

South Ribble Orienteering Club

Background

Following on from the success of the MADDO initiative (see Good Practice section), SROC decided to try a new approach to their autumn 2007 events. Instead of running typical Sunday orienteering events once a month in the terrain they had done for years they thought they would try a series of Saturday morning events in a localised area.

What did SROC do?

- SROC developed the Lancaster Ozone that consisted of four 'come and try it' type events (once a week for four weeks) then a break of two weeks followed by a 'typical' event.
- The areas chosen were all close to or within Lancaster and aimed to provide a progression in technicality before the typical event terrain.
- The initial events took place from 12pm – 2pm on Saturdays
- A successful 'Awards for All' grant was used to buy equipment, get existing areas (near to Lancaster) remapped and to map a new area, and a substantial amount for a concerted publicity drive

Please Note: The club didn't apply for the total cost, instead they asked for 80% with the club committing to provide the rest of the funding. Providing a contribution towards the total cost seems to be the way forward with successful bids.

Organisation and Publicity

- A number of posters were produced and distributed to: shops, workplaces (especially the large employers), local hospital, university, and schools.
- Colour adverts appeared in the local newspapers although these weren't that successful in terms of numbers or cost benefit.
- Posters, leaflets and word of mouth seemed the most successful way of attracting attendees. In total £300 was spent on posters and leaflets and £600 on newspaper adverts.

The club bought a large number of high-visibility bibs with "SROC - here to help" on the front and back. Everyone helping wore one of these so that newcomers knew who to approach for help. Club training for junior members to become assistants was held before two of the events, this was extremely productive as the juniors thoroughly enjoyed wearing the bibs and helping out, and families coming to try the sport were greeted by confident, happy children running around. The juniors were also great at showing the new children what to do.

Event Success

The table below shows the number of runs on each course. Please note that some people enjoyed it so much that they did two or three courses at each event. The number in brackets is the percentage of people entered as independent, hopefully the newcomers. Because of the aims of the series, it was pleasing to see that there weren't many orienteers present, the majority of people seemed to be the intended newcomers.

Course	White	Yellow	Orange	Technical
Event 1	12 (86%)	31 (87%)	30 (90%)	17 (6%)
Event 2	13 (77%)	38 (79%)	40 (78%)	14 (14%)
Event 3	30 (89%)	73 (80%)	55 (71%)	22 (5%)
Event 4	30 (90%)	73 (85%)	55 (71%)	24 (42%)

The figures show that there was no drop off in numbers, people kept coming back and bringing more friends. There also seems to have been a skills progression with more people trying the orange and technical courses towards the end of the series.

New Members

The club has gained 46 new members, 18 membership units (including families).

In order to retain these members the club has already run two training sessions on Saturday mornings, the first was attended by 30 people; the second (on an awful snowy, sleety day) was attended by 20. In addition there is going to be a mini o-zone in the New Year and the club intends to try a similar series in another part of the county in the autumn. In the past the club has spent spring evenings going fell running at various locations, this year they are considering holding a weekly session (fitness and technique training) at a central venue.