

Informal Discussions held before the NGOC AGM 2013
14th October 2013

Role of the Events and Competitions Chair – Chris James

Chris told us about what his role involves and what he has been doing during the first year. He described the difficult task of arranging major fixtures, so that they are sensibly spaced and other events can then fit into this framework.

Broadly, the role encompasses three areas (with three corresponding groups):

- Structure of events – also including mapping and technology
- Officials
- Publicity and promotion

The Orienteering Foundation – Neil Cameron

Neil conducted a brief survey to see how many of us had heard of The Orienteering Foundation. Only 5 of 23 who responded had heard of it. The intention of this was to see the effect of the publicity so far. The Orienteering Foundation is an independent charity with modest funds, to support orienteers. It currently supports junior squads, for example giving grants to enable groups to participate in big events. It was suggested that Neil writes an overview of The Orienteering Foundation for an edition of Legend.

Event and Coaching – discussion

Pat introduced two topics of discussion – events and coaching. The discussion of events soon encompassed elements of coaching so the two topics were discussed as one.

Pat began with some open questions:

- What should we be doing to develop our fixtures and activities next year?
- Urban orienteering is becoming popular but we don't really do it yet. Do we want to?

There was a discussion about the current format of our Informal events and whether they should be more like training/coaching or more like League events. We used to have no defined set of standard courses, and instead one or more training exercises available to do, such as map memory or using a contour-only map. Sometimes a longer course would also be available. However, now we always have a standard set of courses and Informal events are becoming more like League events, with much less of a training/coaching emphasis.

It was suggested that we could just print an "all controls" map and people make up their own courses or have a coach design one for them. It was pointed out that this could actually make it more difficult to plan, because you have to allow for all possible routes between controls, whereas when just setting courses you can avoid bad areas of the forest and create legs with interesting route choice. It was also noted that planning Informal events like this could be a good way to do some training for planners.

It was suggested that each Informal could have a coach assigned to it, and the coach and an organiser plan the event such that the coaching topics and exercises fit in well with any longer courses that may also be planned. This suggestion seemed generally popular. The coaches will meet to discuss plans, but we expect to offer a coaching session before each Informal event, and publicise the theme and exercises in advance. There would be exercises suitable for beginners and exercises suitable for improvers, and the theme could also extend to the Informal event itself.

On the topic of urban orienteering, it was observed that many young people do running (in the streets) or mountain marathons, but not many do orienteering now. Urban O could be a way to lure them in, by doing running with simpler navigation and easier terrain to start off with, and once they get the hang of navigating while running, they might come to events in the forest and find they enjoy that too. The majority of people thought we should put on an urban programme next summer. Most people thought we should use newer maps than we have done previously, closer to ISSOM than black and white line maps.