

NOTES FROM THE MEETING BETWEEN AR COUNTRIES WORKING GROUP & WORLD OBSTACLE

Meeting of representatives from AR Countries Working Group and World Obstacle to present the results from the poll regarding the structure options for the sport of Adventure Racing.

Wednesday, 26 April 2023 @ 20h00 CET

Held on Zoom

Attendance

Cormac Mac Donnell, Ireland - AR Countries Working Group
Lisa de Speville, South Africa - AR Countries Working Group
Ian Adamson, Australia - World Obstacle
Mike Garrison, USA - USARA

Apologies

Lars Bukkehave, Denmark - AR Countries Working Group
Damon de Boor, UK - AR Countries Working Group
Michel Cutait, World Obstacle
Nicolas Davyt, Uruguay (was logged in but wasn't in attendance; at work)
Alen Pujol, Uruguay
Warley Costa, Brazil

Introduction

This Zoom meeting was called by the AR Countries Working Group (ARWG) to present and discuss the results of the poll as submitted by Adventure Racing countries at the end of March 2023. Uruguay, Brazil and USA requested to be notified of the meeting date and details.

The results from the international poll were presented to the AR Countries at a Zoom meeting on Saturday, 15 April 2023 ([Notes from this meeting, PDF](#)). Although the countries in attendance at this meeting gave the go-ahead to the Working Group to progress with the steps to begin establishing an independent association for Adventure Racing, the Working Group decided to schedule a meeting with World Obstacle to respectfully decline their invitation to join their Federation in person.

This in-person meeting followed a [letter addressed to World Obstacle](#), sent on Friday, 21 April 2023 to Ian Adamson and Michel Cutait, in which the Working Group requested the removal of Adventure Racing and adventure racing-related content from the World Obstacle website.

A [media release sent to relevant adventure racing media](#), also on Friday, 21 April 2023, shared the poll results and the Working Group's request to World Obstacle.

Results presentation to World Obstacle

[View the slides used to guide the discussion](#) (PDF).

Cormac began the meeting by describing the process followed by the Working Group to arrive at the poll results.

- ARWG contacted federations, associations and community representatives from active, semi-active and almost-inactive adventure racing countries.
- The National Representatives were tasked with polling their committees / communities to arrive at a vote to submit regarding the direction for adventure racing:
 1. Join World Obstacle
 2. Join another sports federation
 3. Establish own, independent association/federation
 4. Do nothing
- Results from National votes were submitted by representatives into the Working Group's international poll. 23 countries participated.

Lisa then presented the results, which were divided into those votes from countries with associations/federations and those with active adventure racing communities.

- The results were overwhelmingly in favour of the establishment of an independent Adventure Racing International Association.
- There were more votes in favour of Doing Nothing than to Join World Obstacle

Cormac and Lisa also presented some of the comments from the voting process regarding why the countries do not want to join World Obstacle.

A lengthy conversation then followed.

Michael Garrison commented that there was a lot of confusion within the community about the whole topic of International Federations / Associations, terminology being used, role and recognition structures. This very much needs to be clarified and made easier for the community to understand and buy into the idea of having an International Association.

An overall summary is:

1. The international poll results were presented to World Obstacle and the result was accepted by Ian Adamson.
2. Ian Adamson said he would bring the result back to WO Congress later in the year for the members to consider and vote on. He indicated again that WO would likely accept this decision and move on with its other sports.
3. World Obstacle was asked by ARWG if it can remove reference to Adventure Racing as a sub-sport from the World Obstacle website and to stop presenting itself as the governing body of the sport of Adventure Racing. Ian says he cannot do this and that it has to be voted on by the members of World Obstacle at the next Congress in September 2023. Ian will present our letter and results to the members at Congress.
4. Those entities that are members of World Obstacle will continue to receive World Obstacle's sport support, including those that receive funding from their government sports bodies as a result of their World Obstacle membership.

5. Ian Adamson wished the AR Countries good luck in the formation of a new association for the sport of AR. He stated that it had been tried many times before and failed. He also indicated that the sport has a very poor safety record and very much needs to improve its standards and guidelines as all other international sports do. He also offered his personal support to help establish the new association.

Summary ends. Q&A follows.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

For more comprehensive content, we have distilled 2.5hrs into a **Question & Answer** format. A number of items required fact checking afterwards to clarify those points that were unclear to us.

The AR Countries Working Group (ARWG) is represented by Cormac and Lisa. World Obstacle (WO) is represented by Ian Adamson.

Questions

1. Do you accept the results of the poll?
2. Who are these other Adventure Racing countries that are members of WO?
3. Considering the results of the poll, will World Obstacle remove Adventure Racing as we have requested?
4. World Obstacle's Congress has to vote to remove Adventure Racing as a sub-sport and from the WO website?
5. Did Congress vote to extend an invitation to [Parkour and Functional Fitness]?
6. As we have requested, will World Obstacle now stop presenting themselves as the governing body of Adventure Racing?
7. Was it not the announcement of the A1 World Championship endorsed/sanctioned by World Obstacle and the exclusion of AR World Series that basically exploded the situation we have now?

1. ARWG: Do you accept the results of the poll?

Answer by WO:

Ian acknowledges the results of the poll. He considers those countries that voted in the ARWG poll to be a segment of the adventure racing community.

(1:26:00) Ian says our letter was correct in the people we surveyed and the countries we surveyed; this segment of the international community wants to start its own thing.

Ian says that World Obstacle's members with adventure racing activities didn't vote as they don't care because they have support (funding from their government sporting bodies).

(1:30:50)

2. ARWG: Who are these other Adventure Racing countries that are members of WO?

WO: Ian said that there are at least 20 World Obstacle country members that do govern adventure racing (1:17:55).

1:19:20 You may not know about them. That's why they didn't say anything to AR Working Group. They're saying we don't care. We've got our money, we are a member of the If [International Federation] and we don't care if something else starts because it is irrelevant to us.

ARWG: Under the Adventure Racing section of the WO website, there are no members listed. Who are these 20 countries?

Ian says that all the members are listed on the FISO website (1:32:00). "Your job is to contact them and ask."

FACT CHECK

As at 30 April 2023, there were 63 country members listed on the World Obstacle website as members for [Africa](#), [Americas](#), [Asia-Pacific](#), and [Europe](#). In addition, these lists include another 20 countries listed primarily as 'under development' or, a few, 'preliminary organisation'.

On the World Obstacle website there is no indication as to which members have Adventure Racing interests. Of countries with active Adventure Racing, we do know that the national Adventure Racing association in Brazil is a member through their National OCR Federation and that USA (USARA) is an affiliated member. In Malaysia, World Obstacle recently sanctioned the Magnet Edge Orienteering Sport Club as the "sole national governing body for Adventure Racing in Malaysia".

Note that the countries contacted by the AR Countries Working Group included:

Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Ecuador, Estonia, Finland, France, India, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Panama, Paraguay, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Romania, South Africa, Spain, Switzerland, UK, United States, Uruguay, Venezuela.

The 23 countries that participated in the ARWG survey included:

Countries with Adventure Racing associations / federations:

Brazil, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Ireland, Netherlands, Spain, USA, Uruguay

Countries with active (big and small) Adventure Racing communities:

Australia, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Finland, India, Luxemburg, Mexico, New Zealand, South Africa, United Kingdom

Also from:

Jamaica - no adventure racing

Venezuela - no adventure racing / uncertain

3. ARWG: Considering the results of the poll, will World Obstacle remove Adventure Racing as we have requested?

WO: Ian responded (27:20) that this has nothing to do with him. He can make no calls. He says that next year they (World Obstacle) will have 160 countries and it is their call. It has to go to Congress. Congress has to vote.

This came up again later again when Ian acknowledged receipt of the letter from ARWG:

1:07:25 - "With that said, I saw your letter which says to immediately take stuff down. Can't do that, by the way. Not my decision. That is a Congress decision. That will be put to Congress."

The next World Obstacle Congress meeting will be in September 2023. Members of World Obstacle are National Governing Bodies. They are the ones that vote.

That said, Ian has said (2:01:55) that he will take our letter to Congress in September.

"It is straight forward. I take your letter, present it and it will be a discussion with the members. There is no point trying to be an IF of a sport that doesn't want to be IF'd".

"What I will say to the Congress is these guys, an element of the community that has been surveyed, not you (the members that didn't want to have anything to do with it) decided to start their own IF. We don't care. We were simply to help the sport." (1:20:43)

Ian sees the possibility of resistance by those members who receive funding from their governments as a result of being members of World Obstacle. (1:19:20)

He added that World Obstacle would continue their sport support of members that need the membership to World Obstacle for their existence as without it they would no longer get their NOC and NSA money. (2:01:55)

4. **ARWG: If we understand it correctly, the WO members voted at the WO Congress in 2020 to extend an invitation to Adventure Racing to join the WO Federation. The Adventure Racing community heard about this more than a year later and has respectfully declined this invitation after going through a voting process. Now World Obstacle's Congress has to vote to remove Adventure Racing as a sub-sport and from the WO website?**

Lisa was unable to understand why Congress would need to vote to remove anything because there was never a decision taken by Congress (no vote or decision appears in their meeting minutes). Adventure Racing just seems to have appeared on the WO website.

WO: Ian says that no individual and no executive can make a decision like that for a sport. "It was accepted formally in 2020 although it existed loosely since 2014; that's the decision of the members." (1:17:20)

(1:29:20) Ian says FISO did not extend an invitation to anyone to accept governance of the sport at international level. There was no sport. The Congress said if they [Adventure Racing] can get this together it seems like a good idea. Let's see what organisations are out there or would like to be out there. Our GAISF recognition included Adventure Racing, which means that the entire sporting world, as far as they are concerned, FISO is the governing body for Adventure Racing.

(1:51:10) Ian says World Obstacle is with the AIMS and the IOC. This is where the Congress comes in. It needs to actually be voted out. We can't just say we are not doing this anymore. And we can't ignore the members.

Cormac: "You should have consulted the community before you went to Congress in the first place. Let's put it out there."

(1:52:36) "We did. The countries that are the members [of World Obstacle], or some of them at least, said yeah, that sounds fine. But this is the thing, it existed before any of this happened. It is not that hard to undo it.

FACT CHECK

On the World Obstacle website, only the minutes for the 6th, 7th, and 8th Congress meetings are available. The links to the minutes for the other five meetings are broken. None of the meeting minutes include attendance registers or portfolio reports.

At the 6th Congress, on 29 August 2020, the following appears in the Minutes:

Proposed new governance structure and sub-sports

Ninja competitions, OCR and Adventure Racing have distinct histories, culture, communities and events. It was proposed and accepted to provide more autonomy for each sub-sport in a similar manner to Aquatics, Athletics and Cycling. A new common name "World Obstacle" has been proposed to encompass the three sports.

This is the first and only mention of Adventure Racing in the minutes. There is no record of Congress voting to extend an invitation to Adventure Racing or to consider the inclusion of Adventure Racing as a sub-sport in their portfolio.

There is no mention of Adventure Racing in the minutes from the [7th Congress](#) (6 September 2021) and [8th Congress](#) (17 October 2022).

Between 14 August 2020 and 18 September 2020, Adventure Racing was added to the WO website as a sub-sport (according to [web.archive.org](#) captures). This is the first mention of Adventure Racing. It was not present on the World Obstacle website before 14 August 2020 on the old worldocr.org domain.

In 2020, there was a sport and there were countries with established Adventure Racing associations and federations. In 2020, the following 8 countries already had established national bodies representing Adventure Racing:

- Brazil: CBCA - Confederação Brasileira de Corrida de Aventura, since 2011
- Canada: Canadian Adventure Racing Association, since 2006
- Denmark: Danish Adventure Race Union
- France: under French Triathlon Federation
- Paraguay: Club de Corredores de Aventura del Paraguay (CCAP)
- Spain: under orienteering federation FEDO
- USA: United States Adventure Racing Association (USARA)
- Uruguay: Asociación Uruguaya de Corredores de Aventura

(The association in Czech Republic may have already been in existence then.)

5. ARWG: You've mentioned that Parkour and Functional Fitness are set to join WO in 2024. Did Congress vote to extend an invitation to them?

WO: Ian says "That is not how it works". How it works is that we get a request. If there is an existing organisation, they request if they can join and then the Congress votes, which has happened already. (1:22:40)

FACT CHECK

Neither Parkour nor Functional fitness appear anywhere on the World Obstacle website at present nor in Congress minutes. The sports of other World Obstacle members - pentathlon, athletics - do not appear at all on the World Obstacle website either as sub-sports.

6. ARWG: As we have requested, will World Obstacle now stop representing themselves as the governing body of Adventure Racing?

(1:29:20) WO: Our GAISF recognition included Adventure Racing, which means that the entire sporting world, as far as they are concerned, FISO is the governing body for Adventure Racing.

(1:53:10) We have it on our website. We do not promote it. FISO this is. It will go to Congress. There will be a vote. That is how it works.

7. ARWG: We have a conflict situation. We do not want conflicting World Champs. Was it not the announcement of the A1 World Championship endorsed/sanctioned by World Obstacle and the exclusion of AR World Series that basically exploded the situation we have now? (We did not get to the bottom of this.)

WO: It went to the World Finals, which is Nathan's race and then World Champs, which is GodZone, because the Kiwis are very supportive. The goal was to be an association of race directors that had an actual say and that didn't have to pay any money for it and would get safety, fairness and all that kind of stuff built into the system. That's why A1 started.

ARWS not just denied but sued us not to do this so we went with the guys who were friendly.

FACT CHECK

Ian mentions many times in this meeting and others about threats of legal action in Australia by Geocentric - related to starting an adventure racing association or joining World Obstacle or other.

As per content and old emails from Geocentric that circulated online in late February 2023 following the FISO meeting on 18 February 2023:

After a year of being involved with the A1 Series, Geocentric pulled out. They asked A1 to remove Geocentric and ARWS footage from the A1 website. A1 refused and a cease-and-desist letter was issued by Geocentric's lawyers to Adventure1 to remove ARWS video footage displayed on the A1 website. The footage was removed after the cease-and-desist letter was received.

Geocentric never threatened Adventure1, World Obstacle or Ian Adamson at any other time with legal action, this includes the period between 2020 and present; a period that includes:

- FISO 8th Congress on 30 August 2020
- Adventure Racing first appearing on the World Obstacle website (by 18 September 2020)
- the registration of Adventure1 as an LLC in Colorado by Ian Adamson (registering agent) on 18 October 2021, and
- World Obstacle's 'adoption' of Adventure 1 only took place between October and late December 2021
- the announcement of AR World Cup and World Champs with the announcement that Adventure1 is "recognised as the official World Cup for the sport of Adventure Racing" by World Obstacle on 12 December 2021.

In 2016, Geocentric's Craig Bycroft supported the formation of an independent Adventure Racing association saying that Adventure Racing "needs to sit as its own entity and should justify a federation in its own right". The following is also added, "I do feel though that the AR community would push for an independent federation".

Craig refers to an opportunity presented by Ian, which may have been related to the inclusion of Adventure Racing with Obstacle in a Federation (Craig had commended Ian on Obstacle Racing getting organised).

Craig did speak to ARWS directors at the time about "federation ideas" and received a mixed response from them.

This is where conversation and consultation between Ian (President of World OCR) and ARWS seems to have ended (October 2016).

NOTES END