

NOTES ON IOA MAJOR EVENTS CONFERENCE, BEWLEYS HOTEL,  
LEOPARDSTOWN, DUBLIN 17 JANUARY

The Conference was chaired by Mary O'Connell, with presentations by Angus Tyner (Coordinator IOC 2014), Ruth Lynam (Controller IOC Classic 2014), Frank Ryan (Coordinator Irish Three Day 2014), and Harold White (Controller of Technical Standards). Also present was Ruairi Short representing the Senior Squad and Pat Healy, Mapping.

Attendees were Aonghus O'Cleirigh (AJAX) Andrew Cox (WATO) Val Jones (FIN) Roxanne White (DUO) Des Doyle (GEN) Andrew Butterfield (GEN) Stephen Gilmore (LVO) Harry Bell (LVO) Gordon Stephens (LVO) Richard Williamson (LVO) Jana Cox (DUO/WATO) and Pdraig Higgins (MNVA).

Angus Tyner (Coordinator IOC 2014)

They had 270 entries for the Long Distance day as against their budget of 250. The surplus on the event was E1300 but not all of the expenses of the officials were claimed. With the different scale maps and the use of Oakwood this required the set-up of 7 different maps. Ideally maps should be completed 12 months in advance so that the vegetation of the areas can be seen and confirmed at that time.

They borrowed SI units so that none were used twice. All were synchronised by the same timemaster. They had two computers available at each event plus one for Oakwood, and had back-up for everything. As a back-up, the accumulating results were saved every 20 minutes.

The maps were printed on waterproof paper but with the addition of mud became difficult to read. They should also be in plastic bags and in that case could have been on ordinary paper.

Ruth Lynam (Controller IOC 2014 Long Distance)

The use of a second site for M/W 10's and 12's provided a more suitable venue from both a technical and physical perspective that was not available in the more complex Lough Firrib area. However it needed a second set of officials.

In terms of the Lough Firrib map some editing of the mapped features was needed to improve legibility especially at the 1:15,000 scale. However an area that was close to a long leg on the M21E course was not surveyed resulting in confusion to competitors who entered that area. It was felt that it should have been marked in some way on the map (but given its closeness to the marked route it should have been surveyed-HW)

Ruth produced an example of the map on Pertex paper where the mud had been absorbed into the paper making it extremely difficult to read. Ruth made the point that it is the international

norm that maps are printed on good quality paper and sealed in plastic bags. However she felt that Toughprint waterproof paper is satisfactory.

As regards structuring the start lists, each class should be spread over the whole start window.

As regards safety Ruth felt that Mountain Rescue was more useful than an ambulance crew, and that it was very useful to have manned water stations where immediate assistance was available for competitors. Also it is important to have good mobile and radio communications especially for those out in the terrain, including the control collectors. She felt that a safety bearing and a contact telephone number should be given and that a small map of the general location should be provided on competitors' maps. She questioned competitors' knowledge of safety issues and what the whistle procedure is.

It was felt that a section of the next controllers/planners/organisers course should be devoted to safety; and that more guidance be given in the Guidelines for the different format of events.

In terms of the organisation requirements the 2014 organisers had used the very comprehensive check list that had been developed by AJAX. This is to be put on the IOA website.

#### Frank Ryan (Coordinator Irish 3 Day 2014)

Frank provided a very comprehensive view of the process of staging major multi-day events and the issues that arose with their 2014 event. As a starting point, the identification of the owners of land, arranging for its mapping, and permission to stage the event all takes persistence and time especially when there are many owners.

His ideal as Coordinator would be to have different Organisers for each competition day. WEGO have a shortage of Organisers, Planners and Controllers. They have decided not to stage the Irish 3 Day in 2016. Frank thinks that a few reliable helpers are much more valuable than a larger number of unreliable ones. The Organiser and Planner should work together in the siting of assembly, start, and finish and ideally should make these as convenient as possible.

Consideration has to be given to any course obstacles that require the provision of bridges and stiles. Also signage needs to be identified so that sufficient signs are available for the event. He also advocates the use of separate sets of SI equipment for each day's event.

Frank feels that a risk assessment exercise is essential.

Financially the staging of their recent major events has been difficult with surpluses of E752 and E502 for the Irish 3 Day in 2012 and 2014, and a deficit of E4012 at IOC 2013. The Irish 3 Day events benefitted from no significant mapping costs due to them using existing maps, but the IOC involved significant mapping costs. Part of the problem is the low number of competitors that is not a unique problem for them. Frank feels that the IOA need to look at the level of grants provided.

### Map Scales (HW)

The IOF definition in ISOM is that maps for elite competitions where the requirement is for maps to be printed at 1:15,000 scale should be legible at that scale. If not the area is viewed as being not suitable for orienteering. In the case of Lough Firrib some refinement was required in the cartography to produce a legible map.

When the IOA Rules on mapping were revised in 2013, it was decided that the legibility rule would apply to 1:10,000 scale maps as they are the general standard at Irish competitions. However there is a desire from the elite squad that their courses use 1:15,000 scale maps. The wording of the Rule and Guideline needs to be amended to reflect this.

### Policy for missing or misplaced controls (HW)

The possible actions of the Organiser, in the first instance, and the Jury if a protest is made are:-

To void the course

To take out the split times for the legs before and after the missing or misplaced control

To start from a control point after the affected control

To leave the results as they stand

For a course to be voided it is necessary for the race results to have been significantly affected. This could be seen as the better orienteers appearing much lower in the results than would normally be expected. Removing splits should not be seen as a means of converting an unfair race into a fair race.

In a situation like this any decision may be better made in the days after the event when all of the data can be considered.

If a complaint or protest have been made, then it is important that the decisions made by the Organiser or Jury are clearly explained in the published results.

As there is currently no detailed guidance on this in the Rules, Appendices, and Guidelines it was agreed that this should be added.

### Revision of Guideline 1 for C2 Long Distance Competitions (HW)

The proposal to offer no Long or Short classes for M/W18 and 20 was questioned and it was agreed that Short classes should be offered for this age group. No objections were raised to the introduction of elite M/W18 and 20 age classes. It was also agreed that short classes should be provided for the M/W16 age classes.

Also questioned was whether M/W21 L classes were championship classes when equivalent elite classes were offered. This had been the practice at many events but it was agreed that they would not be classed as championship classes in the future.

The proposal on recommended winning times was based in the main on the IOF guidelines for WOC, JWOC, and WMOC with the proposals for Juniors and Seniors being at the lower end of the current range, and lower in the range for the M50 plus and W45 plus age categories. The proposed new guideline for the M45, M50, M55, and W45 age classes was above the IOF guidelines but had been influenced by the higher current guidelines. Harold said that he would re-examine this.

A discussion took place on the suitability of adopting the IOF recommended winning times with some concern over whether some competitors would find the courses shorter than they may encounter on taking part in WMOC. Other attendees worried that with the proposed shorter winning times their courses might be too short. (At the end of the discussion and after further discussions with some of the attendees, I am proposing that the IOF recommended winning times be incorporated in the next draft of the Guideline). It was agreed that a survey would be carried out to specifically obtain the views of the older aged (M/W60 plus) competitors regarding recommended winning times and course lengths.

After some discussion as to the correct technical difficulty rating for M65L and W40L classes and above it was agreed to leave the current ratings as they are. It was questioned as to whether the description 'far from obvious relocating features' in the definition of TD5 was appropriate for the older age categories. In terms of physical difficulty it had been proposed to use the TD1 definition to courses 9 and 10 for the M80, M85, M90, W70, W75, W80, W85, and W90 classes but this definition requires courses to be along paths. It was suggested that the TD2 definition is more appropriate with courses to be along 'paths or forest with no undergrowth'.

No comment was made about the move to single recommended winning times and it is assumed that this is acceptable. Also while not discussed in detail, the proposal to provide 1:15,000 scale maps for M/W18E, M/W20E, M/W21E, and M35L was not objected to.

The current convention is that the technical difficulty of 'Short' courses should be the same as the championship course. It was agreed that this should be one lower technical grade to make the courses more acceptable for the less experienced.

The proposal on the wording of the rule on 'shadowing' should be amended so that the person doing the shadowing should have had their own competitive run before shadowing someone. If they are to run after shadowing then they should declare themselves as non-competitive.

It was felt that competitors on each course should be spread out as much as possible, and that members of the same club should be separated. A firmer management of late starters is needed to prevent people slotting in just before or after the top runners.

### Finances and resources for staging multi-day events (HW)

Ideally events require at least 15 people per event although many clubs have to make do with people taking on two or more jobs over the three or four days of the competition. More cooperation on a formal or informal basis between clubs could alleviate some of the pressure on the people of the host club. Another suggestion was that the organisation of multi-day events should be taken on by regional associations.

As regards finances, most multi-day events only break-even at best, and those that produce surpluses do so because they use existing maps. The major cost items tend to be mapping and prizes. In terms of mapping that could cost E9,000 for a four day event, a calculation has to be done as the future revenue the maps would produce. In the extreme of the map never being used again then it would be legitimate to charge off the total cost of the map to the event. From experience a write-off of 75% of the cost against the event could be justified.

Given the tight financial position the providing of prizes was questioned although the feeling of the meeting was that they should be provided if possible.

In the financial example based on IOC 2014 fee levels, the breakeven point is at about 250 competitors. It was suggested that the entry fees for the Sprint and Middle Distance should be increased; and that the financial support from the IOA be increased either by way of increased subventions or mapping grants.

### IOF World Ranking Events (HW)

#### Competition Formats

Due to time running out these presentations were not discussed. In terms of World Ranking Events it was pointed out that the IOA would automatically qualify for three sprint and three middle/long distance WRE's each year. It was felt that more could be done in marketing our major events internationally that should be listed in World of O, and through social media.

Harold White

Controller of Technical Standards