

FROM THE COMMITTEE.

Jane Forsyth

ADVANCE NOTICE OF AGM. This will be held at Waikouaiti in conjunction with the barbeque and night event on February 16. Matters to be discussed include (a) ratification of membership fees recommended by the committee and published earlier; and (b) awarding of a Life Membership.

Chingford Park - mapping of this will be completed in December by Jim Lewis during his visit here. NZOF has granted \$420 for the establishment of a permanent course there, as they have decided that permanent courses are good for raising the profile of orienteering and are a priority for funding.

During a long discussion about the recent Town Belt South event, held in very wet and cold conditions, Don Melville commented that it was the first time he had ever had to wring out his underpants after an event!! A more serious matter was that, for the third time this year, it was left until too late to pick up the maps for the competitors to run in the event. All controllers and planners - please, ALWAYS, cross-check with each other that you have the maps, not only the master maps but the bulk supply to be given out on the day. We can manage without a lot of things on the day but not without the maps. OCAD maps are organised by Barrie Foote and the older printed maps held by Jennifer Hudson. The planner's and controller's booklets are being updated to remind you of this and other responsibilities. The planner's booklet is on the web site and the controller's one will be also, once it is updated.

THANKS THANKS THANKS

Margaret Tagg.

THANK YOU to people who made the DOC relays at the Pyramids on November 18 such a success. There is extra work in special events so appreciation is expressed to Planners Judy and Dave Browning, Controller Annie Grant, and Organizer Jane Cloete. We are also appreciative of all Barrie Foote's work in preparing the maps. Thanks to other helpers too.

THANK YOU Myles for organizing the Sports Day orienteering display and activity at the Museum on Sunday Nov 25 held in association with the SportsMad exhibition. It was an opportunity to promote orienteering so thanks Myles for giving up a sunny Sunday.

THANK YOU to Geoff Allen and family, especially second-in-charge Simon, for looking after all the orienteering controls and other equipment for so

many years. The job has meant that the Allens have had people on their doorstep before and after most events. Thanks for doing it all so cheerfully. Their storage area is being altered and Dave and Judy Browning have kindly offered their garage for the equipment.

THANK YOU to Jennifer who faithfully and efficiently gets the DOCument to Club members no matter what else is going on!! Sympathy is extended to the Hudson family on the recent death of Jennifer's mother, and congratulations and best wishes to Mark Hudson and Debbie on their marriage.

ORIENTEERING TEAM WINS SOUTHERN TRAVERSE.

Jane Forsyth.

DOC is happy to congratulate the **Edge Orienteering team** which recently won this prestigious endurance race in the Queenstown area. The team are all members of the club, although as they live in Queenstown some are not usually seen at local events. The team gained the permission of the committee to use the DOC name in their fundraising and search for sponsors. Of course they put in all the effort while we just enjoy their success! **Congratulations Bruce, Rachel, Anthony and Paul.** You have done a great job getting orienteering onto the sports pages.

Jim Cotter also competed, his team unfortunately having to withdraw after completing nearly all the race. 6 PAPO members also raced, including Jean Cory-Wright and Ray Pratt, both expert orienteers who ran coaching events in Dunedin within the last year.

For a full account see Team Edge Orienteering's article which follows.

SOUTHERN TRAVERSE 2001

Team Edge Orienteering.

126km of mountain trekking – 115km of mountain biking – 63km of kayaking

10.6km vertical ascent – 10.5km vertical descent

At the hub of the course was Lake Wakatipu, Central Otago, NZ

The Team

EDGE ORIENTEERING

Paul Rogers - Captain & Tactician

Ant White – Pack horse

Rachel Barton – Team Mum & Pack Horse,

Bruce McLeod – Navigator

The Sponsors

Edge Nightclub – Dunedin Orienteering Club

Meindl Boots - Marmot Clothing

Cookie Time

The Training

This could be a novel in itself. Training included overnight non-stop treks of the Kepler and the Greenstone-Caples. Numerous weighted pack ascents of Mt Dewar, bush bash missions in the Eyre, Richardson and Humboldt Mountains...etc etc

As we all live locally (three of us within 200m), we were able to train well as a team. We knew our strengths and weaknesses, and had a good team spirit. To function well as a team is a major component of the race.

The Race

The day had arrived. Unfortunately it was going to be bloody hot. We were all pretty nervous, but our preparation was complete. 60 odd teams (i.e. 240 crazy people, each with a mountain bike and buzzing with far too much energy) jammed into an impossibly small park in the centre of Queenstown.

“Watch out for the bollards !!” an official yelled.

The art of survival was to be paramount from the outset. If we could just get the team through this first 100m of dangerous streetscape alive, then surely the rest of the course would seem tame.

Geoff Hunt (course designer) counted us down, and on the blast of the TSS Earnslaw whistle we were set loose. To our relief the first section went smoothly. A quick transition saw us in kayaks and off down the Kawarau

River. Another smooth section and another quick transition saw us on foot up the narrow gorge of the Arrow River.

The pace was crazy. Teams jogged, waded, and scrambled up the ravine. Narrow rock ledges above the river and huge piles of flood debris were negotiated at speed. A tricky rock jutting into the river required a leap of faith, but the rock was slippery and Bruce plunged chest deep into the icy waters of the Arrow. At least the sun shone down...drink, must remember to drink

Paul urges we pull back the pace... "This is ridiculous, we've got four days yet." The team slows to a walk, and we greet fellow racers as they run past. Already competitors are hobbling and a team passes by at a jog with one of their companions wincing from the pain of a twisted ankle.

We met our support crew at Millbrook. Banana's and fluids are stuffed in and all too soon we were off again on bikes.

The sun shone down...drink, must remember to drink

By the Rastus Burn we all need to refill our drink systems. Bruce's stomach feels a bit odd, must be the nerves. He hasn't had to urinate much...keep drinking.

One flat tire later we gained the next transition, and set off at a walk. We looked on in awe as teams leave the transition...running. With the help of a bit of local knowledge Bruce guided the team to a sheep track above the lake, passing several teams who were scrambling along the shoreline below. Soon the teams below saw the better route and rose up. They passed us...jogging.

In an oversight, two of us forgot a hat. Rachel timed a 20 minute rotation for Paul and Bruce to share her yellow Marmot cap. And the sun beams down. We all ran our drink systems dry again, and had to refill from the Lake. We passed by a puddle of spew...the pace was hitting some already.

We arrived at TA3 (transition area 3) where our crew greeted and cheered us on. A quick feed of lasagne, a change of boots, and a loaded pack (including crampons and ice axe) we began a 1400m climb into the Hector Mountains. As the evening of day one sets in, the sun shines down. We pass more vomit and Bruce's stomach churns. Drink...must drink...take another sip...oh shit, that's not good...and Bruce loses a stomach load of vital energy. He stands and staggers another few metres, actually feeling slightly better for the experience. Paul looked stressed. We sat on the track

and glanced around the team. Paul's calf muscles twitched in a nervous manner, Ants looked white, Rach worried.

We moved on, shortly meeting up with Team Marahau. Julian was in the same condition as Bruce, but picking up. The two teams climbed on together for a while, until Paul struck more trouble. The nervous twitches in his calves were now playing tug-o-war with his three main leg muscle groups. He called Ants and Rach back to rub his legs while Bruce sat hollow and washed out on a tussock nearby.

Darkness finally fell, and the cool of the night was a welcome relief. Jackets and headlamps were donned and we carried on upwards, through the stone hut checkpoint over a high saddle, down a snowfield and a long tussock gully to another checkpoint in a heart of a swampy basin. Bruce was trying to refuel, but finding drinking and eating increasingly difficult. Lucky Paul's cramps had abated, but his legs were now knotted and sore. We met Sierra International down in the basin. One member of their team sat holding his head. The heat had certainly taken its toll.

From here we faced another 800m steep climb to the next checkpoint, a small frozen tarn in a high snowy basin. Bruce and Paul were struggling. The lack of fluid in Bruce's system was beginning to drag him down. After 650m we had to traverse under a high peak before the final ridgeline. Bruce trying to drink was again overcome by nausea. Collapsing on a rock he vomits until there's nothing left, a process which took some five minutes. The team decides to rest. We snuggled together under a lightweight sleeping bag, sitting with our backs to a cold rock. After 20 minutes the cold becomes too much and the call is made to press on. Bruce charges, running completely on empty, he knew the checkpoint wasn't far.

A descent through snow brought us to CP15. Bruce collapsed on the ground, unable to drink or eat. The officials at the checkpoint offer a warm drink, but he can't face it. The team looks on, the situation grim. They wait a while, hoping Bruce might bounce back, but the officials place him in their tent. He looked spent. The others began to shake and shiver and a decision had to be made. They can't wait, they'll freeze. The call is made to press on as three. Bruce's food was divvied out and the compulsory gear re-organised. Bruce, feeling like crap, but warm in the tent, was sure the race was over and awaited the helicopter airlift.

The remaining trio moves off. After some metres, Paul stops the party. "Hold on, what are we doing here? We can't just leave him, we're a team, and we've got to stick together. We're going back. We'll get him going again and it doesn't matter how long it takes"

Bruce is awoken by the sound of Ant's voice "We're back, we're gonna revive you. We'll get some rest and you'll be right" And the four of us are squeezed into the tent.

A couple of hours later Paul scurries out of the tent, Bruce awakes and sits up. His stomach feels hungry, and this time a warm drink of milk, water and honey settles pleasantly in his stomach. He looks at the others and smiles "I'm back!"

Some of Bruce's equipment was divvied to the others, and after thanking the officials the team moved on again. Shortly they passed another team heading back to CP15 with a member in a familiar state. Obviously the next booking for the CP15 Hilton.

Refreshed from the sleep we soon began to move swiftly. Dawn had arrived, bringing a cold grey day, which suited the group. Bruce, eating and drinking methodically as they moved along, found strength and colour returning. We had dropped to 20th place, to complete the course was going to be a hard task in itself. We passed a couple of teams and after a long sidle to the next CP we arrived in good spirits and to our surprise in 16th. We continued the momentum and came off the walk stage in 9th place, our spirits were lifted.

We transitioned in the rain to the mountain bike stage. Warm food disappeared rapidly as we re-equipped for the next adventure. The first task was to push our steeds up 600m vertical to the top of Mt Tennyson in the Garvie Mountains. From here we followed a slippery clay track to a mustering hut and an interesting route choice. Three options existed. The suggested route was along a ridgeline climbing a large peak with a steep descent. Another option was to drop down a steep un-tracked ridgeline to low level road. The last was to backtrack and ride out the Nevis to Garston Road. In hindsight the latter was probably better, but we chose to hit the middle option, hoping some of the ridge would be rideable. Unfortunately our plans were somewhat flattened by the presence of a generous splattering of speargrass on the upper ridge. Warnings to watch out for the spikes were passed around.

About half way down we came across team Cromwell lurking in the mist. They had dropped some distance down the wrong spur and we slid round above on benched sheep tracks. The team was lifted. Team Cromwell are all experienced and tenacious competitors. To catch and perhaps pass them would be a fantastic achievement.

We finally made the saddle and road below. We stopped for a quick re-fuel and looking around team Cromwell was nowhere in sight. Awesome, we could have the jump here.

“My tyre's bubbling” said Rachel, “and look, so is yours Ants.”

Bruce wasn't happy, “I told you to watch out for the bloody speargrass!”

We quickly set to fixing the two wheels, Bruce glancing down the track every few seconds. A team of four was soon seen passing along the track some 100m down below the saddle. We pumped frantically, mounted the wheels and took off. The sheep were beginning to run up the road towards us.

The road turned out to be nothing more than a sticky clay nightmare. Luckily most of it was downhill and we were soon at the creek. We washed our bikes in the stream, oiled the chains, and moved on. Shortly, Bruce noticed Rach's rear wheel deflating. A few expletives later, with more frantic pumping, we were back on the road. Cromwell still hadn't caught up, but we were losing any advantage fast.

Down the stream further we had to cross and climb (push) out over a low saddle. Dodging gorse bushes we found passage across the valley floor to the base of the saddle track. Unfortunately Ants didn't dodge quite well enough and his rear wheel deflated. We had only four spare tubes and this was puncture number four. Luckily the pump was still working. We could now see team Cromwell on the other side of the valley. The pump was next to smoking by the time we had reinflated Ant's tyre, and the climb up the 200m high saddle was eaten up at record speed.

The team was back in formation for the long flat road sections up to the start of the next walk leg. By some miracle we arrived at this transition in 5th place. Again it was pouring with rain, and just on dark.

After a satisfying meal of spaghetti, hash browns and sausages, we had a short sleep of about 30 minutes in the campervan. Waking from this was like trying to come out of a coma.

“Get up NOW!” were the support crew orders. We were soon processed and dispatched into the dark and rain.

The next leg was a long walk up a bush lined stream, deep into the Eyre Mountains. In the daylight it would be unpleasant, in the dark it was simply nasty. Our Meindl boots were soon full of water as we criss-crossed the

stream, dodged in and out of the thick bush alongside, climbing higher up the rocky gorge in which the stream tumbled relentlessly. Bruce, not being able to see landmarks and finding it difficult to judge distance in the dark, lost track of the teams exact location. To him it seemed they had climbed the same flood debris and waded the same rapid over a dozen times. We pushed on. Lights in the bush above us shone down. Generally they were glow worms clinging to the mossy cliffs lining the stream, but one set were brighter than the others. We climbed up and were surprised to meet with team Marahau. They had been sleeping in a hut further back and were also making slow progress in the difficult terrain. We decided to stop and eat. Marahau pressed on upstream. Fortunately the checkpoint wasn't much further.

From the CP we faced an 1100m climb straight up a steep tussock slope to the ridgeline high above. The team was beginning to tire, so the call went out for a quick nap. We dropped into a patch of soft snow tussock on a flat area part way up the mountainside. By the time Bruce had wrung out his wet socks the others were fast asleep. We decided 20mins would be enough, and Bruce felt he had only just put his head down when Rach woke the group. Dawn had arrived and we pushed on to the ridge top.

At the ridge we noted a tent next to a tarn below us. Odd we thought, it must surely be a team sleeping. We passed above the tarn and crossed a mountain basin to a lake on the other side, where the next CP was to be. After a quick search it became obvious that there were no officials at the lake. Where could they be? Bruce's blood pressure was on the rise again, he knew he had reached the correct lake. Ants and Rach offered to go back 500m to the tent we had seen. Paul and Bruce waited, sheltering from the cold misty winds.

Some time later Bruce and Paul began to wonder where the others had gotten to, and began to back track to the tent also. Shortly Ant was seen some distance below them, having taken an alternative direction back to the main lake. More time was lost as the team re-grouped.

"That was the CP back there," Ant said, "It's some foreign dude who has no idea of where he's meant to be. I showed him on the map that he's in the wrong place 'cause he wouldn't believe me at first...hopeless"

Annoyed we pressed on. We soon gained the CP high on another ridgeline, directly above Kingston. Another route choice to make here. A long track led off the ridge, which left a 2.5km walk back into Kingston. A rumoured alternative was to drop off the side, down a fenceline that the local farmer

apparently said was good, and come out right at the TA. The official at the CP added to the rumour...

“Marahau has gone down the fence, Wombat has gone around. You’ll catch Wombat if you go down the fence, it’s a lot faster” he said.

So down the fence we went. After a short distance the fence terminated at the top of an overhanging bluff. We could see bits of fence below, so we skirted the bluff and continued down. The scrub became increasing thick and the terrain steeper. The idea of following the fence was abandoned when it terminated at an even larger cliff. Slipping into a steep stream we dropped from the thick scrub into tight beech forest, filled with lawyer and windfall. Continuing down the creek it was becoming obvious that things were turning nasty. The rock steps in the creek turned into a 50m waterfall. We snuck across the top of the falls and found progress, although slow, could be made down a thick scrubby spur. Soon the scrub turned into thicker native bush. Dodging more bluffs we slid on down, eventually emerging at Kingston. It was raining again and we were rather more beaten up, but glad to reach the TA. We hadn’t quite caught Wombat, but we were now in 3rd place.

A following team came down the same route. Caught above the bluffs they had to abseil off three of the team, and the fourth (who was fortunately an excellent rock climber) was able to down climb the bluff and continue.

After a warm meal and a short nap we were launched onto the calm waters of Lake Wakatipu. The calm was short lived. A strong southerly wind was driving a large swell down the lake. While it was nice to have the wind behind, the further we went, the larger the waves became. At one point Paul and Rach were broached by a large breaking wave (Rach let out a scream about two seconds before Paul was going to, instead he bit his lip for fear of bringing down team morale!) By some good fortune they stayed upright, but all our nerves were on edge. Bruce and Ant had the next turn where a large breaking swell swamped the rear of the double kayak, sinking Ant in up to his chest. Survival mode became operative. The large swells were lifting the rudder from the water and constantly trying to surf and broach the boat. Bruce paddled like mad while Ant (in the rear) steered the kayak using his paddle. For safety we tried to keep close to the shore, but rebounding swells made it feel like we were in a washing machine.

At Halfway Bay, Paul talked to the officials at the checkpoint. He was insistent that a support craft follow us for the next mad dash around to Cecil Peak, which was looking pretty ugly. The officials were very helpful and a boat followed us out. However, about a kilometre into the paddle the

support boat disappeared and left us to it! Paul wasn't happy, but luckily the wind had dropped. Needless to say we were all extremely relieved to make the next CP at Cecil Peak station.

At Cecil Peak the team had an unassisted transition to another walk stage. This time it was a 1600m climb over Cecil Peak, including an abseil section. We were still in good spirits, eating and drinking well, and were soon at the base of the climb. The course was set up another steep bushy gully. The lower section of the stream was very rough, but we were able to skirt a couple of waterfalls by sidling in the bush higher up, although windfall and thick bush made for slow progress. It was now Wednesday night, and darkness fell as we were about half way up through the bush. Bruce's knee was beginning to give some trouble, but climbing on it wasn't too bad.

We eventually reached the CP, high in the upper snowy basins of Cecil Peak. The lights of teams Marahau & Wombat could be seen crossing a high pass ahead. A thin layer of wet snow had frozen on the scree, which made progress slow and treacherous. Bruce downed a Voltarin to try and calm his knee, but the wonder drug never seemed to kick in. Paul was becoming drowsy. After a food stop he began to walk off in the way we had just come. Thinking he was going off to have a pee, we let him go a short distance before realising he wasn't stopping. Some shouting later we were all going in the correct direction again.

After another food stop Paul disappears.

Alone, but not aware of it, Paul yells "Hey Ants, I think we're going the wrong way, these footsteps I'm following are shaped funny, I think they are coming towards me."

Silence.

We realise Paul is missing and call for him...

"Where the hell are you?" we hear a faint yell back. Eventually we see his light appear over a small rock ridge. He goes nuts, "what about some bloody communication here!"

Some time later he sees the funny side of things.

Just before dawn Rach calls for another sleep. We decided to pitch the tent and sleep for 50mins. This was soon negotiated down to 30mins given the fact the tent is much too small for four people, and it's really cold. The 30mins turns into 20 as we wake up shivering. Later we find out Rach only really wanted the sleep to ensure she didn't have to abseil in the dark.

Shortly after dawn we reached the abseil. Surrounded by spectacular views as the sun hits the mountains we made short work of the rope-bridge and 50m descent. Team Wombat was just below us, descending the tussock and bracken slopes to Refuge Point on the shore of Lake Wakatipu. We continued the chase.

We made a bee line for the point. About half way down we struck cliffs and thick bracken. Luckily we found a route through under a cliff and onto a sheep track. We reached the cliff above Refuge Point as team Wombat was passing through the CP below.

After a quick food and water stop we carried on back around the farm track to Cecil Peak. The day was hot and calm. We reminded each other to drink well. At Cecil Peak CP we re-packed our boats and launched back onto the lake. An efficient transition here put us on the water in front of team Wombat, who had a member who was beginning to tire. This time the lake was mirror calm and the boats glided well around to Walter Peak, then over to 12 Mile Delta where our support crew had been waiting for hours.

Arriving here in second place we are treated to KFC and a great crowd of supporters. The team was bubbling. The Mt Creighton walk section had been dropped due to dangerous conditions, and so all that remained was a bike and a final trek. Back on this side of the lake we were again in familiar territory. Bruce's knee continues to be a problem. A Doctor straps the patella and says good luck.

Marahau had a one-hour lead, and we set off in pursuit. The strapping on Bruce's knee was effective and he gained new vigour for the climb up to Moke Lake and on into Sefferstown. We descend into the Skippers Canyon avoiding the sharp matagouri.

Team Marahau was seen on the hillside opposite, starting the climb to the top of Mt Deware some 900m above. We had narrowed the gap to 50mins. They also saw us.

Donning harnesses we dropped down a ladder attached to a cliff and transported the team, bikes and all, across the Shotover River by a waiting raft. Once across, Bruce scurried about in a panic to find the end of the 4WD track and we began the climb.

We met Rob Crawford, who has been popping up taking photos of us in all sorts of locations during the race, about half way up the climb. Marahau are charging and had pulled away again. We reached the top and were 70mins

behind. The sun sinks behind the western ranges and we rugged up for a long steep descent back into the heart of the Shotover. Halfway down we pulled out our lights, and found a stream to refill the drink systems. Finally we reached the next CP, 90mins behind Marahau. Darkness on the descent had slowed us considerably.

The next section is normally a fun single track during the day. However at night, with inadequate light systems, we struggled. Several slips across the track set us floundering. Eventually we came upon better progress, but this still involved a substantial amount of pushing the bikes. We reached the next CP, a remote transition, 2.5hrs behind the leaders. Our hearts sank, but we knew we must push on. Even if first wasn't possible, at least we didn't want to forfeit second.

Lack of sleep was beginning to show. Bruce bumbled his way through the transition, having difficulty with his light system. We finally set off on the last trek, just after midnight on Friday morning.

We quickly gained the track up to the CP at Green Gate Huts. The sleep monster was biting in and we shuffled along finding it hard to stay awake. We decided to take a rest for 10mins. Unfortunately Bruce had just taken an anti-sleep drink and lay awake the whole time while the others slept. Quickly up and away again, Bruce crammed lollies down to try and stay awake. Before long we reached the CP.

The next section was into the unknown. A long trek up the heart of Deep Creek to a low saddle above Coronet Creek. We pressed on in the dark, climbing up and over three low spurs before dropping through gaps in the lines of two bluff systems to gain the shingle flats of the creek. We could see lights far ahead up the valley. To our bemusement we also noticed a couple of lights on a spur behind us. Thinking this might be team Wombat we sped on up the stream.

Initially the going was fast, following sheep and cattle tracks up the river flats. Soon the stream narrowed and became more of a canyon. Steep rock walls confined us as we pushed onward. At one point, high above on the cliff top above us we noticed more lights. These faded quickly. Paul had been bitten bad by the sleep monster. Ants had to prod him on constantly while Bruce led the team further into the abyss. Soon Bruce lost track of the team location, unable to pick up obvious features from the bottom of the canyon. Fighting sleep also, his eyes refused to focus on the map. Ants and Rach were in a similar state and the team slowed. The canyon floor had begun to lift now and the stream tumbled down rocky falls. Thick scrub filled

the available space on the stream bank, forcing progress to be made by wading up the middle of the creek.

Bruce, frustrated by the lack of progress tried to make sense of the situation. Finally there came a gap in the canyon wall, and we decided to climb out, at least to be able to find where we were. Upon reaching the steep slopes above the stream we found a brilliant sheep track which weaved along between the ragged cliffs that line the sides of the valley. Dawn was approaching too, and we were able to pinpoint our location once more. Before long the sheep track led us to easier terrain and we made haste to the final CP.

Ants scurried forward to reach the CP and relay the bad news. We felt we had blown it. With the other lights we saw we felt sure we were probably now in 3rd or 4th place.

Ants yells back “Hey guys, we’re in the lead”

“Bullshit” we reply

“No shit” he yells back !!

We were elated. “They can’t be far away, lets hustle like you’ve never before” was the call. We were at the base of a final 600m climb over Brow Peak. If we could get at least half way up before the others reached the CP we might just win this thing. We took off working hard. Bruce leading, looked back every minute down to the CP and beyond. Higher we climbed and still there was no sign. At last we gained the ridge, and still no sign of the chasing teams. We were buzzing.

We could see Millbrook and the finish. Not far now, and we set to the long descent. We were still mindful of the fact that Marahau might still be ahead and that the CP crew had missed them. The reality only set in when media greeted us down in Sawpit Gully taking action videos as we jogged down the track.

The tree-lined avenue into Millbrook must have been the longest part of the entire course for the team. We could see through blurry eyes the crowd at the end, and hear them clapping and cheering. Partners, family and friends were all there to greet us and the air was thick with emotion.

It was a tremendous relief to simply have finished, considering we nearly hadn’t made it through the first day. To actually come back and win was the

realisation of a dream that had been sparked some three or more years ago.

Thankyou to all those who have supported us and who have been part of the dream.

MISTAKES AT EVENTS.

By Bruce Collins

This year DOC decided to make a committee member the “Technical Contact Person” and I became it. This person was supposed to assist with any technical queries about events etc and I sat back and waited for the queries to come rolling in. Well, after a year it appears everyone thought they knew what they were doing because I answered only a couple of questions.

The committee receive comments about events during the year from club members and together with our own experiences we do get to notice things that aren't perfect. Unfortunately a few mistakes have been made during the past year often due to inexperience, sometimes too much experience or just a lack of time.

In future I will be more proactive and will try to contact planners and controllers about a week before the event to make sure things are going OK. This is not a “big brother” approach but rather to make sure that the controller has actually seen the courses before the event or that the two are still speaking!!

Below is a list of a few things that have happened during the year and could have been better or are just plain wrong:

- The controller not checking the courses before the event. It might seem obvious but it doesn't always happen. Controlling is not just checking the position of the controls on the ground. Some controllers are too polite to tell the planner they have part of a course wrong or it could be improved. Also some planners have a very strong personality and don't accept criticism. This leads on to the next point
- The controller has the last word!!!! They are the representative of all competitors and it is their job to ensure fairness of courses, safety of competitors etc. They usually have more experience and can also often see things with a fresh view that the planner has missed. If the

planner and controller cannot agree on a course/control placement etc they could contact me for an opinion rather than end up not speaking to each other!!

- Controls on the top of steep banks or cliffs. It is not only dangerous but some people are afraid of heights, which make the control unfair for them.
- Courses too physical. Orienteering can be characterised as running navigation. That is running, not climbing, scrambling, bush bashing etc!
- Controls on unmarked features. Just because you have found a nice little re-entrant or cliff don't put a control there unless that re-entrant or cliff is marked on the map. In fact avoid the area completely as the map is obviously wrong in that area. If it is an OCAD map let the Club OCAD person know (Barrie Foote - see inside cover for contact details) and they may have time to alter the map. Make sure both controller and planner agree before making changes to the map though as it may just be you that is wrong!!
- Remember the maps, both the master maps and those for competitors!! This has happened more than once this year where someone had to rush home and get the maps while competitors have stood around waiting.
- Doglegs. This is where the competitor leaves the control in the same direction as they came into it, and therefore can inadvertently show an incoming person exactly where the control is.
- Different courses coming into the same control from opposite directions. This isn't good for the same reason as above. This can still happen at major events and we saw a particularly bad example of it at the last Auckland Champs.
- Unfair start placement. Try to have the start so that people waiting to go don't see the route choice of the competitor before them.
- Too much climb. Try to keep climb to a minimum. Too much climb is too physical for older or less fit orienteers.
- Hidden controls. The challenge of orienteering is navigating to the control site, not having to search under bushes for it when you are within a few metres!

- Runners' courses. Don't have long legs where there is little navigation involved because of prominent features or large catching features. Again this also happened recently at a couple of major events (not in Dunedin) where there were long legs that involved running tracks and then a short bit of orienteering from a track junction or distinct tree.
- No route choice. A route choice between controls should make the competitor think hard about which they think is best. A straight choice of over the hill or around the hill is not necessarily a good route choice.
- Abusing the planner/controller. As a competitor if you find something is wrong with a control placement on your course don't rush up and abuse the planner or controller as soon as you finish. Cool down, calm down a bit and then discuss it with them constructively. Sometimes the mistake is the competitor's, but when the mistake is the planner's or controller's they feel terrible about it. They don't need abuse as well. Trust me, I've been there!!

The Planners booklet is on our web page and will be revised over Xmas and the Controllers booklet will soon be added. All planners/controllers should receive a copy of these about a month before their event but if they don't they could contact me.

If anyone needs any help or advice just get in touch and I will be only too willing to help.

CONTROLLERS REPORT – LOGAN PARK – 4 NOVEMBER 2001

Richard Thum.

Well the Auckland-based forecasters got it wrong.....again! Rain, hail and cold temperatures were replaced with typical Dunedin sunshine and temperatures. Was this the reason for the smiles on the competitors' faces after competing at Logan Park? I suspect partially it was, but the courses planned by Jim C were well worth the effort by all those that took part – thanks Jim.

Confession time - I first sighted the maps and Jim's courses on the Wednesday afternoon and went around the courses 'on the ground' on Saturday afternoon in fading light – hard to pick up the contours on the Orange courses! Moral of the story – go around a lot earlier – it's a lot easier that way!

On the Wednesday, Jim asked me to confirm, among other things, the symbol for a platform. No trouble, I thought - it's a triangle. Checking on 'Event Organiser', the nearest possibilities for a platform are a 'terrace' or a 'shooting PLATFORM'. There are no definitive symbols in Event Organiser for a 'platform' as are depicted in some of our maps as brown filled-in triangles. Anyway, to be fair (which is what I as controller is supposed to ensure), we opted to advise people at registration of what we decided to do – no one was disadvantaged! Thank you to Bob C for reminding me too, re the proper position of the arrow in the control descriptions. Again, I believe that nobody was disadvantaged.

Apologies must go to the Grants for my not confirming who would be managing the organisers – a communication breakdown on my part. Damp clocks from last weekend's 'downpour' nearly severely disrupted this event. Moral of the story – keep clocks as dry as possible!

Can't think of anything else to comment on. Though thankyou to all who came along for a run.