

## ***Long Term Direction of Orienteering-Summary***

Below is a summary of the discussions and group feedback from the first session of the conference on the 'Long-term direction of orienteering' held 27<sup>th</sup> October 2007. The feedback fell into two distinct areas; increasing participation and increasing the volunteer workforce

### Increasing Participation

Groups thought that regular local events that varied in type e.g. Sprint-O, Park-O, Street-O would attract more participants. They thought by advertising the 'unusual' and adventurous side of orienteering it may encourage newcomers to try out the sport. Ensuring that events were frequent and there were minimal gaps between activities were noted. Although a drain on resources, the importance of creating an 'orienteering routine' was debated.

The lack of a 'clubhouse' or focal point was seen as a barrier to participation. Suggestions to overcome this were having events starting at a fixed point e.g. a leisure centre and then moving off to different areas each week. That would allow a central meeting point and increase the social aspects of the sport. It was noted that for newcomers using the same area would be beneficial as it increases confidence. Activities such as using POCs would develop skills that could be utilised in later events. It noted that using the same areas wouldn't necessarily be suitable for experienced orienteers.

Possible target audiences to focus on were those already engaging in physical activity e.g. running clubs, people who like the outdoors e.g. ramblers/countryside associations, those who relish a mental challenge, families, educational groups etc... Focusing on particular areas such as the development of satellite clubs or clusters would help focus resources and attention on 'responsive' areas.

Selling orienteering using unique ideas such as 'Stroll O' and 'Bring a Friend' was suggested. This could tap into groups of people who had not previously considered trying orienteering.

A possible workgroup focussing on retention of members was suggested. Its aim would be to understand why people 'drop-out' of orienteering. It could concentrate on three main 'drop-out' times, from primary to secondary school, from secondary school to university and from university to work

The lack of and need for resources to fulfil these expectations was stressed throughout

### Increasing Volunteer workforce

There were a number of barriers to increasing the volunteer workforce that were suggested. They included the demand for high standards, the level of work involved, the desire for volunteers to still participate in events and the perceived attitude of criticism.

Suggestions of how to tackle some of these issues were to break the volunteer roles down into manageable 'chunks' of work and try to encourage new members to volunteer from the start of their orienteering career. It was suggested that older volunteers should mentor those new to orienteering, which would begin a cycle of passed on experience and

hopefully continue to replenish the pool of volunteers. It was noted that this cycle could also help young orienteers to gain volunteer experience.

Many groups noted the need to minimise paperwork as this tended to 'put-off' potential people from volunteering themselves. More structured training was also suggested as a way of standardising the quality and input of volunteers. It was suggested that local clubs could work together to provide this training.

## Long Term Direction of Orienteering - Focus issues:

### 1. Increasing participation – **How** can clubs provide a *progression* of events to engage non-orienteeers in orienteering activities? **What** are we 'selling' to them?

- Need for regular, frequent local events eg successful series in local parks (inc parks staff) but resource issues – volunteer development and access costs
  - \* Need to make simple to organise by 1 man & a dog!
  - \* Funding streams available from local authorities for participation
- Type of event to attract should be Park-O, Sprint-O, Micro-O; park series with high visibility, attract newcomers – FUN
- Progression – many people do not want to move on to more technically difficult, larger areas
- 2 events per month one local and the other district – in a geographically compact area
- Promotion of POC – use for introductory events
- Health aspects of O should be selling point for some, although a turn off for others
- Coaching/training/social aspects should encourage involvement
- Not having a club base puts off new orienteeers
- Difficult to sell current product – not 'sexy' – but there is a need to sell new formats to current orienteeers
- Incentive schemes: such as Explorer Challenge, colour coded events – encourage progression for youngsters
- Competitive element for some, but usually with small group of people
- Championships, national events provide:
  - Target to aim for
  - Credibility as a sport
  - Publicity for success in clubs

### 2. Increasing participation – **How** can clubs identify likely participants? Are there focus groups to approach? **How** should they be approached?

<b>Characteristics of participants</b>	- its not for everyone
Already doing physical exercise	- Uniformed organisations - Sports Centres / County Parks / National Trust - Running Clubs etc – Street-O for cross training - Permanent 'O' courses, need promotion
Like outdoors	- Needs to link to events - Adult Education - Healthy Living - Doctors surgeries
Mental Challenge	- + social side - Regular activity
Families	- Link to local members - 'Local' Clubs eg MADO - Can take part as a family - Progression - 'Educate' local organisations eg scouts
Education: Univ, Schools, colleges, Secondary	- University Clubs, staff & students - Curriculum
Local large companies	-

- Work with RDOs
- Work with Local Authorities – County Sport Plan, Funding, Facilities

3. Increasing participation – **How** can clubs offer weekly activities based upon meeting at an easily accessible venue, to people interested in taking part in orienteering? **What** type of programme would be delivered, what are the advantages and disadvantages of such a programme?

### 3.1

- Weekly/fortnightly training – works!
- Weekly series using same area, car park and 1 controller - ? Series 4 – 6 max. Target New Orienteers
- POC – Regular, low work load
- Target audiences – different types of event
- Schools – children- parents
- University 18+ years – free entry
- Dads and lads
- Focussed in one area – parents and families
- Difficulties for city clubs – RAs and travel
- More locally – focussed sub clubs
- Target community using mapped park etc
- Publicity in local paper and results after events
- Emails, leaflets. Race for Life

### 3.2

- Trial Challenges
- Ace Races
- Change General concept of Orienteering
- BIB – number and web address

#### **Weekly:**

#### **Advantages**

- New audiences
- Free membership opps
- Bring on current members – event officials of future
- Regular training
- Shorter travelling
- People events – walking trails/younger families
- Social
- Encourage more clubs

#### **Disadvantages**

- Traffic in city
- Transport in country
- Lack of controllers, planners and organisers
- Quality control
- SI and urban areas – vandalism!
- British Orienteering insurance at 50p per map?
- Repeated use of area – not for regulars

\*Regular, local events are easier to promote to “non-orienteers” than a regional event 30 miles away.

\*Why emphasis on a weekly event? A regular meeting whether a social, training run, technical training, armchair-o etc is I feel, the important aspect.

### 3.3

- Programmes – lack of controllers, planners and organisers.

#### 4. Increasing participation – **How** can clubs put on frequent, weekly orienteering activities at minimal effort and cost? **What** programme would you deliver and what would be your target audience?

- Make it easy
  - Participants – comms- marketing
  - Hosts
  - Officials
  - Access?
  - Area teams
  - Simplification
- BOAC on Weds simple & works well (on web?)
- C5s on web fixtures
- Coaches, shortage
- Regularity; clubhouse; multi-sport; 'cluster club' approach
- FUN – Mass start?
- Games players - Convert from desktop to outdoors
- Schools
  - Families
  - Advertising
  - Word of mouth
- Weekly – yes but not everywhere
- Focus on towns – demographic targets
- National Orienteering Week used to take place – now gone
- Programme could include Wednesday pm?
- WCOC – 20 summer, 20 evenings – coordination?
- Local research
  - Targets
  - Ethnicity
  - Universities
  - Demographic targets?
- Exciting
- Targets
  - Gym – keep fit
  - Running
- PCs – weekly adverts in car park
- British Orienteering support to universities, fresher's week, infrastructure
- 'Get them in the shop!'
- New Slogan – 'Run away from your family' (young mums)

#### 5. Increasing participation – **How** can clubs use urban areas such as parks, streets, 'campus' areas, schools etc to generate interest?

- Use of governing body to help awareness
- Clubs and associations
  - Publicity
  - Contacts

- What is available?
    - Website
    - RDOs
    - Coaching
    - Mapping
    - POCs – link to websites
    - Leaflets
  - Community coaches
- Range of events/times
  - Street
  - Park
  - Schools and surrounds
  - CATI
  - Repeat events
  - Campus
  - Sat/Sun/evening/weekday
- CATI (annual/region) –link to club’s fixture list
- Stroll ‘O’ – publicity for fitness/obese
- Club/region additional funds for RDO for their particular needs
- Publicity
  - Website
  - Bring a friend
  - Signs for runners – link with other campaigns e.g. breast cancer
  - Supermarket publicity
- Hosting at events (social interaction)

6. Increasing participation – **What** assistance, from a club perspective, can British Orienteering provide that will support the drive to increase participation?

### 6.1

- Club mark
  - RDOs
  - Motivating
  - Club mark plus?
- Young Adults – junior to senior how?
  - Transport/accessible events/town and street o
  - University Clubs / campus maps
  - Excitement
  - Parents
- Publicity
  - Adventure clubs
  - Excitement
  - Carry cards
- Barriers
  - Local council / community sports partnership
  - Muddy woods
  - Urban areas – mapping cost / expertise
  - Regions to target urban areas
  - Urban badge events – profile
  - Officials

\*Provide templates for posters and fliers (save clubs re-inventing) and keep refreshed 1-2 times a year (new photos etc).

\*Simple understandable language on materials – cut out jargon.

\*I was hooked into orienteering by reading “climber & rambler” in the 70's. Geoff Peck wrote a monthly series of articles about orienteering which inspired me and I suspect many others. How about commissioning someone to do something similar in today's outdoor magazine?

\*Run and report a focussed work group on retention at 3 key stages – Primary to secondary, secondary to university, university to work to aim to keep participants in touch.

## 6.2

- Urban
  - Sprint O
  - Grand Prix
  - Final
  - Staff support?
- Fitness Agenda
- Officials/Volunteers
  - Incentives
  - Simple
- Understanding – why do people not go orienteering
- Survey of non renewing members
- Incentive schemes
- Image
  - Remove the ‘walking’ tag
  - Clothing

\*All age classes M&W 70+ at all events. Don't dump the oldies!

\* Why do people not do orienteering? Why do people who orienteer give up or not renew to British Orienteering or club. What is orienteering's image?

\*Low key urban events may not need to use controls hence reducing work in placing them and reducing risk of loss – use permanent urban features.

7. Increasing the volunteer workforce – **How** can new volunteers be trained to provide them with the knowledge and confidence to stage local events? **What** might their training programmes look like?

## Problems

- Expected standards are very high, even at local events
- Worried about how much work is involved and how complicated it is
- People don't want the responsibility.
- Some come to compete, not too organise
- The younger generation don't do “volunteer” work
- Perceived restrictions e.g. qualifications, IT Skills, form filling and procedures
- People don't come forward unless asked
- Increasing number of events but fewer core people
- Organisers only phone the people they know
- Over criticism from competitors

## Possible solutions

- Break the job down to take task away e.g. land access, event registration, mapping, printing and give to “experienced people”

- “Experienced people” should teach others how to do the job... needs to be documented
- Get new members involved quickly i.e. assign to an organising team such as start, finish, string
- Encourage new members to run and help
- Can event organisation be simplified
- “Mentor” for local events
- All “tools” for a local event need to be readily available (club specific) e.g. standard forms for income and expenditure, British Orienteering information collecting
- Involve non-orienteeing members of the family (parents of children)
- British Orienteering need to keep their forms simple

### Training Programmes

- (8) Regional organising and planning courses for local events
- (7) Include as part of a club running evening or social
- (6) On line training courses to do in the comfort of your own home
- (2) Structured approach to training in a club e.g. shadowing, training, mentoring, organising
- (5) Making it easy on computers. (British Orienteering) – dummies guide to using OCAD for planning a local event, using SI, etc
- (4) Publish articles in the club newsletter (either then publish in Focus or copy from Focus)
- (1) Clubs need to have a designated “volunteer development or training” officer
- (3) Clubs documentation – simple, specifically for local events

### 8. Increasing the workforce – **Can** a club provide the finance to pay a person to organise and run frequent local activities? **What** training would the person require and **how** can the club make the finances work?

- Inside or outside?
- What can clubs afford? What can you get?
- External funding might be necessary - This is “extra” to normal club activities
- Payment by results? A slice of the event turnover
- Marketing – we don’t do it! Somebody needs paying - Who could you pay to do this
- You can train the person to organise
- They can be the organiser or coordinator

### Financing

- Paid by club – taking a slice or bonus scheme
- Some clubs could afford to contribute
- Amalgamation of 1/2/3 clubs or region
- External funding – lottery etc

### Training

- Marketing
- Basic British Orienteering planning and controlling courses – regional if necessary
- Use the RDO

### Payments

- Using British Orienteering to pay
- Expenses
- Pay someone to advertise or publicise
- Someone with a sports background
- Retired persons
- Funding from British Orienteering / lottery funding: CSPs

- Base salary and expenses
- Clubs and coach initiative allows money to be spent on salaries
- Payment? – put on British Orienteering payroll? Pay expenses
- Pay people for new members? 2K a year
- Training to market events

\* Aren't marketing/publicity and event organisation different strands when it comes to payment? If you pay for marketing you need suitable experience or expertise. That may not link with event organiser experience.

9. Increasing participation – A club has a focus on links with schools to increase junior participation.

- a) What types of programmes and support should be put in place to develop the juniors?
- b) What steps should the club take to safeguard the juniors?

### 9.1

- Schools – teachers may be keen – may move
- Families – parents bring children
- Assume school does some “O”
- Ideas of programmes – Sat events, schools league, summer weekday and evenings
- Advertising and marketing – huge lack of marketing
- Fun activities – variety – not necessarily traditional courses
- Welcoming – one club paid ‘meet and greet’, small amount – same person, huge increase in membership
- Programme – frequency – local, know where it is, - friends go , - Include coaching

### 9.2

- Share load of programme with another club
- More local clubs – use parks
- People to put on events – leisure centre staff, park rangers
- Pay organiser – grants e.g. table tennis (Kent) grant, council – keep YP off streets
- Informal score – suggest easy routes/course
- Local – need a base or club house, - link to another sports club – use their club house
- Separate fixture lists – keep local ones separate from large events, not easy for newcomers to understand
- Training/coaching – help YP to improve, informal coaching before people do a course, need to train coaches and assistants
- Need to train officials – grants, the tutors who will train, need mentors for new officials
- Safeguard – get parents involved, - use shadows (older juniors or groups), - photo permission on membership form

10. Increasing participation – What advantages and disadvantages are there to organising programmes of frequent local orienteering activities rather than infrequent and irregular larger events? Are these activities and events mutually exclusive and are there seasonal aspects to the programmes?

### 10.1

#### Advantages

- Building the habit
- Local focus – friendly

- Meet the same people
- Build relationships (meet and greet people)
- Minimal transport issues (students)
- Make friends – collective transport
- Weekly 'fix' for regulars
- Frequency = retention (what something to do next)
- Have a visual marketing aspect (raising public profile)
- Tends to be in public places
- City parks attract B.M.E – more socially inclusive
- Using areas influences L.A to put in P courses
- Learning ground for new persons
- Use of areas that are not suitable for C4
- Family orientated
- Hook parents who bring youths
- New members come from local events

#### Disadvantages

- Use of grotty could put someone off
- Local = public = lose of equipment
- Limited cross over of participants
- Volunteer burnt out
- Best use of club resources?
- Too many can be confusing
- 'Low tech' could put newcomers off (master maps)
- Lots of other markets – OAP Wednesday?
- Volunteers more likely to do something new on door step
- Minimal cost ?
- Can be as good a cash con as big events
- Time for new comers to be helped

#### 10.2

Are local events mutually exclusive and are there seasonal aspects to the programme?

#### Yes

- Some participants only do these events
- Because of the small volunteer we can't do both
- Some district are less friendly

#### No

- Part of a continuum for participants and volunteers
- Competitor choice

#### Seasonal aspects – local?

- Access constraints?
- The jungle
- Winter – geared to schools
- Summer – geared to clubs
- There should be no season
- Use the best resources when they are available

- Holiday periods influence
- Season has been dictated by tradition

\*Over whelming argument for local events. Largest constraint is volunteers/resources. Large events don't equal increased participation and new membership.

\* Local not mutually exclusive – part of the “O” continuum. Wild idea – no generic season – use the best at the best time.