

Major Events Group

3 November 2009

Minutes of meeting



Minutes of the meeting of
Major Events Group
held on Tuesday 3rd November 2009
at YHA St Paul's, London,
commencing at 6.00 p.m.

Present:

Mike Forrest (MF)
David May (DM)
Steve McKinley (SM)
David Peel (DP) – for items 1 -3 only

In attendance:

Neil Crickmore (NC) – Rules Group and organiser of 2011 British Sprint Championships

Apologies:

Sue Birkinshaw (SB)
Scott Fraser (SF)
Nev Myers (NM)

1. British Sprints Championships 2011

Following the decision of the Board that the British Elite Sprint Championships and the British Age Class Sprint Championships should be combined from 2011 onwards, the Major Events Group had been invited to propose the way in which this should be done, for approval at the Board meeting on 10 December 2009.

NC is the nominated organiser of the event in 2011, and had prepared a paper setting out options for how the two competitions could practically be combined.

The meeting agreed the following principles:

- (i) Competitions based on qualifying heats followed by finals are preferable to two races from which the times are added together.
- (ii) British Championships should, if possible, produce champions for every individual age class, rather than for combined age classes such as those used in City Races (and at the JK 2007 Sprint).
- (iii) The format currently in place for the elite classes (M/W 18/20/21) should be preserved as much as is compatible with other objectives.

Following detailed discussions on many of the options identified in NC's paper, the meeting agreed the following proposal:

- (a) The elite classes should be combined, such that M18 and M20 competitors compete in the same race as M21s (i.e. a M open), and W18 and W20 competitors compete in the same race as W21s (i.e. a W open).
- (b) Every other BOF age class will have a competition exclusive to people in that class.
- (c) There would be only one race for each age class (i.e. no L and S classes).
- (d) Competitors must select, when they enter, the age class in which they wish to compete.
- (e) Classes should be combined into the minimum number of courses which is practical for the level of entries. One possibility is to adopt the table included in the current age class sprint rules, as follows:

1 M Open, M35, M40

2	W Open, W35, W40
3	M45, M50
4	M14, M16, M55, M60
5	M65, M70, W14, W16, W45, W50
6	M12, M75, M80 etc., W12, W55, W60, W65 etc.
7	M10, W10

It may be necessary to run parallel courses if any of the courses have high levels of entries.

- (f) The number of heats to be staged for a course is to be determined so that the duration of the heats shall be no more than one hour.
- (g) The quality of the field in each class should be balanced across all of the heats by reference to the rankings list for that class.
- (h) For each class, the number of places in the A final (and each of the other finals needed) shall be dependent on the actual or likely number of competitors in the heats and subject to defined maximum and minimum numbers.
- (i) The timing of the heats and finals should be such that the Open class A finals take place at a time when all other competitors will be free to spectate those races.

It was noted that this preserves the competition that is currently in place for M/W 18/20/21s, but that M/W 16/35/40 etc. would have to select to run the open class if they wish to run against the elite classes, thus foregoing the possibility of winning their own age class. It was further noted that this structure means that there will be no British Sprint Champion at M/W 18/20 classes. The meeting believed that this was preferable to the options available to enable such champions to be found.

The view was that leaving the possibility of only one competitor from a class in the A final results in the second race becoming irrelevant for that competitor. The alternative of elevating a minimum number of additional runners in specific classes to ensure a race in all classes was viewed as too contrived and complicated.

A third option, which involved setting a specific number from each of the elites classes to qualify for the A final was rejected because it was felt that assessing the appropriate number for each class could not be done fairly and objectively.

MF undertook to present this proposal, and the reasons it was arrived at, to Events Committee on 14th November. It was expected that, if approved by EC and the Board, that Rules Group would then be asked to develop the rules on a basis consistent with other major event rules.

2. Major Event Rules

Following the difficulties experienced in developing agreed rules for Major Events, DM (as a member of both this group and Rules Group) was asked by the Chair of Events Committee to develop a format for major event group rules. The purpose of this format would be to:

- (a) ensure that it was clear to the readers of these rules what was mandatory (i.e. a rule) and what was guidance.
- (b) write the Rules in language that makes it clear that the rules are mandatory (i.e. by using “shall”, “will”, and “must” instead of “should”, “would” and “may”).
- (c) Develop rules that were more “standalone” than previous versions, reducing the need to refer to other rules and guidelines when seeking information about a specific event.

To that end DM presented a draft of the proposed rules for the British Nights Championships. The format was generally approved, and Group expressed itself happy that DM should prepare similar drafts of the other rules needed for specific major events. However, it was thought that, where practical, it would be helpful if some of the cross references to other rules were to be replaced by the rules themselves, so that the reader does not have to refer to too many documents. It was further agreed that where any member of the Group is aware of specific changes that should be considered for any of those rules, they should refer them to DM and MF, and that DM should reflect them in the appropriate rules as comments, so that Rules Group could consider them as part of their brief to draft the final versions of these rules for approval by the Board on 10th December.

3. Elite Advisers

DP presented an update on the appointment of BOF Elite advisers to all events where courses are being planned specifically for elite competitors. He has obtained agreement from Graeme Ackland, Derek Allison, John Cross, Colin Eades, David May and Dave Rollins to add to the two existing EAs (DP and Charles Daniel). Some other names were offered to DP to follow up.

It was agreed that EAs would not be appointed for WREs, where the role is part of the brief of IOF Event Advisers.

DP confirmed that a brief for the role had been prepared and discussed with John Palmer (Chair of Elite Competitions Group) and he agreed to circulate this for final approval by the Group.

The proposed allocation to 2010 events is as follows:

Trossachs WRE – IOF Event Adviser (Gordon Ross)
JK Sprint/Middle – Charles Daniel (subject to his agreement)
JK Long – IOF Event Adviser (Tim Pribul)
British Elite Sprint – Graeme Ackland
British Middle Distance – Dave Peel
British Long Championships – Dave Peel

DP reported that he had been asked whether acting as EA for one of these events would result in being declared non-competitive. It was agreed that EAs should be declared non-competitive, although it was noted that this might make it more difficult to identify volunteers for this role.

It was noted that some of the events requiring EAs were not the responsibility of the Group (e.g. FCC and UK Cup Finals). It was also noted that no proposals had been made to appoint EAs for the major relay events.

4. CompassSport Cup and Trophy Final

MF reported that some concerns had been expressed about the classification of this event as a National (level 1) event in 2009. These concerns questioned whether this classification was appropriate and consistent with the competition's history, and whether this decision was a cynical financial decision by BOF.

MF reported on the decision to make the event level 1, as the premier inter-club competition within the British Orienteering calendar, and noted the unintended consequential effect of its elevation to level 1 on the Forestry Commission's access charges. He also reported that the financial implication for BOF of this designation had been a reduction in the entry as a result of the profit share to BOF being less than the BOF levy that would otherwise have been due.

The view of the Group was that it was appropriate to designate the event as a National Event, but that this should primarily be about the non-forest aspects of the event (arena, commentary, spectator facilities etc.) rather than the quality for the terrain.

As this topic has been placed on the Event Committee agenda, MF agreed to express the Group's views to the EC meeting.

5. Map Scales

Following the presentation from David Olivant at the Major Events Conference, MF has sent the following request to Map Group:

1. The first concerns middle races specifically. Long races have 1:15,000 for the main classes and 1:10,000 for "oldies and youngsters". Sprint races similarly have 1:4,000 (or 1:5,000) and 1:3,000 for the same two groups. However, middle races only have 1:10,000 for all classes. As the purpose of middle races is to test fine navigation at speed, which is why the main age classes have 1:10,000, it would seem logical to permit the use of, say, 1:7,500 for the other classes. This would be helpful for all middle races, but has also become a specific issue for the BMDOC 2010 at Haverthwaite, which is complex Lakeland area. A swift verdict on this issue, if only for Haverthwaite, would be really helpful.

2. The other request is for map group to consider whether there are other ways of assisting improved legibility of maps for those of us whose eyesight is failing as we get older. Rather than assuming that a bigger map scale is the only solution, can we investigate whether there are other possible aids to solving this conundrum. The one that got discussed at some length was whether legibility would be improved on a complex map if symbol sizes at 1:10,000 were, say 125% of those at 1:15,000, rather than the current 150%. However, any help that can be given in a way which is reasonably easy to implement would be very helpful.
3. Quite separately, we identified that the change in event classification has had a knock-on effect on appendix H – mapping, which refers to the five levels we used to have. I'm not sure whether map group would want to revisit and redraft that appendix. If so, another aspect that needs to be considered is whether appendix H is right when it says that all national events (the old levels 1 & 2) should have offset litho printing unless specific dispensation is sought. The two issues we had with this are (1) digital printing has become fairly standard for relays, on cost grounds, because of the large number of overprints required, and (2) CompassSport Cup and Trophy final which has now been re-designated a National Event, but many think its ancestry is from colour coded events, so a presumption for offset litho is overdoing it.

6. Monitoring of Major Events

In NM's absence, no progress was made on the development of the buddy system proposed at the previous meeting.

However, SM raised the matter of post-event reports, which he proposed should be prepared and agreed between the key officials (planner, controller and organiser) of our major events, as part of the "lessons learned" process. He agreed to develop some guidelines on what should be included in such a review and how it should be communicated to future organising teams.

The Group agreed that it should then implement this process for the Major Events which are its remit, from 2010 onwards, but that it is desirable for events at all levels to adopt this practice in the future.

7. Major events conference

MF reported that the proposed date for the 2010 conference was 24/25/26 September 2010, at YHA National Forest. This has been proposed as it was felt that the benefits of exclusive use at a youth hostel outweighed the benefit of superior accommodation at Lilleshall National Sports Centre near Telford.

It was noted that it may be necessary to invite some potential applicants for grade 1 controller, pending progress on a more reliable process for training controllers at all grades.

8. Future Meetings

It is hoped that it will be possible to hold the next meeting at the 2010 British Sprint and Middle Championships weekend on 17/18 April in the North West.