

Notes of the Controllers' Update session held in Pitlochry on 13 February 2010

This document is largely notes of the session, with *post-meeting notes added in italics*.

Review of SOLs

The planned review of 2009 SOLs was not possible, as only one controller had completed the form which was intended to be filed for each event, to provide some factual basis for discussion and learning points. Instead, there was lively discussion of whether reviews were needed at all, and if so, how they should be conducted and how the facts and opinions should be captured soon after the event, to allow meaningful review of the series. I agreed to investigate the review form used by the 6 Day Event; *I have since found out from Lynne Walker that the form they use was based on the SOL review form drafted last year. They expanded it to cover wider aspects unique to 6 Day events.*

Most controllers are probably of the opinion that reviewing events is worthwhile, to capture good ideas, share learning points and ensure appropriate levels of consistency across the series. Some kind of form seems an appropriate way of recording noteworthy comments about the event, and the correct forum for discussing such notes would appear to be an annual gathering of controllers (or perhaps as a breakout group discussion). A form can prompt for relevant comments, not necessarily requiring input in every box. *I will discuss this further with the SOA Operations Director.*

Courses for Planners

The suggestion was made that courses for planners should be available; such a course has indeed been available (and advertised!) for several years. *It is mentioned on the SOA web page about sources of information for event officials*

<http://www.scottish-orienteing.org/soa/page/information-sources-for-event-officials/>; *I can run it for clubs if required, or at a central venue, or I can supply the Powerpoint slides for a suitable person in the club to teach. The course is based on the BOF course, but with improved slides. Clubs providing their own tutor would also need to provide their own samples of maps and courses.*

Report from BOF Major Events Committee – Dick Carmichael

The problem of mis-match of loose control descriptions with those printed on the map has occurred on a few occasions. *Condes now shows the filename under the control descriptions.*

IOF have published extensive Guidelines on WREs, a handbook for WMOC, and 52 pages of anti-doping rules.

Major events need their website to state clearly what area is embargoed, and all planning etc. needs to start 12 months ahead.

Rules changes – Dick Carmichael

The new Rules are available on the BOF website, with changes helpfully marked in the margin. You are advised to consult the full document, but Dick summarised the key areas of change:

- the Appendices carry the same authority as the Rules
- generic event guidelines cover the various event types

- Event Rules (previously Event Guidelines) refer to specific events, and will become Competition Rules in 2011
- for Level 1 events, the Rules may be varied only with the agreement of the Controller and BOF Rules Group
- for Level 2 events that have specific Event Rules, the Rules may be varied only with the agreement of the Controller and BOF Rules Group
- for Level 2 events that have no specific Event Rules, the Rules may be varied with agreement of the Controller and the constituent association (SOA)
- for Level 3 events, the Rules may be varied with agreement of the Controller and the organising club
- shadowing of competitors is at the discretion of the organiser, but the competitor who is shadowed shall be non-competitive (*SOA might choose to vary this for SOLs*)
- Controller must review and sign off the Risk Assessment form (completed by Organiser)
- there will be three types of event: Level 1 (National), Level 2 (Regional) and Level 3 (Local)
- events are registered by association fixtures secretary (Levels 1 & 2) or club fixtures co-ordinator (Level 3)
- event organising body has the right to retain some or all of pre-entry fees if event has to be cancelled, to cover costs incurred
- 24-month embargo applies to Level 1 events
- Level 2 events don't automatically have an embargo (*but SOA might apply one to SOLs*)
- Controller's decision is final (*no change*) except on matters referred to a jury
- for events using maps at scales 1:5000 or 1:4000 (sprint events), controls must be no less than 15m apart, and no less than 30m for similar features (*for events using standard scales, the figures remain 30m and 60m*)
- easily confused control codes mustn't be used close together (*formalised previous good practice*)
- Level 1 & 2 events using electronic punching must have backup punching facilities
- in events with mass start or chasing start, first over the finish line wins
- at Level 1 events you can't remove splits
- handling of protests and appeals has changed in a few ways

Risk Assessments – Hilary Quick

BOF have changed the risk assessment form and the Rules now state that the Controller must sign it off. Controllers need to be trained by a qualified BOF trainer, eg. Hilary. Training session delivered covering:

- What is a hazard? (something that has the potential to cause harm)
- Likelihood + severity of effect = RISK
- Mitigation – avoid or reduce chances, minimise effect
- Ability to handle incidents should they arise
- Dynamic Risk Assessment
- Form – Organiser completes, Controller reviews & signs
- Include observations when checking control sites
- Ensure mitigation actions taken

- Keep form as evidence/record; review its usefulness if incident occurred
- Common sense – but structured & recorded

BOF will be informed of all who have attended this training (*done*) and certificates of attendance will be issued. Further training sessions would be arranged as required. (*Lynne Walker can also deliver training.*)

Ewart Scott and Trevor Hoey kindly offered to provide samples of completed forms. Others will be most welcome.

In later discussion it was noted that urban events present different sets of hazards from cross-country events.

AOB

Suggestion was made for GPS training for controllers, but it was generally felt that GPS is unlikely to give a worthwhile level of accuracy. (*If controller can't be confident with that bit of the map, is it fair to use it for competition?*)

Dick Carmichael and Eddie Harwood in turn described the opposing views on the increasing commercialisation (and reduced competitive value?) of WMOC.

Views on use of butterfly loops were also mixed – only really relevant in elite competition.

Several people expressed the view that quality of local events was as important as quality of Level 1 & 2 events, as these were the ones that determined whether newcomers would continue with the sport or not. Quite what such newcomers should expect was not defined.

Level 2 events can use an “experienced” Grade 3 controller, but how is Marjory Craig to know who is “experienced”? (Marjory doesn't normally get involved in allocation of Grade 3 controllers.)

It was noted that the average age in the room was closer to 60 than 50. Once more, it was suggested that experienced controllers (and planners) should encourage and mentor youngsters and inexperienced people. This arrangement, of obvious mutual benefit, has been suggested many times before and is in the hands of clubs and individuals. The role of a controller includes a lot of mentoring. Guidance and criticism must be constructive.

After some head-scratching and discussion about the status of Areas such as East of Scotland, it was noted that these areas ceased to have formal status and representation on the Exec/Board when the SOA became a limited company; directors had to have functional responsibility, not serve as geographical representatives. Areas could continue to function as groups to organise leagues etc..

Not all the discussions were conclusive. Where possible, these will be followed up by other means over the next few months.

Hilary Quick
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