

Decisive days for the new World Championships

Let the Games Begin!

While the stars of the sporting world gather for 16 days of top-class performance and athletic highlights in Sydney, the main decision makers of the International Orienteering Federation will take their seats in Paris to discuss the new "Sprint" World Championships, set to kick off in 2001 - if possible. September can be a decisive month for the future of orienteering, as well as for the Park World Tour which gained much appreciation at the IOF Congress in Leibnitz, Austria, in early August.

The Congress, held simultaneously with the PWT Champions' Week, said "Yes!" to the introduction of "Sprint" World Championships, possibly already in 2001, possibly as a series of races with the Park World Tour concept as a model.

Support for a series

"I would stress that we are talking about a series of races", were the final words of Helge G. Simonsen, President of the Norwegian Orienteering Federation, presenting the proposal to the IOF Congress. An overwhelming majority of the 41 nations present supported the new World Championships - as do the top athletes. "I want to see a series, and I want IOF to engage the Park World Tour crew, with their experience, enthusiasm and energy, to realise this", says classic World Champion Bjørnar Valstad.

Golden Final ahead

Valstad and his partner Hanne Staff are strong contenders for the PWT 2000 titles, and will be chasing current leaders Yuri Omeltchenko, Ukraine, and Reeta Kolkkala, Finland, when the world elite takes off for the PWT Golden Final 21-31 October.

By then, a plan for the 2001 "Sprint" World Championships may have been established. During September, the Finnish Orienteering Federation is expected to tell the IOF about the possibilities for including another distance at the WOC 2001 in Tampere. Meanwhile in Sydney, the first Finnish athlete to enter the stadium at the Olympic Games Opening Ceremony was an orienteer.



"I want to see a series of races, organised by the Park World Tour", is Bjørnar Valstad's wish to the IOF Council, now, planning for the new "Sprint" World Championships.

Check out Olympic and WOC news, PWT Champions' Week reports and Golden Final preview inside!



Thumbs up for the new World Championships: IOF President Sue Harvey and NOF President Helge G. Simonsen surrounded by the founding PWT members Erik Unaas, Gåvert Wååg, Jörgen Mårtensson, Jaroslav Kacmarcik, Hans Mårtensson and Anders Vestergård at the Congress in Leibnitz. The next few weeks will show if the PWT will be involved in the organisation of a future World "Sprint" Championships.

yes! to „Sprint“ World Championships - but in what format?

Decisive days for Park World Tour!

"We really wish to help the IOF", says Park World Tour President Anders Vestergård. "We should of course not throw away the considerable knowledge which the PWT has developed", says IOF Vice President Åke Jacobson.

The future of the new "Sprint" World Championships will be decided in the course of the next few days.

"And I would like to stress that we are now talking about a series of races", said Helge G. Simonsen, President of the Norwegian Orienteering Federation, in his final words before an amended version of NOF's proposal was accepted by an overwhelming majority of the 41 nations present to vote.

The International Orienteering Federation Congress in Leibnitz, Austria ended in smiles and handshakes. Late night meetings, heated discussions, and the longest debate of the Congress day concluded in a manner that appeared favourable to the Park World Tour.

Overwhelming "Yes!"

The Congress said a resounding "Yes" to a new World Championships in "Sprint" Orienteering. If possible these should be organised already from 2001 onwards – and be held every second year.

Finland has the ball

Since the Congress, Finland - the WOC 2001 host nation - has been asked if they can organise a "Sprint" World Championship next year. The IOF Council will receive an answer during September. IOF Vice President Åke Jacobson finds

it natural that the "sprint" final is held in conjunction with the WOC week in Finland. It can be just one single race, but also the last competition in a series.

"We have only been asked if we can organise one "sprint" orienteering competition. It is not stated that this should be a final", says Jan-Erik Krusberg, President of the Finnish Orienteering Federation - and member of the IOF Council.

"From a Finnish point of view, we of course wish that it is the final", he continues.

"What will happen if Finland cannot organise a sprint race at WOC 2001, Åke Jacobson?"

"The wish of the congress was that the new championship should be organised in 2001, and I think that should be possible even if Finland says no", says the IOF Vice President.

A new IOF Committee

The Congress decision was quite open. Many elite runners, strongly supporting the Park World Tour's strive for World Championships status, were under the impression that co-operation with PWT was inherent in the IOF decision. PWT has offered to the IOF to organise the new Sprint Championships as a series of races, and also to pay the IOF an organising fee as the organisers of other World Championships or World Cup events do. The IOF, however, does not seem ready yet for this kind of co-operation.

"All world championships have to be organised by the IOF", says IOF President Sue Harvey. "When we know whether there will be a championship or not in "sprint" orienteering next year, we can then start to work on how it should be organised", she continues.

The IOF intends to establish a provisional Committee to plan the international elite programme and the way to organise the events. At the moment however the new Foot-O Committee is not in existence either although the current chairman, Ove Gasbjerg of Denmark, is willing to continue in the position. IOF President Sue Harvey feels it important to elect members who both have the necessary knowledge and are also backed by their national federations.

Great opportunities

None of the members of the Park World Tour - which has proposed a

special committee for the new Sprint World Championships to be formed under the IOF - have been invited to join any new committee yet.

"We are, as always, willing to co-operate in order to spread and develop our sport", states PWT President Anders Vestergård.

"What kind of help can the PWT give the IOF?"

"Starting from the new World Championships series, we could show the orienteering world a lot of opportunities for improving the overall standards of race organisation, design, spectator and media service - spreading the sport to new orienteering countries and new participants, with increasing media and sponsor interest - and which can be applied to classic distance races too."

"For example our PWT concept with uniform design, a mobile media centre and a huge video screen could then be used at other IOF Championships and World Cup races thus adding at once a new dimension to these events."

The NOF President and many elite runners prefer a series of competitions.

"I think it should be four or five races spread over five to eight days, with qualification races held earlier in the season. The final could be staged in a new developing orienteering country. Park Orienteering is a much easier way to spread our sport", says Bjørnar Valstad, the reigning champion at the classic distance - and a rising star in the park races.

PWT ready for action

The Norwegian elite runner cannot comprehend a championship version with only one race. He also thinks it would be disastrous if the IOF does not involve the Park World Tour.

"Who else other than the PWT has the knowledge of organising such competitions? The IOF would need five to ten years to gain the experience they can now obtain from the PWT. It is also important to utilise the great enthusiasm



Jörgen Mårtensson, the front figure spreading orienteering around the world, gives a historical speech to the IOF Congress, in front of IOF President Sue Harvey, flanked by Vice Presidents Åke Jacobson, Hugh Cameron and Edmond Széchenyi.

Support for a series

The Norwegian O-President Helge G. Simonsen is in favour of an IOF co-operation with PWT.

"They have the knowledge of how to organise this type of competition very successfully. But all World Championships should still be organised by the IOF", says Simonsen.

and energy of the Park World Tour for the development of our sport", states Valstad.

The Park World Tour crew - now preparing for an exciting Golden Final to crown the fifth PWT season - is ready for action. The next few weeks will clearly be most interesting.

High class race at the Kumla heights

Valstad on top at the „volcano“

Reigning classic distance World Champion Bjørnar Valstad mastered the Swedish Kvarntorpshögen hill better than anyone else, running off with his first ever PWT triumph at Kumla on July 26. Reeta Kolkkala of Finland recorded her first race victory since winning the overall Park World Tour in 1996 and took over the lead in the women's class.



Bjørnar Valstad on the climb towards his first PWT victory.

Ukrainian Yuri Omeltchenko lost by 18 seconds to Valstad on the 2.4 km course, finishing just ahead of three chasing Finns in the exotic "volcano" terrain. "The Park World Tour races offer a lot of surprising challenges. Here you had to be good at contour orienteering. It's great that parts of the park orienteering are also in real forest terrain", stated a delighted winner.

Valuable variation

"In a Park World Championships series we should have this kind of race in "normal" terrain as well as orienteering in the city streets and parks", adds Bjørnar with his partner Hanne Staff – who

came 3rd in the women's race - nodding in agreement beside him.

The comments of the Finnish trio Huovila, Peltola and Salmi could be summarised in one sentence: "Small mistakes - you had to be focused on the orienteering all the way. This was a park race to our taste".

Almost perfect for Reeta

Their compatriot Reeta Kolkkala was also very happy with the day. "A testing course - one of the best ever PWT races as I like demanding orienteering. After catching Emma Engstrand (2nd) and Kaisa Salminen (5th), we ran very fast in the final section of the race too", said Kolkkala, stepping up from her second

place in the PWT 2000 season première. The winner of the Hamina race, Marika Mikkola, was not able to celebrate this time finishing 21st. "I'm still very inexperienced in park orienteering - and reading the contours is particularly difficult for me", commented Mikkola, who is always smiling despite her failure this time.

Exotic flavour

The challenging competition also saw some exotic surprises, with Swedish-born Anna Garin securing a bronze medal for Spain - and Central Africa and South America having their first participants on the Tour. „Wow! I really liked this“, said Kenyan Jonathan Mbatia, very happy - even though he was disqualified, with one control missing. „I would love to welcome Park World Tour to Brazil“, ensured Marion Costa Da Silva - a dance instructor and university professor in her home country.

High score event

The Kumla race was rated highly by both runners, spectators and the media as an interesting orienteering event. Over 4,000 spectators attended the Swedish Park World Tour stage, though the O-Ringen 5-days organisers had expected more at the race which was organised specially on the rest day of the orienteering week. The torrential rain, which accompanied the orienteers all through the week, probably kept the big crowds away.



Peter Oberg from Sweden, newcomer in Kumla...



...as well as Jonathan Mbatia of Kenya, greatly enjoying the race.



Reeta Kolkkala on the winning route, passing Kaisa Salminen and a relaxed Kvarntorpshögen inhabitant.

Première Tour winner Reeta back in front A real challenge!

Reeta Kolkkala, the historical winner of the première Park World Tour in 1996, still feels a great thrill about the park races.

"I do enjoy leading the Tour again, but PWT also has an excellent organisation and well organised races, which at the same time serve as tough preparation for other competitions. And yes - the prize money of course adds an extra spice to it all", says Kolkkala. "Even though the season has been long and hard, nothing will make me miss out from the concluding races in Norway, Thailand and China."

World Championships in focus

One exam away from graduating as a qualified primary school teacher, Reeta's main goal this year is the World Cup, with the Park World Tour as a close second. *"In 2001, I will be focusing completely on the World Championships in Tampere. Once the Park WOC series fits my schedule, I will definitely take part."*

"Even if the Park WOC title would be decided one week ahead of the Tampere World Championships, from a physical perspective it would not be a problem. Tough, 15 minute races would be perfect tests of your "max VO² capacity" and also require full concentration. In that context the park races would even be an ideal part of the last "fine tuning" for the World

Championship races", says the blonde princess of the forest.

"Professional" orienteer

Reeta decided already this summer that she will not be looking for a job before the 2001 World Championships are over. *"I will certainly do a few spells as a relief teacher this winter, but while I have the financial opportunity to continue training "professionally", then why shouldn't I?"*

"The 2001 Championships may be my last. At least I won't compete in the world elite in 2002", says Reeta cryptically. Since the PWT Champions' Week in Leibnitz, she has been able to train quite smoothly. "I went straight from Austria to a WOC training camp in Tampere with the Finnish team. After that I was really tired. A few days of rest brought back the "go", but then I got problems with my back after a night race. A chiropractor helped me to get over this in a couple of days."

Best and worst

Reeta Kolkkala has competed in most of the 34 PWT races held so far. Which one gets her highest score? *"As a whole, the race in Turku last year: physically challenging, technically demanding - and you had to be fully focused. Importantly, there was also a big crowd following the competition. I also enjoyed the course*

Results Kumla/SWE

Women - 2,3 km, 190 m ↗, 21 ↘

1	Reeta Kolkkala	FIN	18:51,2
2	Emma Engstrand	SWE	19:52,7
3	Anna Garin	ESP	20:32,7
4	Hanne Staff	NOR	20:41,3
5	Kaisa Salminen	FIN	20:56,8
6	Maria Sandström	SWE	20:58,4
7	Eva Jurenikova	CZE	21:02,2
8	Annika Björk	SWE	21:20,2
9	Simone Luder	SUI	21:34,3
10	Jenny Johansson	SWE	21:46,1
11	E. Ingvaldsen	NOR	22:02,0
12	Lucie Böhm	AUT	22:11,3
14	K. Arewång	SWE	22:19,3
15	Zsuzsa Fey	ROM	22:23,6
15	Jenny James	GBR	22:55,1
16	Maria Hoffman	FIN	23:05,5
17	Giedre Voveriene	LTU	24:15,8
18	Sofie Herremans	BEL	24:46,7
19	Kathryn Ewels	AUS	25:24,5
20	M. Riddervold	NOR	25:31,0
21	Marika Mikkola	FIN	26:15,4
22	Tang Wang Hui	CHN	34:19,3
23	M. Costa da Silva	BRA	35:18,2
	Sarah Rollins	GBR	mispunch

Men - 2,3 km, 190 m ↗, 21 ↘

1	Bjørnar Valstad	NOR	15:12,9
2	Y. Omeltchenko	UKR	15:30,8
3	Jarkko Huovila	FIN	15:45,3
4	Juha Peltola	FIN	15:56,1
5	Janne Salmi	FIN	16:10,7
6	M. Mamlejev	RUS	16:14,0
7	Thomas Bühner	SUI	16:26,4
8	Tore Sandvik	NOR	16:33,9
9	Rudolf Ropek	CZE	16:35,8
10	Jarmo Puttonen	FIN	16:43,3
11	Tom Quayle	AUS	16:47,5
12	Edgaras Voveris	LTU	16:47,7
13	Håkan Petersson	SWE	17:07,3
14	Matthias Niggli	SUI	17:20,7
15	Peter Öberg	SWE	17:47,6
16	Allan Mogensen	DEN	18:35,5
17	Grant Bluett	AUS	18:49,5
18	Lubos Mateju	CZE	19:08,7
19	Odin Tellesbø	NOR	19:46,4
20	Mikkel Lund	DEN	20:07,6
21	Li Feilong	CHN	26:53,0
	Jonathan Mbatia	KEN	mispunch
	Jamie Stevenson	GBR	mispunch

when I won my first race in Oslo in 1996, but even though there were 20,000 persons around the race venue, they were only interested in Norway's biggest youth soccer cup being held at the same place. My "worst" PWT experience was in Venice, in 1997. There were too many people along the course in the narrow city streets". Reeta also gives credit to the PWT crew for the organisation: "It is good that the runners are kept outside the race area before the start. This makes the competitions fair to everyone". "In comparison, the IOF's ultra-short World Cup race in Lahti was a disaster. You got a part of the map in advance, as well as the control descriptions, which revealed the last part of the course - and you could even see the runners passing by from the start. I don't like that type of event."

Hanne hot tip for another PWT title

Inspiring the team

Hanne Staff (28), the Norwegian orienteering queen, is not only a great individual competitor: she is also a great team player. She provides her team mates with support and encouragement, and the Norwegian girls have now become almost unbeatable.

Individually, only Hanne has managed to climb to the top of the podium so far this year, but the Norwegian girls did win the World Cup relay in both Japan and Ukraine - suddenly doing better than ever. "Hanne gives a lot of herself. She tells us her secrets and gives us encouragement and praise. Of course, you also feel confident when you've got a good runner like Hanne in the team," says Birgitte Nordahl Husebye from Fredrikstad. "Everybody is capable of doing anything", says Hanne Staff. And that says everything about her. She really trusts and believes in her team mates.

Exceptionally social

"Hanne is a very sociable person, above the average level", says Ingrid Hadler, the World Champion from 1970 who is now a physiotherapist for the Norwegian national squad. "Hanne is a much better team player than I ever was", continues Ingrid. Hanne is also very popular among journalists and autograph hunters. She never says no. She would probably run

across the finish line one more time if a photographer asked her to do it.

Strong-minded

Smiling and positive, but also a very strong-minded athlete, who means what she says and says what she means and is determined to fulfil her goals. When some of her club-mates in Bækkelaget ran in classes they were a bit too good for at the Swedish 5-days, she let them know about it. Competing in the French 5-days as a child, her parents wanted her to carry a note stating "I am Hanne Staff from Nittedal, Norway". She didn't want to do that. Of course she could find her own way without any help, and of course she did.

Supportive father

Hanne's father, the Norwegian team doctor Peer H. Staff, was himself Nordic Champion in 1965. He and Hanne have a close relationship which is reinforced by their sporting interest. They talk a lot about the physical training aspect of orienteering, especially ahead of major competitions. In her youth, Hanne learnt a lot of orienteering technique from her father. They used to go to the family's holiday cottage in Nord-Østerdal where he taught her how to read the terrain, which in Nord-Østerdal, is very open and continental.

More confident after Grimstad

In her early international orienteering career Hanne experienced a lot of ups and downs like many other young seniors. She was capable of winning one day and then could be among the last the next day. She says that the World Championships gold in Grimstad in 1997 gave her self-confidence a new dimension. Hanne and her partner Bjørnar Valstad live at Kjelsås, a suburb of Oslo, only 15-20 km from the forests of her childhood in Nittedal. Bente Martinsen, the World Champion and World Cup winner in cross country skiing, comes from the same village. She and Hanne are good friends and this summer Hanne was a bridesmaid at Bente's wedding. Some weeks before, Hanne was also a bridesmaid at the wedding of Hanne Sandstad and Johan Ivarsson.

The big secret in Hanne's life is when she will marry Bjørnar Valstad. That's a question she is not willing to answer...



Hanne Staff, enjoying orienteering in the forest as well as in city streets.



From smiling spectator to serious supporter

Bjørnar's big change

A few years ago Bjørnar Valstad thought of park racing as just a new fun novelty form of orienteering, not to be compared with the proper races in classic terrain. He was not very interested in taking part himself. Now, he is an enthusiastic supporter of this form of high speed racing - fighting for an overall victory in the Park World Tour - and campaigning for the future of the new orienteering discipline.

Having won his qualification race at the Champions' Week in Austria, Valstad joined Jörgen Mårtensson to meet the IOF leaders Sue Harvey and Åke Jacobson, to discuss the future of park orienteering ahead of the important Congress day to decide on the issue of its world championship status.

Heated debates

Their discussions continued past midnight, with Bjørnar and a large group of other elite runners joining in for the final (?) battle in the IOF Congress hall the next morning. The Norwegian World Champion also challenged Sönke Bandixen, the Swiss 2003 World Championships organiser, in a heated debate on the future format of the World Championships.

"In the end we found out that we had almost the same opinions", smiles Bjørnar.

Ups and downs

Last year, Valstad was the ultimate World Number One. He added one victory after another in the main competitions. Two years ago he was leading the World Cup right from the very first race but stumbled at the finish line to finish second.

At the 1997 World Championships in Norway on "home"

terrain he only managed 25th in the classic distance, crossing the line totally exhausted, while his girlfriend Hanne Staff had her golden day. However 1999 was Bjørnar's big year for revenge and he finally became a major championship winner with gold at both the Nordic Open Championships and the World Championships in Scotland.

The right way

This year, Bjørnar's aim was to win the World Cup but he lost his chances in the first few races in the forest. Instead, he has done much better in the park and city races. He is taking the Park World Tour seriously, relishing the challenge of trying to get it right.

"A gold medal in sprint orienteering is just as good as in normal classic orienteering", he says. Heard it before? Yes, Jörgen Mårtensson said almost the same thing in the infancy of park orienteering.

"What has happened during the last years, Bjørnar?"

"The races have become much better - and I think this is the way to spread our sport and increase the interest for orienteering on TV and with the media", he comments after recording his first PWT victory in Sweden - now chasing Yuri Omeltchenko in the race for the 2000 title.



Real celebrations: „At PWT, you really feel that this is a World Class Race“, says Bjørnar Valstad, here cheering with Yuri Omeltchenko and Odin Tellesbø.

Première win for Hanne, Yuri - and Maribor

Successful first!

Hanne Staff did it. Yuri Omeltchenko did it. And Maribor did it. The first race victory of the year for two of the biggest favourites. And a successful first for Slovenia as a Park World Tour organiser.



Maribor organisers and Maribor medallists: Boris Bauman, Odin Tellesbø, Hanne Staff, Sepp Hartinger, Franz Hartinger, Jürgen Hartinger and Bjørnar Valstad.

"A tough climb, some tricky route choices, and a real fun city race", says Hanne Staff, the Tour winner of 1997 who took a major step towards another top overall placing.

"The victory was very important for me. Winning gives me a lot of self-confidence. I really had to fight my way up the hill, but I didn't make any mistakes".



A sweet taste of wine

The first big orienteering competition in Slovenia offered a bit of everything. Start and finish in the cosy streets of central Maribor.

Part of the race in a huge park, with a lot of changes of direction. The course even took the runners through a vineyard.

"That was actually my first visit to a vineyard", says Hanne.

She was 12.5 seconds faster than Austrian Lucie Böhm, climbing the podium for the first time this year.

Dorte Dahl of Denmark took third spot - keen to compete again after an infection brought on by a tick bite which kept her away from racing for more than a month.

Speedy Omeltchenko

Among the men, Yuri Omeltchenko scored his first win of the season - and what a win: 18 seconds ahead of

Norwegian Odin Tellesbø, who was followed by Bjørnar Valstad and four more runners within ten seconds.

Omeltchenko even had time to mess around in front of the spectators before finding the last control - adding some extra excitement to the dramatic end of the race, when one man after another clocked a new best time.

"Oh, it felt easy to run - I was running almost too fast up the vineyard climb".



Interested by-standers follow the build-up before the race.



Hanne Staff fights her way up the steep hill through the vineyard.

New orienteering country

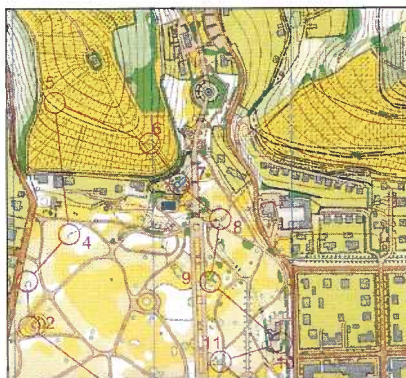
"I was forced to rest for a week before the PWT races and that must have brought me into great form", stated the happy Ukrainian and admitted that he might have lost the victory if the course had been much longer.

Yuri was a bit surprised to get the first prize here after finishing second both in Finland and Sweden.

"I didn't think that I could be any better than number two", he laughs.

Slovenia, with ten years of orienteering history, was the 12th country to host a Park World Tour race. It has 200 orienteers and eight clubs, but also an

impressive total of 70 maps. Slovenia hosted a very good competition with good help from the PWT Champions' Week team in Austria.



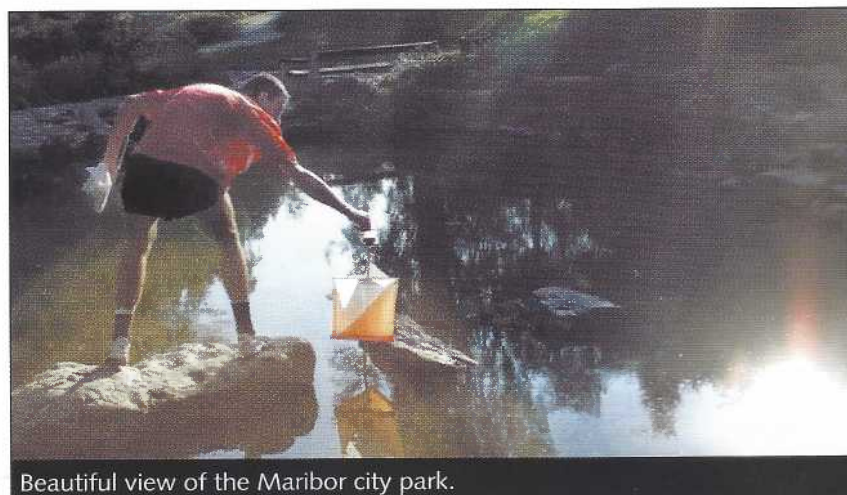
Good view over Maribor: control 5 and 6 in the middle of the vineyard.



Carlo Rigoni „flying" over the water.



Yuri Omeltchenko heading for the first victory of a successful week.



Beautiful view of the Maribor city park.

Results Maribor/SLO

Women - 3,225 km, 75 m ♂, 22 ♀

1	Hanne Staff	NOR	18:27,6
2	Lucie Böhm	AUT	18:40,1
3	Dorte Dahl	DEN	18:43,4
4	E. Ingvaldsen	NOR	18:48,4
5	Jenny Johansson	SWE	18:51,3
6	Heather Monro	GBR	19:00,1
7	K. Arewång	SWE	19:04,6
8	Emma Engstrand	SWE	19:05,2
9	Brigitte Grüniger	SUI	19:29,7
10	Sarah Rollins	GBR	19:34,7
11	Maria Sandström	SWE	19:35,1
12	Reeta Kolkkala	FIN	19:43,9
13	Giedre Voveriene	LTU	20:00,4
14	Kaisa Salminen	FIN	20:01,4
15	Regula Hulliger	SUI	20:07,4
16	Maria Hoffman	FIN	20:25,5
17	Eva Jurenikova	CZE	20:39,3
18	Cassie Trewin	AUS	20:59,0
19	Andrea Eisl	AUT	21:05,2
20	K. Libantová	SVK	21:06,1
21	S. Rottensteiner	ITA	21:06,2
22	Elo Saue	EST	21:18,3
23	Annika Björk	SWE	21:29,2
24	Sandy Smith	CAN	22:11,8
	Liisa Anttila	FIN	mispunch

Men - 3,225 km, 75 m ♂, 22 ♀

1	Y. Omeltchenko	UKR	15:27,1
2	Odin Tellesbo	NOR	15:45,1
3	Bjørnar Valstad	NOR	15:51,1
4	Rudolf Ropek	CZE	15:51,5
5	Jamie Stevenson	GBR	15:52,2
6	Janne Salmi	FIN	15:58,9
7	Thomas Bühner	SUI	16:00,3
8	Allan Mogensen	DEN	16:05,3
9	Grant Bluett	AUS	16:05,8
10	Thomas Asp	SWE	16:12,2
11	Jimmy Birklin	SWE	16:13,3
12	Edgaras Voveris	LTU	16:13,8
13	Lubos Mateju	CZE	16:16,6
14	S. Ambrazas	LTU	16:20,8
15	Jarkko Huovila	FIN	16:23,1
16	Håkan Petersson	SWE	16:25,5
17	Juha Peltola	FIN	16:27,4
18	C. Jørgensen	DEN	16:32,0
19	Marian Davidik	SVK	16:41,2
20	Carlo Rigoni	ITA	16:44,1
21	Andreas Pölzl	AUT	16:56,4
22	Carl H. Bjørseth	NOR	16:58,6
23	Jürgen Egger	AUT	17:04,3
24	Jarmo Puttonen	FIN	17:14,2
25	Christoph Schilter	SUI	17:15,9
26	Jonne Lakanen	FIN	17:42,3
27	Tore Sandvik	NOR	19:16,4
28	Andraz Hribar	SLO	19:59,5

History and high-tech at the Champions' Week qualification

A view of the future

The flags of more than forty nations fluttered in the wind in the main square of Ehrenhausen when orienteers of five continents flashed by through the streets of the small Austrian town and on the huge video screen in front of a 17th century mausoleum.



An action-filled competition with colourful contrasts introduced park orienteering to athletes from all the continents of the world.

The world's biggest Park-O gathering so far kicked off with a colourful race of contrasts - providing a sense of what future World Championships could be like. The Norwegians dominated the PWT Champions' Week qualifications, with 148 athletes racing through the quarters of the old town and up the hills in the adjacent forest on courses that presented challenging orienteering.

Exciting and tough

"Very exciting - and very tough, especially the last climb", said downhill specialist

Odin Tellesbø, one of four Norwegian heat winners.

"Great fun", said PWT leader Yuri Omeltchenko, who recorded the fastest time in any of the five men's heats. Other non-Scandinavian victors were Briton Jamie Stevenson, and Swiss Brigitte Grüniger - second fastest among the women, behind superb Hanne Staff. Sandy Smith of Canada, Cassie Trewin of Australia and Antonia Wood of New Zealand added international colour to the top results, finishing among the five qualifiers in their respective heats.



The mayor of Ehrenhausen greeting the ten qualification heat winners.

16 nations to the final

Orienteers from a total of 16 nations progressed to the A-final. The only favourite who failed to qualify was defending Danish PWT Champion Allan Mogensen, who found himself at the top of a huge cliff at the 16th control, and had to retrace his steps and climb down to reach the control flag. *"A good way to make an orienteering event interesting for both the athletes and*



Jamie Stevenson congratulated by the tennis champion Thomas Muster.

the spectators", concluded British team leader Gordon Ross at the main square in Ehrenhausen.



An injured Carsten Jørgensen was forced to stay in the spectator crowds.



The course proved tough both for PWT veterans and newcomers.



IOF President Sue Harvey, Shin Murakoshi from Japan and Donna Li from China at the dinner table in the local castle.

Champions' Week 2000 • RESULTS QUALIFICATION

Women

Heat A • 2,85 km, 155 m, 23	Heat B • 2,925 km, 150 m, 23	Heat C • 2,925 km, 150 m, 23	Heat D • 2,925 km, 155 m, 23	Heat E • 2,875 km, 150 m, 22
1 Elisabeth Ingvaldsen NOR 21:40,0	1 Maria Sandström SWE 21:52,0	1 Hanne Staff NOR 20:35,0	1 Emma Engstrand SWE 22:09,0	1 Brigitte Grüniger SUI 21:12,0
2 Heather Monro GBR 21:43,0	2 Lucie Böhm AUT 21:55,0	2 Jenny Johansson SWE 21:12,0	2 Liisa Anttila FIN 22:58,0	2 Reeta Kolkkala FIN 21:43,0
3 Sarah Rollins GBR 22:31,0	3 Karolina Arewång SWE 22:39,0	3 Anna Antonowicz POL 21:36,0	3 Jana Miklusova SVK 23:40,0	3 Annika Björk SWE 21:45,0
4 Kaisa Salminen FIN 22:39,0	4 Vilma Rudzenskaitė LTU 23:02,0	4 Olena Zabrodska UKR 23:02,0	4 Dorte Dahl DEN 24:12,0	4 Barbara Baczek POL 22:34,0
5 Sandy Smith CAN 24:15,0	5 Laura Scaravonati ITA 24:59,0	5 Regula Hulliger SUI 23:21,0	5 Cassie Trewin AUS 25:02,0	5 Antonia Wood NZL 23:12,0
6 Eva Makrai HUN 25:28,0	6 Maria Hoffman FIN 26:57,0	6 Eva Jurenikova CZE 23:47,0	6 Pam James CAN 25:08,0	6 Sabine Rottensteiner ITA 24:07,0
7 Agota Hejjas AUT 25:31,0	7 Helene Toussaint BEL 27:43,0	7 Anna Sheldon AUS 26:58,0	7 Jenni Adams NZL 26:27,0	7 Asta Misiūnaitė LTU 24:22,0
8 Blanka Folprechtova CZE 26:24,0	7 Gotseva Dimitrova BUL 27:43,0	8 Esther Gil ESP 27:18,0	8 Giedrė Voverienė LTU 26:35,0	8 Sofie Herremans BEL 25:17,0
9 Meike Jäger GER 28:30,0	7 Elo Saue EST 27:43,0	9 Vasileva Jordanova BUL 28:08,0	9 Andrea Eisl AUT 27:22,0	9 Eva Pekarkova CZE 25:42,0
10 Shihoko Ochiai JAP 30:23,0	10 Anna Amigo ESP 29:24,0	10 Lieke van Opstal NED 28:10,0	10 Veronica Minoiu ROM 28:59,0	10 Ana Jesovnik CRO 26:57,0
11 Ieva Ansaberga LAT 35:19,0	11 Anja Mattick GER 29:35,0	11 Katarina Libantova SVK 29:02,0	11 Iryna Pustovoyt UKR 42:42,0	11 Bati Tobler AUT 27:23,0
Voula Iordanidou GRE mispunch	12 Irena Bralite LAT 32:17,0	12 Eva Ocirk CRO 30:00,0	12 Ge jia CHN 85:03,0	12 Melanie Spruyt NED 35:17,0
Elena Piringiu ROM mispunch	13 Natalia Timbaliuc MDA 34:39,0	13 Yuko Furusawa JAP 44:39,0	K. Papadopolou GRE mispunch	13 Valentina Adjem MDA 50:08,0
	Qui maili CHN mispunch			Zsuzsa Fekete HUN mispunch

Men

Heat A • 3,075 km, 155 m, 25	Heat B • 3,1 km, 160 m, 25	Heat C • 3,125 km, 155 m, 25	Heat D • 3,1 km, 160 m, 25	Heat E • 3,05 km, 155 m, 25
1 Jarkko Huovila FIN 18:58,0	1 Jamie Stevenson GBR 18:23,0	1 Odin Tellesbø NOR 17:44,0	1 Bjørnar Valstad NOR 18:01,0	1 Yuri Omeltchenko UKR 17:31,0
2 Rudolf Ropek CZE 19:06,0	2 Jimmy Birklin SWE 18:35,0	2 Håkan Petersson SWE 17:59,0	2 Carlo Rigoni ITA 19:19,0	2 Grant Bluett AUS 18:29,0
3 Jarmo Puttonen FIN 19:22,0	3 Janne Salmi FIN 19:00,0	3 Thomas Bühner SUI 18:22,0	3 Martin Larsson SWE 19:20,0	3 Thomas Asp SWE 18:34,0
3 Edgaras Voveris LTU 19:22,0	4 Carl-Henrik Bjørseth NOR 19:23,0	4 Jürgen Egger AUT 19:13,0	4 Juha Peltola FIN 19:21,0	4 Svajūnas Ambrazas LTU 19:08,0
5 Christoph Schilter SUI 19:42,0	5 Marian Dávidik SVK 19:50,0	5 Troy de Haas AUS 19:27,0	5 Tore Sandvik NOR 20:01,0	5 Jonne Lakanen FIN 19:35,0
6 Maksym Shtelmakh UKR 19:47,0	6 Marius Sadeckas LTU 20:20,0	6 Libor Zřídkavský CZE 19:34,0	6 Lubos Mateju CZE 20:30,0	6 Christoph Bruder GER 19:44,0
7 Thomas Krejci AUT 20:22,0	7 Ivaylov Petrov BUL 20:35,0	7 Janusz Porzycz POL 19:39,0	7 Ed Nash GBR 20:34,0	7 Robert Banach POL 19:58,0
8 Thormod Berg NOR 20:48,0	8 David Hepner CZE 20:38,0	8 Alexander Lubina GER 19:41,0	8 Miika Hernelahti FIN 20:50,0	8 Paolo Mario Grassi ITA 21:13,0
9 Jurgis Krastins LAT 21:34,0	9 Roger Casal ESP 21:03,0	9 Tihomir Salopek CRO 20:22,0	9 Alistair Landels NZL 21:32,0	9 Andreas Pölzl AUT 21:17,0
10 Tom Herremans BEL 22:51,0	10 Alessio Tenani ITA 21:32,0	10 Allan Mogensen DEN 20:27,0	10 Colm Rothery IRL 21:45,0	10 Marco Smulders NED 21:41,0
11 D. Brickhill-Jones AUS 23:11,0	11 Pierre Kaltenbacher AUT 22:01,0	11 Ovidu Mutiu ROM 22:42,0	11 Vitaliy Gavrylenko UKR 23:52,0	11 Gatis Berkis LAT 22:59,0
12 Daniel Griff ISR 23:53,0	12 Mike Smith MDA 23:00,0	12 Pavol Bukovac SVK 23:38,0	12 Pal Gazda HUN 24:00,0	12 Andraz Hribar SLO 23:37,0
13 Edi Ocirk CRO 23:57,0	13 Paul Nolan IRL 23:43,0	13 Shane Philips NZL 25:14,0	13 Martin Terry RSA 24:46,0	13 Mihail Mihaylov BUL 23:54,0
14 Mark Heikooop NED 25:54,0	14 Nimrod Cohen ISR 33:06,0	14 Nicolae Cotorobai MDA 34:39,0	14 Adam Scheck CAN 27:48,0	14 Chen yi CHN 75:58,0
15 Vasko Serafimovski MKD 40:24,0	15 Mitko Andonov MKD 60:05,0		15 Nobuhiro Nishio JAP 28:28,0	David Teixido ESP mispunch
	Victor Tolias GRE mispunch		16 Wang wei CHN 53:28,0	G. Gounaropoulos GRE mispunch
	Shin Murakoshi JAP mispunch			P. Brabiescu ROM mispunch
	Andrian Cotorobai MDA mispunch			Dries van der Kleij BEL mispunch

Sweden victors in spectacular relay

Exciting mix!

No control was more than 460 metres away from the finish line. It was head-to-head, fast and Sweden's day in the first big international mixed relay at the Garden Show Centre in Graz. It could have been a really big day for orienteering - if it hadn't been for unlucky Cassie Trewin.

With Grant Bluett and Troy de Haas leading off in full speed on the first two legs, Australia had a clear lead when Cassie Trewin jumped down from a 2.5 metre high embankment just 200 metres from the finish. On the big TV screen in the competition centre, everyone could see Cassie lying on the mat at the bottom of the embankment and unable to move or continue the race after her unfortunate jump. Instead, she was taken to the hospital in Graz by helicopter where it was diagnosed that she had broken a disk in her back.

Odin on the wrong knoll

Swedish Jimmy Birklin also had an eye on the big screen and saw what happened before the changeover. Birklin ran the last leg for Sweden's first team and set out 25 seconds after the leader, Odin Tellesbø of Norway. A distance normally unbeatable on a short leg of just 11-12 minutes. Jimmy caught a glimpse of Odin in the open areas, but there was still a huge gap. Tellesbø, stepping into the PWT spotlight with top results this season, however lost the plot on the way to the third last control. He ran

up the wrong knoll, only a few metres away from the correct control feature - but this was enough for Birklin to gain the lead.

Long-awaited triumph

"I saw Odin climbing the other knoll, but I thought we had separate controls", commented Birklin. They hadn't though. Jimmy found it spot on and thereby became the first Swedish man to secure an international relay triumph for quite a long time.

"What happened to Cassie gave me mixed emotions, but the competition as such



Yuri Omeltchenko takes the lead from the start among 35 teams in the PWT mixed relay.



A labyrinth of knolls put the competitors to a hard test.



M. Spruyt diving in for the changeover.



A view to the start and finish area from the tower at the International Garden Show in Graz.

was really good", says Jimmy Birklin. Even if the courses were set in a small park which was very open in parts, he found the orienteering quite challenging.



Shin Murakoshi - elected IOF Council member and 2005 WOC host with Japan the same day - punches at the water control.

"You had to be very careful", he comments. Jenny Johansson, Karolina Arewång and Thomas Asp were Birklin's triumphant team mates in the relay which took place on Friday evening not far from Graz airport.



One second too much

The relay teams were comprised of 2 men and 2 women running the same four courses, and this was the very first time this has been organised in a top international competition. Birklin still likes it better with separate male and female teams.

"It would have been better with two specific legs for the men and two others for women. Then it would be a bit easier to follow the competition", he says. It was nearly a remarkable day for Sweden in Graz. Their second team finished in third spot, but was subsequently disqualified.

"I forgot to visit one control. I actually passed within four metres of it, but I didn't think it was my control. You had to be concentrated every single second", admits Emma Engstrand, the unlucky team member on leg one.

She really enjoyed this relay format with both men and women on the same team.

"I think all of us Swedish girls enjoyed running with our male team-mates", she comments.

And well what happened with Odin Tellesbø? Yes, he did find the right knoll after a short while - and finished only four seconds behind Birklin. It was close, but the Swede had enough time to show his delight as he crossed the finish line.

Live on TV and www

The relay was broadcast live on PWT's Internet homepage, as well as on TV - an exciting race to watch with a lot of changes in the lead.

It could have been close to perfect, if it hadn't been for Cassie's unlucky fall.



A flourishing control point.



PWT speaker Kjell-Erik Kristiansen with Jimmy Birklin and Thomas Asp.

Champions' Week RESULTS RELAY

Women and Men (2+2), 4 x 2.7 km

1	Sweden II Johansson/Arewång Asp/Birklin	52:50
2	Norway Ingvaldsen/Valstad Ståff/Tellesbø	52:54
3	Finland I Kolkkala/Salminen Huovila/Peltola	54:07
4	Finland II Salmi/Hoffman Anttila/Hernelahti	54:21
5	Austria Böhm/Eisl/Krejci/Pölzl	54:24
6	Great Britain Nash/Rollins Monro/Stevenson	54:33
7	Switzerland Hulliger/Grüniger Schilter/Bührer	56:08
8	Czech Republic Pekarkova/Jurenikova Mateju/Zrđkavesely	56:16
9	Lithuania Voverienė/Rudzenskaitė Ambrazas/Voveris	56:44
10	Germany Jäger/Bruder Mattick/Lubina	1:00:19
11	New Zealand Adams/Wood Philips/Landels	1:00:20
12	Belgium van der Kleij/Toussaint Herremans/Herremans	1:00:55
13	Italy Scaravonati/Grassi Rottensteiner/Rigoni	1:01:44
14	Croatia Ocvirk/Ocvirk Jesovnik/Salopek	1:01:45
15	Slovakia Libantova/Miklusova Dávidík/Bukovac	1:04:23
16	Ukraine Zabrodska/Gavrylenko Shtelmakh/Pustovoyt	1:04:52
17	Hungary Makrai/Gazda Fekete/Vasarhelyi	1:05:26
18	Romania Brabiescu/Mutiu Minoiu/Piringiu	1:32:54

Mixed Teams outside the competition:

Canada/Sweden/Finland 56:47
Mogensen/Dahl (DEN)
Björk (SWE)/Lakanen (FIN)

Austria/Australia 1:00:54
Hejjas/Kaltenbacher (AUT)
Tobler (AUT)/Brick-Jones (AUS)

Canada/Norway 1:03:01
Scheck/James (CAN)
Smith (CAN)/Berg (NOR)

Runaway race for Yuri in Leibnitz - Maria proved her winner's capacity

Proud winners!

Last spring, Stockholm-based Maria Sandström (27) took her first international victory at the Park World Tour event at Skansen in her home town. A great success of course - but winning the final race of the Park World Tour Champions' Week in Leibnitz, Austria, Maria's delight was in a way much greater.



Silver and Gold in Leibnitz: Jenny Johansson and Maria Sandström, both Sweden.

"Even if nobody told me so directly, I felt that a lot of people thought it was just pure luck when I won, or - even worse - that I won because I ran in my home town, and that people therefore assumed that I was very familiar with the terrain around the Skansen open air museum". "That's why I'm so happy with this victory, this time there will be no doubt that I had no more advantages than anyone else".

Swedish battle

In Sweden, Maria Sandström is one of the runners in the national team who sometimes manages to be among the six best, but is seldom able to win. "It has been the same in the Park World Tour. After last year's victory, I have had

quite a few good races and ended up as number four, five or six, but I seldom make it all the way to the podium". In the Leibnitz final, the strongest challenge to Maria's victory came from another Swede - newly crowned European Short Distance Champion Jenny Johansson. At 23 years of age, Johansson still hasn't completed her first year in the national team, but has already raced from success to success. "This was only my third Park World Tour race, so I am very pleased with second place. Since my first race at Kumla, ten days ago, I have managed to develop the skill of reading the map at high speed. It's not only great fun, it's also very good preparation for the longer orienteering races", says Jenny, who in "normal" life

is a geology student in Gothenburg. The difference in time between Maria and Jenny was 14 seconds, but Jenny had a hard battle to keep her second place as she faced a tough challenge from Dorte Dahl of Denmark, who was only seven tenths of a second



On the podium: Janne, Yuri and Odin.



Edgaras Voveris, Lithuania.



Jarmo Puttonen, Finland.



On the way to take the lead:
Yuri Omeltchenko, Ukraine.

Champions' Park World Tour 2000 Week 2000 • RESULTS FINALS

Women A Final

4,65 km, 45 m ↑, 25 ▢

1	Maria Sandström	SWE	23:49,7
2	Jenny Johansson	SWE	24:03,7
3	Dorte Dahl	DEN	24:04,4
4	Hanne Staff	NOR	24:09,3
4	Reeta Kolkkala	FIN	24:09,3
6	Karolina Arewång	SWE	24:30,2
7	Emma Engstrand	SWE	24:30,4
8	Heather Monro	GBR	24:36,5
9	Regula Hulliger	SUI	24:46,9
10	Lucie Böhm	AUT	25:06,8
11	Liisa Anttila	FIN	25:07,5
12	Olena Zabrodska	UKR	25:13,1
13	Brigitte Grüniger	SUI	25:19,0
14	E. Ingvaldsen	NOR	25:27,2
15	Sarah Rollins	GBR	25:36,1
16	Anna Antonowicz	POL	25:53,0
17	Annika Björk	SWE	25:56,9
18	V. Rudzenskaitė	LTU	26:08,6
19	Laura Scaravonati	ITA	26:17,1
20	Kaisa Salminen	FIN	26:29,9
21	Barbara Baczek	POL	26:36,1
22	Jana Miklusova	SVK	26:44,6
23	Antonia Wood	NZL	26:51,0
24	Sandy Smith	CAN	28:01,2

Men A Final

4,65 km, 45 m ↑, 25 ▢

1	Y. Omeltchenko	UKR	19:34,6
2	Odin Tellesbø	NOR	20:11,0
3	Janne Salmi	FIN	20:23,4
4	Thomas Bühner	SUI	20:27,0
5	Håkan Petersson	SWE	20:27,3
6	Bjørnar Valstad	NOR	20:33,2
7	Jimmy Birklin	SWE	20:33,6
8	S. Ambrazas	LTU	20:40,5
9	Rudolf Ropak	CZE	20:41,6
10	Jarkko Huovila	FIN	20:46,0
11	Tore Sandvik	NOR	20:50,9
12	Thomas Asp	SWE	20:51,5
13	Jürgen Egger	AUT	20:53,3
14	C.-H. Bjørseth	NOR	21:09,3
15	Carlo Rigoni	ITA	21:10,9
16	Juha Peltola	FIN	21:14,8
17	Grant Bluett	AUS	21:14,9
18	Marian Dávidík	SVK	21:15,1
19	Troy de Haas	AUS	21:32,4
20	Christoph Schilter	SUI	21:49,4
21	Edgaras Voveris	LTU	22:08,1
22	Jarmo Puttonen	FIN	22:33,2
23	Martin Larsson	SWE	22:46,3
24	Jonne Lakanen	FIN	22:54,7

Women B Final

3,675 km, 40 m ↑, 19 ▢

1	Eva Jurenikova	CZE	20:05,9
2	Maria Hoffman	FIN	20:45,9
3	Andrea Eisl	AUT	20:51,9
4	Eva Makrai	HUN	21:25,4
5	S. Rottensteiner	ITA	21:27,1
6	Sofie Herremans	BEL	21:43,8
7	Asta Misiūnaitė	LTU	21:51,5
8	Elo Saue	EST	21:56,4
9	Giedrė Voverienė	LTU	21:59,4
10	Eva Pekarkova	CZE	22:05,4
11	Jenni Adams	NZL	22:09,3
12	Pam James	CAN	22:10,0
13	V. Jordanova	BUL	22:32,8
14	Esther Gil	ESP	22:57,2
15	Meike Jäger	GER	23:00,7
16	Lieke van Opstal	NED	23:07,4
17	Anna Amigo	ESP	23:23,9
18	Veronica Minoiu	ROM	23:32,7
19	Agota Hejjas	AUT	23:47,1
20	B. Folprechtova	CZE	23:55,8
21	Shihoko Ochiai	JPN	24:00,7
22	Anna Sheldon	AUS	24:38,9
23	G. Dimitrova	BUL	25:00,2
24	Ana Jesovnik	CRO	25:29,2

Men B Final

3,675 km, 40 m ↑, 19 ▢

1	Alexander Lubina	GER	15:57,1
2	Miika Hernelahti	FIN	16:34,3
3	Robert Banach	POL	16:41,8
4	Janusz Porzycz	POL	16:47,5
5	Allan Mogensen	DEN	16:50,4
6	Andreas Pölzl	AUT	16:52,5
7	Tihomir Salopek	CRO	16:53,7
8	Thomas Krejci	AUT	16:55,2
9	Libor Zřidkavský	CZE	16:56,3
10	Lubos Mateju	CZE	16:58,0
11	Thormod Berg	NOR	17:03,4
12	Maksym Shtelmakh	UKR	17:12,0
13	Ivaylov Petrov	BUL	17:18,8
14	Colm Rothery	IRL	17:20,1
15	Marius Sadeckas	LTU	17:26,8
16	P. Grassi	ITA	17:27,3
17	Alistair Landels	NZL	17:31,1
18	Ed Nash	GBR	17:42,4
19	David Hepner	CZE	17:46,1
20	Tom Herremans	BEL	18:08,8
21	Roger Casal	ESP	18:37,9
22	Christoph Bruder	GER	18:39,0
23	Jurgis Krastins	LAT	18:56,3
24	Marco Smulders	NED	18:57,0

behind her. Even closer was the battle for fourth place, with the leading ladies of this year, current number 1 Reeta Kolkkala, and Hanne Staff, who is second, just nine points behind, sharing this spot.

"One man race"

If it was a tight race among the women, the men's race in contrast could be called a "one horse race". Yuri Omeltchenko of the Ukraine was just outstanding in the race around the town centre of Leibnitz. His winning time was more than 36 seconds faster than that of his closest rival, Odin Tellesbø from Norway, who once again, just as in Maribor a few days before, finished

in second spot. After Tellesbø there was another gap of more than twelve seconds to Janne Salmi, Finland, who ended in third place. What is the secret behind such a dominant result? "Well, this time it was almost a perfect run, and I knew I was going fast when I caught up Bjørnar Valstad, who started one minute before me, shortly after the spectator control. But there is also another explanation", says Yuri Omeltchenko, "I had a lot of supporters here in Leibnitz. The Ukrainian delegation to the IOF Congress are staying at the camping area, through which the course passed, and there was a lot of cheering for me, so I thought I had better give them something to cheer about!"

Ukrainian joker King of the Champions' Week

Yuri turns on the show

An ever-smiling joker and a great showman. Incredibly fast - and incredibly successful in PWT 2000. Yuri Omeltchenko, the short distance World Champion from 1995, is set to be the new "King of the Parks". Today, he's happy he chose orienteering ahead of football, but it wasn't always the case.



Set to be number one.

"The orienteers had better coaches to organise their training than the football players did. That's why I am an orienteer", laughs Yuri, who was keen on both sports as a youngster in the Ukraine. He still plays football - as a physical training teacher at the secondary school in his new home town of Karlskrona in south-east Sweden - where he also teaches orienteering to the students. Yuri (29) and his wife Inga are both full-time sports teachers. Yuri enjoys the combination of working and elite level orienteering, and he is able to utilise the free periods at school by doing his own training. He also enjoys living in Sweden.

"When I won the short distance World Championship in Germany in 1995, I asked Jörgen Mårtensson about opportunities with clubs in Sweden. My dream was to go and live there.

Now I'm actually here in Sweden and it is indeed good compared with living in the Ukraine. You can work, earn good money and live well. You don't have to think of getting more work all the time to get enough income to live on as the situation is in the Ukraine."

"Don't you miss the Ukraine?"

"We visit our home country a couple of

times every year and our parents can visit us. That's alright", he says - in fluent Swedish.

17 years of orienteering

Yuri started orienteering at the age of 13 in a local military club, and he ran the World Championships in Czechoslovakia already as a junior in 1991. If he had not forgotten to punch at the last control in the qualification race, he would have won one of the heats. Four years later in Germany he took revenge for that mistake by winning a surprise victory in the short distance race by over a minute from Jörgen Mårtensson himself. After becoming World champion he received a lot of offers from Swedish clubs. The president of the Ukrainian Orienteering



Comfortable in continental terrain.

Federation chose OK Orion for him. *"I received incredible help from OK Orion, first and foremost from Gunnar Johansson, the former leader of the club. He really managed to achieve the*



Battling with Champion Valstad.

unbelievable. In the end we were so well known at the Swedish Immigration Department that they were about to sponsor our club".

"There is also a very good team spirit in Orion, with a lot of parties and social activities. I can't imagine it's like that in many clubs", says Omeltchenko.

A hundredth for the hair cut

This year he has been very impressive in the PWT races and is now leading the Tour at the half way point by 20 points ahead of Bjørnar Valstad.

At the Champions' Week in August he was totally unbeatable: winning in Maribor, posting the best time in the Ehrenhausen qualification race, as well as in the Graz relay - and then grabbing another gold in the Leibnitz final.

It seems as though Omeltchenko almost has an extra gear compared with the other runners - which makes him too tough to keep up with.

"Everything can change. I am not that good. I have only managed to find the right pace", he says.

"Is your hair cut the secret behind your speed?"



Likes the splashes and smashes.

"No, no, only if you count in hundreds of a second. This hairstyle is just easier to cope with. I now shave my head every second day. I used to do it every third day but at school I have to look good", explains Yuri.

This autumn, though, he won't be taking part in the concluding World Cup races, but instead is heading for the Park World Tour Golden Final round which will take place in Norway, Thailand and China.

Omeltchenko is the only orienteer in the world to have started in every PWT race since the kick-off in 1996.



Wants to be an Olympic orienteer

"I like the Park World Tour very much", he states.

"Are you a park and city orienteer, then?"

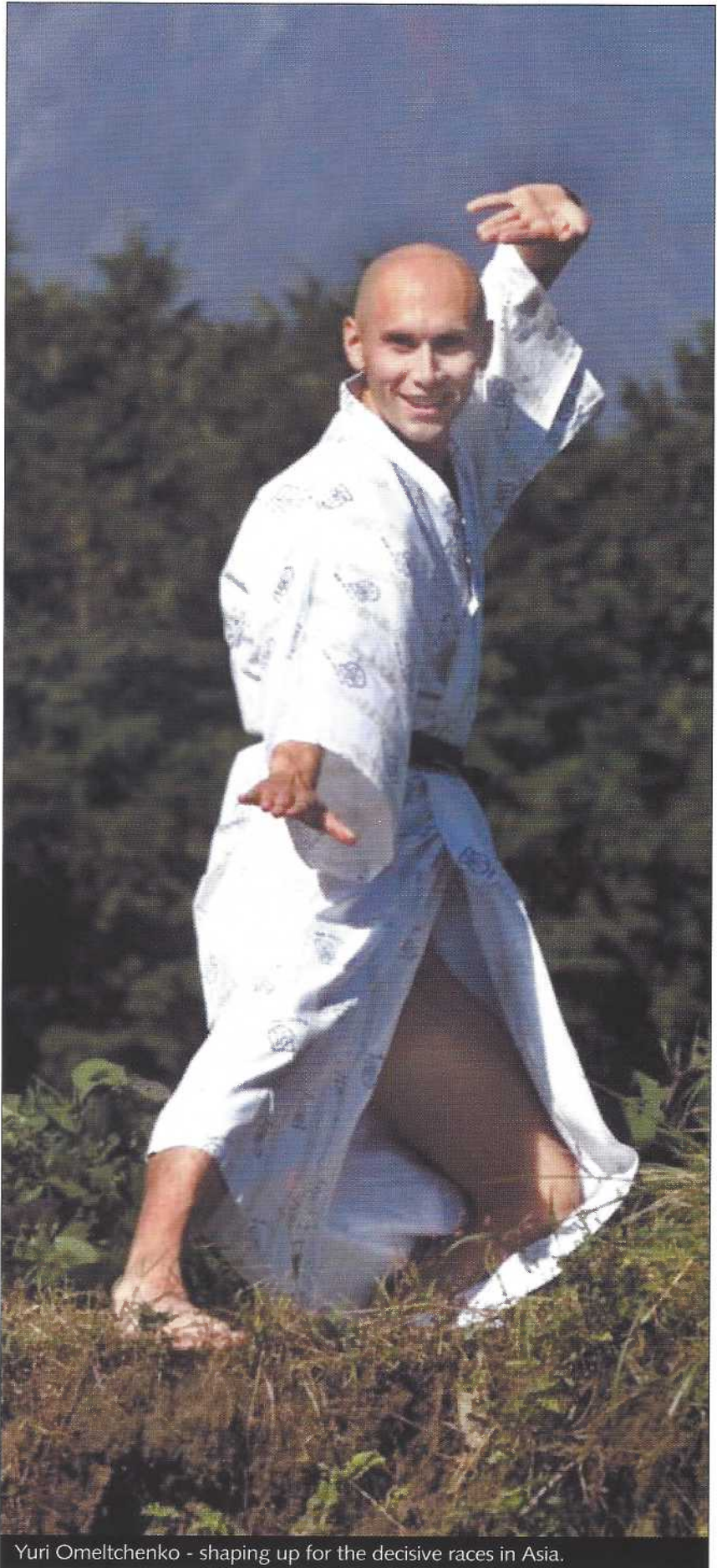
"Continental forest orienteering is what I like most. Then comes park orienteering, and then Scandinavian orienteering. But the latter is not that easy to master. Competing in Scandinavia, I can still feel like a newcomer in this sport".

"How long will you continue as a top orienteer?"

"As long as my legs and knees can carry me, and I can see further than one hundred metres ahead", he laughs.

Yuri's dream is to take part in the Olympics.

"That's the biggest thing for an athlete. I'm a bit disappointed that so many orienteers still want to hide deep in the forests", comments Omeltchenko – the current top artist on the PWT stage.



Yuri Omeltchenko - shaping up for the decisive races in Asia.

First we take Fredrikstad, then Bangkok, Shanghai and Kunming!

Golden Final ahead!

The fortified old town quarters of Fredrikstad in Norway, the Bangkok big city oasis of Lumpini Park, the Hong Kou Football Stadium in Shanghai and the beautiful Flower Expo Garden in Kunming. With great adventures and excitement ahead, the Park World Tour takes the world's best orienteers to a Golden Final with medals, honour and SEK 420,000 at stake at the end of October.



Lucie Böhm - heading for a strong climb in the final races.

A one hour TV broadcast - with World Champion Petter Thoresen as an expert commentator - will add extra spice to the race in Norway, while the first top international o-event in Thailand and the two concluding races in China,

with tens of thousands of spectators and extensive media coverage, are also being looked forward to with huge interest.

Challenging world first

The PWT technical director Jaroslav Kacmarcik has a tough task as he tours the host cities during the next few weeks, in Asia accompanied by Jörgen Mårtensson and Gävert Wååg, in order to secure a high standard for the maps and courses as well as fair and spectator-friendly competitions. The race from the football stadium in Shanghai in particular, which is expected to attract crowds of more than 30,000, will be a challenge for both organisers and competitors.

With half of this year's eight PWT races to be completed in eleven days, the top positions on the 2000 Tour are far from determined. Reeta Kolkkala has a gap of nine points to Hanne Staff - who missed out the first event and has lots more to give.

Watch out for Jenny

Swedes Emma Engstrand, Maria Sandström and Jenny Johansson are not far behind, and especially Jenny - scoring 10th, 5th and 2nd spot in her three PWT starts so far this year - is a girl to watch out for. So are Lucie Böhm and Dorte Dahl, who both won one race each on last year's Final Tour and are hoping for another top result in 2000.



Dorte Dahl: hot tip for the PWT top 2000.

Yuri Omeltchenko looks unbeatable among the men, but Norwegians Bjørnar Valstad and Odin Tellesbø are sure to give him a tough fight for the crown from their "home race" in Fredrikstad on.

Experienced duo Janne Salmi and Thomas Bühner are battling with newcomers Jamie Stevenson and Jarkko Huovila for the "rookie of the year" title, while the 1999 medallists have been struggling.

Former "park king" Rudolf Ropek knows that he can beat them all - and so does Grant Bluett, who won both races in China last year.



1999 Champion Allan Mogensen starts the final round from position 20.

Golden Final Information

Fredrikstad 21/10

- Kjetil Storaas-Hansen
kjetil-sth@c2i.net

Bangkok 24/10

- Varoros Paribatra
varoros@hotmail.com
- Michael Thulin
michael.thulin@th.adtranz.com

Shanghai 28/10

Kunming 31/10

- Donna Li
donnaipq@sohu.com

Media Information

- Anders Vestergård
anders.vestergard@pwt.org



The big city Shanghai welcomes the PWT runners for the second time - now to race from the Hong Kow football stadium.



German Wild Card

Reigning PWT Champion Allan Mogensen earned his Golden Final ticket through a wild card, as did the German Junior Champion on the track, Alexander Lubina. He won the Champions' Week B-final in Leibnitz and can be a strong challenger for the established stars in October. The winners of the 2000 Park World Tour will be rewarded with SEK 60,000 each at the Grand Final Banquet in Kunming on 31 October - which may be followed by an official World Championships Series kicking off only a few months later!



And off we go!



Current overall standings after 4 races

Men				Women			
			Points				Points
1	Yuri Omeltchenko*	UKR	90	1	Reeta-Mari Kolkkala*	FIN	64
2	Bjørnar Valstad*	NOR	70	2	Hanne Staff*	NOR	55
3	Odin Tellesbo*	NOR	65	3	Emma Engstrand*	SWE	54
4	Janne Salmi*	FIN	41	4	Maria Sandström*	SWE	48
5	Thomas Bühner*	SUI	33	5	Jenny Johansson*	SWE	39
6	Rudolf Ropek*	CZE	31	6	Lucie Böhm*	AUT	38
7	Jarkko Huovila*	FIN	30	7	Dorte Dahl*	DEN	35
8	Jamie Stevenson*	GBR	28	8	Elisabeth Ingvaldsen*	NOR	33
9	Mikhael Mamlejev*	RUS	24	9	Kaisa Salminen*	FIN	30
10	Håkan Petersson*	SWE	16	10	Marika Mikkola	FIN	25
11	Juha Peltola*	FIN	15	11	Karolina Arewång*	SWE	23
12	Grant Bluet*	AUS	14	12	Heather Monro	GBR	22
12	Jimmy Birklin*	SWE	14	13	Brigitte Grünige*	SUI	19
14	Edgaras Voveris*	LTU	13	14	Anna Garin*	ESP	17
14	Tore Sandvik*	NOR	13	15	Frauke Schmitt-Gran	GER	13
16	Carsten Jørgensen*	DEN	11	16	Eva Jurenikova*	CZE	9
16	Carl Henrik Bjørseth	NOR	11	16	Giedre Voveriene*	LTU	9
18	Tomas Asp*	SWE	10	18	Annika Björk*	SWE	8
18	Svajunas Ambrasas	LTU	10	18	Regula Hulliger	SUI	8
20	Simo Martomaa	FIN	8	20	Simone Luder	SUI	7
20	Allan Mogensen*	DEN	8	20	Sarah Rollins*	GBR	7
22	Jarmo Puttonen	FIN	6	22	Külli Kaljus	EST	5
23	Tom Quayle	AUS	5	22	Liisa Anttila	FIN	5
24	Thierry Gueorgiou	FRA	4	24	Käthi Widler	SUI	4
25	Jani Lakanen	FIN	3	24	Olena Zabrodska	UKR	4
25	Lubos Mateju	CZE	3	26	Maria Hoffman	FIN	2
25	Jürgen Egger	AUT	3	27	Zsuzsa Fey	ROM	2
28	Matthias Niggli	SUI	2	28	Jenny James	GBR	1
29	Thomas Jensen	DEN	1				
29	Peter Öberg	SWE	1				
29	Carlo Rigoni	ITA	1				

* Competing in the Golden Final

Additional wild cards:

Alexander Lubina* GER
Troy de Haas* AUS
Chris Terkelsen DEN

* Competing in the Golden Final

Additional wild cards:

Antonia Wood* NZL

Cassie heads for 2003

"My goal is to be fully fit for the World Championships in 2003 - maybe already in 2002 if there are 'Sprint' World Championships then". Australian Cassie Trewin has made a remarkable recovery after her serious back injury incurred at the PWT relay in Graz in August. After undergoing surgery the same night, she then had to spend ten days in hospital before being well enough to fly home to Canberra.



Cassie Trewin, here with Anette Trewin, Silvia Titze, Josef Gutman, is recovering, fast and strongly, supported now by the local sponsor „MAS Magneticfield System“.

"Since then my parents have been looking after me, and now I am just about to move back into my own house", says Cassie, five weeks after the accident. As she will be unable to run for several months she will attempt to regain her fitness by gentle exercises. She will also gradually begin to carry out tasks again for her employer - the Australian Sports Institute. *"At work, I have been testing the girls in our national football team and I am now looking forward to watching them play in the Olympics",* says Cassie, who visited the very first event of the Games when the Australian women played Germany in her home town. Cassie Trewin is also preparing for the ACT state orienteering championships in Canberra in mid-October - as course planner together with her father.

Orienteering Olympians



Injuries have stopped Carsten Jørgensen from running the 10,000 metres at the Olympic Games, but several other orienteers will still appear in the spotlight during the hot September days in Sydney.

Mary Fien, a PWT medallist in Hong Kong in 1998, has worked for the organising committee since May and will be one of the track and field officials at Stadium Australia. Dorte Dahl, a PWT bronze medallist in 2000, is part of the Danish TV team among over 21,000 media representatives at the Olympics. Brigitte Grüniger, a strong newcomer on the Tour this year, will be on site supporting her boyfriend Philipp Huber, who is representing Switzerland in one of the toughest events on the programme, the decathlon.

And we can get there!

"We can get there if we really want," declares Park World Tour President Anders Vestergård, who is spending another two months in Sydney as an Olympic researcher. He is preparing his Masters thesis on the requirements facing sports which wish to join the Olympic programme, and Anders has also joined the Olympic workforce. As a Field of Play Marshal at the Opening and Closing Ceremonies, Anders was the first Finnish athlete to enter the main stadium, before the national teams marched in. *"I was most proud to be there - as an orienteer and a volunteer - 50 metres from the stage where the Olympic cauldron was lit,"* says Anders.

Wang on the run in Shanghai?

The Olympic 5,000 metres Champion in 1996, Wang Junxia of China, made



Olympic Champion Wang Junxia enjoyed her first orienteering experience, accompanied by Jörgen Mårtensson, and is considering a PWT start in China in October.

her orienteering debut at the O-Ringen 5-days in Sweden in July. *"She has a clear talent for the sport and I did not need to help her very much",* says Jörgen Mårtensson, who accompanied Wang in the forest. Her performance

impressed the World Champion, but the Chinese runner did not feel confident enough to start in the Park World Tour. Struggling with minor injuries she withdrew from the Champions' Week - but may appear at the final races in her home country in October. *"I would still like to improve my orienteering skills before I compete with the world elite,"* states Wang, clearly attracted by the sport.

Beijing among the finalists

Beijing - officially supporting orienteering as a new Olympic sport - is one of five contenders in the race to host the 2008 Games. Paris, Osaka, Toronto and Istanbul are Beijing's rivals - all in countries showing interest in hosting PWT races during the next years. The International Olympic Committee will select the host city at its Session in Moscow on 13-16 July 2001, which is also a place and time suggested for a PWT/World Championships race.

Support the O-goals!

You can support the orienteering goals of joining the Olympic Games and spreading our sport all over the world by joining the PWT Supporter Club. As a Club member you will receive four issues of PWT NOW! a year, as well as special travel offers and PWT products. For more information, contact jan.fogeby@pwt.org

PWT NOW! ISSUE 3/2000, SEPTEMBER
Text: Erik Borg, Seppo Veijalainen, Iain Rochford, Anders Vestergård.
Pictures: Thommy Nyhlén, Erik Borg, PWT Archive, Hartinger Consulting, Franz Hartinger.
Layout & Printing: Hartinger Consulting.
Publisher: PWT Supporter Club, Jan Fogeby, Dadelgränd 6, 17557 Järfälla, Sweden,
E-mail: jan.fogeby@pwt.org