

## Putting on a Maze-O



### Summary/background

The following notes were prepared following a Maze-O set up to promote orienteering/Tayside Orienteers as part of the Perth & Kinross Adventure Festival in May 2015. This type of maze was deliberately aimed at people who did not know what orienteering was and was not intended to offer a challenge to, or activity, for experienced orienteers (though those that came enjoyed it). Key to the activity being interesting/eye-catching and inspiring people was the use of SI kit and a laptop/splits printer to enable “live” results – very good for generating inter-family rivalry and repeat runs around the maze by people keen to beat siblings or better their time.

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### Spec

1. 10m x 10m grassy space allocated on request. Ask for/make sure you have additional space for the club tent.
2. Maze designed with dimensions 9.8m x 9.8m (aisles 1.4m wide). (These figures assume a diagonal measurement of 13.86 – take this measurement with you on your plan to ensure you can get a proper square when setting up).
3. Maze could be bigger but this would be time consuming and potentially expensive in kit to make, and offers no real advantage to beginners.

## Advance preparation

4. Site visit - ensure space required will definitely be available and ground is suitable – flat grass into which electric fence posts can be pushed.
5. Register the event with BOF as an activity.
6. Risk assess the area/activity and submit relevant paperwork to external event organiser (if required).
7. Design maze, courses/control sites. We drew our maze using a computer-aided design package and saved as a jpeg for inputting to Condes. We designed three courses (Short, Long and Star) – we thought carefully about the position of the controls within the aisles to minimise people reaching over to punch controls. The “Star” course brought people back into a central control several times. We used a separate entrance and exit to the maze, but on the same side – the side nearest where the club tent/event registration/download would be. We included a proper control description table on the map and used the fence symbol for the controls (there is no actual feature of course and these are irrelevant to beginners for this sort of activity but it made it look very official/interesting and was a talking point).
8. Print maps (A4) – it is hard to gauge numbers that will be required as you don’t have pre-entry for this type of event. People seemed very happy to return maps once they had done the activity so we didn’t need that many. You could laminate some maps, or print on waterproof map paper, or print on cheap paper but put in polypockets if weather is poor. Idea for things to include on the map - basic instructions/rules, club logo, some good, colourful pictures of orienteering, club web/Facebook address, details of next event etc.
9. Set-up Autodownload, charge up electronic kit etc, clear all dibbers in advance to be on safe side.  
**Synch the units - synching the SI units is vital because only seconds separate each runner between each control and in a practice session at home we registered mispunches where we were very fast between controls.**
10. Use a very simple event registration form in case you get long queues building up. You don’t want to put people off with very official-looking paperwork but do capture key info, including details of how to get back in touch with people who want to be kept informed about club activities – that is a key aim of the activity.
11. Prepare promotional/display materials for the club tent – we used big felt display boards with laminated photos of club activities, sample maps, club mascot, potential member packs (with membership form etc). Flyers promoting forthcoming events are vital.
12. Recruit sufficient club members to help with set up, manning the activity, chatting to potential members, clearing up etc. Ensure they wear club kit!

### **Publicity/promotion**

13. Promote to local press unless overall event being well-publicised, or in addition to.
14. Email prospective members – people who've already expressed an interest in orienteering/the club but who have yet to come to an event or who have only been once or twice.
15. Advertise on the club website and Facebook etc.
16. Exploit other suitable advertising opportunities – eg poster to Parkrun noticeboard.

### **Kit**

17. Green plastic electric fence posts – x64 used.
18. A decent, heavy mallet (rubber one was a bit soft for banging banner spikes in).
19. Stakes, SI units, kites etc
20. Red/white plastic tape – two strands used.
21. Several long tape measures and diagram showing stake position/dimensions etc.
22. Club tent, table, chairs.
23. Club banner
24. Start/Finish banners (useful to create walls as well as interest/official-look)
25. Club A-board or similar for display/signage
26. Blackboard and chalk for leader board – this was fun for kids to see names being changed and kids can help with this.
27. Felt display boards for use inside tent – put up photos, maps, mascot, control descriptions etc for people to browse/add colour/interest
28. Potential member promotional packs with details of forthcoming events (very useful for genuinely interested parties)
29. Club laptop, splits printer, battery pack
30. Email sign up form for people wanting to leave details
31. Club event registration etc kit
32. First aid kit, wipes, bin bags etc
33. Food/drinks for you/helpers!
34. Camera (remember protocols for photographing kids etc)
35. Think about what you are going to charge – probably a nominal/small amount - we went for a “£1 means you can go round as many times as you like today.” Keep it simple – one charge for all ages? Take plenty of coins in float/change.
36. Other activities – took laminated control descriptions to use as a game but not used/needed (back up plan in the event of very wet weather or for club members to test each other on in quiet spells – though there were none!).

### **Manpower/timings**

37. Three people to set up (two on maze construction, one in tent).
38. For a 0930 start arrived 0810 and were ready in good time.

39. Club members/helpers are vital to help with set up and to chat with the public, advise people at the start, look at their results with them, encourage them to club's next event etc.

### **Set-up**

40. Thoroughly check area for hazards, including dog poo, glass, needles etc (this was an urban location)
41. Set up so that start/finish are close to registration/tent and tent is positioned with good view of maze.
42. Mark out the four corners with posts making sure shape is square.
43. Fill in with posts at 1.4m intervals (or as required) in relevant pattern using diagram/plan and ensuring you get a proper square.
44. Use two rows of red/white tape to create walls
45. Lay out stakes, SI units, kites, start, finish etc
46. Add Start/Finish banners to maze "walls"
47. Fly club banners at corners (subject to no overhead lines and other hazards etc)

### **Summary/conclusions**

41. Set complete beginners off on the Short course first, encouraging them to try harder courses next. Make sure they clear and then dib the start unit. Explain how the units work etc, setting map etc. Give people who look hesitant special help.
42. Over seven hours we had c157 runs completed – this included some people running more than one course more than one time! Do not underestimate kids' interest in beating their previous time, or the time set by a sibling/friend – some kids ran round multiple times.
43. Autodownload was key to this – kids loved seeing their splits and getting a print out of their results. It would not have been anywhere near as much fun without the kit.
44. Expect some very enthusiastic/energetic kids! It is important to have enough people to chat with parents whilst they watch their kids run around the maze – and to try to encourage them to have a go themselves. Also to chat to them about the club and coming along to another event and to make sure they go away with a potential member pack/club info. Many kids don't actually use the map (as expected) but there were definitely some naturals/orienteers in the making – be absolutely sure to let their parents know and encourage them to come to an event!
45. There is a limit to the number of "asks" you can make of people at something like this – you might not want to push membership per se, nor "sign up to get emails from us." Better approach is to be sure you/your team invest enough time with people that seem like they might take the next step and come to an event – encourage them to follow the club on Facebook, web, to leave their email address etc. By the time we got home we had two more Facebook likes!

MN

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