



New Zealand Orienteering Federation

High Performance Strategic Plan

Prepared by Michael Wood
Adopted by NZOF Council

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1 Definitions

“High Performance” in the context of this document refers to the performance of New Zealand’s elite and junior elite level competitors in international competition on foot.

As such this excludes Veteran, Secondary School, and other non-elite performance. It also excludes emerging activity in MTB-Orienteering, though this may be included here in the future.

2 Overall Approach

The aspirations of the NZ Orienteering Federation in the context of elite performance on the world stage need to be tempered in reality, given the purely amateur level of the sport in NZ, small competitive population, and that most international events are held in Europe. NZOF itself has limited resources.

The plan is unashamedly a pragmatic one with the overall objective of improvement over time up to a level that is realistic given our constraints. The plan is not designed to deliver NZ a World Championship winner within its time frame, as this would require a step change approach that is not practical or affordable at this time.

3 Targets

3.1 Results in World Championships

Our small size means that we’ll have spiky results, as outstanding performers develop and retire. Regardless of any plan, we’re going to celebrate all our “best yet” results. However it is impossible to chart a steady improvement from where we are now to somewhere higher, because that’s simply not going to happen.

There are also changes in the competition format, number of disciplines, number of countries, and location of the championships.

We can however make some targets based on best so far. We write “within grasp” and “next level” targets.

<i>Targets for World Orienteering Championship</i>	
Women	Men
<p>Best 10 individual placings:</p> <p>10th (1991) 16th (2005) 21st (2005) 21st (2003) 24th (2005) 24th (1993) 24th (1995) 24th (1997) 25th (1999) 25th (1997)</p> <p><i>Within grasp: Top 15</i> <i>Next level: Top 10</i></p>	<p>Best 10 individual placings:</p> <p>24th (1997) 27th (2005) 28th (2005) 28th (1976) 28th (1993) 30th (2003) 30th (1991) 31st (2005) 33rd (1999) 34th (2001)</p> <p><i>Within grasp: Top 25</i> <i>Next level: Top 20</i></p>
<p>Best 5 relay placings:</p> <p>9th (2005) 9th (1997) 10th (1985) 11th (1983) 13th (1995, 1981)</p> <p><i>Within grasp: 8th</i> <i>Next level: 6th</i></p>	<p>Best 5 relay placings:</p> <p>11th (1991) 13th (1997) 13th (1985) 16th (1999) 17th (1987)</p> <p><i>Within grasp: 12th</i> <i>Next level: 10th</i></p>

3.2 World Ranking

This is an international system which potentially avoids the fluctuating nature of championship placings. As far as possible orienteering competitions are held on new terrain, so that times or speeds cannot be directly compared. However existing rankings are used to calibrate the results of “ranking events” so an objective score can be awarded to participants. A person’s world ranking is based on their best four scores within the last 12 months. As well as major international events, performances in NZ and Australia (at certain events) can be used to establish performance levels which have meaning internationally.

The numbers are such that 1000 is the average score of all internationally ranked orienteers, and 200 is the standard deviation. 4000 is therefore a good ranking, 4800 is an excellent level. Leaving aside “drift” in the level of the world’s ranked orienteers, this score is an absolute measure of performance. (The drift can go both ways – top orienteers get better, but new countries come into the pool below us.)

<i>Targets for World Ranking</i>	
Women	Men
Ranking points and placings immediately after the 2005 World Championships:	Ranking points and placings immediately after the 2005 World Championships:
4744 (65 th)	4888 (81 st)
4584 (82)	4667 (121)
3930 (131)	4491 (147)
3880 (134)	4036 (206)
3807 (138)	3713 (238=)
3659 (148)	3636 (250)
3364 (170)	3549 (263)
	3523 (267)
	3274 (294)
	3152 (323=).
Summary of current level: 1 above 4800, 5 above 4000	
<i>Within grasp: 2 above 4800, 8 above 4000</i>	
<i>Next level: 4 above 4800, 12 above 4000</i>	

3.3 Significant Results in the Oceania Region

Reality is that “medal placings” (top 3) are most unlikely at world level. But they do have media impact and they are achievable within the Oceania region. Oceania is an IOF region consisting of Australia, New Zealand and the island nations of the Pacific – effectively Australasia.

The Oceania Championship has a history of two: first run in Australia in 2003 and then in NZ in 2005. Unlike the world championship entry is unrestricted, countries can enter as many as they wish.

<i>Targets for Oceania Orienteering Championship</i>
Away competition 2003: Top woman 6 th top man 10 th , womens relay 6 th , mens relay 7 th
<i>Within grasp: Top 3 both men and women, top 2 relay both men and women</i>
<i>Next level: Win in either men or women, relay win in either men or women</i>
Home competition 2005: Top woman 1 st top man 1 st , womens relay 2 nd , mens relay 1 st
<i>Within grasp: Top man and woman, relay win men and women</i>
<i>Next level: can't do much better than that!</i>

The Oceania Championship seems likely to gain a higher status for elite competition than the Asia Pacific Orienteering Championship which preceded it. We therefore make no targets for APOC results.

3.4 Other International Events

World Cup events used to be run in the “off years” between World Championships. The World Championship is now held every year and the last World Cup in the old format will be in 2006. A new format World Cup based on existing major events is being planned to begin in 2007.

The new World Cup events will be spread out in time, and the majority will be in Europe. World Cup results will not form part of our targets although some athletes may be in a position to use them for international experience.

Events in Australia including the Australian Championship, and home and away “Test Matches” will also form part of our international experience. However these are “means to an end” and they don’t form part of our ultimate targets.

3.5 Junior World Orienteering Championship

NZOF will support participation by junior elites who we predict will perform in the top 75% of results. Results at the junior international level are even more “spiky” than at senior level, as shown by the “age” of the top placings; and in many cases there aren’t enough athletes to form relay teams. As above we make targets based on best so far.

<i>Targets for Junior World Orienteering Championship</i>	
Women	Men
Best 10 individual placings: 5 th (1992) 19 th (1992) 19 th (1997) 30 th (1991) 47 th (2004) 48 th (1996) 53 rd (2002) 53 rd (2002) 55 th (1990) 63 rd (2003) 63 rd (2005) <i>Highly commendable: Top 40</i> <i>Standout performance: Top 20</i>	Best 10 placings: 10 th (1996) 12 th (1996) 17 th (1998) 21 st (1998) 21 st (2002) 43 rd (1996) 44 th (1998) 45 th (1992) 45 th (1996) 46 th (2004) <i>Highly commendable: Top 40</i> <i>Standout performance: Top 20</i>
Best relay placings: 19 th (2000) 20 th (2005) 21 st (1997) 23 rd (2002) <i>Highly commendable: Top 20</i> <i>Standout performance: Top 15</i>	Best 5 relay placings: 10 th (1998) 16 th (2005) 21 st (1996) 22 nd (1997) 26 th (2001, 2002) <i>Highly commendable: Top 20</i> <i>Standout performance: Top 15</i>

JWOC in 2007 will be held in Australia. Experience of Australian conditions, and the relative lack of it by European youth, favours New Zealand. We make specific targets for JWOC 2007 as follows. We expect that individuals will take part in three disciplines.

<i>Special Targets for 2007 Junior World Orienteering Championship</i>	
Women	Men
<i>Individual: Best result in Top 10, 4 results in Top 20</i> <i>Relay: Top 8</i>	<i>Individual: Best result in Top 10, 4 results in Top 20</i> <i>Relay: Top 8</i>

Participation in JWOC should be a stepping stone to an elite career. Therefore the success of JWOC participation should also be measured at elite level. That's impossible to do, but we expect that most JWOC participants will have made it into the national squad three years after participation.

Targets for Progression to Senior Elite Ranks

1995 JWOC participants in NOS in 1998 0/1 0%
 1996 ... 1999 4/7 57%
 1997 ... 2000 6/10 60%
 1998 ... 2001 2/5 40%
 1999 ... 2002 4/5 80%
 2000 ... 2003 2/3 67%
 2001 ... 2004 4/5 80%
 2002 ... 2005 6/8 75%
 (Figures for JWOC are accurate, figures for NOS membership are estimates)

Target: 80%

3.6 Recognition and pride by ordinary orienteers

We want ordinary orienteers to take an interest and pride in the performance of elites. This is not just a means to obtain resources, it's a vital part of the health of the sport.

Yes it *is* hard to measure.

Even though we can't measure this, we can still *describe* the sort of targets we want. They would include:

- Percentage of orienteering club members who follow the world champs by internet while they are on, possibly now 1%, target 5%
- Percentage of orienteering club members who can name the national squad from photos, possibly now 2%, target 10%.
- Percentage of orienteering club members who check on their superseries team's fortunes after each round, possibly now 3%, target 15%

4 Action Plans

It is fashionable to write grand objectives, followed by a list of the actions and resources estimated to be required. Because it is good to be ambitious with objectives, the actions and resources required inevitably exceed those available *by a lot*. Then we have to rewrite a more realistic action plan; or more likely ignore the plan in day-to-day life.

We present instead something based on “just a bit more” than is estimated to be available in the immediate future, so that the plan is more meaningful.

We start with NZOF putting \$30,000 into High Performance.

(In 2005 it was: \$27,000, including NOS direct, NOS coach expenses, WRE fees, JWOC direct, D Squad via coaching budget. The draft budget for 2006 is less at \$24250.)

Of this, it puts \$10,000 into paying a High Performance Director. This has extended what volunteers can do, eg run a national league, attract further funds eg Superseries travel funding up to \$10,000 pa.

Of the \$20,000, most should go to current elite activity, but obviously some for developing tomorrow’s elites.

We apportion 25% for tomorrow (\$5000) and 75% for today (\$15,000).

To achieve these targets, we’ll do the following things

4.1 Identify and Apply for as many World Ranking Events as we are allowed

The current number is 3. There are fees to the IOF of about \$1000

4.2 Provide coaching of today’s and tomorrow’s elites

Each year, select a squad of orienteers who are committed to preparing to represent NZ at World Championship level (National Orienteering Squad).

Appoint qualified coaching coordinators for the national squad and national teams. Carry out training to most effectively prepare for competition. The detail for this is in the Coaching Plan, but we would expect several multi-day training camps in NZ each year. Attendance at selected offshore training camps relevant to specific targeted events.

Each year, select a squad of orienteers who have the potential to be in the national squad within the foreseeable future (Development Squad). JWOC team members will be drawn from this squad.

Appoint coaching coordinators for the development squad and JWOC teams. Carry out training to most effectively prepare for competition. The detail for this is in the coaching plan, but we would expect several multi-day training camps in NZ each year, and one in Australia.

We would expect regional coaching activity combining members of both squads and high-performing veterans; the emphasis on national versus regional structures is a coaching plan matter.

4.3 Develop Coaching Skills

Train coaches for the elite level so there are sufficient candidates for squad and team coach appointments. The detail for this is in the coaching plan, but we would expect a

qualification system, and in-service training for existing coaches. We would expect that elite coaches had some knowledge of sport science as well as navigational skills. We would expect to be able to use some of Australia's coach-training expertise; either by attending formal training or on a working-alongside basis. And from time to time we would expect to bring in expertise from one of the advanced orienteering countries for a short period.

We would expect new technology to help the coach to become available, such as video analysis or tracking technology. At the very least electronic punching needs to become widespread in NZ.

The two squads have volunteer coaching staff: \$500 per squad for their miscellaneous expenses.

4.4 Offer Moral Support for Living Overseas

There is no doubt that living and competing in Europe and Scandinavia has a huge effect on individual results. This has to be a personal decision but we can offer moral support for those who choose it.

4.5 Select teams, including managers and coaches

Maintain a selection policy, selection panel, carry out selection; this is not currently part of the High Performance portfolio. Appoint managers and coaches.

4.6 Identify World and Oceania events to support with available funding

After HP Director, squad coaches and ranking event fees \$13,500 is available for national squad direct athlete support. The mix of domestic and overseas activity is a year-by-year decision.

We will select those World and Oceania championships to support. We'll choose World Championships roughly every second year, and with regard to those that will motivate our top orienteers the most. The Oceania Championships are generally closer but only two-yearly; we'll participate each time.

Nomination is made in the annual plan three years ahead and confirmed two years ahead. The squad may accumulate funds by forgoing world champs attendance in one year in order to have greater resources for the next.

Athletes may choose to attend non-supported events subject to being of suitable standard; criteria for this need to be added to selection policy. There may be nominal support for costs but it cannot be significant without compromising the targeting approach.

Our plan is to target the World Championship in Denmark 2006, miss the World Championship in Ukraine 2007, and target the World Championship in Czech Republic 2008.

(Note: The philosophy would miss the World Championship in Hungary 2009 but as World Champs beyond 2009 haven't been awarded yet, this decision is left open.)

4.7 Identify Junior World events to support with available funding

After HP Director and squad coaches \$4,500 is available for development squad direct athlete support. The mix of domestic and overseas activity is a year-by year decision. The squad may accumulate funds by reducing junior world champs attendance in one year in order to have greater resources for the next, but it is faced with orienteers who are only 20yrs old once, so there is less flexibility here.

(Note: the JWOC schedule is 2006 Lithuania, 2007 Australia, 2008 Sweden. It is likely that the orienteering public may be persuaded to increase 2007 HP funding because NZ has greater than normal chances for good results.)

4.8 Provide domestic and trans-Tasman competition

Maintain the Orienteering Superseries and test-matches against Australia. Administration of the series is a task of the HP Director. Seek travel expenses from external sources. Recently this has been largely successful; otherwise it may be a call on national squad funds.

Develop a Junior Superseries aimed at increasing competition intensity between school-leaving and early 20's.

4.9 Orienteering Infrastructure

Align the domestic competition year with preparation for World Champs, which are usually in August. This requires suitable competition in March-June. The superseries is already aimed this way, with the final at Queens Birthday weekend. However it is a struggle to find suitable events and in the interim it has started earlier than ideal, in October-November.

For HP needs, the national champs should remain somewhere between March and June, but at a fixed time for stability of season planning. In addition, some or all of the area champs should also be in the March-June period.

The period following the World Champs will consist of:

- Sep-Oct active rest for those who attended WOC
- Working towards the Australian Champs for the others, or maybe the whole team in un-supported years
- Nov-Dec Gradual resumption of physical training load for the following year (later for those peaking at Aust Champs)
- Jan-Feb Highest physical training load.
- March Resumption of technique training and competition

The pattern may "bend" eg in off-WOC years or when there are regional championships, but a regular structure is a must. Major competition in January may be accommodated between the moderate and heavy physical training periods.

Improve course planning for NZ elite courses, particularly the differences between the various disciplines, and for new disciplines being introduced.

Ensure there are enough active IOF-certificated controllers to supervise World Ranking events in NZ. This reaches down into the controller education system.

Improve major events calendar advance planning. Rather than the current calendar-year emphasis (with publication by 31 Aug) we need to have the July-to-June programme settled as a block. Announcement with only 4 months to the start of period is highly inadequate, we need events settled at least a year in advance of the start of the period. This particularly applies to selecting events for WRE status.

4.10 Communicate results

Ensure high performance results and orienteers are widely communicated throughout orienteering in a way that increases interest and appreciation. Methods may include the NZOF website, NZ Orienteering magazine, and because not everyone may see the above, encouragement of club magazine editors and webmasters to feature performance. Improvement of race commentary is needed through workshops and more practice

Encourage elite and junior elite orienteers to play a full part in their club life.

Ensure we make the most of the results we obtain. The detail for this is in the media plan, but we would expect that the media officer arrange who is going to supply results and background before each team leaves NZ. Maintain a set of print-quality photos of team members that can be supplied to media.

Give squad members training in being interviewed.

5 Conclusion

NZ's 2005 World Championship results were arguably the best ever in total: 2nd and 3rd equal best placings of all time for both women and men; and an equal best ever womens relay placing. This plan shows how we can do even better.

A strategic plan looks several years ahead. Further detail is in an annual plan made by November each year which recognizes the resources available. The current annual plan is reported on at the end of each year.