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EVENT MANAGEMENT

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Case Study...

IOF World Orienteering Championships 2015

The World Orienteering Championships (WOC) was held in the Highland and Moray areas of Scotland in August 2015. It attracted 300 elite athletes from 50 nations, and 52500 competitors to the associated 'spectator races'. Competition takes place at 6 locations over 9 days of racing.

WOC2015 had many stakeholders, some of whom were also funders. These include Event Scotland, Highland Council, Moray Council, Scottish Orienteering Association, Scottish 6 Day Co. Ltd, BOF, IOF and our sponsors and media partners.

Paul acted as **Event Director** for WOC2015, working as a contractor directly to the British Orienteering Federation (BOF), who had a contract with the International Orienteering Federation (IOF) to deliver the event. As Event Director, Paul had complete responsibility for all aspects of WOC, and for working closely with the organisers of the spectator races to ensure efficiency, collaboration, strategic oversight and co-operation

Key Tasks and Responsibilities

Budget: Combined event budget over £1M, including substantial amounts of public funding.

Economic Impact: an EKOS impact study was commissioned – **the WOC/S6D event was worth £9.5M** to the Scottish economy.

Television: WOC was broadcast live by several European national broadcasters, including Finland, Sweden, Norway, Czech Republic, and Denmark. We also achieved a 'first' for the sport in the UK by negotiating a deal for **the BBC to broadcast three of the races live on UK terrestrial TV** (via the BBC Alba channel). Recorded highlights packages were shown across the world including UK and USA.

Logistics: In addition to having large amounts of equipment to move and set up at each arena (we needed to create 5 separate arenas over 9 days, each capable of hosting 5000+ spectators, and having full TV OB facilities), we had some serious communications challenges to overcome. In some of our venues we had to create full power, communications, mobile phone/wifi network, access roads and bridges, catering, security and safety infrastructure from scratch.

Technical and International Federation requirements: Paul was responsible for ensuring the technical aspects of the field of play were correct and conformed to the rules of the sport – in this case, maps, maps standards, course planning, and independent oversight ("controlling"), and that all FOP equipment was correctly specified, procured and located.

There were significant technical requirements in terms of data and timing – many of the checkpoints required radio timing data to be transmitted back to race HQ for use during live arena, online and TV broadcasts. Responsibility for all aspects of athlete services (accommodation, transport, catering, welfare), ceremonies and IF/NGB protocol.

Event Management: responsibility for recruiting running the Local Organising Committee (LOC), and reporting to the Steering Group. Creation of organisation structure, and recruitment of volunteers and contractors to deliver the event – **during race-time, we had have over 1400 members of the team.**

Sport Presentation: WOC2015 was a full-blown international sporting event, and as such, unlike anything UK orienteering had experienced. I therefore led on changing mindsets on sport presentation, and encouraging orienteering to raise the game and learn from major events in other sports.

Local Clubs: I worked closely and carefully with local clubs. There was a risk that they lost their best competition areas temporarily (through WOC's need to 'embargo' venues to ensure no unfair advantages), and also from volunteer overload.

Key outcomes KPIs

WOC2015 has many KPIs that require to be achieved – these include TV viewing figures, number of nations competing, and of course, the budget has to balance. It is also hugely important to the sport that the opportunity that WOC brings is not lost – there has to be a 'legacy' in terms of visibility, profile and awareness in the UK, and in increased participation/

I have condensed these aims into a simple vision that all members of the team focus on delivering;

- We will be ambitious. We are not producing 'just another orienteering event'. This is the World Championships!. It might be the only chance we get to stage one.
- We are aiming at the highest possible quality presentation of an elite sport. Everything we do will be guided by the 'show' and presentation. This will look very different to current 'normal' orienteering practice, and so we should be happy to take cues from other sports.
- TV/Internet and media coverage is essential to the success of WOC. We need to make the event look great, and make the competition attractive and understandable to the orienteering and wider general public. This is how we will primarily generate public awareness and impacts.
- WOC2015 will be a great athlete experience: registration, status, venues, arenas, maps, courses and all other ancillary functions. Athletes will leave Scotland saying 'best WOC ever'.

