

Controller's Conundrum – Volunteers Weekend National Orienteering Centre

Colin's Comments:

Thank you to everyone who completed or part completed the controller's conundrum, especially Andy Paterson & family, Alan Halliday and Dave McQuillen who all scored over 30 points under the firm but fair marking system. Ivan (O'Map) was an experienced orienteer who stopped competing when on-line entry systems came in and he can perhaps be forgiven for his lack of attention to detail. Few orienteers noticed that the building by control description 31 had elongated significantly since the map was drawn – Hilary's office used to sit above the stores but moved southeast. Johannes was the only person to notice that the "narrow passage" description was used for the footbridge. Using the knoll (black dot) symbol for a boulder instead of a triangle was not picked up by everyone – this was done deliberately because of course on the map a boulder is a black dot. There were a lot of other things wrong at control 41 as it was taped on the wrong side (or alternatively the description did not match the tape); the circle should have been centred on the feature and you should not use 3 dimensions to describe the size of a boulder. The IOF Control Descriptions 2004 are currently being reviewed and there will be some changes that help bring control descriptions more in line with features as mapped.

It is accepted that the map needs a full revision and I will request that the SOA releases some funds to allow this to progress. Apologies go to anyone who tried to follow the footpath between the footbridge and control 52, the optimistically described path crossing (actually a junction). A common mistake made by many planners is to show the crossing or junction in column E – it should be in column F. I also apologise for the wet feet suffered by those who went to control 37 in the marsh (incorrectly labelled 38).

There were bonus points added where I had not picked up on things such as safety issues starting by the road junction, the controls reaching near to the edge of the mapped world, lack of points for a score event and so on. Bonus points were reduced for those who argued with me over the rights and wrongs of answers. I hope that it was an enjoyable experience to all who took part, and if you are not already a Controller you consider following this pathway.

The answers (or some of them)

- Start No control description
- 31 Description OK but building has extended and map has not been updated
- 32 Circle (and tape) on S path junction but description says N. Should show path/track in columns D & E and junction symbol in column F. "Path crossing" might be a better description.
- 33 Earthwall instead of small erosion gully in description. Too close to a similar feature 34
- 34 Should use small depression not depression. Too close to similar feature 33
- 36 Stony ground not a boulder cluster
- 37 Do not use "side" for a marsh. This is used for features that extend above the surface e.g. boulder. Tape on wrong side of marsh. Tape is numbered 38.

- 38 Marked as S knoll on map (and taped as such) but says N. Wrong symbol for rocky knoll (boulder field used)
- 40 Gully used instead of pit. Marked as S but description and tape in N. Number too far away from control circle.
- 41 Circle should be centred on boulder on map even though description says W side. Knoll symbol used instead of boulder. Too many figures in dimension box. Tape on E side
- 43 Semi-open land description. Control must be on mapped feature.
- 45 Depression symbol used but this is a small hill. Possibly should define position of marker
- 46 Description OK but on the ground it is not distinctive enough and I would not use this site
- 48 The edge description is for where the feature goes down below the surface of the ground or extends over a significant area. Use corner for the building. Cannot read control number as it is partially on top of the black of the building
- 52 It is a junction and not a crossing. The junction symbol should be in column F not E
- 69 I would consider this a watercourse and not a minor water channel. We usually use words like stream and ditch. No 69 is too close to 96 and could be confused.
- 87 Wrong symbol for a ruin (paved area used). Do not use E "part" but would use side or corner
- 96 Wrong symbol for a bridge (narrow passage used). Tape is not underneath

Finish Do not have 50m marked route on a score course (nothing 50m away in any case)
Map scale incorrect (actually 1:7,500 and says 1:5,000)

Technically too difficult for a Beginners Score