

## WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

Poster discussion topics as used at the SOA  
Volunteers' Weekend, May 2016. Participants'  
comments are given verbatim in *italics*; follow-  
on comments are in **blue**.

# WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF....

# 1

Your next leg is this:



- (a) run ESE to the track and through the gate
- (b) run to the crossing WNW of where you are – you hadn't seen the gate on the track
- (c) go straight, hop over the fence and hope no-one sees you
- (d) go straight, you've just seen someone else do that
- (e) go straight, there's no reason why you shouldn't hop over the fence

Would your answer be any different for a local event or for the British Championships?

If the latter, what if you'd had a good run so far and thought you were in with a chance of the title?

If you were the controller, would you have allowed this choice?

1. *Uncrossable fence should be obeyed regardless of scale of event.*
2. *I would choose (b) route as re-entrant will lead me to control. But if I were planner I would plan leg to avoid crossing fence other than via crossing points.*
3. *(b) – uncrossable wall/fence not to be crossed under any circumstances.*

This is a genuine example from the British Championships 2016, which caused some discussion in other places. Technically, it is an excellent route choice leg – but only if you could be totally confident that no-one would disobey the marking of the fence as uncrossable (the solid purple line indicates this). Taking a prohibited route is cheating, and can jeopardise relationships with landowners.

## WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF....

# 2

In an open moorland event, a runner near you falls, gets up after a couple of seconds, rubs his head then runs off in a slightly zigzag manner, in a completely different direction to previously?

*Try to catch up with them and ask them if they feel OK. If less than coherent (after testing through simple questioning), then gently offer to escort to finish. This needs first aid confidence; not something someone would do if not experienced in this.*

*(second person) Yes agreed. Bang on head always needs to be checked out. Zig-zag action almost certainly suggests concussion.*

## WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF....

# 3

You turn up for a club training event, which is being planned/organised/controlled by just one person. Her car is in the car park, but she doesn't appear by the scheduled start time, though she's always been totally reliable so far. More people turn up, and you can see the maps on the back seat of the car. What do you do? Does time of day make any difference? Does time of year have any bearing?

1. *try phoning her mobile if you have the number*
2. *check to see if car is open – if so, take map and organise a search*
3. *try next of kin*
4. *if evening – more urgency*
5. *if winter of bad weather – more urgency*
6. *organise search with competent orienteers waiting, especially if 4 & 5 are “yes”*
7. *no sign after initial hasty search – call 999 and ask for police or mountain rescue*
8. *in future, ensure organisers have buddy system*

Resident Mountain Rescue expert provided this answer, which no-one can fault! Thank you Ross.

## WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF....

4a

You've noticed that your lead club coach tends to stand a little too close to people – he's done it to you and you spend the whole time edging away but he just follows you. You think he tends to do it more with young adult females. Now you've seen him touching these young adult females – usually on the arm or shoulder – and they tend to step away, but he moves closer again and carries on regardless. Should you do or say anything? At what stage? What should you say? What if the coach is female? What if the athletes are under 18? What if the coach was not born British? Does the age of the coach have any bearing? What if you're told the coach is gay/lesbian? What if one of the athletes mentions it to the Club Chairman? What if the athlete who mentions it is under 18?

*Raise with club child/vulnerable people protection officer, asap. Try to be objective, report facts only, don't make assumptions regardless of sex, age, ethnic origin, status.*

*Report regardless of affected person's age, sex, ethnic original, status etc..*

*Club chair – report to child/vulnerable people protection officer.*

Note from SOA Lead Child Protection Officer: this should be handled sensitively. Taking the first bit separately, it's possible that the coach in question simply has different "boundaries" which he's not aware of, perhaps he comes from a culture where it's perfectly acceptable to stand a little closer than we do in the UK. It might be that in his/her culture it's OK to touch people. But the important thing is that IF THE ATHLETE/YOUNG PERSON FEELS UNCOMFORTABLE THEN IT HAS TO BE TACKLED. You can't say "oh it's just the way he is..." Anyone should be able to say "I feel uncomfortable when you stand close to me, please give me more space" or something like that. Casual touching should be stopped; there's nothing wrong with an occasional, justified gesture such as a hug of celebration or condolence – so long as the recipient is OK with it. Best to do such things in public too.

## WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF....

4b

**(do this one after 4a)**

A parent has made a formal complaint to the club about the behaviour of the lead coach, claiming that he (the coach) has been touching his (the parent's) daughter inappropriately. The daughter is 15, and you understand it has been reported to the police. You are aware that you'd felt slightly uneasy about this coach, but you felt uncomfortable about saying anything..... The daughter was a regular but hasn't been at coaching for a couple of weeks.

*Report to chairman or child protection officer. Let them and police take appropriate action.*

Note from SOA Lead Child Protection Officer: Yes. Sadly, this is the kind of thing that can develop if the situation described in 4a goes unchecked. This coach must also now be accompanied at all times when with juniors.