



DEESIDE ORIENTEERING
CLUB
Big Covert
Summer Evening Event
17 June 2009
Officials' Comments



Organiser's Comments (Gwyn Thomas)

We were fortunate to be blessed with a pleasant evening after such a miserable day. Hope you made the most of what could be the last event on Big Covert for a while. Many thanks to Don Smith for being so obliging. Thanks also to all the helpers: Jill and Barry Barnes, Joan and Peter Edwards, Pat Moody, Bob Elmes, Pete Owens, Alan Mullock, Norman Hall, Martin Cranny, Val Thomas, Ian Gilmartin, Mike Round and Terry Harper.

Planner's Comments (Robin Tilston)

Well! I made a mess of it. First I lost control 225 (between the cliffs) right at the top of the map. Then we discovered that that I had transposed 223 & 232. They were consecutive on my setting out route. The missing control was quickly replaced by removing one of the two boxes from the last control 254 and reprogramming it. Unfortunately it still thought it was 254 but a bit of massage on the software sorted that. Chris Calow recovered the lost box thankfully.

The transposed controls were a bigger problem in that although runners successfully located the control they were not convinced of the accuracy of their navigation. It was the only pit in the area, the next being 162m WSW and 30m lower. Similarly, the re-entrant in the cliffline has the next re-entrant in the cliffline 212m SWS: I am not trying to excuse my error, only pointing that you must learn to trust your own navigational skills. The Light Green runners may not have the experience but Blue and Green must have the ability to accurately locate TD5 controls and, therefore, should have been able to say to themselves "I know exactly where I am so the number is wrong"

I understand that amendments have been made to the results so no one should suffer in the league.

All that aside I hope the rest of your run was satisfactory. I was convinced that at last my weather luck had run out, however, apart from a very heavy rainstorm at about 16:15 we got away with it. I didn't and although I was only 100m from my car at the Maeshafn end of the wood I got soaked.

There have been suggestions that the courses were too long, but, apart from Green the finishing times (even with time lost at the transposed controls) seemed to be well within

guidelines. Even Green at a winning time of 70 minutes (unadjusted) is within the recommended 45 - 75 minutes. This is the third time that I have planned and had the Blue winner home in less time than the Green winner on a course 1.5km longer.

Thanks are due to Fergus, my Controller for his assistance in the planning and putting out controls. Martin Cranny for putting out controls. Chris Calow, Chris & Mike Smithard for control collection. Bob, Pete and Co on IT and any one else who did their bit.

Controller's Comments (Fergus O'Brien)

This was my first time on Big Covert and I was certainly impressed by the navigational challenges available in a relatively small area. I am also new to controlling so I wasn't quite sure what to expect as I worked with Robin for the first time. However he made it very easy for me in the run up to the event and my thanks to him for that.

I knew from the start that I would be helping put controls out in the area on the day of the event but, with the benefit of hindsight, I think that I needed to concentrate on checking the position of controls. As a result I may have been able to avert the problems with the transposed control numbers and we would have avoided the risk posed with having no-one to check the controls I placed. Another learning point is that we need to have at least one or two spare control boxes available on the night to deal with unforeseen circumstances which arise for any number of reasons.

Once the results were compiled the effect of the transposed controls became a lot clearer. There were quite a number of verbal comments from runners about finding the affected controls, then looking elsewhere before returning to the control and punching it. Other runners described arriving at the control only to be told by others nearby that it was the correct control so that they could punch and continue without delay. Looking at the results it confirmed the varied impact the mistaken control numbers had on the results and the only fair decision was to discount the leg times on the affected legs. My apologies for the frustration this caused competitors.

Finally whilst the courses were within the guidelines for course finish times, I think some of them demonstrated Robin's enthusiasm and his "if you are going out in the area you might as well get your money's worth" approach! I think that had the earlier rain persisted finishing times could have been considerably longer given the nature of the terrain and that could have been a problem. Having said that I think most competitors found the courses technically challenging, something that is not always easy to achieve for a summer evening event.