

After the first three years of Worldloppet's existence, on the occasion of the annual meeting in Helsinki 1981, it came to statutory reelection of the Secretary General of Worldloppet. Seven members from Europe above all were not satisfied with Tony Wise as the first Secretary General. USA seemed still to be a bit far away; the communication in those days was rather complicated and first and foremost the Europeans couldn't accurately come to terms with American customs. That is why they looked for the Secretary General from Europe, found it in my person and elected me.

In Helsinki the Worldloppet was enlarged for the first time. With the acceptance of La Transjurassienne de France, there were then eight European organisers. Discussion over possible co-operation with FIS was held at the meeting in Helsinki. Co-operation between WL and FIS was discussed during two hours with the president of FIS those days, Marc Hodler and the Secretary General of FIS those days and the present President of FIS, Gianfranco Kasper.

Different countries considered then that closer co-operation was not necessary, that Worldloppet knows better what it is to be done and that they don't want FIS to take part in their decision-making. I myself was already at that time a delegate of FIS and argued for a closer co-operation. What has come out of it we can see today from the good and successful co-operation.

During the following four years I exerted myself for the successful existence of Worldloppet and for the possible enlargement and the general rise in quality of our races. Together with a team from Pontresina with Claudio Chiogna as publicity manager for Worldloppet and Tina Vonmoos as Secretary of Engadin Skimarathon and Worldloppet, a great deal of work was accomplished.

First of all the rules of Worldloppet were revised and adapted to the conditions and laws in Europe and they were approved in the occasion of the next annual meeting in St. Moritz (SUI). Also the minimal requirements for the races who wanted to be members of Worldloppet were approved in St. Moritz. I visited the Marxa Beret in the Spanish Pyrenees as an observer in 1983. As a result of my report the race was not accepted to membership of Worldloppet because it didn't satisfy the minimal demands.

Klasse Kvänna (SWE), Bruce Cameron (CAN) and I visited and judged also the Sapporo International Ski Marathon. At the next annual meeting in Cavalese (ITA) the Sapporo International Skimarathon was accepted as the 11th member.

Different applications from the former Eastern block countries were answered negatively, because they couldn't assure the unhindered entry and departure of the skiers. Those were the applications from Russia, Poland and Czechoslovakia. The appropriate co-operation was unthinkable until the breakpoint of the communistic regime.

After four years, on the occasion of the meeting in Cavalese, I could hand over my position as Secretary General of the Worldloppet to Risto Rytökoski from Lahti (FIN).

It was a very intensive and also a very interesting time with a lot of work, but also with a lot of fun that I wouldn't have missed in a million years. I'm still very interested in Worldloppet. I wish much fun and satisfaction in this valuable work to all the people in Worldloppet, especially to my follower as Secretary General.

Eugen Peter  
Secretary General of Worldloppet 1981-1985  
Pontresina, SUI

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### **1985-1988 Risto Rytökoski, Finlandia-hiihto (FIN)**

Risto Rytökoski's main helpers were his wife Leila, who spoke 6 foreign languages, and Vappu Määttä, the secretary of Finlandia-hiihto. Under the leadership of Risto Finlandia-hiihto became the world's biggest skimarathon but he had also a lot to offer to Worldloppet already from its beginning.

In Finland the present Worldloppet symbolics were finally worked out (logo, diploma) and also the idea and buildup of the yearbook, which has retained its form until today. For better promotion every race had to prepare advertising materials and send 100 copies to the central office every autumn. This request was made to make the information distribution easier. Among other innovations Risto Rytökoski concluded the first Worldloppet sponsor contracts with companies Fischer and Adidas.

Starting from 1986 the member races were asked to provide the headquarters with additional statistics about participation numbers and nationalities, to have more interesting facts for the media. A need for alphabetical results rose, as the number of passport owners had risen to 2174. For tracing results to stamp the passports of Master candidates, the General Secretariat was forced to use ranking lists (many of them on 50 or more pages). For many races this kind of data processing requirement was quite difficult to fulfill.

To make the organisational work and decision making more effective, several sub-committees were formed (for example a working group on the Worldloppet brochure, sponsorship, marketing of passports, rules etc.). Their task was to work out the drafts of decisions, as the only WL decisive body - the annual meeting once a year - was not enough to maintain the development.

Madis Lepajõe: "Risto Rytökoski was a highly respected professional, who always worked for developing WL into an organisation, which is open to new ideas and new members".

Angelo Corradini: "Risto was my best friend in all Scandinavia. No doubt, he was the best promoter of the Worldloppet family. We will remember forever his words at the AGM: "Freunde, wo geht Worldloppet hin?""

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Risto Rytökoski was planning and founding Finlandia-hiihto in 1974 and was chairman of organising committee from then on. Risto was not a skier. He worked in Lahti as a marketing manager in a big enterprise and was a very active, skillful and voluntary-minded person. He was at once, with some other persons, ready to take responsibility for Finlandia-hiihto. In a short time, less than 10 years, Finlandia-hiihto became the biggest long distance ski race in the whole world. Risto was as a director of the Organising Committee of the race almost 25 years. He died in 2000 after a serious illness.

Risto was a big friend of long distance ski races. He was planning and founding the Euroloppet competition in 1976, which became a very popular competition of European long distance ski races.

Risto was convinced that we had to have some competition and marketing ring for the whole world of cross-country and he played a very important role in founding the Worldloppet, to fulfill this idea. He believed in the aim of Worldloppet to promote the sport of cross-country skiing through the various ski races around the world.

Risto worked in Finland with Worldloppet advertising and marketing. He had a very important role in creating all kind of Worldloppet designs. He presented a