

To the
- Members of the Sub-Committee for
World and Continental Cups Cross-Country

For information to:
- Cross-Country Executive Board
- Sub-Committee for Women's Nordic
- National Ski Associations
- Johan Eliasch
- Michel Vion
- Niklas Carlsson
- Sandra Spitz
- COC Coordinators

INTERNATIONAL SKI AND SNOWBOARD FEDERATION

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Oberhofen, 23.06.2023

**Minutes Meeting Sub-Committee for World and Continental Cups Cross-Country
Hotel Croatia Cavtat, Cavtat-Dubrovnik (CRO), 05.05.2023, 08:00 – 12:30 hrs CET**

Dear Ski Friends,

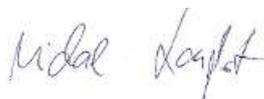
We are pleased to send you today the Minutes of the Meeting of the Sub-Committee for World and Continental Cups Cross-Country held in Dubrovnik, 05.05.2023.

You are kindly asked to send any remarks to the FIS Nordic Office in Oberhofen until **15th July 2023**.

We would also like to take the opportunity to inform you that the minutes are available on the Member Services section of the FIS Website: www.fis-ski.com.

Thank you very much for your valuable contribution. We wish you a nice spring.

Kind regards,



Michal Lamplot
Race Director Cross-Country

Enclosure: ment.

**INTERNATIONAL SKI AND SNOWBOARD FEDERATION
Sub-Committee for World and Continental Cups Cross-Country**

**Minutes Meeting Sub-Committee for World and Continental Cups Cross-Country
Hotel Croatia Cavtat, Cavtat-Dubrovnik (CRO), 05.05.2023, 08:00 – 12:30 hrs CET**

AGENDA

1. Opening of the meeting
2. Members present
3. Approval of the agenda
4. Approval of the minutes of the last meeting
5. Report of the last FIS Council meeting
6. FIS Cross-Country World Cup 2022/23
 - Season report
7. Reports and proposals from the Working Groups, proposals Sub-Committees and National Ski Associations
 - World Cup Calendars
 - Equal Distances
 - Fluor ban implementation
 - Common waxing Tallinn
8. World Cup rules 2023/24
9. COOP FIS Cross-Country World Cup calendar 2023/24Draft long term World Cup calendars
 - World Cup calendar principles
10. JWSC and U23 WSC update
11. CoC update
 - COC organization and future of COCs
12. Other items arising
13. Next meeting
14. Closing of the meeting

All proposals and decisions of the Sub-Committee are subject to the confirmation of the Cross-Country Committee on 05.05.2023 and to the approval of the FIS Council, 24.05.2023

1. Opening of the Meeting

Chris Grover welcomed the members of the Sub-Committee for World and Continental Cups and opened the meeting.

2. Members Present

Excuses / Replaced by:

Chris Grover, USA, Chair	
Ulf Morten Aune, NOR	
Anders Byström, SWE	
Marko Gracer, SLO	
Gyu Im Yeui, KOR	
Chris Jeffries, CAN	substituted by Julie Beaulieu
Kaliba Stepan, CZE	
Zofia Stefania Kielpinska, POL	
Guri Knotten, SUI	
Hannu Koivusalo, FIN	
Özkan Koyuncu, TUR	
Hiroshi Kozakai, JPN	Not present
Sergey Kryanin, RUS	Not present
Albert Manhart, LIE	Excused
Giorgio Marchesini, IRL	Not present
Finn Marsland, AUS	Excused
Olivier Michaud, FRA	
Julio Moreschi, ARG	Not present
Andriy Nesterenko, UKR	
Andrey Nevzorov, KAZ	
Gabriella Paruzzi, ITA	
Robert Peets, EST	substituted by Vahur Leemets
Milanko Petrovic, SRB	
Ferran Pubil, ESP	
Andreas Schlütter, GER	
Jon Vidar Thorvaldsson, ISL	
Timoleon Tsourekas, GRE	Not present
Ondrej Tuka, SVK	Excused
Thomas Unterfrauner, AUT	substituted by Michael Bonfert
Jostein Vinjerui, GBR	
Petar Zografov, BUL	

Julia Kern, Athletes representative	
James Clugnet, Athletes representative	
Meier Norbert, CAN – representative of World Cup LOCs	
Rudi Huber, SRS	Not present

Uros Ponikvar, SLO, Chair CCC
 Michal Lamplot, FIS
 Simon Caprini, FIS
 Doris Kallen, FIS
 Synne Dyrhaug, FIS
 Madeline Nappey, FIS

Guests

Guests from different National Ski Associations, Organizing Committees, Infront and other Committees were present.

3. Approval of the Agenda

The agenda was sent out on 15th April 2023. As there were no additional items reported, the Sub-Committee for World and Continental Cups Cross-Country approved the agenda.

4. Approval of the minutes of the last meeting

No remarks have been registered at the FIS Office.

The Sub-Committee for World and Continental Cups approved the minutes.

5. Report of the last FIS Council meeting

Michal Lamplot informed the members of the S.C. about the latest FIS Council meeting that took place on 17th March 2023.

The Council approved two new athletes representatives for Cross-Country that were voted into the athletes commission. Julia Kern from the USA and Jimmy Clugnet from GBR replace former athletes representatives Virginia De Martin and Martti Jyhlä.

Due to the ongoing invasion of Ukraine by Russia, the FIS Council did not change the regulations in terms of participation of Russian and Belarussian athletes and officials at FIS Events. The FIS Council will discuss the matter again at the next Council meeting on 24th May.

6. FIS Cross-Country World Cup 2022/23

Season report

The debrief with coaches, service and industry was conducted in a season debrief online call and personal conversations during the season.

Michal Lamplot pointed out that the season 2022/23 overall has been very successful with a total of 67 competitions in 15 venues and 11 countries – and no cancellations. Throughout the season, a total of 434 athletes and 400 staff were registered from a total of 44 different nations.

Common waxing Tallin

The feedback on the common waxing in Tallin was good as a test event but would need further evaluation and development if it should be followed up in the future.

Three implementation tests for the fluor control took place throughout the season and service teams had the possibility to get involved into in field testing and educational sessions around the testing device. The test phase proved to be very valuable.

Athletes survey

Jimmy Clugnet and Julia Kern presented the results from the athletes survey that focused specifically on equal distance evaluation. Main feedback from the survey was:

- Overall feedback through comments showed a tendency that athletes would like to see different formats and course variations, depending on the venue and overall program.
- The question was raised what profile today's elite Cross-Country skier was trending towards. The majority agreed that the current system supports an allround skier more than a specialist.
- The tested formats and distances in terms of equalization seem to make sense for majority of athletes.
- The new Team sprint format with qualification was perceived as much fairer.

7. Reports and proposals from the Working Groups, proposals Sub-Committees and National Ski Associations

Working Group on World Cup Calendars

Michal Lamplot reported that the general feedback led to the conclusion that the 2022/23 season was one of the logistical best planned seasons ever.

This was achieved thanks to the set calendar framework that set the standards for the calendar planning.

Nevertheless, to ensure the financial sustainability for all stakeholders, this framework needs to be controlled consistently and able to adapt to circumstances. All stakeholders must follow this framework in the interest of the sport.

In addition to the planning framework, the long-term calendar must be re-introduced and followed by every stakeholder involved. Details on the calendars were to be presented in point 9 of the agenda.

Working Group on Equal Distances

2022/23 marked the first season where women and men raced equal distances in all formats along the FIS Cross-Country World Cup. After thorough discussions in media prior to the season, all doubts disappeared once the season started.

After meetings of the working group throughout the season, gatherings with coaches and athletes and from feedback of TV and media, the conclusion was for all to propose to keep the tested distance framework of 10km, 20km and 50km for all. Gender specific (women and men's) relay should be 4x7.5 km.

Working Group on Fluor ban implementation

As approved by the FIS Council, the Fluor ban will be effective as 1st July 2023. Test procedures have taken place during the past season and will be clearly defined this summer and approved this autumn. ICR updates including testing procedure and sanction process will be added in autumn and must be approved by the Committees and the FIS Council.

Working Group on Common waxing Tallin

Michal Lamplot reported that the common waxing project implementation during the World Cup in Tallin worked well. The wax and material was provided by SWIX, which was chosen as a company after the organizer and NSA had published an international tender for the event.

On a positive note, common waxing resulted in a financial advantage for the organizer as costs could be saved by not having to hire and provide individual wax cabins. Fewer technicians and staff travelled on site and the conditions during competitions was the same for all but not only due to common waxing, but also due to the snow preparation on course.

Features to be improved before following common waxing further were mainly the logistics with the handling of material and especially also the ventilation in the tent, which was not sufficient. Especially this latter point reminded us why the rule of prohibited common waxing was originally in place and why it should remain in the rules.

Conclusion: common waxing was successful but needs further development and communication. The first definition must be to agree on the long-term goal for common waxing, whether it is to reduce costs or to provide equal skis for everyone.

8. World Cup rules 2023/24

The following proposals were sent by NSAs and discussed in the Sub Committee:

Proposals ITA on competition formats

- New format Sprint qualification
To separate qualification race to a day prior to the actual Sprint World Cup. NOR and GER plan to test the format and to report to the working group of race formats and the Sub Committee.
- Elimination race
- Relay with 3 skiers (C/F/F or C/C/F)

The existing working group of race formats were appointed to take further evaluation on the proposed changes of competition formats.

Proposals from POL, SVK, HUN

- Request to move to OPA Cup

CCC Chair Uros Ponikvar pointed out the consequences as with the move of the three countries to OPA, only UKR would be left in the Slavic Cup and OPA would rise to a total of 13 nations. The shift in regions raised the question what task and meaning the regional Cups at COC level has.

A working group was appointed to follow up on the status quo of Continental Cups organisation and to come up with suggestions on how to proceed with the COC level regions.

Report of the W.G. is expected before the FIS Technical Committee meeting in autumn 2023.

Athletes Start Quota for Individual Events

With the thought to strengthen smaller nations and to provide the platform for more nations in the top ranks, a review of the quota system for individual events was questioned.

A reduction of the national quota from 10+2 U23 to 8+2 U23 or 8+4 U23 was the central point of discussion. The current quota has mainly only been used by the large Scandinavian nations and according to them, a cut to 8+2 would result in more athletes changing to popular racing. For most smaller nations, a cut would not impact their teams as of the current situation.

The members agreed that the definition of quota for individual events needs further evaluation but that the overall goal of strengthening the smaller nations must be prioritized in these discussions.

National group quota

With a repetitive number of nations as organizers of World Cup, the question was raised whether to limit how often the national quota can be used during a season.

Together with the evaluation of individual event quota, this matter will be taken to a newly appointed working group that will research on this matter throughout summer and report to the Sub Committee in the FIS Autumn meetings.

2.2.3.1 Nation quota USA and CAN at North American events

Regarding the calendar draft of the World Cup season 2023/24, USA and CAN sent a proposal that both nations can use their maximum quota of 10+2 during both World Cup events (Canmore and Minneapolis) to strengthen their team appearance in North America.

The members of the Sub Committee approved the article 2.2.3.1 in the World Cup rule draft.

2.3.4.2 Starting order for interval start competitions

During the season the discussion came up whether the current system of choosing spots manually for the seeded group would result too much in team tactics which then impact the race and thus results.

It was pointed out that on courses with multiple laps, larger teams had an advantage as start positions could be created that enabled them to create trains and to be drafting in races.

The proposal to set the starting positions for seeded athletes by a draw instead of manual choice was approved by the members of the Sub Committee.

2.3.3.2 Starting order for qualification round

In the same discussion as in individual start competitions, the starting positions for the Sprint qualification round was proposed to be done by an automated draw.

The starting order was set for seeded athletes to choose even numbers and athletes from group 2 to be placed in between at every odd number.

Both proposals (draw and starting position) were unanimously approved by the members of the Sub Committee.

2.8.2 Bib System

Michal Lamplot elaborated that a next step into simplifying the big bib system in the field of play was to reduce the number of big bibs in a final step. The proposal was made to have only one "course" bib on the race course (still separating between women's course and regular course) and only one team bib for the rest of the field of play. The bibs will be allocated according to the quota as so far.

The change to two big bib types was unanimously approved by the members of the Sub Committee.

9. COOP FIS Cross-Country World Cup calendar 2023/24 draft and long term World Cup calendars

World Cup calendar 2023/24

As an introduction to the discussions for the upcoming calendar, Michal Lamplot informed that the calendar working group met several times online and on site during the past season but did not come up with a final proposal of the upcoming calendar 2023/24. Therefore, three drafts were available.

He also pointed out the importance of Nordic events as defined by the FIS Council.

PERIOD I

The major challenge in the upcoming season was the first period. As the Finnish Ski Association with Ruka Nordic as an organizer was unable to move weekends, the traditional Nordic opener was set four weekends before Christmas. This resulted in having more race weekends in the first period of the calendar than defined in the framework, resulting in higher financial demands to teams and therefore a thread of having fewer nations and athletes at the start line during the season.

The Sub Committee approved to vote on the three proposals of the calendar and voted in favor of the presented voting system (first round to vote on all three proposals and second round to vote between two with highest vote).

The end vote resulted in 12 to 7 votes in favor of option 1, including Ruka Nordic as a season opener, Gällivare as second stop, followed by Östersund and then Trondheim to conclude the first period of the World Cup.

After the vote, it was to point out that FRA was strongly against the final version of the Period I of the World Cup calendar 2023/24.

With the now only version of the World Cup calendar 2023/24 in place, the members discussed each period and the possible formats per venue. Remarks that were pointed out was the big load of 20km in the draft (11 times) to 6 scheduled 20km in the previous season.

As Trondheim is set as test event for the WSC 2025, the Norwegian Ski Association inquired to replace the Mixed Relay in the draft to a WSC format. Michal Lamplot highlighted the importance of having a team event in the first period and the suggestion came up to implement the gender specific Relay in Gällivare instead due to a fitting course profile.

The members agreed to change the schedule in Trondheim to WSC specific formats and voted in favor of Sprint on Friday, Skiathlon on Saturday and 10km Interval on Sunday. In the same vote, the members approved to include the mixed Relay in Gällivare and to follow the wish from Östersund to schedule the 10km as an Interval start instead of Mass start.

PERIOD II - Tour de Ski

In the search of options to increase the attractiveness of the Tour de Ski, the FIS Cross-Country team together with the organizers of the upcoming Tour have come up with a concept that includes a special concept competition at every end stage per venue.

Current TV production related technical evaluations were still in place for Toblach, for the final stage on site that would lead up to the Lago di Landro with a view on the Tre Cime.

As a second stop, Davos in its 50 years anniversary addition was scheduled exceptionally in the Tour, and its final stage was to visit two of the three Cross-Country accessible valleys around Davos (Flüela and Dischma). Guri Knotten mentioned that Davos would also be ready to host the Sprint as a night Sprint. However, further evaluation had to be taken as there was little recovery time to the next days 20km in case of a Sprint at night.

The Final Climb in Val di Fiemme is scheduled to remain unchanged and marks the highlight of the Tour.

All members supported the concept as it is in favor of nature of the sport.

PERIOD III

Neither DSV for Oberhof nor Swiss Ski for Goms saw the possibility to implement a 10km Interval start instead of the 20km Mst as a reduction of long-distance races was elaborated. The main reason was the unsuitable middle European market in terms of production and spirit for the interval start competition format.

PERIOD IV

Due to the flat course set in Minneapolis, the concern was raised that in the originally scheduled 20km Mst, the athletes would cross the finish line without large gaps. Therefore, the proposal from US to change the format from 20km Mst to 10km Interval start was approved by the Sub Committee members.

PERIOD V

The Finnish Ski Association inquired to exchange the Mixed Relay in Lahti with a Team sprint in Classic technique. The proposed change was approved by the members of the Sub Committee.

The members of the Sub Committee approved the final calendar frame for the season 2023/24.

Long Term Calendar planning

A long-term calendar planning was requested by most stakeholders to plan investments and attendances accordingly in the future.

Michal Lamplot re-introduced the existing key principles and opened the discussion point by point.

Scheduling the start of the season

The members of the Sub-Committee strongly and unanimously agree to schedule 3 weekends before Christmas and 1 weekend off before the Tour de Ski in future calendars.

How many back-to-back weekends we want to have?

The members agreed to schedule maximum 3 weekends per period.

How many competitions per weekend?

The basic question was raised whether the season was to be measured by weekends or by how many competitions were on the calendar.

From team logistical views, three-day weekends are environmentally and financially more sustainable and therefore preferred. However, it has consequences on the physical load on the athletes.

As long as the framework followed by all stakeholders, and no additional race weekends have to be planned, three competitions per weekend are preferred by the majority.

Tour de Ski

The Tour was to remain with three host nations where smart travelling can be implemented. The competition period over new year shall remain. The collaboration between the organizers has to be strengthened, also to give the Tour a more connected "look and feel" in order to make it easier to sell it as a product. The Tour de Ski remains a period in the World Cup where special formats and new features can be implemented and thus remains very important for the overall program. All stakeholders are challenged

to come up with special features for the Tour. Commitment from NSAs interested in hosting Tour de Ski in the future is requested.

Specialist weekends

The general approach is to combine Sprint and Distance weekends but to stay open for specific events where the concept makes sense (eg. City Sprint).

Avoid clashing with other events (eg. Nationals) – scheduling the Nordic U23 and Junior WSC

A long-term calendar frame shall help to avoid clashing of events such as National Championships or the Nordic JWSC. The preference goes towards scheduling the JWSC later in the season, ideally post WSC if applicable. Coordination with SJ and NC in this matter is important. Date of the JWSC & U23 WSC 2024 has been set, in 2025 it could be possible to host the JWSC & U23 WSC later in the season because Cross-Country will be alone in Schilpario, ITA.

Scheduling World Cup before title events

To keep the work load and preparation phase for title events to full capacity, the preference of the majority of the members was to have a competition-free weekend before any title event.

Scheduling World Cup after title events

The members of the Sub Committee agree to race the weekend directly after a title event but it highly depends on what format. Back-to-back 50km long-distance races must be avoided.

Scheduling the end of the season

Post title event or/and the final period of the World Cup calendar sees the classic Nordic organizers of Lahti, Falun and Oslo. With two of them being Nordic events, the competition load is already very heavy and thus, adding another event is unrealistic.

The end of the World Cup competition season shall therefore be no later than around third weekend in March – or third weekend after title event.

10. JWSC and U23 WSC Update

The next Nordic U23 and Junior World Ski Championship should take place in Planica (SLO) from 5th to 11th February 2024. Official confirmation of dates from SloSki was pending (at the time of the meeting).

Mainly the distances in U20 categories are to be discussed as the topic has also already been taken up in the Youth & Children Sub Committee. The results of the evaluation there will be very crucial to be able to present a successful transition for U20 to World Cup athletes, without risking a large drop-out rate.

11. COC update

As a working group has been appointed to evaluate the current status quo of the COC regions, no further discussions took place. See point 8 of the minutes.

12. Other items arising

No other matters.

13. Next meeting

FIS Autumn meetings Zürich (SUI), 27th to 29th September 2023

14. Closing of the meeting

Chris Grover thanks all members for the very constructive Sub Committee meeting and closed the meeting at 12:30h.