

To the:

- Members of the Sub-Committee for the Development of Cross-Country

For information to:

- Cross-Country Executive Board
- National Ski Associations
- Gian Franco Kasper
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Oberhofen, 19.05.2021

**Minutes Meeting Sub-Committee for the Development of Cross-Country
GoToMeeting platform, 06.05.2021, 15:00 – 17:00 hrs CET**

Dear Ski Friends,

We are pleased to send you the minutes of the Meeting of the Sub-Committee for the Development of Cross-Country held online, 06.05.2021

You are kindly asked to send any remarks to the FIS Nordic Office in Oberhofen until **15th June 2021**.

We would also like to take the opportunity of informing 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.

Kind regards,

Leandro Ribela
Chairman Sub-Committee for the Development of Cross-Country

(sent by e-mail without signature)

Enclosurement.

**INTERNATIONAL SKI FEDERATION
Sub-Committee for the Development of Cross-Country**

**Invitation Meeting Sub-Committee for the Development of Cross-Country
Thursday, 06.05.2021, 15:00 – 17:00 hrs CET**

AGENDA

1. Opening of the meeting
2. Members present
3. Approval of the agenda
4. Approval of the minutes of the last online meeting, 22.09.2020
5. Participation statistics
6. 2020/2021 Season review
 - Junior World Ski Championships / U23 Championships, Vuokatti (FIN)
 - General season experiences/feedback
7. 2021 Nordic World Ski Championships, Oberstdorf (GER)
 - Rules for participation
 - Qualification event feedback
 - Developing nation's feedback
8. FIS Development Programme (FDP)
 - 2020/21 Report and 2021/2022 plans
9. Qualification OWG 2022
 - Simulation, feedback and recommendations for the future
10. Fluor ban updates and discussion about "future of ski preparation"
11. Any other matters arising
12. Next meeting
13. Closing of the meeting

All proposals and decisions of the Sub-Committee are subject to the confirmation of the Cross-Country Committee, 21.05.2021 and to the approval of the FIS Council, 02.06.2021 (tbc)

1. Opening of the Meeting

Meeting was opened at 15:00

2. Members present

Roll Call Sub-Committee for Cross-Country Development		
Ribela Leandro	BRA	Present
Abou Saad Victor	LBN	Not present/replaced by Freddy
Koyuncu Özkan	TUR	Present
Jerman Matias	ARG	Present
Lahaye Jean-Pierre	BEL	Present
Malak Michal	SVK	Present
Marsland Finn	AUS	Present
Sargsyan Gagik	ARM	Present
Shrestha Jeetendra	NEP	Not present
Tsourekas Timoleon	GRE	Present
Young Roy	GBR	Present
Zipfel Georg	GER	Not present
open	BOL	
open	HUN	Brigitta Bereczki, present
open	ITA	
open	MGL	
open	ROU	
De Boer Henk	NED	Honorary Member
Lindstrom John	USA	Honorary Member
Guests		
Cesar Baena	VEN	
Freddy Keirouz	LBN	
Gunars Ikaunieks	LAT	
Jonya Balint	HUN	
Nick Lau	TTO	
Lorena Malec	CRO	
Franco Puntel	ESP	

3. Approval of the agenda

Agenda was approved.

4. Approval of the minutes of the last online meeting, 22.09.2020

Approved

5. Participation statistics

The number of athletes at WSC increased this year. 63 nations on men's side and 50 nations on women's side. (s. presentation for more details). 37 (men) and 22 (women) nations took part in the WSC qualification event and this is an increase since Seefeld 2019. The performance, especially on the men's side is increasing and more and more athletes achieve less than 300 points.

Leandro suggests organizing qualification events at World Cups, maybe once every two years, in year when there is no WSC. This could stimulate the knowledge exchange between nations and preparation of the small nation to the WSC.

In OWG 2022 there will be less nations participating when comparing with 2018, where the biggest number of participations was achieved. Some nations who would most probably have athletes eligible (under 300points at FIS list) to participate at the OWG, did not achieve the criteria to open a spot under the basic quota (under 300 points at the U23WSC or WSC. Reasons for the decrease, especially on women's side, needs to be evaluated and initiatives on how to have more women in sport and how to support them should be considered.

Jean-Pierre asks if the shown statistics represent only Cross-Country. This is the case.

19 nations used waxing support during the WSC, which are good numbers. 58 pairs of skis were waxed for the qualification race + 21 pairs for the other races. None of the teams who used the support were present at the meeting to share experiences on the waxing support.

6. 2021 Nordic World Ski Championships, Oberstdorf (GER)

- Rules for participation

Rules were changed, so no one was excluded, and exceptions have been granted upon request.

Preliminary entries are too early for small nations. The deadlines for the provisional team selection were changed during season and the change will remain.

9. Qualification OWG 2022

Leandro points some cases where the Qualification system for OWG 2022 seems not appropriated:

- First case about the Latvian women athlete who is very active in biathlon but did not meet the FIS Points criteria for WSC. In the season 2020/2021 she had several top 30 results at Biathlon World Cup, including a 9th place and 18th place at the Biathlon World Championships and a win at the European Championships. She had only two Rollerski races in her FIS profile in the past years, so she had to go to the qualification race in Oberstdorf and won the race, opening 27 points in the second place. Pierre was asked if it would be possible to change the criteria and grant exceptions in cases like this, to go to the main race and not affect the qualification race, which at this WSC was counting as criteria to open spots for the OWG under the basic quota. Pierre comments that it is difficult to take the right decision and asks why a biathlete would be allowed to go to WSC whereas

someone with 123 FIS Points (or example) would have to go to the qualification race. Leandro suggests considering biathlon points for example, once it is a cross-country-like discipline. Pierre thinks it is difficult to compare different sports. Leandro says he understands but having the basic quota for OWG based on points at the qualification race (for many nations) and then have to face outside factors affecting this race is not fair for those nations preparing for the event. So, we should think about ways to avoid it to happen. This case for example took 3 nations out of the OWG, who were prepared to achieve the points and quota, although were affected by a outside factor. The athlete could have been registered directly at main 10km race if we had considered that before. She scored better points at the 10km race (102.86 points) than in the qualification race where she scored 122,49, finishing first. It is not her fault, either fault from LAT NSA. The issue is that the current rules are permitting cases like this to happen, affecting other nations in the OWG qualification process, what we should try to avoid happening.

Roy comments that rules are rules, and they are published in good time ahead. Athletes can adapt if they want to participate in the WSC. If we are too flexible, then we will end up in chaos. Pierre agrees and adds that the qualification criteria must be compared and revised constantly. Leandro says that Roy understood it wrong. She didn't request to go to the main race, although knowing her level at biathlon, FIS should have a mechanism to not accept her registration for the qualification and allow registering her directly at the main race instead. Otherwise, this affects many other nations. A good athlete with bad points in a weaker field limited by rule (only athletes without one result lower than 120 points) generates higher race penalty and higher points for the whole field. Of course, we cannot control points an athlete's performance, although we can try to think deeper about rules that covers the issue in case it appears.

- César asks a statement on one of his athletes that had an expired Venezuelan passport but a valid other one. The athlete met all criteria but could still not participate in WSC. Pierre suggests discussing this outside the meeting. Leandro supports Pierre and advises that first, all federations must investigate internally to solve problems. Only afterwards FIS should be involved.
- The second case refers to a women athlete from Bosnia-Herzegovina who had one result under 120 points and was registered directly at the 10km F Women race (without going to qualification), where she did not achieve less than 300 FIS Points. BIH had other athletes at the women 5km qualifying race, although none of them scored under 300 points. This means, BIH did not achieved one basic quota for OWG. If the athlete with one result under 120 points could start at the qualification race, she would most probably had achieved under 300 points. Leandro suggests that people on the edge can chose if they want to do the qualification race or not (establish a range of points) or we use another criteria for participation at WSC qualification event (for example FIS points, one 2 or 3 results under 120 points). One single result seems not to be appropriate. Pierre explains that the qualification for OWG does not only depend on participation in WSC. Athletes can also participate in U23 WSC. Further, the qualification criteria for OWG are not established last minutes and the nations need to prepare earlier for big events. For Pierre, the question is if we want to focus on the development of single athletes or a whole team. Leandro agrees that there were many small nations who did their homework and sent teams to JWSC and WSC, increasing their chances to open a spot for OWG under the basic quota. Roy comments to review the current rules. Pierre explains that in OWG number of athletes is fixed which in WSC is not the case. In addition, the hosting nation in OWG needs to have a basic quota of 4 per gender. This reduces the number of athletes for all nations. Even RUS and NOR can only bring 16 athletes per gender whereas before they could bring 20 athletes

and more. The question is if we want to bring more nations resulting that less athletes from each nation can participate in the competitions, e.g., relays would have only 10 teams participating. In Pierre's opinion OWG is the highest competition level where the top 30 nations should participate.

- Third case refers to athletes who are granted WC start by the exception rule, earning points for the Nations Ranking, where the top 30 receive a quota in D1 allocation for OWG. If the nations ranking counts for OWG quotas, only athletes eligible for participation at WC should earn points. Pierre says it was not an issue this season, but he agrees, and we should take that in consideration for the future.

Leandro comments that there will always be different levels of development among the nations. But it is important they all have a chance to participate at OWG to push their development further. It would be important to have fair chances, independently of outside factors. Therefore, he proposes to look carefully into all the cases and factors raised above and try to fix it for the future WSC and OWG. Pierre understands that the Nation's ranking opens for more athletes, so maybe the current FIS points limits, and criteria need to be reviewed. For the 2026 Olympics there is no rush as the criteria will be established only after 2022. For the WSC, possible changes should come during the Autumn meetings with concrete proposals.

Pierre shows what was proposed to the IOC in regard of the pandemic impact on the qualification for OWG. For qualifying events (WC, WSC, JWSC) there were no restrictions on travelling, so every nation had the possibility to participate. Only decisions from their national authorities/ NSAs were making participation and travelling difficult. During simulations only in few cases the pandemic had a significant impact on the nation ranking. There is a marginal impact on women's side as number of athletes and density are usually lower for women. As consequence FIS Points for women were higher than expected. Therefore, for women it is suggested to adjust D1 and D2 criteria by 10%. No changes/ adjustment for men. The athlete's eligibility is based on FIS points. Therefore, the calculation periods should start on 1st July 2019 (before pandemic). All these points are on the table of IOC and a decision can be expected in the next weeks. Pierre states that no discussions on specific cases can be done.

Leandro concludes that the group must communicate their goals better and clearer to make a progress. Pierre agrees and adds that the information is available and published but often lost. A clear strategy is necessary.

10. Fluor ban updates and discussion about "future of ski preparation"

Pierre gives an update of the Fluor ban Working Group. The device is not quite ready, and the calibration and certification are missing, although expected for May. The decision for next season is expected for June. The final certification test for the device will be done in beginning of June. The device was also tested on field of play, but the results were not good enough. Pierre will always push for the ban if the device is working 100 %, but this does not influence the Council decision. Council will take the final decision in June.

Leandro informs that he will be part of the Cross-Country Expert Group of ski preparation. He encourages the members of the subcommittee to contact him in case of questions/ concerns so he can address these in the expert group.

6. 2020/2021 Season review

- Junior World Ski Championships / U23 Championships, Vuokatti (FIN)
First, Michal sends a big “thank you” to the Finnish Ski Association who took over the JWSC very late!

He presented facts and figures which can all be found in the JWSC report enclosed and asked the members for feedback, encouraging them to discuss and propose race formats and distances for the future.

During the presentation, the following comments were written in the chat:

- 30k is too long for U20
- U23 should continue to have Mass Starts
- JWSC always at the end of January

Michal will collect comments from the NSA and bring them further to the Cross-Country Committee. He also comments on the JWSC period. He agrees that JWSC should take place at the end of January but 2022 OWG starts earlier than before and there might be a potential issue for some nations. Then, we as FIS are also dependent on the LOC and other stakeholders. The Polish Ski Association hosts a Ski Jumping World Cup in middle of January and the end of January is high season for tourists. All these factors limit the possibility to organize JWSC in January and it was agreed to host the event in the end of February. Finn explains that for Australia, end of February is too late in terms of travelling and organizational aspects.

Distances and Formats of future JWSC will be further discussed in the S.C. CC Youth & Children.

- YOG 2024: see enclosure.

7. FIS Development Programme (FDP)

Dimitrije presents the report (see enclosure for presentation). Özkan asks why Ski Jumping and Nordic Combined have 3 camps whereas Cross-Country has only one. Dimitrije will check this and get back with an answer. Dimitrije writes to Leandro by e-mail a few days later stating the following: “Further to open question from TUR, please be advised that I have provided correct answer. There is no space for any kind of discrimination or not having attention to different sports in this case CC. It is just management of the activities and how the activities were organized.

CC had longer camp and NC/SJ two shorter one. In addition to for the coming season we will have instead of one, three CC camps. The budget allow it and management of camps was made some savings in planning. Leandro forwards his e-mail to the member of the committee.

8. Any other matters arising

9. Next meeting

The next meeting will take place during the FIS Congress in Vilamoura, last week of May 2022.

10. Closing of the meeting

Meeting was closed 17:10 hrs CET