

PARTICIPATION IN MULTI-SPORT GAMES 2.20

Preamble

1 The Australian Masters Games and other similar multi-sport games have become increasingly popular in Australia over the past decade. For the competitors they offer the opportunity for open participation in a high-profile competition without being restricted by competitive ability, and provide social/travel experiences which cannot be gained through local competition. For the city hosting the games, they offer the opportunity to earn income from visitors, both through entry fees and spending on other goods and services. For participating sports they offer the opportunity to host major competitions with much of the administrative effort being borne by the overall Games organisation.

2 Being an individual sport with a relatively informal level of organisation, Orienteering is well suited for inclusion in these Games. On some occasions it has been a participating sport, while on others it has not been included, either because the State/Territory association did not have the resources or interest to take part, or because the Games organising body did not wish to include Orienteering. In the latter case, it should be appreciated that a major criterion for including a sport in the Games is the amount of money it will generate and the organisers may favour those sports which they feel will be most successful in this respect.

3 Open multi-sport games are most valuable for those sports for which the games create new opportunities which are not otherwise offered within the sport itself. Orienteering, however, offers much better opportunities for open competition than any other sport in terms of integrating all ages, sexes and levels of ability through its international/ national event and State/Territory championship programs. Furthermore the latter events generally offer better quality organisation and courses and more challenging competition for generally a lower price than is achievable through orienteering events held as a part of a multi-sport games. It is unrealistic to think that such games will ever attract orienteers in numbers comparable with those attending the regular national orienteering events or State/Territory championships. What then are the benefits of having Orienteering included in a multi-sport games?

4 The benefits can be summarised as follows:

- a) Profile. Inclusion of Orienteering in such games helps to reinforce its profile as a 'real sport', and provides opportunities for media coverage, particularly if the local media are supporting the games.
- b) Attracting new participants. There are many participants at the games who are there primarily for another sport, but can be tempted to try Orienteering if it is held on one of their free days. Because it is relatively easy to learn the basics of Orienteering, a competent novice can satisfactorily complete a B course and maybe even win a medal. A proportion of such participants may take up Orienteering regularly.
- c) Different opportunities for orienteers. Some orienteers are multi-sport people who enjoy competing, if only socially, in sports other than Orienteering. The multi-sport games offer the opportunity for this, and also to mix socially with participants from other sports.

- 5 The disadvantages of including Orienteering in multi-sport games are as follows:
- a) Workload. Organisation of the event is an additional task for volunteers from the local State/Territory association, although the effort involved is generally much less than for comparable events on the Orienteering national fixture list, as there is no expectation of a new map and some of the administration is handled by the overall games organisation.
 - b) Cost to participants. Because of the need to fund the overall games organisation, rather than rely on volunteers for administration, entry fees tend to be relatively high, particularly for anyone competing in a single sport. This is off-putting to some competitors, particularly those living locally, and can reflect adversely on Orienteering if the sport is not well supported as a consequence.
 - c) Conflict with other orienteering events. The Australian Masters Games tends to be held in October when there is potential for conflict with the Australian Championships Carnival, if only because orienteers will attend one carnival or the other due to time limitations. On the other hand, if the timing and location are favourable, the two carnivals may support each other.
- 6 Based on the above considerations, there are no compelling reasons for Orienteering to be either included in or excluded from the Australian Masters Games or other multi-sport games. Timing, location and availability of local volunteer resources are all factors which need to be considered in relation to participation in each games, the decision on participation depending ultimately on the relevant State/Territory association.

Policy

- 7 The following OA policy has been adopted as guidance to State/Territory associations:
- a) Orienteering Australia encourages the inclusion of Orienteering in the Australian Masters Games and other multi-sport games unless there is a direct clash in timing with the Australian Championship Carnival, the Australian Three-days Carnival or international Orienteering events held in Australia.
 - b) The ultimate decision to participate in the Australian Masters Games or other multi-sport games rests with the relevant State/Territory association or club and the body responsible for the overall games organisation.
 - c) The technical standards and experience of organising personnel for events held in the Australian Masters Games should be broadly equivalent to those expected for National Badge Events. In particular, it is not expected that a new map should be prepared. The standards for events in other multi-sport games may be higher (e.g. World Masters Games) or lower (e.g. local games), depending on the status of the games.
 - d) Orienteering events held in multi-sport games should be promoted with a view to encouraging new participants, as well as providing fair and challenging competition for established orienteers.
 - e) OA encourages participation by orienteers in multi-sport games involving its State/Territory associations or clubs, including participation in sports other than Orienteering.
 - f) OA considers that fees at multi-sport games should be kept as low as practicable and should be set only to cover essential costs.
 - g) If Orienteering is included, OA will list the Australian Masters Games on its National Fixture List, with the fees negotiated on a case-by-case basis.

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