

NEWSTRACK

FEBRUARY 1997

Contents

Editor's (Bigger) Bit.....	2
Event Report- Weston Heath.....	4
New and Changed Members.....	6
Coaching News.....	6
March Open Meeting.....	7
DVO Weekend Abroad 1997.....	8
CompassSport Cup News.....	9
Odds and Sods.....	9
DVO East Midland Champs.....	10
Fixtures.....	11

Editor's (Bigger) Bit

The BOF Fixtures Working Party has issued a report on the future structure of fixtures with a number of recommendations for consideration at club level. Its brief was to formulate a fixtures structure "which meets the needs of ALL (their emphasis, not mine) orienteers". Unfortunately, rather like Doktor Frankenstein, the FWP may have set out with the best of intentions but the creature that they have produced is something of a monster.

One word stands out from a reading of the FWP's assorted proposals - Elite, Elite, Elite. Whereas the meat and drink of orienteering - the colour-coded event - merits just eleven words in the report summary, nearly a page is given over to a new elite only competition. The whole report is predicated in terms of "top" and (by implication) "bottom", "high" and "low". No prizes for guessing who qualifies for the more pejorative of these terms. The FWP conveniently sees the sport as operating at these two extremes and, despite the fact that the inhabitants of the "lower" level vastly outnumber those of the "higher", seeks to devote its attention to the tiny minority, airily dismissing the majority activity as nothing more than a "pleasant healthy competition". I do not know what gives the FWP the right to speak in such condescending terms but the fact that they do speaks volumes as to the inherent prejudice underpinning this report.

I do not think that it is very hard to see how this imbalance has come about - the FWP consisted of just five people - none from the East Midlands - and, where there is disagreement amongst those five, a majority recommendation has been put forward, so some of the proposals intended to shape the future of the whole sport are based on the views of just three people. I cannot imagine how whoever set up the FWP imagined you could hope for balanced conclusions from only five people anyway.

The FWP did apparently try to obtain views across as wide a spectrum of opinion as possible and, surprise, surprise, they found (my emphasis) "a majority of clubs and individuals, the mainstream orienteers, said they were satisfied with most of the structure and with the orienteering available to them". That is hardly surprising because that is exactly the position, and I could have told BOF that without the need for a Working Party. You would have thought that any working party, having found that in fact we already have a system that pleases the majority of orienteers, would have congratulated themselves, adjourned to the pub and gone home, but oh no. Instead they did two things:

- (i) They thought, "we are a working party, it is our job to make changes, so we are going to make them whatever the wishes of the majority". (If you don't believe me, this is a paraphrase of the first paragraph of section 3.2 of their report).

(ii) Then they thought "What do the majority know anyway, we'll listen to "orienteers with a wider knowledge and a greater involvement in some areas of orienteering , such as coaches, squad officials, top (sic) orienteers, and those competing abroad".

Are we twigging something here? These last three categories are nothing but pseudonyms for one thing - yup, Elite, Elite, Elite. And because the FWP found dissatisfaction amongst these already pampered prima donnas, "we cannot ignore their dissatisfaction, despite the majority being content....We must address the weaknesses without adversely affecting the satisfaction of the majority."

If that were truly the effect of what the FWP have achieved, then I, for one, would not be hammering away at this keyboard now. I actually have no quarrel with the principle of separation of the elite so long as it doesn't spoil the fun for the rest of us. They can have their subsidised trips abroad, their exclusive training camps, their beloved Short Races and even their "Hagaby type loop races" (no, I don't know what they are either but the FWP apparently does because they recommend their introduction). When I start to get agitated is when they gate-crash our party and expect us to stop our games so they can play theirs.

I suspect that the FWP are nothing more than closet-elitists masquerading as representatives of the rest of us. Their starting point is the belief that the elite are so exceptional and superior that they should not have to degrade themselves, associating themselves with the likes of you and me or, heaven forbid, competing alongside us. No, they should have their own championships separate from the rest of us and this should hijack the title of the British Championships. We are to be left competing in the National Championships - so that there is no possibility of confusion between the two (?). I say "we" but in fact it is not "we" at all, because the poor old M and W21s are to be completely disenfranchised in this Brave New Set-up - there is no provision in the new National Champs for your average M/W21; if you're not elite, then, tough, you might as well take up tidlywinks.

The FWP haven't even started yet; it gets worse. The new National championships are in fact the old British Championships including the Relays, but whereas the elite must have their champs on the best terrain available, the hoi polloi is to be content with merely "good" terrain - after all we wouldn't be capable of appreciating the best terrain, it would be only wasted on us. This could result in certain areas being reserved for exclusive elite use and the pleasure denied to the majority. Of course the proles will be expected to organise these additional championships but it will be such a privilege to be in some small way of service to these superior beings.

Not content with introducing apartheid into the sport, the FWP go on to propose a shortened racing season with (six) National Races taking place in February to June.

(As an aside here, I think that this phrase "racing season" gives an illuminating insight into the strange and distantly viewed world inhabited by the elite and, for that matter, the FWP. Whatever it is we (or "they") do for the second half of the year, it is not "race". You apparently do not try your hardest from July to January in case you exhaust yourself for the remaining six months. From now on I shall have the perfect excuse for lousy runs in the second half of the year: I'm saving myself for the "racing" season).

Back to the plot. There are any number of objections to this recommendation but here's three to be going on with:

- It is completely impractical. When have there ever been six National events between February and May? Come to that, when was the last time that we had a full compliment of National Events as planned throughout the year anyway? In the real world, National events require massive planning and resources and do not take place when the FWP would like them to but when the relevant landowners let them.
- It is undesirable. It would exclude any number of perfectly acceptable National Events purely by reason of falling in the "wrong" part of the year. The New Forest November Classic springs to mind. National Events have taken place in the second half of the year in the Lake District, in Wales, in Scotland and there is no sustainable reason why they should not continue to do so. (Did someone say next year's New Forest British may not take place till the autumn?).
- It removes necessary variety and quality from the orienteering calendar. The second part of the year is always uneven at the best of times, no JK or British, few weekends away, a dwindling number of events as the year expires. The prospect of a National event or two or three can make all the difference; Blidworth Woods could be almost tolerable if the prospect of a National Event on Eskdale loomed as it will later this year.

The acceptance of these proposals would result in a grotesque distortion of emphasis within the sport, the interests of the many sacrificed for the benefit of the (very) few. Can the FWP seriously pretend that these proposals "value the long term health of the sport" and do not "adversely affect the satisfaction of the majority". I think not.

EVENT REPORT

Weston Heath - 16th February 1997

OK, let's try to be positive.

1. It didn't rain as much as Suzanne Charlton said it would.
2. I wasn't the poor soul who struggled 50 metres up to the Start and then realised he'd left his map behind.
3. This wasn't Wakerley Woods.

Er, that's about it really. So what did I really think?

When you fork out your money for a badge event, there are one or two things that you're entitled to expect to distinguish the event from a run-of-the-mill colour-coded. One of these things is a pre-marked map. Now there may be very good reasons why there was no pre-marked map at this event, but, if so:

1. There was no reduction in the entry fees to reflect this (not to mention the fact that we were running on a 1992 map).
2. There was no advance publicity of it prior to entry.
3. There was no explanation in the event information sheet either.

(There may be an explanation in the results but it's a bit late then). To make matters worse, those courses with second master maps were not given a clean second blank map to use. Had pre-marked maps been supplied, longer course runners would inevitably have ended up with two maps, so why should deployment of a master map system make any difference? Expecting at least this minimum convention, I failed to bring a different coloured pen with me; trying to make sense of the west side of the map with a dozen and a half red hand-scribed circles on it was no fun - and that was without map corrections. (Come to think of it, the last master map badge event I went to was another West Midlands event, at Nesscliffe; maybe this is the norm there).

This was a map which cried out for pre-marked courses. When the feature in question is the only boulder in the circle, it will be pretty clear where the control is hung, but when the control description is "East Spur" or "Middle Re-entrant", and the circle is crammed with contour lines, veg boundaries, rock features etc. as on Weston Heath then no matter how carefully you mark your circle, you end up, approaching the control itself, interpreting your interpretation of the planners intentions - east of which spur? middle of which re-entrants? As a result I spent a very tired quarter of an hour hunting for a control on a spur where there was never going to be one in the first place. Now, I know that the potential for this sort of problem crops up wherever there are master maps but this just emphasises the point made earlier - master maps are for colour-coded events and colour-coded events are not held on complex areas like Weston Heath, last used for a National Event.

The first part of my course was well planned and almost every leg had genuine route choice of the shall-I-take-the-straight-line-up-and-down-the-re-entrants type or the longer contour-round variety. The problem was that there is not enough of Weston Heath, or certainly not the bit we used, to get a 6.9 km course without re-treading much same ground as on the first half. This resulted in much crossing and re-crossing of the western half of the map and, unfortunately, the same contour lines. (The course was billed as having 320 metres of climb but I counted 450 metres on the routes I took on my largely accurate run). The planner seemed to run out of inspiration in the second half too; most control sites were sited at or near the top of the massive, craggy spurs and cliffs of Weston Heath and navigation consisted of not much more than losing the hard-earned climb you had just gained, contouring along to another similar spur or re-entrant and dragging yourself back up to a similar altitude as the previous control. In the end, I just lost interest in the repetition of this meaningless and tiresome exercise and actually became a little bored by the whole process.

The course lengths seemed modest enough - 6.9 km for an M40L - but the reality was that straight line routes were hopelessly impractical, resulting in actual course lengths being up to 50% longer than billed. All finishers that I spoke to unanimously agreed that the planners had failed to take the physical and topological nature of the terrain into account and had erred on the long side. There was much discussion of whether it was better to have scaled the heights of another craggy re-entrant or waded through the sloughs to the south of the map which at least my course avoided altogether.

NEW and CHANGED MEMBERS

New BOF Members:

John Fuel and Carol Brammer, 83 Leman Street, Derby DE22 3UY. Tel: (01332) 363431.
(Family members)

James Burke, 34 Willson Road, Littleover, Derby DE23. Tel: (01332) 760326. (Junior member).

Paul, Hilde and Julia Greenfield, 70 Hallam Way, West Hallam DE7 6LE Tel: (0115) 9327881.
(Formerly local members)

Deb Ryde, Lea House, Kiln Lane, Parwich, Ashbourne DE6 1QB. (Former local).

Change of club:

Amanda James, 34 Gallery Lane, Holymoorside, Chesterfield, S42 7ES

Change of Address:

Chris Bourne, 224 Smedley Street, Matlock, DE4 3JD.

Coaching at Home - 5th April 1997

For those of all ages up to Light Green standard. The session organised by Ann-Marie Priston, Mike Godfree, Randal Macdonald and Val Johnson will last from 10.30 am to 12.30 pm. Meet in the lay-by on the A6 at the North-west-end of the area.

Names to Ann-Marie on 01773 - 856824 as soon as possible please.

Coaching Away - 26th April 1997

Tone up those orienteering skills - FREE - the day before the National in the Lake District on a one day training course.

Professional coaching by Andrew Kelly in intricate south Lakeland areas (Lough Rigg, Ambleside, Great Tower side of Windermere) on Saturday, 26th April. Exercises to improve Bronze to Championship standards in contour navigation, route choosing and any other skills requested by you beforehand. Two sessions (9.30 - 12.30 and 1.30 - 4.30) with all maps and fees paid for by DVO. So, how can you miss a great opportunity to practise in quality terrain?

Contact Ann-Marie Priston on 01773 - 856824 if you would like to go or are just thinking about it or with your training suggestions. Accommodation (church hall) may be found if there is the demand. A detailed timetable of events will appear in February/March.

DVO Open Meeting - Wednesday 12th March 1997

7.30 pm - 10.00 pm at Belper Sports Centre

Despite what you may have read or heard elsewhere, the next Open Meeting will be held on Wednesday 12th March, starting *promptly* at 7.30 pm - this means that runners will have to start earlier than usual if they wish to attend the meeting.

After a *brief* meeting to deal with any Club business, the rest of the evening will be available to Team Leaders and Deputy Leaders organising the British Relay Championships. This will allow us to run through the whole of the procedures for the relays.

Anyone attending the Open Meeting is welcome to stay on and participate in the run through (and there is a bar!).

If you have not yet confirmed your availability to help on 17 and 18 May, please do so with your Team Leader as soon as possible so that we can finalise teams and send out instructions.

Ranald and Viv Macdonald
Co-organisers, British Relay Championships 1997

*The following Open Meeting will be
on Wednesday 11 June (venue to
be advised).*

DVO WEEKEND ABROAD

It's voting time again for the weekend abroad - Thursday 30 October to Sunday 2nd November, subject to confirmation of half-term (the Karrimor is on 25/26 October).

These figures are estimates, excluding insurance, based on three nights bed and breakfast in a 2/3 star hotel and flight.

The verdict last year was that Barcelona was great partly because it was further south and warmer, so I've concentrated on those (but not all) further south.

<i>Destination</i>	<i>Airport</i>	<i>Cost</i>
Dublin	Birmingham	£207
Florence	Manchester	£305
Lisbon	Manchester	£352
Madrid	Manchester	£249
Munich	Birmingham	£349
"	Manchester	£315
Rome	Birmingham	£323
"	Manchester	£303
Seville	Manchester	£349

Please could you let me know your preferences by the end of April.

Viv Macdonald

(01629 734307)

CompassSport Cup - the big one

Having disposed of HOC in the last round, DVO now takes on the might of NOC but the world will have to wait until Sunday, 11th May to learn the outcome of this battle of the Titans. The venue is the OD area of Hay Wood, south of Coventry. A three line whip will be in operation - no bunking off to any other event as some truants did on the last occasion

ODDS AND SODS

Summer League '97 Derek Gate will once again be organising this, on Friday evenings between May and July. Volunteers are needed to organise events. Please contact Derek on 01283 585244.

Dates for your Diary

Saturday, 5th April. Coaching on Crich Chase. See elsewhere in Newstrack.

Saturday, 26th April. Coaching in the Lakes. Ditto.

Saturday, 7th June. Hartington Flower Footpath Relay.

Saturday, 14th June. Club Champs, including the new bit of Longshaw, followed by picnic tea.

Up and Coming

Permanent courses for Darley Park (both sides of the river!) and Chaddo Park.

Summer Wednesday night hash runs.

The Second Annual Three trigs Run.....in September.

Watch this space.....

Sports Personality of the Month Most of us are used to the feeling of running round in circles on an O course. Most of us only have ourselves to blame. At Badgerslade, Sue Russell had a better excuse than most - she'd brought two left-footed O-shoes with her.

Honourable mention to John Hopper, firstly for taking his car to travel the 400 metres from Ten Pin Bowling to Pizza Hut, and then getting lost on the way.

Good Orienteering costs less at DVO Are DVO's colour-coded events the cheapest in the country? This thought occurred to me after the CompassSport Cup sally into Walton Chasers country. Val turned up at the map sales car clutching what she thought would be a perfectly adequate tenner for two adults and three juniors, only to be told that it would be £10.50, thank you very much. An enquiry about family entry fees was met with a grudging reduction to £10.00. A DVO family entry costs £5.00, seniors £2.00, juniors £1.00. WCH charges seniors £3.00, juniors £1.50 with no official family entry. No wonder DVO events attract so many.

Congratulations to DVO members Dave and Sal Chaffey and Neil and Julie Addison on their recent contributions to DVO's 2006 W10 relay team. Who's going to provide the third member?

Stop Press

Not a lot for DVO to shout about at the East Midland Champs held at Wakerley Woods on Sunday, 23rd Feb but the following distinguished themselves by winning their respective A or Long courses:

W12A Emma Whitehead
M21L John Duckworth
M45L John Hopper
M55A Dave Walker

M12A Matthew Dickinson
M40L John Hurley
M50L Steve Buckley

Congratulations to the above. Several DVO members also featured in the Gallopen awards. Unlike those who chose to go to Tintwhistle Knarr, we stayed dry - and enjoyed well-planned courses which avoided the worst of the brambles. Well done, LEI. Bet you never thought you'd see those words together in Newstrack.

FIXTURES

2nd March - LOG Bourne Woods C-C Event . TF/079204

Ian Durrant (01522) 532245

9th March - NOC Strawberry Hill C-C Event, Mansfield. SK/572592

Abi Weeds

16th March - WCH Brindley and Fair Oak Badge Event, Cannock. SK/003155

David Schofield, 6 Elm Avenue, Walton On the Hill, Stafford ST17

ONA (01785) 604472. CD: 27/2/97. Fees: £5.50/£2.50. Chq: Walton

Chasers. NO EOD.

MIDLAND CHAMPS

22nd March - LEI Bradgate Park C-C Event, Leicester.

Paula Baldry (0116) 267 3468

23rd March - HOC Clent Hills C-C Event, Halesowen. SO/938807

Phil Presland (0121) 4545365

28th-31st March - JK, Cornwall

6th April - DVO Crich Chase C-C Event, Ambergate.

Neil Forrest (01332) 332641

13th April - London Marathon

20th April - WCH Beaudesert C-C Event, Cannock. SK/050125

Craig Barnes (01543) 505394

26th April - DVO Training, South Lakes.

27th April - LOC Holme Fell National Event, Coniston

11th May - Hay Wood. CompassSport Cup Match v NOC.

No other details yet. Look out for these in EMEWS.

17th May - British Champs, Clumber Park

18th May - British Relay Champs, Chatsworth

(Have YOU volunteered to help yet?)

24th-26th May - Springtime in Shropshire,