

Press Release: Orienteering Achievement of 2017

16 athletes or teams from 10 different countries are nominated for the annual poll to find the most impressive achievements in international orienteering. The poll is organized by World of O – the major internet presence for international orienteering news. Voting is open until December 12th.

Winning a Gold medal at the World Championships is always a great achievement – but sometimes winning a Bronze medal can be an even bigger achievement – based on what your starting point was. The stories behind the medals and the great achievements is what makes the sport truly fascinating! In “The Orienteering Achievement of the Year” these stories are highlighted – to make it possible to get a background for the amazing achievements.



Voting is open from December 7th until December 12th using the following links:

- [The Orienteering Achievement of 2017 - Men](#)
- [The Orienteering Achievement of 2017 - Women](#)

In the women's class Elena Roos (Switzerland), Venla Harju (Finland), Natalia Gemperle (Russia), Marianne Andersen (Norway), Maja Alm (Denmark), Tove Alexandersson (Sweden) and Simona Aebbersold (Switzerland) are nominated. In the men's class Olli Ojanaho (Finland), Leonid Novikov (Russia), Yannick Michiels (Belgium), Jerker Lysell (Sweden), Olav Lundanes (Norway), Vojtech Kral (Czech Republic), Daniel Hubmann (Switzerland), Thierry Gueorgiou (France), and the Estonian WOC team are nominated.

The international sponsors for the Orienteering Achievement of 2017 are Five + Five days of Vasto (Italy), EKG Swiss 5 Days/EOC 2018 (Switzerland), Cerkno Cup 2018 (Slovenia), Sprint Scotland 2018 (Scotland), Antalya Orienteering Festival (Turkey), Portugal O-Meeting 2018 (Portugal), Andalucia O-Meeting 2018 (Spain), OOCup (France) and Lipica Open (Slovenia). Prizes valued to more than 5500 Euro are drawn among lucky voters & the ones suggesting nominations.

More info: <http://poll.worldofdo.com/2017/>



Nominations: Orienteering Achievement of 2017 – Men



Jerker Lysell

Nominated for

In his first sprint race since WOC 2016, Lysell took the bronze medal in WOC sprint 2017. One day later he helped Sweden to gold at the WOC sprint relay. And finally The World Games sprint gold medal was the topping on the cake.

Story

Jerker Lysell never stops to surprise. Even after tons of injuries and a minimum of competitions, Lysell is the only man who has taken WOC sprint medals the last three years in a row. Add to that his great run at the WOC Sprint Relay and the World Games gold medal - and you have a real success story. To put it in Lysell's words: "- It goes up and down. It is nice to get some medals on the way - that everything isn't just an injury hell."



Olav Lundanes

Nominated for

Repeating a great success is more difficult than doing it the first time: For the second time in a row Lundanes wins gold at both WOC long distance and WOC relay - this time in rough and challenging Estonian terrain far from home instead of in his backyard like last year Strömstad

Story

Olav Lundanes has been one of the absolute top athletes in forest orienteering since his WOC long distance gold medal in Trondheim in 2010 - winning gold on his favourite WOC long distance in 2010, 2012 and 2016 before this year's championships in Estonia. Repeating a success isn't easy though - in 2017 Lundanes for the first time took two long distance gold medals in a row - and for the second year in a row Lundanes ran solo on the second leg in the relay, delivering anchor Magne Dæhli in gold position. An amazing athlete with amazing results!



Yannick Michiels

Nominated for

Taking the first ever World Cup win in orienteering for Belgium - and topping it with a medal at the The World Games in Poland. An inspiration for orienteers from countries with less orienteering resources - showing how you can reach the top against the odds.

Story

Yannick Michiels has been fighting his way towards the top for several years. In 2015 he thought he had his first World Cup victory in the pocket, but after the race was voided he had to battle on. Two years later the popular and fast Belgian could finally climb to the very top of the podium - winning his first World Cup race at the World Cup sprint in Lohja, Finland. After a disappointing World Championships, he managed to turn the odds and take a silver medal at The World Games in Poland.



Thierry Gueorgiou

Nominated for

The King is back - what a fairytale ending! Having announced his retirement well in advance, Gueorgiou had one very last chance to live up to the old "King of Middle" naming from the old days - 6 years after his last middle distance title. And Gueorgiou did it - with a smile on his face from arriving at the start in the morning until leaving in the evening with the gold medal around his neck.

Story

After winning the WOC middle distance in 2003, 2004, 2005, 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2011 - Gueorgiou went under the name "King of Middle" - having revolutionized the sport by taking the technique to a new level with his "full speed - no mistake" strategy. But then the "King" showed his human side in 2012. And in 2013. 2014. 2015. 2016. But finally in 2017, after pushing the pressure on himself to a maximum by having announced that this was his last World Championships, Gueorgiou could climb back on his middle distance throne, fulfilling his dream. 14 years after his first WOC gold medal in Switzerland in 2003, Gueorgiou took his 14th WOC gold medal. The perfect end to a magnificent career!



Vojtech Kral

Nominated for

Working hard for many years - finally taking the step up and winning a medal at the The World Games in Poland. Topping it with his first ever World Cup win at the World Cup sprint in Latvia.

Story

Vojtech Kral has worked very hard for years, just waiting for the work to really pay off. Showing an incredible stability, Kral had 13(!) World Cup races where he placed between 6th and 10th place and another 9 within Top 15 before that beautiful day in Latvia this summer where he could climb all the way up to the top of the World Cup podium, taking his first ever World Cup win. Some weeks earlier he had won a medal at The World Games in Poland. What a summer for the ambitious Czech runner!



Daniel Hubmann

Nominated for

6 years after his first and only WOC sprint gold medal, Daniel Hubmann was back on the very top in the sprint distance - taking his 24th WOC medal, the 10th WOC where he could travel back to Switzerland with medals in the luggage!

Story

Taking World Championships medals is not easy, but it may look like it when you take a look at Daniel Hubmann's career. Before this year's World Championships the Swiss had taken 23 WOC medals in 9 championships. It is amazing how after so many World Championships, Hubmann is still able to make top results, culminating again with a gold medal!



Leonid Novikov

Nominated for

Coming from nowhere and surprising again: Taking the WOC long silver medal after being away from the top of the results since his last big surprise - the WOC middle gold medal back in 2014.

Story

The ones following the Russian orienteering scene closely knew that Leonid Novikov was in great shape and that the Estonian terrain at this year's World Championships long distance fitted him perfectly. For all others, Novikov's WOC silver medal was a big surprise, as the Russian had been absent from the top of the international results lists for years. But being in shape is one thing - delivering the goods at the most important race of the year, being the only one challenging Olav Lundanes, is something completely different. Amazing performance!



Estonian WOC Relay Team

Nominated for

WOC on homeground is a once-in-a-lifetime experience for most orienteers. The Estonian relay team with Timo Sild, Lauri Sild and Kenny Kivikas took the opportunity and delivered Estonia's best ever WOC relay result on homeground for Estonia with a 4th place.

Story

The best individual result of the Estonian team at WOC on homeground was Timo Sild's 10th place on the long distance - going from there to a 4th place at the relay is an impressive team effort. Running on their own land with their fans and with lots of emotions. With this result, Timo and Lauri repeated their father Sixten Sild's 4th place from the relay back in 1989 when running for the Soviet Union team. For a country with a population of 1.3 million, this is a huge thing - a historical result for this team.



Olli Ojanaho

Nominated for

Big man of JWOC on homeground, battling the pressure and coming back to the top with 3 individual gold medals and a relay silver, after struggling a lot at JWOC 2016.

Story

Olli Ojanaho is an incredible orienteering talent - but after his fantastic 2015 season where he took JWOC gold in all three individual disciplines, 2016 was more of a quiet season where the medals didn't come that easy - giving him a 9th, a 19th and a 28th place at JWOC. In 2017 with JWOC on homeground the pressure was extremely high for the young Finn - but he managed to deliver on race after race - in the end finishing off with all three individual gold medals and a relay silver medal.

Nominations: Orienteering Achievement of 2017 - Women



Tove Alexandersson

Nominated for

Winning both individual forest gold medals at WOC for the second year in a row - and topping it up with running Sweden into WOC relay gold. Add to that the victory in the overall World Cup both in foot orienteering and in ski orienteering, several World Cup victories and numerous other top results. Amazing results, amazing stability!

Story

The World Championships didn't start in the best way for Tove Alexandersson. After a good Sprint Qualification race, Alexandersson caught a cold and had to skip the Sprint Final. The question marks were there ahead of the middle distance - would Alexandersson get another championships like 2015 were injuries at the Sprint Qualification ruined the rest of the championships? But no, Alexandersson emerged strong as ever and took the remaining gold medals in the championships - the last one together with her team on the relay. The Swedish multi-talent won the World Cup yet another time - both in foot-orienteering and ski-orienteering. No words.



Natalia Gemperle

Nominated for

Showed that she is complete runner - with her WOC sprint silver she now has WOC medals in all individual disciplines. Took her first World Cup victory - at the middle distance in Latvia in August - and also took bronze on the WOC long distance, silver on the WOC relay and two World Games medals.

Story

Natalia Gemperle got her big breakthrough last season with individual WOC medals at both long distance and middle distance. This year she took another step both in the forest and in the urban sprint discipline: In sprint she took the step up to the WOC medals also in sprint - in the forest she took her first ever World Cup victory. She now has individual WOC medals in all disciplines - and has shown that she can beat everybody on the big occasions. Her stability is also impressive: This year on world cup stages her placing was never lower than 7th place, with 7 podiums in total.



Marianne Andersen

Nominated for

A fantastic comeback on international level - taking her 7th WOC medal 7 years after her 6th. Years of struggles while never giving up really paid off for Andersen!

Story

Marianne Andersen' was one of the biggest stars of orienteering between 2006 and 2010 - taking double silver medals both at WOC and EOC in 2006 - and winning another 4 WOC silver medals between 2007 and 2010. But then Andersen struggled with injuries for several years - being away from the sport between 2011 and 2015, but still pushing on, training after training, determined to get back to the top. The power, the will, the patience in one place! The silver of this year is not the end, it is just a new beginning!?



Simona Aebersold

Nominated for

Simona Aebersold took all three individual gold medals and a relay silver medal at this year's JWOC in Finland - that's the second year in a row where the young swiss runner travels home from JWOC with 3 gold medals, and it was her third JWOC Sprint gold in a row!

Story

Six JWOC gold medals in 2 years - what a success and stability by young Swiss runner Simona Aebersold. Winning three gold medals on home ground in Switzerland is one thing - repeating it in tough Scandinavian terrain is an even bigger achievement. Aebersold did however move to Finland to prepare in the best possible way. On national level Aebersold shows that she can beat the very best on a good day - it will be very interesting to see what Aebersold can do when she get to compete with the World's best in the international races. Photo: Kimmo Hirvonen



Maja Alm

Nominated for

Wins the WOC sprint title for the third time in a row - and at the same time winning an amazing silver medal at WOC long distance. Repeating a success is never easy - Alm did it wonderfully!

Story

Maja Alm has dominated the sprint discipline the last years - simply running away from the competition. This year she took another big step by winning the silver medal at one of the forest races at the WOC - the long distance in very tough Estonian terrain. Another step on her way to become a complete orienteer. In addition Alm might be aiming for the Olympics in athletics - after running several excellent races on the track this year.



Elena Roos

Nominated for

Elena Roos has taken impressive steps this season - from being a sprint talent in 2016 to become a complete orienteer in 2017 with a World Cup victory over long distance, a World Games silver medal, a World Cup 2nd place sprint and Top 6 results in both long and sprint disciplines at WOC.

Story

Elena Roos has really impressed the orienteering world with fantastic results this year - being strong in all disciplines, and suprising everybody including herself by winning the long distance World Cup race at home ground over long distance. What can this woman from the Italian part of Switzerland do at the European Championships on home ground in Ticino next year?



Venla Harju

Nominated for

Coming back to win a medal at the World Champs Middle distance was a very big personal victory for Venla Harju after having some very tough years following her success on home ground in Finland four years earlier. The WOC relay silver medal was the icing on the cake.

Story

Being a top athlete is not always easy, with lots of pressure from all sides, most of all from yourself. Venla Harju is one of many athletes who felt this strongly with a long "burn out period" in 2014-2016 - telling the world about her struggles in an open letter in 2016. Her rise back to top level with the WOC medals in Estonia tasted extremely well, and impressed everybody knowing her story immensely!