

Statement re: IOC/ IAAF decision on the future of race walk within the Olympic Games and World Championships.

It has recently come to light that the IOC has proposed changes to the athletics programme, starting in 2018. These changes include the abolition of the men's 50km race walk at the Olympic Games and IAAF World Championships, and the 20km race walk being replaced by a half-marathon distance (21.1km). It is our understanding that the IAAF Council are to vote on these changes at the upcoming Council Meeting in London, 12-13 April 2017.

The 50km race walk embodies the Olympic spirit and values, most notably how to endure. Olympians, athletes, and supporters of the Games firmly believe that the IOC should embrace rather than exclude events such as the 50km race walk. It is one of the few remaining free events on the Olympic program, allowing all to witness and engage with athletes in their pursuit of excellence. In Rio, the 50km race walk was a global event and one of only two events where the first four finishers represented different Area Federations.

The 50km race walk has been a staple of the Olympic athletics programme since 1932. While appreciating its history, we acknowledge that sport must continually evolve to remain relevant in the modern sporting context. Having two men's events (20km & 50km) and only one women's event (20km) is based on an outdated and incorrect assumption. We commend the IAAF on measures taken to ensure this inequality based on gender is closing and celebrate the first official women's 50km race walk world record. We want to work with the IOC and IAAF to reduce this gender-based inequality and create a programme that best showcases our event for a modern audience.

We propose that the current schedule of events (men's 20km & 50km race walk and women's 20km race walk) be maintained until the Olympic Games in 2020. Furthermore, we propose a working group composed of IOC and IAAF officials and athlete representation to assess the future of the event beyond 2020.

These measures ensure sufficient athlete consultation, maintenance of athletes' livelihoods and rewards the investment of National Federations in support of their athletes to 2020. This proposal provides the IAAF opportunity to commit to transparency in decision making and listen to the athletes they represent.

We call on Thomas Bach and the IOC Executive Committee, Sebastian Coe and the IAAF Council, to be transparent in this decision making process and include the athletes in any further discussions in regards to race walking at the Olympics Games and IAAF World Championships.

Yours in sport,

Matej Toth



Olympic Champion – 2016

Jared Tallent



Olympic Champion - 2012

6th April 2017

Link to Change.org petition:

https://www.change.org/p/international-olympic-committee-keep-the-50km-walk-in-the-olympic-s?recruiter=566496974&utm_source=share_petition&utm_medium=copylink

Signatures of fellow Olympians supporting this cause

Yohann Diniz FRA Olympian 50km World Record Holder	Robert Heffernan IRL Olympian 2013 World Champion	Ines Henriques POR Olympian 50km World Record Holder
Hirooki Arai JPN Olympian 2016 Bronze Medallist	Jarkko Kinnunen FIN Olympian	Evan Dunfee CAN Olympian
Chris Erickson AUS Olympian	Jakub Jelonek POL Olympian	Isamu Fujisawa JPN Olympian
Inaki Gomez CAN Olympian	Srp Miklós Domonkos HUN Olympian	Kevin Campion FRA Olympian
Dane Bird-Smith AUS Olympian	Arnis Rumbenieks LAT Olympian	Erick Barrondo GUA Olympian
Quentin Rew NZ Olympian	Yerko Araya Cortes CHI Olympian	Vera Santos POR Olympian
Mathieu Bilodeau CAN Olympian	Edward Araya Cortes CHI Olympian	Johanna Atkinson ENG Olympian
Wayne Snyman RSA Olympian	Rhydian Cowley AUS Olympian	Brigita Virbalyte LTU Olympian
Rafał Augustyn POL Olympian	Brendon Reading AUS Olympian	Nazar Kovalenko UKR Olympian
Perseus Karlström SWE Olympian	Lukáš Gdula CZE Olympian	Pedro Daniel Gomez MEX Olympian
Tadas Suskevicius LTU Olympian	Håvard Haukenes NOR Olympian	Andres Chocho ECU Olympian
Marco De Luca ITA Olympian	Rachel Seaman CAN Olympian	Isaac Palma MEX Olympian
Marius Ziukas LTU Olympian	Rachel Tallent AUS Olympian	Tim Seaman USA Olympian
Hagen Pohle GER Olympian	Maria Michta-Coffey USA Olympian	Alana Barber NZ Olympian
Adrian Błocki POL Olympian	Brendan Boyce IRL Olympian	David Smith AUS Olympian
Benjamin Thorne CAN Olympian	Sandor Racz HUN Olympian	Simon Baker AUS Olympian
Miranda Melville USA Olympian	Marc Mundell RSA Olympian	Takayuki Tanii JPN Olympian
Carl Dohmann GER Olympian	Tom Bosworth ENG Olympian	Claire Tallent AUS Olympian
Venyercsán Bence HUN Olympian	Lebo Shange RSA Olympian	Agnese Pastare LAT Olympian
João Vieira POR Olympian	Alex Wright IRL Olympian	Veli-Matti Partanen FIN Olympian
Regan Lambie AUS Olympian	John Nunn USA Olympian	Satoshi Yanagisawa JPN Olympian

Christopher Linke GER
Olympian

Viktoria Madarasz HUN
Olympian

Teodorico Caporaso ITA
Olympian

José Ignacio Díaz Velázquez ESP
Olympian

Nils Brembach GER
Olympian

Jani Lehtinen FIN
Olympian

Antonella Palmisano ITA
Olympian

Aleksi Ojala FIN
Olympian

Adam Rutter AUS
Olympian

Beki Smith AUS
Olympian

Tanya Holliday AUS
Olympian

Caio Bonfim BRA
Olympian