The Development of Rogaining: The World

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Rogaining was introduced to North America by Canadian orienteer Jim Force who toured Australia during the World Orienteering Championship (WOC) in 1985. The first rogaine in North America was in Canada in September 1986 at Lake Minnewanka, Alberta in the Canadian Rockies near Calgary. Hosted by Kitty Jones, Andy Newson, and Jim Force. Winners were Stuart Wood and John Laycock, with 89 participants in 30 teams.

The first United States rogaine was in May 1989 at Buck Meadows, Wenatchee National Forest, Washington State in the Cascades near Ellensburg. Hosted by the Washington State Orienteering Association with Bob Reddick, Carl Moore, Knut Olson, and many others from four area O clubs. Winners were Dan Waugh and Mark Hartinger of Seattle, who punched 35 of 45 controls travelling 44 miles and climbing 5800 feet. There were 112 participants in 52 teams. When the US Orienteering Federation (USOF) adopted rogaining and created a Rogaine Committee, many other rogaines followed in North America.

In August 1990, Canadians Kitty Jones, Andy Newson and course setter Jim Force organised the Most Awesome Rogaine at Bobs Creek, south of Calgary, Alberta in conjunction with and directly after the Asia-Pacific Orienteering Championship, itself an Australian invention. At this event, international rogaining reached its pinnacle, with 20 different countries represented, including 57 Australians in a total of 136 teams. Winners were Brian May and Francis Falardeau of Canada.

In 1994, then Australian Rogaining Association (ARA) President Peter Taylor visited USA and developed the concept of an annual North American Rogaining Championship. This event has provided a focus for North American rogaining and increased expertise in competing in and organising 24 hour rogaines. On 25 June 1994 the first North American Rogaining Championship was run by Sage Orienteering Club (BC, Canada); the 1995 event was run by Columbia River Orienteering Club (WA/OR, USA); the third championship was on 20 July 1996 organised by Central New York Orienteering (NY, USA); and the 1997 event was run on 1st March by Tucson Orienteering Club (AZ, USA).

Michael Wood of Hutt Valley Orienteers (OHV) attended the Most Awesome Rogaine in Canada and was inspired to organise New Zealand's first rogaine, a short four hours, in 1991. OHV has run one rogaine at least every year since. Orienteers in Whangarei, Auckland, Hamilton, Rotorua, Hawkes Bay, Taranaki, Wairarapa, Marlborough, Canterbury and Otago have since adopted rogaining. In January 1994, Dunedin Orienteering Club organised the first New Zealand Rogaining Championship at Pisa Range near Wanaka on the south island. The event, principally due to the efforts of Ken and Anitra Dowling, attracted 143 entrants to the 24 hour and 6 hour categories.

The first experience of rogaining gained by the Czech Republic was in 1990, when runners from the orienteering national team entered the Most Awesome Rogaine in Canada. In autumn 1996, Tomas Prokes founded the Czech Association of Rogaining and Mountain Orienteering (CAR) and the first two races in Mountain-O were held in Branzez and Liberec. The following year saw the first rogaine events with a 12/24 hour event organised as the first Czech Rogaining Championship by Honza Vokurka and his team.

Tallinna Orienteering Club (TAOK) in 2000 organised the first rogaining event in Estonia. The event was given a warm welcome by the 54 teams / 150 competitors who participated in the 8 hour rogaine. Year by year, the number of participants has steadily increased. From 2000, the rogaine has become the annual key event of the club and a trade mark of TAOK. The largest rogaine attendance in the world, 914 competitors, was recorded at Kolga, Estonia in 2006.
Towards an International Federation

In 1989, with the establishment of the USOF Rogaine Committee, there was a fear in Australia of 'some very rapid moves to incorporate rogaining under larger wings over there' and that rogaining would 'become a cadet sport to orienteering'. The fear being that 'there is nothing to say the sport will not change dramatically in style' from that pioneered in Australia. Neil Phillips and David Stephens recognised the need to control the development of the sport and thus assembled an informal group under the heading of 'International Rogaining Federation' (IRF). The objective was to work with individual

keen rogaine organisers, to influence them to follow the models established in Australia, including independent rogaining associations. Neil Phillips championed the production of an organisers' manual to officially define the sport. From this the ARA funded the manual Organising a Rogaine, written by Rod Costigan.

Early in 1996, The Australian Rogaining Association (ARA) commenced investigation of models for a formalised International Federation. In mid-1996, ARA formally resolved to ask USOF (USA), COF (Canada) and NZOF (New Zealand) whether they saw themselves as representing rogaining in their countries and if so, to join it in forming an International Rogaining Federation. In August 1997 the International Orienteering Federation (IOF) decided to adopt rogaining and Mountain Marathons as official forms of orienteering under the heading of 'Marathon Orienteering'.

Neil Phillips, Nigel Aylott, David Rowlands and Richard Robinson developed and agreed an IRF constitution in June 1999, consisting of national bodies. In June 2000, ARA appointed an 'IRF Transitional Subcommittee' to negotiate with stakeholder countries a suitable formal IRF framework based on the 1999 constitution. In response to this, and fearing a takeover from the IOF, two people registered a body as 'International Rogaining Federation', with a structure consisting of nominated individuals. The Australian Rogaining Association did not recognise this and was not a member.

After many failed attempts, the IRF was finally created as a federation of peak national rogaining bodies in April 2010, with initial members being New Zealand Rogaining Association, Czech Association of Rogaining and Mountain Orienteering, Estonian Orienteering Federation, Orienteering USA, and Australian Rogaining Association.
References:

IRF State of Play 1996

IRF Newsletter 2000

ARA Process to Form IRF 2000

IRF Announcement 30 June 2000

ARA Response to IRF Constitution 2001

Summary of ARA Agreement With IRF Executive 2006

ARA Call For Action IRF Newsletter 2007

ARA's Rationale For a Federation of National Rogaining Bodies 2008

IRF Constitution Produced by ARA 2009
World Championships

The first World Rogaining Championship (WRC) was held at Beechworth, Victoria in October 1992, organised by Geoff Hook with course setter David Rowlands. The first world champions were Michael Walters and James Russell, with Andrew and Peter McComb only ten points behind, and Greg Barbour and Eddie Wymer third. International representation included a few from USA and a significant number from New Zealand. The next World Championship was in August 1996 amongst the everlasting daisies of Mt Singleton, Western Australia and won by James Russell and David Rowlands from Australia. Thereafter, World Championships have been held every two years and have cycled between Australia/New Zealand, North America and Europe.

Sage Orienteering Club organised the 1998 World Rogaining Championships at Douglas Lake Ranch, near Kamloops, British Columbia in conjunction with the North American Orienteering Championship. Almost 300 rogainers competed on a day that reached 39.7 degrees. Peninsula and Plains Orienteering Club staged the 2000 World Championship in the North Canterbury region on the South Island of New Zealand, following the Pacific Orienteering Championship in Auckland. The 2002 World Rogaining Championship was organised by the Czech Association and centred on the small village of Lesna, in the spa region near the western border with Germany. Tucson Orienteering Club coordinated the 2004 World Championship at Big Lake in Arizona, held at over 2500 metres elevation.
The 2006 World Rogaining Championship in New South Wales Australia highlighted the spectacular sandstone features and the dense scrub of the Warrumbungle National Park. WRC 2008 was held in Southern Estonia in the low lying Karula National Park, centred at the village of Ähijärve, in Võru country. In 2010, the World Rogaining Championship returned to New Zealand's hilly farm country near the town of Cheviot, 120 km north of Christchurch. Czech Republic again hosted the World Championship of 2012 near Prebuz in the Ore Mountains on the western border. There were 700

competitors, with the first three teams from Estonia, Finland and Russia.

Rogaining is now well established in a large number of countries especially in Europe, including Russia, Estonia, Czech Republic, Ukraine, Latvia, plus USA, Canada, New Zealand and Australia. Outside Australia, most rogaines are run by orienteering clubs and associations.

References

ARA, May 1990, Minutes of ARA Workshop

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Michael Wood

Peter Taylor

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