

## Controller's musing after the event, decision time:

Well I hope you are all glad to be back to some orienteering, I am, and it was good to see everyone at Jennyfield safely taking part as either a helper or a competitor. This is was the latest of a string of events that Claro has staged and I must applaud Claro for providing a good stream of orienteering activities over the past year. A small club, but an impressively active club. This event came together very quickly and I feel both Richard (Organiser) and Ruth(Planner) filled these roles superbly.

As we hopefully get back into the swing of both putting on and staging events, there are a number of things I think worthy of comment:

Two competitors came to me at the event suggesting that the SI boxes hadn't been set in Air mode. Subsequent checks found that the battery inside their dibber had failed and in need of replacement. How many more had batteries that are on the point of failing which could lead to mispunching and disappointment? Please can I ask all owners of SIAC dibbers to check the state of the battery in their device at their next event. My own dibber is in the process of being replaced following making this check.

Control 220 at Jennyfield was the centre of two issues, it was visited by courses A,B,C &D. The first concern to me was the high number of mispunches, 9 out of 129 visits to that control. All being on courses B,C & D spread out throughout the day. Any suggestion that this SI box was at fault has been checked out, both the battery and firmware appear to be correct and in line with the other boxes that were used. Five of the mispunches were using SAIC, the box itself cannot be interrogated for these type of punches to confirm a visit. For the other four who would have had to put their dibber into the SI box none have been registered in the box itself.

While one of these mispunchers admitted to missing out the control, what could be the cause?

- Were they distracted by the noise of the noise of the lawn mower next to the control by the friendly lady enthralled by the event outside her house that meant the audible signal was lost?
- Did they miss out that control? This control was on the straight line between the previous and next control, having diverted around the path they would have come in close to the next control.
- Another thought is that it was a dog leg to physically get to the control so there was no need to go past the control and on to the next, maybe those with SAIC didn't get quite close enough.

I can only speculate. I do not like this situation, but have decided that I have no good reason to void this control and so all the mispunches at this control will stand. Sorry to those involved, I know it is an uncomfortable feeling.

We appear to be back to the issues surrounding the crossing of uncrossable boundaries in urban situations. The symbols for what are crossable and uncrossable are an important part of urban orienteering and should be something you can quickly recognise. In the middle of a race this can be confusing but if you intend to cross something that could easily be defined as uncrossable then check back on the map first. There were several transgressions witnessed at the event that have been reported back to me, and in some cases reported by the competitors themselves having realised their error and expecting to be disqualified.

The map extract below is a leg 206 to 220 that was common to courses A, B, C and D. When looking at this route for the first time, the eye is immediately drawn to the green dashed route, a mere 100m in length, but this requires the crossing of an uncrossable wall on the southern side of the piece of open. If the eye does not first register this wall then running round to take a look should definitely lead the brain to ask, am I really allowed over there? A quick check should say no and an alternative route found. The alternative, and best legitimate route, from the previous control is the purple dashed line measured at 310m more than 300% longer than the green route.

If setting such legs is wrong on the basis of being too enticing to people to cross these types of boundary, then we are in peril of removing a key feature of urban orienteering. It would then become even more of a running race. I would suggest it is these sorts of control legs that you remember to discuss post race and not the ones that just demand good running speed.

Uncrossable boundaries are defined for many reasons, safety, private property, damage prevention are but a few. It has even been done in competitions to deliberately to create route choice. Please accept that they are not just deemed physically uncrossable by the mapper and therefore a parkour challenge. Please orienteer to the map, and if you make an error and cross one then declare yourself non-competitive. This is only the second urban that I have controlled, and the second time this sort of activity has been witnessed.

This leg, 206 to 220, is the only one where perpetrators can be identified as their split times are physically too fast for the distance needed to do the leg correctly. I have therefore taken the decision to disqualify those that can be seen to have transgressed, or admitted that they transgressed at this control. I do this in the hope that this begins to send out the correct message that it is not acceptable and has consequences. I do not wish to deter these people from orienteering, just from crossing uncrossable boundaries.

Enjoy your orienteering,

Quentin Harding, Claro

