

41st WMRA CONGRESS – Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, 24. September 2025; 9:30AM-11:30AM
Canfranc – SPAIN



1. Opening of 41st WMRA Congress by the President (art. 15.10.1) – Called to order 9:38AM
2. At the time of the Congress, 36 National Athletic Federations were **WMRA members**.
 - 23 delegates were present at the Congress.
 - Some delegates were not present due to late arrivals. Those were contacted after the Congress, and all agreed with the decisions of the Congress (signed with *).

	MF	Delegate / representative
1.	AUS	Aaron KNIGHT
2.	AUT	Helmut SCHMUCK
3.	BEL	Thierry FAVEAUX
4.	BUL	Konstadin KISYOV
5.	CAN	Adrian LAMBERT
	CRO	*Josip TOLJAN / Guest
6.	CZE	David BOR
7.	DEN	Soeren RASMUSSEN
8.	ESP	Luis SALADIE
9.	FIN	Kari MIEHUNEN
10.	FRA	Salhi LAHCEN
11.	GBR	Anne BUCKLEY
12.	GER	Meike BILLIG
13.	GRE	*Dimitrios THEODORIDIS
14.	HKG	*Wong Kim LUN
15.	HUN	*Antal BERENDI
16.	IND	----
17.	IRL	*Richard NUNAN
18.	ITA	Matteo REDOLFI

19.	KEN	*Peter SKNLI ???
20.	LTU	*Edvardas MOSEIKA
21.	MEX	*Pedro FLETES
22.	MLT	Gerald GRECH
	NED	*Alke STAAL / Guest
23.	NZL	John BOWDEN
24.	NOR	*Tobias DAHL FENDRE
25.	PAR	*Hugo ORTIZ
26.	POL	Pawel JESIEN
27.	ROU	Paul SMERECIUC
28.	RSA	*Jazz NNYENGERA
29.	SLO	Boštjan NOVAK
30.	SMR	----
31.	SRB	Ranko MILANOVIĆ
32.	SRL	-----
33.	SUI	Frederic DUMAS
34.	SVK	Pavel KOVAL
35.	SWE	*Karl AVEDAL
36.	USA	Rob MULLETT

- **Present WMRA Council Members:** Tomo Šarf (SLO - President), Nancy Hobbs (USA - Secretary), Sarah Rowell (GBR - Treasurer), Giorgio Bianchi (ITA), Paul Smereciuc (GER), John Bowden (NZL); Marcel Matanin (SVK)
 - Apologies for absence: Sergio Mayayo (ESP)
 - WMRA Hon President/World Cup Manager: Jonathan WYATT
 - WMRA Communications Manager: Hector Rubio
 - WA Representatives: Alessio Punzi, Helio Gesta de Melo
3. Appointment of three scrutinizers (Art 15.10.2) - AUS, USA, GBR
 4. Approval of Minutes of 2023 Congress (Innsbruck, June 2023); (art. 15.10.3) It was confirmed that the minutes from Innsbruck previously circulated were approved.
 5. Report by the President on behalf of the Council (art. 15.10.4) – a recap was provided by power point by Tomo Sarf. This included reference to the difficult times of Covid with delays of competition but noting that WMRA still held a Congress with elections virtually in February 2022. The President

referenced the many changes that had happened through the early 2000s, in particular noting that the **World Cup** has really grown over the past few years and is one of WMRA's signature events.

Other events include the **Masters World Mountain Running Championships** which is delivered in partnership with World Masters Athletics and held this year in Meduno, Italy with more than 1, 500 participants. It was a very well received event with three distances contested.

The **U18** competition is another event under the WMRA umbrella. The number of nations is increasing and is a very popular event for young athletes. Slovakia hosted the event this year in June 2025, again a very successful competition.

Canfranc will host the 3rd edition of the World Mountain and Trail Running Championships, with the 2027 edition to be in Cape Town, South Africa.

It was further reported that WMRA now has a signed MoU with WA, creating financial stability for the next three years. Additionally, the WMRA continues to work to secure sponsors to help with revenue for the organization. WMRA is well positioned in the off-road community.

6. **Report by the Treasurer and by the Auditors** (art. 15.10.5,6) – Sarah Rowell provided a report, noting that the WMRA has two accounts - one in Germany and one in USA. WMRA is looking to move to one account in the near future. The current year budget has stability for the next three years with the investment and support from World Athletics. This year WMRA used some of its reserves to support the World Cup, which ideally operates on a cost neutral basis. The budget at year end will reflect that which was presented and approved by the Council.
7. **Approval of the 2023/24 Audited accounts** (art.15.10.7) – David Dunham and Sandra Hegmann.
8. **Report on the 2025 Budget** – provided above.
9. **Appointment of the Auditor for 2025 accounts** (art. 15.10.9) – Will ask David Dunham (USA) and Sandra Hegmann (GER)
10. **Report by WA - Helio Gesta de Melo** from Brazil, WA Council member and Chair of the WA Mountain and Trail Running Working Group provided a short presentation. He thanked the LOC for the event and Sarah Rowell for assisting in getting the Working Group off the ground. He finished by wishing good luck to all the athletes.

Alessio Punzi provided a report on behalf of World Athletics discussing the present and the future, highlighting that it has been a year of celebrating and anniversaries, including the WMRA 40th year in 2024.

He gave thanks to those who work to support mountain running, noting that the funds provided by WA are there to help the WMRA achieve their mission. An MOU is now signed with the WMRA and WA which goes through 2027. In other points he reported that

- Natacha Manchado has been appointed by WA and works closely with the WMRA.
- Seb Coe is now in his last term as WA President.
- The WMRA World Cup had been very successful this year, with thanks to Jonathan Wyatt as World Cup manager, and the media team who works closely with WA communications team to promote the events.
- WA is looking to build on its support for the World Cup by creating an 'off road' race label system to extend to other events such as Golden Trail and UTMB. One of the goals is to fund an anti-doping program and framework.
- One important theme is succession. Having the organizations aligned is important. A future discussion in 2028/2029 regarding the future of WMRA and whether, like the ICC (cross

country) in time WMRA will become absorbed within WA. This is for the WMRA membership to discuss.

- There were 25 expressions of interest in hosting the WMTRC 27 and 3 finalists. Punzi raised the question regarding how we ensure that the event attracts the superstars of the sport and how the WMTRC works with other big races so that the sport is not cannibalized or the overlap and choices for the athletes to compete are diluted.
- The WA Mountain and Trail Running Advisory Group is routinely discussing whether trail/mountain could be in the Olympics and what would that look like. There is a group in Brisbane 2032 Olympics that is looking at this side of the sport as is WA and the advisory group. The outlook remains positive.

11. **Proposals by the Council** (art. 15.10.12): Constitution change, article 9 12. Proposals by the Members (art. 15.10.13 & 15.12) - Two items were proposed. One of which covers liability of the WMRA and its Council Members; the second is related to representation on the WMRA Council – presently there is one representative per gender, the proposal to move to two of each sex. Unanimous approval by the members in attendance for both proposals.

2024 Mountain Running Competition Programme - summary of events

12. 17th International U18 MR Cup – Aguilar de Campoo/ESP; 22. June 14.
13. 23rd WMRA/WMA Masters World MR Championships – Canfranc/ESP; 13-15. Sept. (uphill, classic and long distance)
14. World Cup 2024 (9 venues, 12 races)
15. Continental competitions
 - European Athletics Off-road Running championships; Annecy, 1-2 June

2025 Mountain Running Competition Programme – summary of events

16. 3rd World Mountain and Trail Running Championships, Canfranc/ESP – 25.-28. Sept.
17. 18th International U18 MR Cup – Donovaly/SVK; 15. June
18. 24th WMRA/WMA Masters World MR Championships – Meduno/ITA – 28.-31. Aug. (uphill, classic and long distance)
19. Continental competitions – typically not held in years that the WMTRC are held.
20. World Cup 2025 (9 venues, 15 races)

The World Cup Manager report was provided by Jonathan Wyatt. He reported that It is the 26th year of the WMRA World Cup (formerly Grand Prix). The World Cup was born out of four race directors getting together 26 years ago to form a series of top races. The sport has evolved a lot over the past 15 years.

The WA label status has been very positive for the events included in the World Cup. Sponsorship from Valsir was noted and much appreciated.

A survey of the runners was just completed with a 50% participation rate. Of the respondents, 55% stated that the WCup was an important part of their season. For the first time, the WC was staged in Asia. There were a total of 15 races with 9 events in 8 countries in 2025, with three categories of racing – uphill, up and downhill and long distance. For the first time there was also a race in Romania. The overall winners of the World Cup were Philemon Kiriago (KEN) and Scout Adkin (GBR). The strategy moving ahead includes development of mountain running in new areas, partnerships with brands and other race series, support of the athletes (financial travel support is part of this – about 30% of the budget – 30% on media), increase WMRA brand visibility. He thanked the media team, noting that in the modern world athletes expect the media attention (as noted in the athlete survey). Imagery and content creation is important. Another important aspect is our work with

Global media partnerships. A total verified social media reach is 7.2 million. Follow #wearemountainrunning.

2026 Mountain Running Competition Programme - planned

21. 19th International U18 MR Cup – Gagliano del capo/ITA; 21 June
22. 25th WMRA/WMA Masters World MR Championships – Janske Lazne/CZE – 26-28 June (uphill, classic and long distance)
23. World Cup 2026 (tbd)
24. Continental competitions:
 - European Athletics Off-road Running championships; Kamnik/SLO, 5-7 June

Miscellaneous:

25. World Ranking – short report on the WMRA Raking was provided, noting that the system was a sophisticated ranking to review and see which athletes are at the top throughout the running season. Denmark representative asked about the ranking program and its reach and cost. Hector Rubio (WMRA Communications Manager) reported that the World Ranking had ~ 22,000 visits per month, noting that the WMRA Media Partners are increasingly using the World Ranking. To compare the WMRA website has 17,000 visits per month. The cost is minimal. Belgium representative asked about how the ranking could be/should be used. The understanding of the World Cup Ranking is important. The vision of the ranking was to include major races such as the World Championships, Continental and National Championships, World Cup and traditionally strong races. WMRA invites all nations to provide their national championship results for the ranking.
26. Athletes Commission – Council member John Bowden gave a short report, noting that there are currently 16 athletes on the commission – 12 men and 4 women. In the next four years, the WMRA will work with the athletes on the organization and mission of this group. An AC member is also invited to participate in the WA Mountain and Trail Working Group.
27. WMRA promotion tools: web site, social media... - the WMRA Media report was provided by Hector Rubio who starting working for the WMRA in June 2023. He gave the following figures to show the growth in WMRA media - in 2023 – Facebook 19K followers and Instagram 9K followers and 400 subscribers on YouTube had 1K views per month. The situation today – 30K on Facebook; 19.5K Instagram and 1.9K YouTube subscribers.

One goal has been to provide community created and cohesive storytelling. Engagement has increased significantly. In 2023, the media team started with two people and now there is five on the media team. Average total social views was around 800K in the year; now the estimate is 15M for 2025. These numbers for WMRA channels (in addition there is reach via WA, media partners, and brands). Rubio shared milestones of the media team showing significant social reach (from reels and videos produced by the team amplified by partners).

28. Relationships among mountain running, ultra-distance and trail – WMRTC Partnership
29. MF Questions – no questions
30. **ELECTIONS** – Constitution, article 11
 - ⇒ Elections for the **President** – Sarah ROWELL / GBR
 - ⇒ Elections for the **Secretary** – Tito TIBERTI / ITA
 - ⇒ Elections for the **Treasurer** – Stéphane SCLAVO / FRA
 - ⇒ Elections for the other Council members
 - Marcel MATANIN / SVK
 - John BOWDEN / NZL

- Jason BRYANT / USA
- Omar HERNANDEZ / ESP

The WMRA Constitution states that if there are a full set of candidates with no contested positions, the elections are considered fulfilled. Procedurally, the members present also provided a unanimous support of the election.

Newly elected president Sarah Rowell provided a short speech introducing herself to the attendees, giving thanks to those retiring from the Council. Commemorative gifts were presented to Tomo Sarf and Nancy Hobbs, both of whom have been involved on the WMRA Council for over 20 years.

31. Next Congress. – date will be confirmed at the next World Mountain and Trail Running Championships in 2027 in South Africa.

The Congress was closed by the President at 11:30



WMRA Secretary
Tito Tiberti



WMRA President
Sarah Rowell