Summary of the WRC 2014 Questionnaire

1. Introduction

The WRC questionnaire is an attempt to get as much feedback as is possible from WRC participants. There is no intention to blame anyone for his/her mistakes, the survey should help the future rogaine organizers to maintain high standard of the future rogaining events.

2. Methodology

The WRC Manager addressed WRC participants via e-mail and asked them to answer 5 questions. The received answers were copied into an Excel file **WRC 2014 Questionnaire** and the most important issues have been highlighted in this Summary. Some significant remarks are referenced by an excel cell address in the **WRC 2014 Questionnaire** (open the file, press **F5** key, and then type the cell address of a quotation).
Some issues have been adopted from the **Report of the IRF President** (by Richard Robinson) as well.

3. Questions and responses

3.1 What did you like about the 12th World Rogaining Championships?

- Most of rogainers appreciated event location, venue, terrain, the course (set and location of controls, esp. many possibilities in course planning), perfect organization, great atmosphere in the hash house, well organized map distribution and weather (see e.g. **A4**, **A14**, **A25**, **A106**, **A113**, and **A120**).

- A respondent (**A142**) claims the bid of BHOC and Peak Assurance should never have been accepted by IRF as the organizing team had only organized one rogaine event prior to the bid and had no experience in organizing/course setting regional championships and none of the team had attended a previous WRC. He would like to see greater discrimination of bids in future. Also he points out the fact that the bid should have been supported by the national body, but OUSA did not take any responsibility. Therefore he suggests changing of the IRF's WRC policy by clarifying that the "host" can be the national body only.

WRC Manager´s summary:

- Most of the survey respondents were happy with the WRC event organization.

- In early 2014 the IRF established a policy that required all WRCs to be hosted by a National Rogaining Association that is an IRF Member. This policy will be effective from the 2017 WRC although in effect it will also apply to the 2016 WRC which is being hosted by the Australian Rogaining Association.

- The IRF now has a process to address both the issue of the WRC host selection and the follow up checking of the WRC preparations progress (drawing up of the WRC Hosting Agreement listing duties of both WRC organizer and IRF; and establishment of the post of the IRF Adviser to check the WRC preparations on site).

3.2 Do you have any comments on the map?

- People appreciated waterproof material of the map (**B48**, **B86** and **B87**)

- The roads marked in the map weren´t of a consistent grade. Some marked roads were faint and others that were very obvious not marked (see e.g. **B4**, **B13**, **B14**, **B21**, **B36**, **B47**, **B53**, **B55**, **B60**, **B64**, **B78**, **B82-83**, **B86**, **B89**, **B94**, **B95**, **B101**, **B103** and **B131**). Major roads not marked on the map between CPs 83 and 49 or CPs 80 and 81 introduced an inappropriate element of luck and unfairness (**B13**, **B60**, **B89** and **B100**).

- Few people appreciated organizer´s idea of not mapping some roads preferring cross country navigation rather than a running race along tracks (**B44** and **B115**).

- Also there were complaints on non-mapped dangerous objects, e.g. rocky cliffs (**B74** and **B121**) and a demand of having springs mapped (**B71**).

- Few people suggest increasing of WRC entry fee in order to improve quality of the event map (**B18** and **B79**).

- Some controls (e.g. CP43, 44 and 85) were misplaced (**B4**, **B14**, **B116**, **B139**, **C57** and **C74**) or their location did not match the legend (and **C74**), some CPs were placed in locations with too little detail on the map (**B60**, **B82**, **B101**, **B112** and **B136**). Leg 78 to 105 was 1 km on nothing but a compass bearing (**B60**). Coarse contour interval introduced an element of luck in navigating to and finding a given control. This could have been avoided by placing controls on more obvious features (**B64**). A control in a not drawn smooth re-entrant close to a deeper re-entrant inside the circle was supposed to be tricky as well (**B82**), some of the re-entrant controls were so vague as to be matters of luck (**B112**). A detailed analysis of some CP locations can be found in the **WRC report by Richard Robinson**.

- In the South there were significantly more dead-fall areas than in the North, therefore teams started from the North gained a little advantage in comparison to those started from the South (**B90**). Some participants would appreciated marking of dead-wood areas in the map (**B37**) or at least not putting controls inside of them (**B37**, **B90**, **B129**, **B132**, **C18** and **C117**).

WRC Manager´s summary:

- I agree with the respondents requiring a consistent grade of the road mapping and do not support removal of some big roads in order to increase difficultness of the race. A benefit of better navigational experience is totally belittled by the introduction of a lottery element, esp. at night. If there are too many trails on the map nearby controls, the control sites can be moved. In my opinion also the main rocky cliffs and other dangerous objects should be drawn in the map.

- I do not support opinion of few respondents that the quality of a WRC map shall be improved by increasing of the entry fee. There is no need to pay a professional cartographer, the issue of non-consistent roads and tracks could be easily captured using a bike and GPS or redrawing of paths from Google maps etc. Of course any WRC organizing team should have the use of a group at least few volunteers willing to devote some time to the map preparation.

- Following the event map and course development since May 2014 I noticed a significant improvement of the WRC course and also proposed control locations as the time went, probably thanks to the effort of Australian vetters Eric Andrews, Jon Potter, Merv Trease and Vic Sedunary. Many thanks. WRC Questionnaire indicates that not all questionable CP locations were eliminated. It needs to be made clear that Eric and Jon did not have the competition map and did not visit the site and therefore they were unable to assess the true suitability of any given CP site. Vic and Merv did have the event map, and visited all the CP sites, but due to agreements between the organizers and the landowners were only allowed to move any CP location within the original CP circle or very nearby. I am sure any check point misplacement was not done intentionally but it is obvious that setting and vetting process was not the strong point of the WRC organizing team. Detailed assessment of some CP locations can be found in the already mentioned **Report by the IRF President**.

- Ad dead-wood areas: A rogaining map shouldn´t show forest passability. Nevertheless such a significant passability difference like between the southern wood-fall areas and the relatively clean northern forest should have been at least mentioned in the pre-event information.

3.3 Do you have any comments regarding checkpoint equipment and SI readers?

- Pleased to see multiple SI boxes at the close in controls to the Hash House (**C69** and **C116**).
- Most of the control flags were hung very poorly. Controls should have been hung away from trees to be visible from all approach angles, not strapped tightly to one side of a tree (**B95**, **C12**, **C23**, **C30**, **C41**, **C101** and **C131**).
- Use of reflectors made unfairness worse. The controls were very visible from one side and invisible from the other (**C40**). The reflectors were so powerful that the light reflected back was so strong that we thought we were looking at another competitor´s headlight (**C124**).
- Quite a number of controls were hung too high (**C40**, **C48** and **C129**).
- Punching devices at water stops confused rogainers - they did not know whether to punch it or not. That should have been explained in pre-race info (**C131**).
- Except for the end of the race, the SI equipment seemed to work fine and the readers recorded the correct information (**C23**, **C25-27**, **C67** etc.). There would have been no issue if each SI type was tried with a large number of CPs before the race (**C17**, **C30**, **C44** and **C48**).
- There should be a backup system in place in case the technology fails (**C33**).
- Having no live GPS tracking during the event is probably my number one comment about the WRC (**C115**). The bagging rules for devices seemed excessive, e.g. a GPS data logger with no display had to been bagged (**E60**).

WRC Manager´s summary:

- Using of multiple SI boxes and bunch of starting controls around the Hash House is a praiseworthy example for future rogaine organizers, on the other hand the way of flags and punching units hanging shouldn´t be set as an example.
- Punching equipment at water drops with zero point value seems to be an organizer´s misunderstanding.
- The investigation of the computing system failure hasn´t been finished yet; whenever the conclusion is available it will be published within IRF. In my personal opinion an experienced computing team should have been able to solve any issue on the spot or via consultation with an expert on the phone/mail.
- The suggested backup system would require:
    1. Immediate printing of maybe 300+ sheets of paper containing header (team number, age/gender category, names and nationality of team members) and table of the CP codes, their point value and few blank rows to write down subtotals and box for the final result.
    2. Addressing of all participants and asking them to filled in the form and return it asap.
    3. Sorting the returned sheets according to the age/gender categories
    4. Recalculating let say first five team results in a category, the clause B3 of the IRF rules (eligibility of ultraveterans/superveterans/veterans/open) have to be taken into account!
    5. Printing and publishing of the preliminary results at the event center and organizing of the prize-giving ceremony
- GPS tracking at least of several top teams would be a pleasant bonus of any future rogaining event. Also team routes drawing using Route Gadget or other similar programme should be considered as a standard.

3.4 Do you have any comments on food service, showers, toilets and water on the course?

- Model event was excellent (**E40**).
- Portable toilets were fine, showers exclusive (**D6**, **D23** and **D51**), although some people complained that they were too far from the HH (**D41**, **D76** and **D78**).
- Some people were satisfied with water points, some not: Several of the points were clearly not on a preferred route between controls. They seemed to be placed for the ease of the organizer and not for the ease of the racers (**D35**). Water stations were on the border of the map - large detours just to get water (**D129**). Maybe the water pressure in water tanks was too low and therefore there were queues in some water controls (**D4**, **D44** and **D106**). There were plenty of complaints on water quality in WP tank. The bad taste was probably caused by overdose of a disinfectant (e.g. **D41**, **D47**, **D69**, **D74** and **D88**).
- Reactions on Hash House food service differed likewise: Good or excellent (e.g. **D31**, **D33**, **D41**, **D64** and **D66**), or even: Food service was best I've seen at 7 WRCs (**D50**); vs disappointing (**D48** and **D62**), or even: Hash house was the worst I've ever seen. Where were the hamburgers? Salted potatos? Hot dogs? Donuts? (**D52**).
- Food offered throughout the whole weekend would be appreciated (**D122** and **E127**).
- The restriction on parking of RVs at the HH (because they were "on-course" and therefore had to stay 1 mile away from the Event center) was bad and should have been at least announced in the Pre-Event Info (**E50**, **E76**, **E87** and **E108**).
- Inadequate tables and chairs for course planning (**D128** and **E87**).
- An accompanying person was denied of race map after race even when we paid extra fee for accompanying person (**E57**).

WRC Manager´s summary:

- The model event was considered as an excellent feature, but unfortunately the model map was prepared and printed in different standards than the event map.
- Ad showers: Hash House is not a spa. Without army assistance or close vicinity of a school or any other suitable building it is almost impossible to manage showers for hundreds of WRC participants. Any soundly accessible shower is an organizer´s bonus.
- The **Report of the IRF president** states the location and balance of the water drops was good. The quality of the water was a serious problem as it was heavily dosed with chemicals, which made it quite unpalatable and made a number of competitors sick.
- On the grounds of the survey I am almost sure the Hash House food service was appropriate (a complainer always occurs).
- Food offered throughout the whole weekend would be fine, however it requires some additional organizer´s effort (arranging at least a grocery stall). Minimally in the pre-event info the food (un)availability should be mentioned.
- The on the spot announced restriction on HH parking of RVs was a great organizing mistake that certainly caused problems to the RV drivers not informed in advance.
- It seems the event center did not meet the of appropriate and spacy course planning area for competitors. The problem was even worsened by the ban of planning in campervans in order to prevent using "illegal" equipment (e.g. computers) for planning. On the other hand nobody took care about possible cheating in tents and cars. Strange.
- An accompanying person deserves to be given by a copy of the WRC map after the event. After race selling of the spare maps to all takers or donation of the map to locals and VIPs should be an organizer´s custom.

3.5 Do you have any comments on the pre-event info, transportation, and post event?

- Pre-Event website was mostly accepted well (e.g. **E23**, **E25**, **E26** and **E41**), although some issues were highlighted as well: Blogging pre event info was confusing (not easy to find an information on the website). Should have been a standard web page (**E12**, **E47** and **E67**). The pre-event information was not well organised or easy to find on the website. The pre-event was disorganized. I was asked to give a $20 deposit for the SI reader, which was not given back at the end of the race (**E35**). Pre-event info about the map size, essential for waterproof covering and for planning using strings, pre-marked for the map scale, and a cork board or similar for sticking pins into (**E87**).

- A bus is supposed to be provided from the closest major city to the event but this wasn't listed anywhere (**E89**).

- There was no pre-event info displayed at event center. Neither previously published info displayed at a notice board, nor bulletin/booklet in the team bag, no team list displayed anywhere with member names. There was no indication on site that this was World Championships event going on - no national flags, no posters greeting the participants and no closure ceremony (**E78** and **E124**).

- Post event: Due to the computing system failure there was almost none Post-Event Ceremony (**E75** etc.).

- Off topic: I do not support the change to annual WRC's. There is a great danger of the WRC's becoming a "game of two halves" with Europeans dominating entry numbers one year and the next year the remainder such as those from the host country and Australasians (**E69**).

- I got the impression that the event organisation was left to only one person which was probably too much for one person (**E124**).

WRC Manager´s summary:

- I would prefer a standard pre-event web page rather than blog as seeking of any information was always a time-consuming issue. Furthermore some important issues organizers did not publish at all. E.g. starting list of entered teams is always expected and also the event map size should be known in advance. The organizer´s embargo on the map size publication was hard to understand and the nonsensicality of the decision came out at the moment the map was disclosed - there was a lot of "useless" space on the edges (white space and sponsor's logos).

- According to the D5 clause of the IRF rules the WRC organizers shall arrange bus transport from a suitable major city to the event site and this option was offered by all the past WRC organizers. Nevertheless no serious complaints have occurred, all participants used their own transport.

- Pre-event info should be displayed at event center at a notice board and given into the team bags. The list of starting teams shall be posted there as well. An on-site indication of the event as the World Championships (national flags and posters greeting the WRC participants) is always expected. I am almost sure such a deficiency (and many of others previously mentioned ones) would be never committed by an organizer who had attended at least one WRC event in the past.

4. Conclusion

First of all I would like to thank Rick and his organizing team for their effort that was really admirable. I can feel the most of the WRC participants were generally satisfied with the event although they of course criticized some issues. Considering all the available information sources (WRC survey, reports by vetters and IRF President, mail correspondence with US organizers etc.) I got to the following conclusion:

- The crucial problem of the WRC 2014 organization was that almost anything was burdened to one person only. I haven´t recorded a significant contribution of the OUSA, except for the EoI submission process. I have a strong feeling that there was just a small organizing team of volunteers and all the key items had to be solved by Rick Emerson. Such a constellation could be satisfactory for any smaller rogaine but in case of the WRC it posed a heightened thread of failure.

- It is obvious that among the organizers was not a person with an experience of a past WRC participation who should be able to list and arrange plenty of missing issues reasonably expected by WRC participants (welcome flyers, flags of nations etc.).

- I have been partly involved into WRC map and course evolution. The improvement of course quality after the intervention of Australian advisors was obvious even from the table. Unfortunately during the event preparations the organizers ignored some of vetted tapes and misplaced few flags sometimes even hundreds meters from the right location. If such a mistake happens to an experienced course setter, there should be another experienced person, the vetter to fixes it. I am afraid the setting-vetting process was not handled enough to satisfy.

- I do not have enough information to explain the reason of the final results collapse. The most likely explanation emerging from the analysis of Edward Despard seems to be using of different versions of the readout software (licensed and non-licensed downloaded from web) on different computers resulting in some people downloading fine, and others having issues. What is obvious the buying of the full Rogaine Manager license in late July 2014, about three weeks before the event, is too late for proper study of the software functionality. And considering the fact that the key testing person was at the same time busy with entry process and other pre-event preparations...

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