

At Zurich the truth (which had already been revealed) on the cancellation of The Rollerski World Cup and the prospects for the future.

An informal meeting of the rollerski subcommittee was held on the 30th September 2004 in Zurich.

The informality of the occasion was due to the fact that at this summer's Miami congress the Cross Country committee overseen by the F.I.S. had called for the rollerski subcommittee to be broken up and its members disbanded.

What had given rise to such an extreme decision: the arrogance demonstrated by George Brouwer towards the German federation and his angrily declared non availability to give his consent for the transfer of the World Cup to Inzell – where everything was ready to host the pinnacle event. This non availability was understood by the Cross Country committee to be wholly due to personal reasons inside the Brouwer family. Indeed the condition requested by the German federation to the rollerski subcommittee was that the World Cup jury be changed, excluding Mr George Brouwer (already on a collision course with the mayor of St. Wendel. for a shifted appointment).

The Miami congress went like this: Gijsbert Brouwer (son of George), in his position as rollerski World Cup Manager, took it upon himself, without thinking to consult anyone except for his trusted advisor Gianluca Codemo, to cancel the rollerski World Cup. Presenting himself at the Zagabria World Cup, he refused to call a meeting to update the teams about the situation of his own creating: he kept quiet both on the subject of the cancellation and the fact that it was he who was responsible. He even kept quiet about the breaking up of the rollerski subcommittee. In short, Brouwer's reasoning appears to be a case of: I go, we all go.

When asked by the members of the Rollerski Subcommittee why it was that no invitation to the September 30th Zurich meeting had been sent out, the answer from Jurg Capol was this: “ *At this moment in time a Rollerski Subcommittee overseen by the F.I.S. does not exist.*” Strange but true.

The meeting of the rollerski “subcommittee” at Zurich represented the strong desire of the main nations (large and small) active in the sport to survive and restart from the ground up. Italy, Germany, Russia, Denmark, Holland (but not Brouwer), Turkey, France, Croatia and Japan were all present.

The analysis started with the current situation with respect to rollerski in the various nations, the conclusion being that the biggest financial investment and consequently the biggest support given over to this sport is on the part of the German federation, followed by Russia, Italy and Letonia. And that's it for international rollerski! No other federations invest. Participation in the World Cup is an economic and organizational question linked mainly to private clubs.

The focus moved on to the nations where there is an established calendar of events: Italy is the most organized country in this sense. Germany has many local Sunday races which serve as selections for the World Cup. France organizes the “Rollerski Tour” circuit with a considerable deployment of resources and facilities. There are several rollerski races in Russia. And so on in many countries. Also, Japan has a big following for the rollerski races, the federation declaring itself interested in greater involvement in the world of skis on wheels.

Subsequently Jurg Capol wished to understand better why it is that the world of cross country skiing doesn't participate in the F.I.S. Rollerski World Cup. The objection put forward by various members of the subcommittee - that cross country skiers don't enter rollerski races - was refuted by Jurg Capol: in Norway the entire national team participates in rollerski competitions from June onwards. In Italy the national team races from May. Same story in Russia and in Germany. Capol drew attention to the large numbers present at the “Suverall” in Estonia. Capol also pointed out the participation of Pietro Piller Cottler at the final leg of the World Cup, emphasizing that it would be enough to raise the level in quality terms to attract the attention of the elite of cross country skiing. All this simply from the standpoint of the development of the sport, both in the economic sense (sponsors) and the media (interest generated by the presence of international class athletes).

As a result the F.I.S. representative proposed the creation of a calendar of just 4 ‘big events’, avoiding those venues and territories where rollerski receives neither investment from the federation nor has a calendar or competitive national team.

The subcommittee has pinpointed the absolute necessity in the coming year of salvaging the World Cup, the cancellation of which has constituted a huge economic loss for all the teams involved.

Two pre-candidatures have been proposed by the F.I.S. for 2005.

Another important request has been to fix the World Cup every year, as happens in other sports.

For World Cup 2005, the pre-candidatures of Italy, Denmark-Sweden (with linked races in the same week), Letonia-Russia. Croazia and Turkey are also available on the organizational front.

Finally, the new board of the Rollerski Subcommittee was considered: Italy supported the candidature of the French representative Jean Pierre Chocet, coadjutant of a brand new workgroup composed of Germany, Italy, Russia, Denmark and France.

The new international executive is already at work to present by November the calendar for 2005.
The ball is now in the court of the Federal Council of the F.I.S., while the higher echelons of the international ski world have been effectively informed of the proposals of the rollerski subcommittee by Jurg Capol in person.

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