

To Members of the Press

June 1, 2011  
Japan Orienteering Association

**Contributions from 27 countries at the World Ski Orienteering Championships  
Donated to the Japanese Red Cross  
Japanese Ski Orienteering Team**

The Japan Orienteering Association sent a Japanese team to the World Ski Orienteering Championships held from March 20, 2011 in Sweden. Through this championship, the Association has received numerous messages of support from participating countries wishing Japan a speedy recovery, as well as donations amounting to ¥111,041. The Japan Orienteering Association would like to announce that it has subsequently donated these funds in full to the Japanese Red Cross.

The World Ski Orienteering Championships were held from March 20 - 27, 2011 in Tänn dalen, Sweden. Competitors from Japan and 26 other countries participated in this event, the highest number of participating countries in the history of ski orienteering.

Immediately following the Great East Japan Earthquake, it was very difficult to obtain any news as to the safety of Japanese team members living in the affected north-east region of Japan. Additionally, all training camps that had been planned to take place in Japan were canceled, and there was uncertainty as to what arrangements could be made, if any, for transportation to the airport. Amidst all this chaos, at one point we even considered withdrawing our participation in the championship. However, we kept in mind what it would mean for the team to represent Japan in the World Championships and we continued to modify our arrangements until the very last minute. As a result, we were able to send the whole of the Japanese team to the Championship. People in Sweden also took great interest in the situation in Japan and the Swedish Orienteering Association magazine included articles about the Japanese competitors and various messages about the earthquake disaster (please see Attachment 1).

During the championship, we received valuable donations, as well as warm and encouraging messages from team members and other people related to the sport from other participating countries (see Attachment 2). After coach Takeshi's speech at the closing ceremony, all participants shared their condolences regarding the recent Great East Japan Earthquake.

Unfortunately, in spite of our efforts in making necessary adjustments to our plans prior to the Championship, the Japanese team was unable to improve on their past results. However, out of the nine team members representing Japan, four of them were high school students who had been newly selected as Japanese team members, and they did manage to exceed their objectives and obtain excellent results. We have great expectations for their performance in the next World Championships and the up and coming tournaments in Asia.

We offer our condolences for the victims of the Great East Japan Earthquake, and we solemnly wish that those adversely affected may settle back into their normal lives as quickly as possible.

<Related Information>

What is ski orienteering?

A ski time trial race where the competitor chooses the most appropriate route to pass through specific points, in the right order, and in the fastest possible time. It is an intellectual snow adventure sport that requires great physical, as well as emotional and spiritual strength. As with cross country skiing, any small lapse in judgment can make the difference between winning and losing. Ski orienteering was recognized as an official event of the Asian Winter Games 2011 and petitioning efforts are currently underway towards the sport being recognized as an official Olympic event in 2022.

Japan Orienteering Association <http://www.orienteering.or.jp/ski/>

Japan Ski Orienteering Research Center <http://www.skio.jp>

What is ski orienteering? (video) <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3f8cinOAo9o>

Official World Championship Site <http://www.skiwoc2011.com/>

International Orienteering Federation <http://orienteering.org/>

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<Attachment 1>

Translation of an article in a Swedish orienteering magazine.

<Attachment 2>

Messages of encouragement and support sent to Japan from other countries (Switzerland, Czech Republic).