, and need to consider enforcement and suggested that a blinder system should be fixed to the range rather than to the rifle due to potential to look

over a blinder on the rifle when aiming.

RW: we will accommodate test next season, and we will measure the shooting time, as we need inputs prior to final decision. IPC Nordic Skiing World Cup in Tyumen, RUS could be good place for testing.

YES: 11 AGAINST: 0 ABSTAIN: 2

5. Germany #3

Establishing a biathlon relay. Based on the rules of the CC relay.

NPC Germany withdrew the motion as it is similar to one proposed by the STC to be discussed later

6. Ukraine

To modify the upper part of spring for athletes in class LW2-9: Trapeziform or straight without ledges.

Rationale:

Most of the teams use additional onlay (strip,, spacer) to make the buttock wider so that the rifle is fixed on the spring, which gives significant advantage while aiming, reload and shot itself. Suggested modification of the spring will allow to avoid manipulation with the rifle and will make the shooting process more fair and closer to IBU requirements.

Discussion:

HP: suggested removing the upright wings on the top plate and widening it.

After discussion voting took the place

YES: 10 AGAINST: 0 ABSTAIN: 3

7. USA

In line with previous proposals by Russia (Irina Gromova), we propose to replace the sitting middle distance XC lengths of 5 & 10km with the previously used "short" distances of 2.5km for Women and 5km for Men at the WCH and PWG. These short distances are in the rules

now and used at some IPCNS events but were removed from the PWG and WCH schedule in order to allow addition of the sprint event.

- Looking at the results from distance races (middle & Long), you will find that generally the same people are winning these longer races. They are essentially the same kind of race, physiologically.
- The muscular demand placed on a sitting athlete is different from those in a standing position. This results in becoming physiologically taxed sooner, and we believe it is the reason the longer distances provide similar results. This is not interesting for spectators or for nations.
- We should be looking for opportunities for athletes of all the nations to distinguish themselves in different distances. Shorter races would provide varied physiological demand and therefore may provide opportunities for more athletes & more nations to experience success, which would in turn provide them greater motivation for NPC's to invest in our sports.
- If accepted sit ski Women would have 900m sprint, 10km long, and a 2.5km short as their XC races, and sit ski Men would have 900m sprint, 15km long, and a 5km short as their XC races.

Rationale for the recommendation:

In looking at the results from WCH & PWG for the past years, you can see that the winners of the Middle & Long Distance are the same. The Sprint is the one that you see some different podiums, with a few LW10s finding success, whereas they are generally not finding it in the longer races. This proposal will help to mix up the podiums and provide more opportunity to more skiers of more nations to share in the medals. This will be very good for the growth & development of our Sport.

Discussion:

NPC Germany suggested using distances 3 km and 6 km (due to 3k course) rather than 2.5k/10k.

NOR: discussed this with our athletes and their opinion is that we should not reduce the distances. Current formats are 1k, 5k, and 12k for women and 1k, 10k, and 15k for men (sitting) and that these

middle distances are not true middle distances. Proposed that the middle distance should be mid way between sprint and long distance. E.g. men would go to 7.5km and women to 6km.

YES: 10 AGAINST: 2 ABSTAIN: 0

11. Recommendations from the STC

Discussion

Recommendation #1:

Permit the calculation of IPCNS points in races with fewer than 3 persons with points in the top 5.

Current Rule: 4.3.1.3 If there are less than three competitors with IPCNS points among the first five on the result list, the IPC Nordic STC decides about the race penalty for this race or may decide that this race won't be taken into consideration for the IPCNS-Points.

Proposal: To add the following wording to the rules to explain what methods the STC might use to determine the race penalty in COC races:

The STC may apply the following methods to calculate a race penalty at their discretion if there are fewer than 3 competitors with IPCNS points in the top 5 finishers on the results list:

- If there are two competitors with IPCNS points among the top 5 in the results, the two point values are added and then divided by 2.25 to determine the race penalty. (Note: this value of 2.25 will be reviewed after each season as are other values in the points calculations.)
- Standing and Visually Impaired classes may be combined in order to calculate a race penalty. The percentages for classes will remain the same.
- Men & women in the same class may be combined in order to calculate a race penalty. 18% (or current percentage for relay races according to the IPCNS Rules and Regulations rule 324.4.2) will be subtracted from women's percentages before combining.

Current Rule: 4.4.1 Minimum penalties will be applied for the following competition categories:

Proposal: Add the following category to the current rule:

- Continental Cups races will carry a minimum penalty of 35 points.

Rationale for the recommendation:

We aim to increase the number of COC level races that are held around the world, and this will help to ensure there will be the chance to score IPCNS points at these races with smaller fields and fewer athletes with points. More races scored with IPC points will also improve the accuracy and stability of the IPCNS points system.

RW explained rationale behind the motion and voting took the place

YES: 12 AGAINST: 0 ABSTAIN: 0 (Unanimous)

Recommendation #2:

Athletes with both IPCNS and FIS Licenses may earn IPCNS points by participating in FIS competitions. To be awarded IPC points from FIS results, the following steps must be completed:

- Athlete must hold both IPCNS and FIS licenses
- Athlete must have a valid and current IPC classification
- An IPCNS licensed athlete who earns FIS points can petition for those points to be converted to IPCNS points. (*they must appear on official FIS results)
- Petitions will only be considered for FIS races of up to 20km (not longer)
- Proposed conversion steps:
 1. Athlete or nation submits a points conversion proposal, including relevant information: official FIS registered name, date, race location, distance, codex etc. as well as the athlete's IPCNS (SDMS) license number.
 2. Athlete's race time is then modified according to their official classification percentage, as it would be in an IPC event.

3. FIS points are modified according to adjusted time (if there is an adjustment).

- IPCNS converts modified FIS points to the IPCNS system based on a points conversion formula (exact conversion numbers to be determined).
- Conversion system is reviewed annually to ensure conversions are accurate and fair.

We propose establishing a conservative conversion system for the 2015-2016 season determined from looking at results from 2014/15 and before. A more thorough analysis and modification will be made for the 2016-2017 season based on additional data from the 2015/16 season. A points working group will be formed to conduct this annual review and recommend changes to the STC.

Rationale for the recommendation:

This will offer a method for developing athletes to gain experience before racing on the IPCNS World Cup circuit, improving the level and depth of competition at the highest level of our sport. It will also increase the amount of data in the IPCNS points system and therefore improve its accuracy.

RW explained rationale behind the motion and two Nations (CAN and NOR) express concern about the proposal (why limit to distances only up to 20km, FIS does not have 20km distance, what about World Loppet, 30, 50k?, FIS point is a FIS point). The STC amended the proposal to eliminate the restriction to races more than 20km.

YES: 11 AGAINST: 0 ABSTAIN: 1

Recommendation #3:

The STC has heard from some nations that they would like to see a biathlon relay event in the PWG and WCH. This could require that the cross country relay events be reduced from 2 races (Open Relay and Mixed Relay as done in Sochi) to one race in order to make space for a Biathlon relay. The STC would like to hear from the Sport Forum representatives if they would like the STC to investigate a possible

format for a Biathlon relay and make a future proposal for replacing a Cross Country relay event with the Biathlon event.

Rationale for the recommendation:

The benefits of replacing a CC relay with a BT relay would bring the number of BT events more even with the number of CC events. It would also eliminate any confusion by spectators about the difference between the 2 CC relays. It is likely that the format would be similar to that of the CC relay.

The common difficulties with the relay would be to ensure that both men and women are widely included and also a variety of classes. Also, it will be important to make sure that overall nation participation is kept high.

There is no guarantee that a change would be implemented before the 2018 PWG but if this motion shows support for this idea the STC will do its best to come up with a solution quickly.

Discussion:

RW explained rationale behind the motion. He explains that if there is support for the motion then the STC will try to create a new relay format with the help of nations. There is no guarantee that a new race format will be in place for 2018 PWG.

CAN: like the idea and suggested two leg CC and two legs BT, so that it could be kind of a combined event (like youth Olympic Games). Can we test this?

NOR: support proposal from CAN

USA: will this event replace existing day or we are adding new competition day in PWG, WCH program? STC responds that this would replace one of the existing relays on the same day. No additional day is proposed.

UKR: support original proposal and disagree with proposal of combine CC/BT disciplines in same relay event.

RW: question: would athletes be allowed to compete in both relays (CC

+ BT) if there were two separate ones? Right now can only compete in 1 of 2 CC relays

HP: reminded that the idea of two CC relays is to have most athletes taking part in event. If we remove one CC relay which one would it be? The risk in this is that we reduce the number of nations / athletes that could ultimately compete in either.

GER: we should look for interesting events as we need more media and more spectators, and we like idea of combine CC/BT disciplines and using short distance.

CAN: we always face the problem of making competitive team, and in Sochi we made it. The current relay is still new, fun and cool and should continue to be developed rather than changed. On the other side athletes do not like to change too much and we would support the idea to introduce something like this after PWG 2018.

YES: 12 AGAINST: 0 ABSTAIN: 0 (Unanimous)

Recommendation #4:

Recommendation:

- Get rid of the marked holding zones and let the athletes hold whenever they need it for safety reason.

Rationale for the recommendation:

- Why should we tell a B-athlete when they need to hold on to the guide's pole and for how long? They know better than we do. Since pushing and pulling isn't allowed and can be sanctioned by the jury I think we can make it easier for everybody by taking away the marked holding zones.

Discussion:

RW explained the rationale behind the motion. Pushing or pulling would still be disallowed.

NOR: questioned how much pushing and pulling we now see.

Suggested most pulling occurs at top of downhill, and that some pushing /pulling between guide and athlete on downhill because of

different relative speeds is hard to avoid.
USA asked if there was such an advantage why do B2/B3 not do it?
SWE/GER: opinion is that it is a disadvantage for a B1 to hold in a downhill because you lose time anyhow.

YES: 7 AGAINST: 3 ABSTAIN: 2

12. Other business

Discussion

RW: discussion on idea of having Sport Forum outside of World Championships

CAN: Sport Forum is every two years, and as it is every two years it is very hard to deal with all proposals and ideas.

RW: for that reason we have sometimes organized Open Forum on last World Cup in the season when we do not have Sport forum in order to collect all inputs from nations.

NOR: we can make a meeting in connection with FIS meeting in June or October that could involve both the Open Forum discussions/voting on one day and working group meetings/presentations on another day. On the other side I like to have Sport forum attached to World Championships because everyone is present, but we would also like to have an annual meeting to sit down and discuss what is coming up.

CAN: if we have agenda well in advance, we can send more people to these meetings. Budget wise keep SPF at WCH

GER: it is very important to have classifiers at World Championships to observe the competitions so they are more familiar with the athletes and the sport.

YES: 11 AGAINST: 1 ABSTAIN: 0