

NGOC League Pre-entry

The league is becoming ever more popular, and has progressively moved up the scale of events from wholly local, to a mix of local and regional, with the latter becoming more common.

This has brought about a few situations in which we have run out of maps, despite Paul's best efforts to estimate how many we are likely to need.

One way to help manage this is to have pre-entry for the NGOC league. It is becoming more common to have pre-entry for galoppen events, and BOK have pre-entry for all of their events, though, from what I have been able to gather from looking at Fabian, with relatively limited success; pre-entries are not very high for their mid-week events, and I imagine they still have a lot of EODs.

If we were to go down this path there are, perhaps, 2 approaches we could take:

1. A simple DIY system, involving a form on the website which people would complete, in effect to reserve a map; no payment would be made until they turned up on the day
2. Using Fabian 4. Apart from basic entry handling, Fabian can provide facilities such as discounts for entry to multiple events, and series rather than individual event setup.

The purpose of this note is to outline the pros and cons of these options, in order to help make a decision on whether we continue as we are, or have pre-entry for the league. I don't suggest we should have pre-entry for other local events, and of course we will invariably have it for bigger events.

DIY System

For each event there would be a link on the website inviting people to pre-register. It would collect any data we felt needed to be collected, but would not collect money, so would not effectively commit people to actually coming.

The technology is straightforward; we would use a Google form probably 'owned' by an NGOC rather than private account, and the entries would be made available to whomever needed to see them. With some post-processing it could probably create a file which could be imported into the event software to set up the runner details.

People would be encouraged to pre-register, but unless we establish some form of incentive and/or penalty it would in no way commit people to turn up.

Benefits

1. Free and relatively easy to set up
2. Provides a rough guide to how many people are thinking of coming (though it could include a 'probability' factor)
3. Overall probably an improvement on what we currently do.
4. Maybe saves having to print lots of registration slips, though some will always be needed. For info, these cost about 4p each to print.
5. We could perhaps incentivise pre-registration by offering a lower entry fee for pre-registered people than for EODs

Issues

1. Doesn't commit people to coming, so may be used as a safety measure to reserve a map, with no actual commitment
2. Needs to be set up for each event
3. Unless all registration data is captured, still have to fill in a form on the day. If all registration data is captured, GDPR issues may arise regarding website holding of personal data
4. Without commitment, we still have to manage map numbers at the event, but now have a number of maps reserved for which we don't know if the people will actually turn up to claim them.

Fabian 4

We would set up an event series at the beginning of the season which would mean a one time exercise to go through the fairly involved Fabian setup process.

Fabian charge 4.5% of the total entry fees as a service fee, and they pay us in arrears, so revenue for an event can be up to 60 days after the entry is made.

Once the system is set up, it is relatively simple to administer, though changes to the schedule, for example if an event is re-scheduled, may incur a cost. Some changes are free, some are not.

Fabian offers facilities to export entries in a format appropriate for loading them into our software, and they also offer an event emailing system which allows us to contact all entrants to a particular event, should we need to do so.

Benefits

1. Requires payment so a better way to get people to commit to coming
2. System does allow for structured discounts, though I don't know the detail, which should allow us to offer discounts for entering multiple events
3. Reduces on the day registration and computing workload
4. Pre-entries can quickly be loaded up into the event software
5. Give a much better estimate of map demand
6. Enables us to incentivise pre-entry by potentially increasing the EOD premium
7. Provides a useful mass communication channel

Issues

1. Has to be set up and managed – a task we don't currently have in event preparation
2. Reduces event income, as Fabian take a service fee
3. Revenue is not realised until after the event, in some cases, though conversely early entry does mean earlier revenue, dependent on just how early.
4. People may object to paying up front for local events
5. May not be possible to flex fees for different levels of events – eg if the Galoppen is included in the series. We normally charge more for a galoppen than for league events, event regional ones. I don't know if we can set different fees for different events in a series.

Other Considerations

One thing we could take into account in coming to a decision on whether to have pre-entry/registration or not is our current fee levels.

We have not increased league fees for several years, and they remain very cheap, by and large. One thing we could do would be to increase the standard fee, to cover Fabian expenses, if we were to go down that route, and/or introduce an EOD premium at sufficient a level to encourage people to pre-enter.

We probably should not change anything for this year's league, but we should come up with a proposal to put to the AGM for the 2020 league season, if we wish to change anything.