

NOPESPORT URBAN LEAGUE – LOSSIEMOUTH SAT 11TH JUNE

Organiser's Comments – Roo Hornby (Moravian/RAFO)

As a resident of Lossiemouth (although based at RAF Kinloss), it seemed the simple choice to volunteer to be organiser for this event in the latter part of last year. However, with work opportunities having dried up at Kinloss, I have been working in Wiltshire and London this year which has made it a bit more of a challenge. Mike Rodgers, in particular, has been a tower of strength in assisting me. That said, our experience from running the Scottish Sprint in 2009 and a smallish event in the snow at RAF Lossiemouth last Dec gave us a good basis to work from. I would like to acknowledge the hospitality and patience of the RAF Station Commander, Group Captain Andrew Hine and his staff in hosting us and allowing use of their map. Lossiemouth Community Centre could not have been more helpful in providing their facilities. MOR is a growing club, but still has only a small core of experienced members. Therefore assistance of RAFO members managing the start, some of whom had travelled a significant distance, was greatly appreciated. My Registration team were amazing and I cannot praise Ian Welsh and Margaret Dearman enough for the time they have spent this weekend dealing patiently with grumpy computers (couldn't cope with more than 30 controls for print out initially), unfortunate mis-punches and dead brikkes, all with great equanimity. All the other helpers were essential to the smooth running of the day. Whilst alarming at the time, my favourite memory of the day is Eddie, having discovered he had not placed a control on the A Course, racing the first runner (Ben Livesey) to the site (and beating him literally by seconds) to ensure it was in place. Ben was blissfully unaware until after his run. Finally, I would like to acknowledge the patience of my family, who have not seen a great deal of me this year and much of the time I have been home has been taken up with this event.

Planner's Comments – Eddie Harwood (Moravian)

Lossiemouth is largely a very rectangular town, but it has on it a fantastic housing estate, and I was always sure that with the addition of a bit of forest and scrub land it would make an excellent venue for a very varied urban race. When ordering the map contract I pushed hard for the inclusion of the forest as far as the canal crossing – I'd have liked a bit more but we can't be too greedy.

The later availability of the RAF base added an excellent extra dimension to the variety. However it did mean that only the A course was able to go round the whole forest loop. It also meant that I scrapped the original 16- course which was virtually exclusively in the scrub and forest area with a timed out, manned main road crossing.

One unique thing for my planning is that when the map arrived I sat down with Condes and planned an armchair first draft course. As it turned out, apart from moving sites slightly to find suitable street furniture to attach them, this course ended up as the A course without a single control being changed, added or removed.

The “sting in the tail” on the B course came about by accident when the finish was moved and the previous easy finish became unviable. I needed an extra control and suddenly realised that using the control on the other side of the fence added value very much in the keeping with urban orienteering – I know that some of you disagree!

Eddie

SCOTTISH ORIENTEERING LEAGUE 4 – CULBIN FOREST SUN 12TH JUNE

Organiser’s Comments – Donald Grassie (Gramp)

I was originally down to Control the Culbin part of the Moray Mix, but a chain of events meant that I ended up Controlling the Urban, and at a late stage stepping in to assist with Organising. I need to stress the “assist” part, as Moravian just seemed to work as a team, with some of the more experienced members mentoring less experienced members. I am particularly indebted to Mike Rodgers - without his assistance, the event would not have been such a success. In the end a wonderful venue – both forest and assembly area – some fantastic courses, and a bit of sun made this a day to remember.

A big thank you to the various team leads – Ian Welsh (Computers/ Registration); Liz Barr (starts); Carole Chapman (parking) and Pippa Weir (signage) and their many helpers. Both start teams had slight glitches with their clocks – but everything was handled seamlessly by Jon Hollingdale and Peggie Gordon. (When the start clock’s beep went silent, Peggie ran her start like someone who was used to having her working life dictated to by bells).

As ever, the Computers / Registration team put in a power of work – a special thank you to Margaret and Ian and their team of helpers for making everything run so smoothly.

Donald

Planner’s Comments – Chris Spencer (Moravian)

East Culbin Forest is a national treasure and Moravian Orienteering Club is privileged to be able host large competitive events there. Access into this area has only become available in recent years and this was only made so by the persistent hard endeavours of numerous Scottish orienteers.

From a planner’s perspective my main aim was to ensure that the competitors left the event feeling that they have had a most enjoyable run that was both competitive and fair. I was quite active in the forest during the event taking photographs at the starts and finish. Most runners, though exhausted by the unexpected warm day and sunshine, looked happy with their performances. It was very satisfying to receive so many positive comments about the courses.

Orienteering, and planning in particular, is not an exact science, despite its rules and guidelines. The finishing times suggest that some of the courses were just a bit too long; we had expected that the course lengths going off past results would secure the target finishing times for a SOL event. However, that said, the technical complexity of the terrain for which Culbin is so famous did catch numerous orienteers out. I do regret not placing a central water station in the forest, something I completely forgot until I had virtually drawn all my courses. Reluctantly we had the long walk to the Red Start but I am sure you can understand that this got competitors to experience more of the better terrain. There were numerous areas in the forest that were OOB (not marked) and hence why the courses were a little restricted in places. Sorry for the dead running near the end but that was unavoidable if you want to keep runners out of the dark green!

Thank you to all the organisational team for supporting this large event and the assistance given by other club members to collect controls in the rain at the end. Andy Oliver, the controller, did an excellent job of keeping me on course and Jon Hollingdale's numerous map corrections and advice greatly assisted in improving the competition. A big thanks to both.

See you again soon.

Chris

Controller's Comments – Andy Oliver (MAROC)

Getting to Control a SOL at Culbin was great. You never need an excuse to visit one of the great orienteering forests, but to have a REASON to go there and see it at much closer quarters than I ever would as a competitor was fantastic.

Chris's task as Planner was to prepare courses that were worthy of the forest, providing a technical challenge to suit each standard and using the opportunities to make the courses fun for runners of all abilities. Mine as Controller was to ensure that selected control sites were fair, that courses met the required technical standards, and were of the lengths and ratios laid down in the event guidelines. Also to ensure that controls were placed in the correct locations and were properly described in control descriptions.

Some of these tasks are more or less mathematical, but always you have to go out in the forest (yippee) to check on the ground what you think is there on the map. There were some changes as a result, and some tweaking of the map (thanks to Jon Hollingdale's great assistance). Courses were generally at the upper end of the target lengths, but Culbin is so runnable for elite orienteers, and recent races had seen some of the top elites in GB achieve sub-5 minute/kilometre running speeds.

The real test of courses is how they are seen by the runners on the day, and Chris and I were soon at the Finish to greet some of the early finishers to find out how

they had enjoyed their runs. The smiles on their faces told the story, and the juniors were eager to tell us their route choices. When the first finishers arrived from the Red start it was a similar story, and Chris and I could relax a bit. There were some great runs, with Claire Ward's 3rd place on the 11.8k Brown course a highlight, and on Green, Karen Maxwell ran away from her rivals for a super win. Local interest saw a real ding-dong on Light Green between Johnstone MacPherson-Stewart and Andrew Barr – well worth following on RouteGadget.

For a small club to put on what has been described as the best weekend's orienteering this year is a superb achievement that speaks volumes for the commitment of the members, and showed the spirit that earned the club the runner-up spot for the BOF Club of the Year. It was a pleasure for me to be involved in this event, and I am happy to pay tribute to Chris Spencer for a great Planning job, and Donald Grassie and his extended team of club volunteers for the "front of house" organisation that presented such a welcoming face to the many visitors to Moray. You can be sure they will return.

Andy Oliver
Controller

Registration/Downloads/IT – Ian Welsh (Moravian)

On the whole registration etc went according to plan. The vast majority of entries were placed online via Fabian4 which helped enormously with the planning and running of the event. Problems on the Saturday were mostly down to human error typing in brikke numbers; on Sunday the problem was the bottle neck of only being able to use one timed start list to prevent double allocation of time slots.

There is no easy well to tell a sweaty, exhausted and hopeful runner that they have mis-punched. There were a few uncomfortable moments both days when we gave folk the bad news. To be fair, there were also some funny moments when people realised what they had done to miss a control.

Apologies must go to Kate Hunter who was issued a dead brikke on the Sunday. Fortunately Kate fitted a backup card and used good punching technique so we were able to verify her run and include her in the results. A valuable lesson there to all users of the Emit system.

For future/larger events the Club needs to look at the pre-entry process and interaction with the start team(s) to smooth the flow on the day. I'll say "Thank you" to the Controllers and the control collectors for their patience at the end of each day while we checked that everybody was accounted for.

The "live results" screen at Lossiemouth seemed to go down well. Thanks must go to Paul Stitson for providing the equipment to do this. Finally, thanks to everybody else that helped at any point with the pre-entries (Mike), registration and download jobs.

Who knows with a few more helpers for the next event; I might convince myself to go and get lost in the forest as well.

Ian.....