

Competition Structure-Summary

The Event Structure Review Group published a consultation document in September 2007 discussing potential options for changing the current competition structure. The recommendations can be found at the British Orienteering website in the downloads section. The 'Future of orienteering' conference allowed the opportunity for feedback from members. Below is a summary of the discussions and group feedback from the second session of the conference on the 'Event Structure Review'. The feedback fell into distinct headings linked to the recommendations and British Orienteering's vision of 'More people, more places, more podiums'.

Increasing participation

Some of the groups were unsure whether the recommendations would increase participation any more than the existing event structure. Others suggested recommendations 8 and 9 were key as they would improve the ability of participants to progress through the different event levels. They highlighted the need to be able to cater for 'sparse' areas and age groups. It was highlighted that the recommendations, if accepted, would need to be managed very carefully to ensure the needs of all were met.

Event Structure

Groups suggested that frequent local events could help attract newcomers to orienteering. Some suggested the changes may be accepted by newcomers but may confuse the experienced orienteers. It was suggested that some clubs would accept the 3-tier system and others would not, this could possibly be influenced by the age of members and locations. Possible advantages of the new structure are it may be simpler for newcomers to understand, more events would become C5, better progression for adult novices and possible better progression for volunteers.

Ranking List

Groups suggested that they needed a better understanding of how the ranking lists worked to discuss the recommendations in-depth. However it appeared that the recommendations could meet the needs of established orienteers. Groups also suggested that they were unsure whether it would matter to newcomers as they suggested a lot of them may be unaware of its existence. It was noted that badge standards would be more suitable for newcomers. Emphasis fell on making a 'simple' system that was more easily understood by orienteers as a whole.

Event formats and courses

Suggestions were made about showing the technical difficulty of colour coded courses. A possibility was to have, for example, a green short, green medium and

green long course; this would accommodate people who required a specific technical difficulty but varying length.

The possibility of using a variety of formats e.g. score on a fixture list at regional or higher level was discussed. Other examples given were using MTBO and Trail-O. It was discussed that these may not increase participation but they may raise the profile of orienteering. Other suggestions were running more local events that could include a variety of event formats.

Major Events

It was emphasized that good quality Major Events can be used to promote orienteering. Although this promotion may be limited it shows people enjoying healthy activity in attractive countryside. It was appreciated that orienteering may not always be a good 'viewer experience'. The importance of quality competition at national level was emphasized.

Talent Pathway

The importance of a pathway of 'awards' or 'incentives' was stressed and it was suggested that the recommendations may improve the pathway to progress. It was noted that it was important for juniors to experience good quality competition and possibly try out the different event formats. With regard to Elite athletes it was explained that the elite have their own programme of events and that events would only be attended if they fitted into this programme and were of a good quality. The importance of a domestic calendar that supports those athletes striving to become world class was noted.

Competition Structure - Focus Topics:

- A. Increasing participation – Will the recommendations help increase participation?
What other modifications to the competition structure could help increase participation?
- No more so than existing structures: However taking away age group competition doesn't make the sport more accessible
 - See this morning's suggestions re local events
 - * No – not addressing a relevant issue relative to participation
- B. Event Structure – Does the recommendation for a 3 tiered structure meet the needs of experienced orienteers and 'new to orienteering' members of the public?
- No problem for experienced orienteers – apart from changes to Colour Coded terms
 - New – for colour coded OK
 - New – for age related difficulties?

- New – pre-entry regulations
 - maps available?
 - publicity/marketing
- Newcomers will accept – experienced may be confused
- * Regional Guidelines A

Pg 2: There should be a formal process in British Orienteering from association through to Council. Whilst this might rarely be used it would prevent ill-feeling escalating to unacceptable levels, - given committee pause for thought if they know they might be challenged

C. Event Structure – Will clubs accept the 3 tier system? If not why not? What are the advantages and disadvantages of this 3 tier system from a club's perspective?

- Some will, some won't (cf age + location)
- Advantages:
 - simpler for newcomers to understand
 - more events become C5
 - better for attracting and progressing of adult novices
 - better progression for volunteers
- Disadvantages:
 - 'Standard' covers too broad a range of events
- If not why not?
 - Clear distinction between highly competitive events and low key events
 - Not catering for established orienteer

D. Ranking list – Do the recommendations for the ranking list meet the needs of experienced orienteers and 'new to orienteering' members of the public; is the ranking list an incentive to motivate newcomers, can it be improved?

- Meets needs of experienced orienteers
 - Yes to those interested
- * Need a better understanding of how the ranking list will work under the recommendations
- New to 'O'
 - Not sure it matters
 - Lot of newcomers don't know about it
 - Badge standards are more tangible for newcomers to assess their level
- * NB Current method of awarding badges to age-based courses won't work on new 'Standard' event courses. The only way to keep gold, silver and bronze Badges as an incentive scheme is to base them on the ranking points gained at standard events. For example Gold = 1100 points silver 1000 points etc
- Can it be improved?
 - Discussion on how it is calculated; majority did not understand it, however ranking can easily be viewed via web site
- * Silly to have separate lists for short courses runners. At the moment, scores for those running short are exaggerated – inflated relative to long course runners

E. Courses – Do the recommendation for courses and the naming of them meet the needs of experienced orienteers and the 'new to orienteering' members of

the public?

- Suggest:
 - National – Levels 1 & 2
 - Regional – Level 3 (age)
 - Ranking count for National and regional
 - Local Levels 4 & 5 where 4 is full colour and 5 is limited colour
- Colour should = technical difficulty; need different physical difficulty on Green
 - Light Green -> Long Green -> Blue
 - Blue -> Short Green -> Light Green
- Suggest:
 - White TD 1; Yellow TD 2; Orange TD 3;
 - Red TD 4
 - Green – S, M, L – less physically difficult
 - Blue – S, M, L – more physically difficult

F. Major Events – Can the major events be used to promote orienteering – how can they be modified to increase their capacity to act as the ‘shop window’ for orienteering?

- Use of Major Events to promote O?
 - To a limited extent only, eg show lots of people enjoying healthy activity in attractive countryside
 - Perhaps not feasible to make races a good ‘viewer experience’ – Orienteering is not snooker!!
- Can they be modified?
 - Not acceptable to modify in ways that reduce quality of the event.
 - Acceptable if no loss of quality ie spectator controls, butterfly loops
 - New technology a possibility eg tracking runners. But would this be of interest to ‘the mass market’!
- * Appendix C – Pg 1: this rule seems to undermine the Controller who has the responsibility for the individual event

G. Event formats – Are there event formats such as ‘score’ that should on the fixture list at regional or higher level. What do such event formats offer and will they help achieve increased participation?

- Like idea of variety of formats
- British Schools Score Championships already exists
- Sprint series of national level city
- MTBO
- Trail-O
- Night canoe-O!
 - these may not increase participation but might raise the profile
- Urban Sprint – visible, raises profile with a new audience
- NB need more local events which may include these formats and may increase participation

H. Increased participation – Do the recommendations for the fixture structure meet the needs of increasing participation and development in general?

- Recommendations 8 & 9 are key

- These will meet key needs:
 - Ability to be able to progress – or not (do ‘standard’ events help or hinder?)
 - Not ditching ‘oldies’
 - Need to be able to cater for ‘sparse’ areas and age groups
 - For competition results/rankings
- The proposals must be managed carefully to meet these needs
- Proposal 1 is of questionable value
- Proposal 3 & 4 are positive but marginal
- Proposal 2, 5 – 7 and 10 will have no effect

	Increase Participation	Development
Helps to meet needs	3	6 provided managed well
No significant effect	3 on balance	0
Hinders meeting the needs	0	0

I. Talent Pathway – Do the recommendations provide a clear talent pathway for the development of junior orienteers? Do the recommendations improve the pathway for talented juniors? What other modifications to the competition structure would improve the talent pathway?

- Awards:
 - pathway of awards – incentives
 - Info of BSOA awards
 - competition or accumulation of experience
 - ?? scheme or colour/badge standard
 - not apparent
- Motivation – experience/competition
- Coaching
- Different Events
- Publish Event results – separate junior/senior results

J. Talent Pathway & the Elite – In the group’s opinion, in what ways do the recommendations support the development of World Class orienteers through the regional and national levels? Are there other ways in which the competition structure could be modified to meet the needs of developing talented orienteers?

- Elite have own programme of preparation
- Events will be attended if they fit into the programme
- People aiming to be World Class – need domestic calendar for preparation and selection
- Consistent quality of events is important