

The International Association of Worldloppet Skiers (IAWLS)

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WHAT IS IAWLS?

IAWLS is the association representing the skiers of Worldloppet (WL). Our double goal is:

- to help cross country skiers interested in WL races with practical advice,
- to serve as a link between skiers and organisers with a view to improving the quality of the races.

The basic philosophy is that we are WL enthusiasts. But we are also consumers and wish to get the best service for our money. Suggestions for improvements in the races are always presented in a constructive mode. This was crystallised in the motto

"No organisers, no race – no skiers, no race!"

EARLY HISTORY

A few days before Marcialonga 2000, Jan Jasiewicz (SUI), Hannes Larsson (FRA) and Lech Milewski (AUS) met in the coffee-house La Grillo in Cavalese. They agreed that it would be nice to find a way to forward the views of skiers to the race organisers. The IAWLS was founded and was publicised on the WL website; by early 2005 the committee included the three founders plus Robert Palliser (CAN, since 2000), Bengt Karlsson (USA), Minoru Matsuyama (JPN), Blanka Nedvedická (CZE) and Piotr Skarlat (POL). Jan Jasiewicz retired in 2005.

IAWLS, REGISTERED ASSOCIATION

A big step forward was made in August 2005 when seven persons fixed the statutes of the association and agreed to register IAWLS in France according to the Law of July 1, 1901, as an official organisation.

The founding members of IAWLS, registered association, are Bengt Karlsson, Hannes Larsson, Minoru Matsuyama, Lech Milewski, Blanka Nedvedická, Robert Palliser and Piotr Skarlat.

An important technical development also occurred in the autumn of 2005 when IAWLS opened its own website www.worldloppet skier.com with Bengt Karlsson as webmaster.

IAWLS STRUCTURE AND WORKING METHOD

The IAWLS consists of Members who have signed up on our website. The number of members in mid-June 2007 was 246, representing 25 countries, and it is constantly increasing. An Executive Committee (EC) elected for 3-year renewable terms by the members at General Assemblies takes care of the running of the association. The EC currently has eight members: The 7 founders and Lars Vagle (NOR).

The association operates by e-mail and uses the website extensively for communicating with members. There are no membership fees, simplifying the financial side of the organisation.

The language commonly used is English, but the EC often answers questions, comments and suggestions in other languages. The EC can handle 11 languages: Czech, English, Esperanto, Finnish, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Norwegian, Polish and Swedish.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Advice for skiers

The texts concerning each of the 14 races are visible on the website. They contain data on how to reach the area, on accommodation etc, and some features of the race useful for skiers. There are also general chapters on travelling by air, road or train, and indications on how to connect consecutive races in Europe. The Advice is regularly updated.

Race reports

During the 2005/2006 season we started publishing reports on each race on our website, concentrating on citizen skiers, according to the famous Dolomitenlauf motto "Everybody is a winner over him/herself". There is a picture taken by a skier from within the race, and a selection of IAWLS members' results.

Proposals to WL

It has become a tradition to write a letter to the WL organisation every year, containing everything from simple requests such as good quality stickers for the skis, country flags for the bibs and the organisation of food stations, to more demanding questions.

A recent proposal to WL was the adoption of a special recognition for those who have skied all existing races, 14 at this moment. This idea, the Global WL Skier, was accepted by WL in June 2007.

THE FUTURE

IAWLS plans to continue working with the WL organisation and to further our double goal. An increasing and active membership will provide benefits for everyone interested in WL skiing. Becoming an IAWLS member is simple and free and we are always interested in receiving comments and suggestions.