Orienteering race analysis: personal orienteering style and mental models

This is an example of a race analysis befit to chart personal orienteering skills and the state of mental models. It is based on my personal understanding of efficient orienteering technique but can be also applied generally as a starting point. Anyone seriously interested in developing oneself as an orienteer surely needs to adjust this to fit better with personal needs once the content of personal orienteering style develops and becomes more conscious.

This analysis is best done with a map from a quite recent significant race which was run motivated and concentrated.

1. Basic skills

Map reading
a) Map reading / interpretation: How successful was I in reading / interpreting the map? Any difficulties?
b) Contours: Was I able to form a mental of the terrain features based on the map? In any difficulties, in what kind of detail?
c) What was most difficult to understand in the map?
d) Essential features / simplification: Did I find the essential on the map or was a reading too much (orienteering point to point)?
e) Route choice: Did I manage to choose the best routes for my skill and ability based on this map?

Compass use
f) Precise bearing: If there were controls that needed compass bearing to take, how did this (and pacing succeed)? Did I hit the control straight or did I drift left/right?
g) General bearing: How did I manage to maintain correct bearing on the legs with little / too much to read?

2. Orienteering technique (mental models)

Planning
a) Did I make a plan on EACH leg?
b) When did I plan the leg?
c) What was the content of the leg plan?
   • Did the plan include the whole leg?
   • Was the plan just a route choice or did I include the essential features?
   • If essential features were included, were they only enroute or also beside it (*railings)?
   • Did I take into account control taking (attack point, enlargement, visibility)

Legs

d) Did I manage to stay on the intended route? - Draw on your race map both the route ran and the planned route (e.g. dotted line) if it was different
e) **Observation**: draw (e.g. with a pencil) arrows from your route to what you saw
   - Did I observe sufficiently far ahead and aside (or behind) or only features close to where I was?
   - Were the observation expected (map-terrain) or unexpected (terrain-map)?

f) "Traffic lights": How did I manage to regulate my running speed? Was I trying to run too fast in relation to my condition and orienteering skill?

g) "Future orientation": Did I manage to think ahead or were my legs faster than my head...

h) "Fluency" of my orienteering: draw a cross-line on your route on the map in the places where you had to stop. Why did you stop?

i) Use of compass: Where did I use compass and in what purpose (orienting the map, compass bearing)? How did I manage to coordinate compass use and map reading?

Control taking

h) Planning: Did I plan the control taking? Where did I plan it?

i) Technique: Did I manage to take controls in the most efficient manner? Did I realize the essential (attack point, control enlargement/simplification, precise compass bearing, point to point orienteering...)

j) Difficulties: Where and what type of controls? Why?

3. **Controlling the whole performance**

Concentration

a) Continuity in thinking: draw on top of your route (e.g. with a pencil) a continuous circle where your concentration was completely lacking (you were thinking other things than orienteering) and dotted circle where concentration was only partial

b) In what type of situation (easy, difficult, leaving or taking a control) and where did I have concentration problems?

c) Reasons for concentration problems: Was concentration weak throughout the race on in particular situations due to interferences? What caused the concentration to falter? - Write explanation behind your map.

d) What did I do/think during easy orienteering or the "waiting time" (between expectation and observation)

e) Was my map reading continuous and sufficient (frequent enough)

Mistake management

f) Where on the course and legs did I make mistakes? First or last controls, leaving the control, on the leg, taking the control?

g) Reasons for mistakes: Compare you behaviour and thinking before the mistake based on the above analysis. Was it due to problems in interpreting the map, unsuccessful route choice, weak or incomplete planning, poor concentration, insufficient map reading, insufficient observation of the terrain, problems in maintaining compass bearing etc?

h) Mistake management: What did I do after I realize I had made a mistake (or did not know where I was)? Was I able to correct it and minimize the time loss?

i) Did I manage to continue concentrated? How did I succeed on the next leg?