



## HEEL AND TOE ONLINE

The official organ of the Victorian Race Walking Club  
2018/2019 Number 23A  
Friday 8 March 2019



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### #SAVETHERACEWALKING



Next Sunday (2 days time) is our D-Day, when the IAAF Council will decide on our future. All we can do at this stage is hope for the best. The NO campaign has been well run and has gained support from almost the entire world wide racewalking community.

Let's not lose sight of what we want.

- Keep the current 20km / 50km as the international racewalking distances until after the 2024 Olympics.
- Use this extended timeframe to properly test the new shoe insert technology.
- Work to enhance the current 20km / 50km events to make them more attractive to the general viewing public.
- Visit this issue (if it still exists) again in 2024 once the shoe insert technology has been deemed to work (or not!)

A few final bits and pieces from the last few days of the ongoing campaign.

First, we have been getting some publicity from a few major news outlets. Here are a few snippets

- Athletics Weekly article (<https://www.athleticsweekly.com/news/race-walkers-unite-to-save-their-sport-1039921331/>)
- Article from Greek sports site sportsfeed.gr (<http://sportsfeed.gr/2019/03/07/oi-vadistes-ksesikonontai-kai-pali-kata-ton-apofaseon-tis-iaaf/>)
- Lequipe.fr article (<https://www.lequipe.fr/Athletisme/Actualites/Yohan-diniz-et-les-marcheurs-bientot-fixes-sur-l-avenir-des-20-et-50-km/996075>)

We have also been getting more personal reflections from top walkers arguing in support of retaining the 50km and 20km

- German walker Carl Dohmann (<https://www.larasch.de/carl-dohmann/blog/warum-ich-fuer-20-und-50-kilometer-gehen-bin>)
- Canadian walker Evan Dunfee posted a very thoughtful 2 pager on twitter (<https://twitter.com/EvanDunfee>). He explains as follows: With the @iaaforg set to vote on the future of race walking in Monaco this weekend I tried to put my thoughts

down as politely as possible. We have a viable product, we just need to present it better and changing the distances in and of itself doesn't do that!

Stefano La Sorda has put out a couple more excellent pieces

- Stefano's latest press release (<https://savetheracewalking.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/PRESS-RELEASE.pdf>)
- Stefano's link to survey results, both overall and for individual countries (<https://savetheracewalking.org/en/survey-results-how-to-save-the-race-walking/>)

And while we are talking about Stefano's survey, he found that one respondent tried to influence the results by voting 10 times, pretending via proxy server to be in 10 different countries, and always saying he/she was 100% in favour of the change and that the IAAF RW Committee was doing a fantastic job. But he/she wasn't very clever! Here are the 10 pathetic attempts. The base ip-address header of 108.173 (the rest of the ip address has been masked by Stefano) points to Alberta in Canada. Coincidentally, that is where IAAF RW Committee member Tim Berrett resides. Stefano has asked Mr Berrett to help us find the culprit. The world is full of dirty tricks, isn't it. Luckily such people are not on our side. We don't want people like that on our side of the racewalking community.

IP address (anonymized)	What is your role in sport?	What country are you from?	Do you think women have to compete for the next Olympics on racewalking 50Km?	In your opinion, what is the way to make racewalking more attractive for the public?	In your opinion, to make racewalking more attractive for the public, what are the right race distances for racewalking events in major international competitions?	How do you judge IAAF RW Committee's work during last years?	According to IAAF RW Committee the proposal to replace the 20 and 50Km with 10 and 30Km is the right choice to save racewalking, but according to many racewalkers this choice is a serious mistake. What do you think IAAF RWC must do now?
108.173.XXX.XXX	racewalking judge	ARG	No	Reducing the race distances	10Km and 30Km	excellent	go ahead with their choices and change to 10 and 30Km
108.173.XXX.XXX	racewalking judge	AUS	No	Reducing the race distances	10Km and 30Km	excellent	go ahead with their choices and change to 10 and 30Km
108.173.XXX.XXX	simple racewalking lover	AZE	No	Reducing the race distances	10Km and 30Km	excellent	go ahead with their choices and change to 10 and 30Km
108.173.XXX.XXX	racewalking coach	CHI	No	Reducing the race distances	10Km and 30Km	excellent	go ahead with their choices and change to 10 and 30Km
108.173.XXX.XXX	former racewalker	FIN	No	Reducing the race distances	10Km and 30Km	excellent	go ahead with their choices and change to 10 and 30Km
108.173.XXX.XXX	racewalking athlete	GBR	No	Reducing the race distances	10Km and 30Km	excellent	go ahead with their choices and change to 10 and 30Km
108.173.XXX.XXX	former racewalker	GBR	No	Reducing the race distances	10Km and 30Km	excellent	go ahead with their choices and change to 10 and 30Km
108.173.XXX.XXX	other	GBR	No	Reducing the race distances	10Km and 30Km	excellent	go ahead with their choices and change to 10 and 30Km
108.173.XXX.XXX	other	IRL	No	Reducing the race distances	10Km and 30Km	excellent	go ahead with their choices and change to 10 and 30Km
108.173.XXX.XXX	simple racewalking lover	USA	No	Reducing the race distances	10Km and 30Km	excellent	go ahead with their choices and change to 10 and 30Km

  

IP Address	Country	Region	City
108.173. [REDACTED]	Canada 🇨🇦	Alberta	Edmonton (Northwest Edmonton)

  

ISP	Organization	Latitude	Longitude
TELUS Communications Inc.	TELUS-HSIA-EDTNABXT	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]

Some nice photos that I received today from the Gosford (NSW) racewalk training group of Frank Overton. Some of our best young Australian walkers are in this group and they all support the retention of the 20km and 50km.





Lots of influential people have been writing to various IAAF Council members. Here is the letter that former IAAF RW Committee member Peter Marlow wrote yesterday to IAA President Lord Coe

Dear Seb

It is with a heavy heart that after 43 years serving on the IAAF race walking committee (RWC) that I felt compelled to resign my position in protest over the recent proposals that the RWC have voted on and will put forward for approval at the next IAAF council meeting. Quite simply I could not allow my name to be associated with what I believe are disastrous suggestions for the event that I have dedicated my life to.

Although the RWC reached out to member federations, athletes coaches and supporters they only allowed a short time frame for these stakeholders to formulate any response. However many responses were still received with the majority in favour of retaining the status quo. Luis Saladie IAAF Head of Competition Management has since written to all members of the RWC and IAAF race walking judges outlining the proposals. He states that the RWC reached out some years ago but the consultation was only brought about after what was described as the underhand actions of the RWC was made public

Unfortunately no minutes are ever kept from the RWC meetings and as such the majority opinion is often ignored in favour of those held by leading members of the committee.

The RWC are told that all decisions must be kept secret under brought before the council yet the IAAF as a whole was guilty of failing to act with any transparency in the past and these directives only serve to show that in some areas nothing has changed.

At the most recent meeting you suggested that the RWC needed to be brave. A strong hint if ever there was one that they should support the proposed changes. Whilst athletics has evolved the essence of the sport remains the same, Citius, Altius, Fortius, with many individual events unchanged. Race Walking has changed but has achieved a programme level that requires athletes to demonstrate speed and endurance whilst maintaining remaining a technique within the rules.

The IAAF having opened its arms to women to show their strength and endurance over 50km in the last two years why then are they taking this opportunity away from them and of course from the men.

I don't think anyone is against the introduction of technology to support judging of the event but stakeholders agree that it to be rigorously tested and not rushed into use within the competition programme. Today there are so many unanswered questions that seem to be ignored with those asking the questions being seen as troublesome rather than helpful.

Recently a survey was carried out in over 70 countries with over 2000 responding and 93% proposing to wanted to retain both the 20km and 50km race walking events. Maurizio Damilano Chairman of the RWC appears to be alone in Italy and even the President of FIDAL calling the proposals crazy.

The RWC knew that there was overwhelming opposition to the proposals and they still went ahead regardless. We are now told that the IAAF is recommending a time limit if 2 hrs 45 minutes for individual events. If we look at the 2016 Olympic Games marathon some men finished outside of this time and more worryingly only 76 of the 132 women finishers came in under 2.45. So if this new rule does come in to play, many female marathon runners will be taken off the course and not allowed to finish. And what would happen to the Pole Vault. Or is this proposal one that is aimed only at the race walking events.

There are many other arguments that I could put forward to you but I would only be repeating what others are saying so for now and in conclusion I strongly urge you and the council to reject the proposals of the RWC and listen to the athletes, coaches, member federations and the wider athletic community that want to retain both a 20km and 50km for both men and women. Accept that technology can be used in the future but that a rigorous testing programme is undertaken.

Best wishes, Peter Marlow

As usual, USA Attorney at Law Paul DeMeester has been active, having written personally to EVERY Council member, matching most of them with their own native language. Check out these documents

IAAF President Lord Coe (English):

<http://www.vrwc.org.au/documents/Letter%20to%20President%20Coe.pdf>

IAAF Council Member Mr. DU Zhaocai (Mandarin):

<http://www.vrwc.org.au/documents/Letter%20%28Mandarin%29%20to%20Mr.%20DU%20Zhaocai.pdf>

IAAF Council Member Mr. Yokokawa (Japanese):

<http://www.vrwc.org.au/documents/Letter%20%28Japanese%29%20to%20Mr.%20Yokokawa.pdf>

IAAF Council Member Mr. Juantorena (Spanish):

<http://www.vrwc.org.au/documents/Letter%20%28Italian%29%20to%20Ms.%20Riccardi.pdf>

IAAF Council Member Mr. Amsalem (French):

<http://www.vrwc.org.au/documents/Letter%20%28French%29%20to%20Mr.%20Amsalem.pdf>

IAAF Council Member Ms. Riccardi (Italian):

<http://www.vrwc.org.au/documents/Letter%20%28Spanish%29%20to%20Mr.%20Juantorena.pdf>

I've run Paul's letter to Lord Coe through my text recognition program so that I can reproduce it below

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The Lord Coe CH KBE  
President, International Association of Athletics Federations

February 25, 2019

Dear Mr. President,

Ref. Race Walking Committee Proposal for 216th Council Meeting at Doha, March 10-11, 2019

I am very thankful for having had the opportunity to discuss with the Members of the Council the Men's 50K Tokyo 2020 Race Walk Event at the 209th Council Meeting (London) and to discuss the inclusion of women in that same event while at the 215th Council Meeting (Monaco). I write you to address the proposal by the Race Walking Committee to shorten race walking distances at major competitions after 2020, which proposal is said to be included on the agenda of the upcoming Council meeting in March according to the IAAF Press Release of 6 February 2019.

The proposal would eliminate the 50K. Race walking, however, is a long distance discipline. When we want to catch the bus arriving at the corner, we sprint. Late for an appointment downtown, we jog at a steady pace like a miler. When having to cover a great distance, we walk. Race walking in a competitive context makes sense only over distances longer than the ones we typically contest in running events. It is therefore appropriate that the 50K is longer than the marathon.

Changing from 50K to 30K is like substituting a 25K for the marathon. A marathon is said not to start until the 30K mark. Likewise, a 50K is said to begin at 35K. The 50K is an endurance event. The 30K, like the 20K and 10K, is a speed event. Those who do well at 20K are expected also to excel in 10K and 30K events. If the Committee's proposal is adopted, the race walking program at major championships will consist of two speed events, even though race walking is truly an endurance sport.

The 10K was once on the Olympic program but was changed to 20K in 1956 due to difficulties in judging the "no-loss-of-contact" rule. Returning to the 10K will also bring back the prevalence of loss of contact with a much greater loss of credibility in light of improvements in technology. Reintroducing the 10K may well lead to calls for the complete elimination of race walking from major events. A 10K should be run at top level, not walked.

Introducing the electronic chip insole shoe technology (RWECS) will not alleviate the loss of contact problem in short distance races but only highlight and prove it. Loss of contact is remedied by lengthening race walking distances, not shortening them.

The proposed electronic shoe system has not yet been proven to work. As long as the e-shoe is still in its experimental development phase, race walking distances should not be changed. The Race Walking Committee's draft proposal of January 10, 2019 agreed: "Without this technology, we strongly advise against changing the current distances." (January 10, 2019 e-mail by IAAF to Member Federations on behalf of Mr. Maurizio Damilano, IAAF Race Walking Committee Chair.)

The time period of the next Olympic cycle (2021-2024) should be used to demonstrate that the new technology works and is practical. Any discussion of distance changes should be deferred until 2025 and only if the e-shoe has been proven reliable. If and when that time comes, it may well demonstrate that 30K and 50K are the only credible "walking" distances.

I share the Committee's embrace of gender equality. Inclusion of women in 50K competitions has led to an increase of 50K participants overall and the emergence of top athletes from China to South America. Women walkers deserve more than two World Championships (London, Doha) and one Olympics (hopefully) to prove their worth in the 50K, after having been historically excluded from the event from 1932 until 2017.

Of course, the numbers in the 50K will never be what they are for the 100m. The 50K is tough and technically difficult. Like the ski jump at the Winter Olympics; the pommel horse, bars and rings in gymnastics; and the pole vault, it will not attract mass participation. But the inherent difficulty of these events makes them worthy of inclusion when the world's best athletes meet to compete.

It is ironic yet sad considering who is proposing this change. Six of the ten male members of the Race Walking Committee have contested the 50K at the Olympics. Seven of its twelve members walked the Olympic 20K. One member won gold over 50K three times and once in the 20K. Two other members were 20K Olympic Champions and won multiple medals in the event. One other member won bronze in the 20K. Imagine Usain Bolt asking to delete the 200m, or Mo Farah the 10,000m, or Seb Coe the 1,500m.

I ask that you vote to retain the current 20/50K distances until after 2024, require the e-shoe technology to prove itself during that time period before becoming mandatory, and allow for sufficient time to study the use of the new technology before any change of distances is considered.

Paul DeMeester  
Racewalker  
Former member Belgian National Junior Athletics Team 1975-78

And finally, I am just home from the Victorian T&F Championships, currently being held this weekend in Melbourne. Tonight, Swedish walker **Perseus Karlstrom** won the Victorian Open Men 5000m Track Walk in a new Australian All-Comers record of **18:32.56**. This was also a new Swedish record. On the way through, he clocked a 3000m walk split of **11:08.27**, also setting a best ever Swedish time for that distance also. This is Persey's 9<sup>th</sup> walk victory in a row in Australia and he continues to be unbeatable 'down under'.



*Perseus Karlstrom burns the track in Melbourne - just an advance taste for my report in next week's newsletter.*

We can all be proud of the parts we have played in this current campaign. Since finding out about this projected change in late January, more and more people have joined us.

In particular, I would mention specifically **Stefano La Sorda**, **Paul DeMeester** and **Peter Marlow**. All have led from the front.

Thanks everyone!

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