

Session 3: competition that lies at the heart of the sport of orienteering and how it can be strengthened

What do Clubs & Associations see as their role in contributing to growing the number of competitive runs?

- Distance (localness) not equal to levels. Can have a local 'Level B' or 7 course level D, distance is the issue
- Type/quality of events is also an issue
- Balancing the number runs against volunteer effort (No. of runs per volunteer effort)
- Identifying the club/regional need
- Income issue, is not the issue
- Ranking points are valuable
- Club contribution to improving 're-runners' rate by making the peripheral experience as good as possible (meet and greet, coach)
- Change attitude of committee
- Review level C and D mix
- Different event types
- Find key people (Biggest challenge)
- Not main organiser
- Neighboring clubs
- University students – pay top juniors to become coaches and put on summer series
- Focus on one town – nearest to key people/existing members? With parks, maps and cafes
- Links to help publicise – parks/others
- Coaches – pay for train up Inc. safeguarding
- Fund raising
- Regular coaching sessions
- Improve communications – Facebook, collect and use email addresses
- Regular, frequent newsletter
- Welcome pack

What are you doing already that is aligned to growing the number of competitive runs?

- Bristol Orienteering Klub;
- Informal Summer Evening Urban Series leading to people to have a look
- **Missing:** the link to further weekend Orienteering Activity
- **Attraction:** evening, local, midweek, short. Maybe this meets the need of 'members' echoed by the LVO midweek WEE (Wednesday Evening Event)
- Southampton Orienteering Club;
- Saturday morning 'introduction to Orienteering' summer series, Parks + Urban but failure to convert interest into membership
- Wessex Orienteers;
- Wessex Night League
- Evening
- White
- Usually Midweek
- 25-45 committed orienteers
- Mostly urban
- Focused on a pub or restaurant to meet the social need
- North Gloucestershire Orienteering Club;
- 'F Nest' Café to increase social content of events
- Most current orienteers do not want to go to lots more events, so just putting on more level D's doesn't necessarily help
- The greater impact will come from getting new people to become regular participants (and more level D's might be the right way to do that)
- Is it simply more events = more competitive runs?

Do Clubs & Associations have their own strategy/goals and how do they fit, or not fit with the British Orienteering growing competitive outcomes section of the strategy?

- Clubs may have one (Clubmark) but contents not widely known
- Probably focused around juniors (Saturday morning forest events)
- Difficulty of resourcing (Staffing) activity specific to development
- Using midweek events to develop event officials (focused on technical difficulty 2/3 for some, technical difficulty 4 for others)
- Even out the competition by using handicaps/prize spreads, allow/encourage the less confident to operate as pairs
- Increase the experience of event officials

Can different Clubs and Associations contribute in different ways to different elements of the strategy implementation?

- Other than fixtures, junior squads, what is the role/contribution of associations? None? “What have they done for us?”
- No communication from association to member other than in a club
- Pathway contribution is a club activity
- For others Associations do contribute differently to clubs (by providing centrally coordinated development opportunities that enable the club activity)
- Club responsible for initial contact and initial pathway to level D/local
- Associations not in a position to influence, relationship issue
- Some associations still run magazines/newsletters
- Some associations are associations of members but there is (SCOA) an association of clubs
- Most (?) communication via clubs
- Regions have different terrain and hence some are better suited to hosting major competitions
- Association = spread level C and higher to increase participation within the region
- Increasing local opportunities might mean having to permit clashing level C and higher
- Most clubs have their own strategy and goals
- British Orienteering want as many competitor runs as possible, Clubs want to keep existing members happy, attract new members and for the events to be financially viable
- Are sports tourists a category we even need to think about?
- Local events as a ‘training ground’ for the bigger more competitive events
- Juniors like competitiveness
- Having other people of similar standards on your course is competition in its own right
- Retaining older competitors who are not competitive in their age class adds to the number of participant runs, how do we recognise the contribution of these members to the sport?
- Exception is taken to changing the word ‘events’ to ‘races’ in the presentation. An event is what many older competitors want to go to, the don’t necessarily view it as a race
- Clubs need to have a focus on coaching, British Orienteering has no focus on coaching, especially for the adults
- Associations have a little role in growing competitive outcomes but are key for major events
- Different terrain, population/membership spread
- Allocation of major events – JK, British Champs
- Time/Travel costs
- No. of qualified officials (Level A and B)
- Mentoring to upgrade skills
- Inter-regional – cooperation assisted by British Orienteering, fixtures secretaries working together
- Random strategy – depends on committee member’s personal preferences

What help to grow competitive runs do Club & Associations want from a central staff group?

- Facilitate, rather than actively develop: whether membership, land access, courses etc.
- Support with staging major events
- Collect and store good practice
- Provide the central repository of authoritative information e.g. rules, guidelines, membership etc.
- Bring in some fun events, such as a mouse maze score event which attracts others, particularly by a BBQ
- Training packages for key organising roles (so that clubs and associations can deliver)
- Competition rules & mapping standards (E&CC)
- Templates for publicity
- Marketing of largest events (JK, British, etc.)
- Marketing of national league (e.g. UKOL)
- Cross marketing of sport in other sports or organisation's materials
- Articles in Focus giving a case study of a 'beginner family' going to their first 6-day (or JK, etc.) also mentoring other aspects of a great trip (e.g. visiting tourist attractions, etc.)
- British Orienteering (fixtures) contribute by providing framework for level B+A
- Range of levels needed to develop structure of event officials experience as good as possible
- Orienteering clubs poor at social activity
- More clarity/consistency so that level B & C events are more distinct
- Careful scheduling to avoid clashes
- What makes people go back for a competitive run?
- Size of club – limiting factors – Volunteer base
- Need to develop coaches to develop competitive orienteers
- Do people get stuck just going to level D events

"I agree that competition is part of sport, but I would not say that it lies at the heart. The intro paragraph on the BOF website is as much about recreation as it is about competition. A quick look at the Oxford English Dictionary shows that "competition" is the wrong word. I would say that the vast majority of orienteers are out to have a technically good, enjoyable run, but not necessarily "to establish superiority or supremacy". The top 10 in each age class are probably truly competitive.

Therefore, I think we need a new word here. It was interesting that at our table the discussion barely mentioned competition, but focused on capacity, i.e. a bigger volunteer workforce, more events and attracting more people to events and what makes a Level A, B, C, D event, all of which would strengthen the sport."