

## Proposed Motion To Be Put To IRF Council

*That the World Rogaining Championships shall be held every second year, beginning in 2019 or 2020 as decided by the IRF Council.*

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### Summary

From 1996 to 2012 WRCs were successfully conducted every two years. At the beginning of the current decade, there was a flurry of interest in conducting WRCs from new IRF members which led to WRCs being held each year from 2012 until 2017. This demand has now subsided and there will be no WRC in 2018, due to lack of proposals from suitable hosts.

### ARA's Rationale

The Australian Rogaining Association (ARA) believes that the WRC should be conducted every second year, as it was until 2012. This remains a significant issue affecting Australian rogainers, which ARA has been requested to address. The IRF's survey in 2014 and discussion with other IRF member countries indicates strong support from members in the southern hemisphere and many groups in the northern hemisphere.

### IRF Policy

Currently, the IRF is holding a World Championship as often as once a year if there are acceptable proposals from member countries. However, the IRF Council has never established a formal policy for the frequency of WRCs. In April 2011, Members were asked to vote for a WRC in 2013 (which led to WRCs in consecutive years 2012-2014). It was made clear at the time that this vote related to the 2013 event alone.

### Implementation

Expressions of Interest for the hosting of a WRC in 2020 have already been called. If this current motion is passed, then applicants for the 2020 WRC would be given the option of conducting that event in 2020 or 2021, with subsequent WRCs being at two year intervals.

### The Key Arguments for World Rogaining Championships occurring once each two years

- **Sustainability.** The rogaining world is still relatively limited in its extent. The IRF is currently struggling to obtain quality proposals for the conduct of annual WRCs. The risk of there being no high quality candidates to conduct a future WRC is very real if we continue with annual events. Annual WRCs have proven to not be sustainable.
- **Higher Quality of Events.** Annual WRCs could lead to WRC key focus areas from the IRF Strategic Plan: "*accurate, fair and challenging courses*" and "*excellent administration and presentation of events*", being compromised. A well run WRC takes an enormous amount of effort from a large group of dedicated volunteers. We have seen examples of WRCs that did not fully meet expectations in the past few years, and should be implementing policy to ensure this does not happen again.
- **Reduced Cost.** Rogaining is a wholly amateur sport where participants are fully self-funded. All have limited time and financial resources. If we conduct WRCs every year, or most years, the reality is

that the majority of these will be held in Europe. For those from outside of Europe, it is very difficult to find funds to attend all WRCs if the frequency is annual.

- **Reduced Regionalisation.** Annual WRCs have resulted in the vast majority of qualifying rogainers choosing not to attend some WRCs. This has the effect of "regionalising" the participant base for WRCs, leading to a less international competition in each event. For example, Australasians would be less likely to travel to Europe or North America for a WRC if they knew that there would be another one in their region the following year, or vice versa. The small European contingent at WRC2016 was a clear demonstration of this. In effect, we believe that annual WRCs "cheapen the brand", making the WRC title less prized. A consequence of the above is that key focus areas from the IRF Strategic Plan: a "*wide cross section of participants*" and "*must attract the qualified elite competitors from all member nations*", are being severely and adversely impacted by annual WRCs.
- **Uniqueness.** One of the things that made the WRC successful in the past was that it was "special" because it occurred only every two years. Thus serious and competitive rogainers could see participation in the WRC as a key and attainable objective. We are concerned that this uniqueness has been significantly diminished by the recent WRCs held annually.
- **IRF Workload and Focus.** Reduce the work load of the WRC Manager and potential WRC hosts by conducting a selection process every second year, rather than every year.
- **No Impact on IRF Revenue.** WRCs are a significant revenue source for the IRF. If the IRF levy on WRC competitors was to double from the level of the past few years, this would not add materially to the cost of competing in a WRC. Revenue should not be seen as a factor in considering whether to hold WRCs annually or every two years.
- **Certainty.** The current approach of seeking Expressions of Interest annually and then awarding WRC hosting rights **IF** there is a suitable proposal submitted, creates continued uncertainty for both potential WRC competitors and potential WRC hosts.
- **Strategic Plan.** The lack of a defined policy on the frequency of WRCs suggests that the IRF is not effectively managing the award and conduct of our World Championships. Moving to a policy mandating WRCs on a two yearly basis will deliver strategic stability for our World Championships in the short and medium term.

Please note that the ARA is not philosophically opposed to ever having annual WRCs in the future. However, if such a change is to be made, it needs to be made in the context of a documented and agreed strategic development plan for international regaining, and at a time when such a change will be sustainable in the long term.

## **Background Information**

### **IRF's Strategic Plan**

The IRF Strategic Plan states that the IRF's World Rogaining Championship policy will be guided by the following principles:

- The World Championship is the pinnacle event of rogaining
- The WRC has a role to ascertain the best rogainers in the world
- The "world" title necessitates a wide cross section of participants in all age and gender classes
- It must attract the qualified elite competitors from all member nations and beyond.
- Demands a consistently high level of technical challenge in all facets of the sport.
- Competitors expect a professional standard of organization of the event and associated activities.

### **WRC Selection Policy**

The World Championship host selection process states:

- WRCs are to be conducted by IRF members only
- The minimum requirements for a proposal to host a WRC are specified
- A WRC regional rotation policy is in place
- Selection of a WRC host will be 3 years in advance of the event.

### **History of WRC Bid Selection**

World Championships were conducted every second year from 1996 until 2012. From 2012 to 2017 the event has been held every year. However in recent years the number of willing and suitable hosts bidding to run the WRC has diminished. For 2018 there were no bids after Ukraine withdrew.

The recent history of WRC bids and selected hosts is as follows:

2019: Spain, Ukraine (selected: Spain)

2018: no bids (selected: none, since Ukraine withdrew)

2017: Latvia, Ukraine (selected: Latvia)

2016: Ukraine, Latvia, Australia (Australia)

2015: Finland-1, Finland-2, Latvia, Ukraine (Finland)

2014: USA-1, USA-2 (USA)

2013: no competitive tender (Russia)

2012: Russia, Czech (Czech)

2010: Ukraine, Czech, New Zealand (New Zealand)

### **Contact Information**

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