

A preliminary look at updating the COF Officials Programme

submitted by John Rance

We need a training programme for officials. It ensures a consistent standard and provides one way for people to become more involved in the sport. The programme needs to be designed in such a way that it can be quickly and efficiently revised as circumstances evolve. Perhaps the curriculum should live on a website and modules added, subtracted or modified. This would allow us to avoid the current situation where the current programme, while basically sound, is dated and requires modification.

- 1 The most obvious shortcoming of the current programme is its lack of an "ELECTRONICS MODULE(s)" including information such as:
 - Timing and event organization using SI
 - Printing maps, courses and descriptions from a home or office computer
 - Revising, expanding, correcting existing maps using OCADObviously, a Level 1 course cannot deal in detail and depth with these topics but we do need to consider where they fit in the overall package.
- 2 The types of orienteering events commonly presented has changed. A, B, and C style events still exist but sprint, middle and classic distance events are now common. Design parameters for each of these are necessary in the training of officials. Also, mid week training meets (often in the dark) are very common and have unique demands in terms of course design, time constraints, etc.
- 3 Currently we have 4 levels of certification. In addition, there is the IOF controller designation which is important for WRE. Perhaps we need to revise the number of levels and create a natural progression or flow of participants through the levels. I believe there is not an actual curriculum for level 3 and 4. These are based upon experience in organizing events. Also, some people were grandfathered into level 3 and 4. There may be people with higher level qualifications who are not up to date with recent developments. We do need some mechanism to keep people current.
- 4 I think the single most important concept the officials programme should teach is sound course design. A lot of the other stuff is common sense that a bright beginner can figure out quite easily. Course design is hard because it has to take into account so many variables of age, fitness, skill level, terrain, map quality, etc. As part of the training package, we could have full sets of courses (1-8) from different parts of the country. If these have comments from the designer about the concepts that went into them, along with information about winning times, etc. we would have an ongoing resource useful for both beginner and experienced planners. Again, this could live on our website and be updated after major events.

The following comments refer to the Level One Instructor's Manual

Page 2	Equipment for B Meet Revise the table to take into account preprinted maps, SI start finish timing.
Page 3	What types of courses are suitable for the practicum? Sprint? Middle? Classic? Mid week training?
Page 4	Course done on a weekend? Can this be changed to say that it can be done over a series of weekday evenings? What is correct COF Address?
Page 5	Is the flow chart still appropriate?

Module 2	For B meets, pre-assigned starts are not necessary. The most important thing is to be sure that everyone who starts is recorded. SI simplifies this a lot.
Module 3	Part 1. Emphasize the importance of getting names addresses of everyone. Very important for a search and also for government funding. Part 2. The master map info is fine but is becoming increasingly rare as computers allow excellent maps to be printed at home. Part 3. Start procedure is fine but SI is becoming common. Part 4. Again--this is fine but is now not commonly done. SI does this.
Module 4	Part 1 Course planning terminology is good. Where are the slides referred to? I have never seen them. If they exist, they may be dated and need to be redone and then stored electronically where they can be easily retrieved. Part 2. Ditto
Module 5	Where are those slides? The courses are referred to by length. The concept of recommended winning time needs to be incorporated. (For each of the disciplines).
Module 7	Part 1. The exam. When can it be done? I usually assign it as homework for before the practicum event and then go over it with individuals at the event. What types of courses are acceptable at level 1? The Exam. There is need for a complete revision to take into account the new realities of the sport. For example, the SI units make the Meet Organization Plan inappropriate.

The following refer to the B Meet Organizing Manual Revised 1998

Page 1	Note that Short, Medium and Classic can be part of A, B, or C C meets are now very common and need to be considered--ie weekday evening events
Page 2	How many courses of what standard/discipline?
Page 5	Must full body clothing be worn? The sprint at Denmark had people in shorts and singlets.
Page 9	Revise chart to take account of SI and preprinted maps.
Page 19	"Place the control Marker..." This means that a control should not be in a pit or similar location. It is unfair if the control is invisible from a short distance away but clear if someone is standing there.
Page 21	Block vetting is common on the morning of an event. Course vetting should be done earlier, at course planning stage to be certain that the courses actually "work " in the terrain. If the controller and designer don't actually run the courses, they may miss an unmapped feature, vague area, error, etc. that will influence the race.
Page 22	Photo of SI stand.
Page 27-36	The maps are very hard to read. The comments make sense but would be much more useful if a series of events are stored electronically. The Whitehorse map is fine but not as useful for a beginner as a local area map.