

Status Report to the 2022 ISU Congress on the Four-Year Plan 2018/19-2021/22

Committee/Commission: Speed Skating Technical Committee

Area of Activity: Coaches/Skaters education & monitoring of Technical Rules

The SSTC has performed the activities as planned in order to achieve the specific results & benefits stated in the Four-Year Plan 2018/19 – 2021/22. (see attached file)

The following areas have required and will require specific attention:

1. ISU Speed Skating Events structure and season calendar

The decision of the ISU Congress 2018 reduce number of the World Speed Skating Championships allowed focusing and strengthen the World cup calendar. But at the same time introduction of the Four Continents Speed Skating Championships (4CCh), showed that placement the this event in the season in the same period as a European championship, is far from perfect, since participation of skaters requires extra transcontinental flight. The absence of the strongest Asian athletes at the two Championships held is a confirmation of this.

The overall ISU Speed Skating Events program and calendar nevertheless still needs continued assessment and refinement to be attractive for athletes, fans and sponsors, and to make it financially viable for ISU Members to participate actively. Unfortunately in some countries COVID, political or other issues makes it impossible for hosting Events. This creates certain difficulties in the multi-year planning of the World Cups, even if the Council has tentatively allocated the World Championships until 2026.

Since 2016/17 ISU Junior World Cup, series includes competitions for Neo seniors not older than 23 years. Members showing big interest and number of entries is stable in the past seasons.

2. New types of competitions and new competition formats.

Racing rules, competition formats and race management logistics of Mass Start races have been developed and continuously elaborated during the last seasons, as the event has become an ordinary part of the competition program at World Cups, Junior World Cups and ISU Championships and the Olympic Winter Games program. Mass Start races have presented speed skating with new challenges regarding safety measures, definition and enforcement of (and compliance with) racing rules. These issues are being actively addressed through changes to the rules and regulations, and cooperation with the Short Track Technical Committee and officials allows their experience to be used to educate and train officials, coaches and athletes.

For the second time at the Winter Youth Olympic Games in 2020 an adapted version of the Team Sprint (with four team members) was successfully staged as a team event based on both mixed gender and mixed NOCs team composition.

However, IOC decided not allowing any mixed NOCs team events anymore. Instead, ISU proposed to include Mixed Gender team relay (6 laps for 2 skaters) for the YOWG 2024. This first competition in speed skating introduced as a demonstration event during World Cup Final 2020 and as a competition part at Junior World cup in 2021. Participants, coaches and fans met these competitions with great enthusiasm. This can be especially interesting for countries that cannot make a full team for a Team Pursuits or Team sprint.

Last Olympics showed one more time that Team competitions give Member federations and athletes the opportunity to pursue international ambitions also through team-building efforts. This helps the sport to grow and gain attention, especially in countries with limited number of world class individual skaters.

3. Efficient organization and attractive presentation of Competitions

ISU Events are met with higher expectations on a streamlined presentation of the competitions.

Venue production and key technical operations, like time-keeping, sport production, need to be performed flawlessly and presented in a consistent manner across different Events.

The interaction between Organizing Committees, hosting Members and ISU in the preparation stage has improved in recent years through joint planning on race schedules, existing online tool for entries and "ISU Inside Event" App. Such and other similar tools plus ISU Event management and SS TC support functions in close collaboration with the organizers to ensure a professional execution of the Events.

Job of ISU Speed Skating Events manager in this field is very valuable and helpful for organizers, Technical committee and partners.

An attractive presentation of the races and associated information that conveys the most exciting aspects of the competition is of crucial importance for the promotion and overall image of the sport. Tools and features which will enhance the experience of spectators, whether they follow the competitions on site in the venue, on TV or through other media, have to be developed on a continuous basis. Media coverage and attention need to be supported and reinforced by easy access to relevant sport statistics and athlete biographies, and new media must be proactively applied to promote the Events.

ISU Memorandums are constantly updated and unified. TV production guidelines are in the process of getting ready.

4. Education needs for coaches and athletes

Also coaches and athletes have to cope with a more demanding context of competitions at ISU level, and a professional attitude and cooperation from their side is needed for a successful staging of the Events. They need to be well informed and knowledgeable of technical rules and rule changes, of agreements with media regarding the coverage of the Events etc. Such knowledge is also essential as a basis for influencing future rule changes, competition programs and race formats. Team leaders at ISU Events have to be conscious of their key role and responsibilities around and during the competitions, including the responsibility for the proper awareness and appearance of their skaters and support staff.

For the future success of speed skating it is essential to find efficient means of transferring knowledge and experiences between coaches that have coaching experience with skaters competing at ISU level. Many ISU Member federations do not have the resources available to establish education programs addressing the latest developments in important areas like physical training, mental training and technical training, movement analysis, testing protocols, nutrition, talent identification and talent development. High quality education of coaches and access to state-of-the-art training programs is a key for Members to help their skaters reach a level of international success. It is therefore necessary to stimulate networking among coaches and to initiate projects to transfer best practices in the area of coaching and coach education.

March 2022

ISU Events and meetings 2018/19 – 2021/22

Event	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Coaches meeting	2	2	1??	1 (Online)
World Cups	Obihiro Tomakomai Tomaszow M. Heerenveen Hamar Salt Lake City	Minsk Tomaszow M. Nur-Sultan Nagano Calgary Heerenveen	cancelled cancelled cancelled Heerenveen Heerenveen	Tomaszow M. Stavanger Salt Lake City Calgary Heerenveen
European	Collalbo	Heerenveen	Heerenveen	Heerenveen
Four Continents		Milwaukee	cancelled	Calgary
Allround/sprint	Calgary/Heerenveen	Hamar		Hamar
Single Distances	Inzell	Salt Lake City	Heerenveen	
OWG				Beijing
Junior World cups	Tomaszow M. Helsinki Baselga di Pine	Bjugn Enschede Minsk	cancelled cancelled cancelled	Inzell Inzell Innsbruck
Junior Worlds	Baselga di Pine	Tomaszow M.	cancelled	Innsbruck
YOWG		St. Moritz		

45 ISU Events in Total