

Urban Orienteering Subcommittee Report – November 2016

Orienteering Victoria Board Meeting

OVERALL STATUS	Business as usual
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ACTIVITIES & PLANS

1) Park Street winter participation rates

Attendances this winter were affected by unusually cold and wet weather.

The Tuesday night Series avoided most of the bad weather and showed a small increase in participation over the previous year. The Wednesday Autumn/Spring Series remains the largest series in participation numbers but has declined markedly in the last couple of years – this year this series was affected the most by the particularly cold and wet winter. Saturday "Cake O" remains popular but numbers were down by low turn-outs at venues like Cairnlea, Keysborough and Altona Meadows where we have started to try and attract western participants to the series. The lower attendance at these venues was expected and now the committee needs to assess if we continue to try and expand the series into the west.

An informal survey of participants who in recent years have reduced the number of events attended also indicates that travelling to events is becoming a lot more difficult and is influencing people's decisions on attending.

Series	Av attendance 2015	Av attendance 2016
Monday	49.1	44.3
Tuesday	62.4	65.7
Wednesday	83.8	74.3
Saturday	66.3	63

It is recognised that key to growth of Park Street is the need to extend the advertising of the events, and alter the style of advertising to appeal to younger people. The members of the Urban Orienteering committee are both already fully committed with other work and are of the wrong age group to take on this task by themselves. Help from outside the committee is required.

2) Park Street Melways sponsorship and volunteer recognition

Park Street Orienteering has enjoyed the sponsorship of Melways up to this season, but with the declining Melways sales we have been advised that they have now withdrawn their sponsorship.

The sponsorship has been in the form of Melway map books which have been distributed for volunteer recognition. The committee now needs to look at an alternative form of recognition, such as the provision of season tickets which would be about a \$700 reduction in levies if Orienteering Victoria was prepared to forego them. This will be a topic on the agenda of the next committee meeting.

3) Sprint into Spring update:

This year's series is proceeding very successfully with 4 of the 7 events having been completed. The series has attracted a new group of course setters this year (we have not yet had a course setter set two SiS events) with the course setters being Michael Hubbert (BK), Dion Keech (MF), Steven O'Connell (BK), Simon Rouse (DR), Toby Cooper (EU), Richard Goonan (BG) and David Brownridge (BG).

There are three new maps within the series: Keilor Downs Schools, Ted van Geldermalsen (YVOC map); Bendigo South East College, Richard Goonan (BGOC map) and New Argus, Neil Barr (BGOC map).

Attendances are generally tracking higher than last year although we have not been experiencing as good weather. There was a dip in numbers for event 2 which experienced atrocious weather. The organisers were amazed that so many came out and braved the conditions.

Attendance comparison		
Event	2015	2016
1	129	162
2	157	118
3	126	146
4	129	148
5	162	
6	128	
7	N/A	

The most popular course is the Mo Farah course attracting both the top orienteers and those who want a long course – including walkers. Sally Pearson is the next most popular with the Usain Bolt course remaining as a good entry level course.

The event jerseys are proving to be an increasing drawcard for the series. Parents are commenting that their children are insisting on coming so that they can continue to be competitive for the jerseys and the many comments around the live results are proving that adults are just as keen to win a jersey.

There are 3 events remaining, with the two in Bendigo to be SI Air events. As such these events will be slightly more expensive to enter.

4) SI Air events

Most SI Air sprint events up to now in Australia have been restricted to elite entrants only (excluding Jim Russell's Bendigo2day). The SiS team decided that it was time to extend this to all entrants for the last two SiS events, and following Bendigo Orienteers approval, extended to include the Victorian Sprint Championships. AussieOGear has provided a discounted rate for the 3 days, plus with additional sponsorship from SiS, competitors will only pay a maximum of \$4 for the SI Air hire. This cost being built into the entry fees.

4) Sprint into Spring 2017 planning:

Feedback from participants is that they would like the Sprint into Spring events to continue in their current format. We have even already had one volunteer for course setting.

The current small team has organised this event for the last four years (including this year). It is time for the team to be extended. Ted van Geldermalsen has been a key figure in the team acting as Technical Advisor and coaching new course setters. Ted wishes to have a less intensive role and we are seeking people to share the roles of lead technical advisor and coaching new course setters (this could be multiple people). We request support in sourcing this additional support from qualified people.

The jerseys have increasingly proved to be a drawcard of this series. The cost of the jerseys for the last two years was covered by grant money plus a generous sponsorship by DirtyD in New Zealand. SiS would like to continue with the same jerseys for next year but will need the support and sponsorship of OV to enable this. The committee will seek quotes from DirtyD based on both a 1 year and 2 year supply and see if they will extend their sponsorship.

5) Victorian Sprint Championships and Levies:

This year's Victorian Sprint Championships will be held in Bendigo on a Neil Barr map, Camp Hill. This is an iconic area in the middle of Bendigo taking in Roslyn Park, a sports arena and 2 schools. It has taken a lot effort by Nigel McGuckian and Neil Barr for us to have access to this venue and we are very appreciative of the effort.

We are also appreciative that Bendigo has undertaken to hold this event at nil monetary return to their club, given the high level of fees that will be incurred.

Championship Levies

To run a sprint event at a state level, the cost can be considerably higher than that of a bush based event. This is because hire cost are often higher and additional costs of traffic management and road closure costs often incurred. Map costs are often higher as well.

The largest cost incurred is the combined OV and OA event levy which are disproportionately high for this type of event.

From the experience from the last two Victorian Championships, it is obvious that the benefit of a club running these events is marginal at best. Clubs are rightly questioning if they should run this event.

The committee requests that OV reassess the levies placed on this event and asks OA to also reassess their levy costs.

If not the committee cannot guarantee that this event will continue past 2018, as clubs are now unwilling to invest in an event where they will see no return. The ultimate result of not reassessing the levy therefore could be to lose the levy income completely.

Bendigo Orienteering club have highlighted in a recent communication the following:

In the past in Victoria, clubs have invested in the cost of making new maps and then the maps have to somehow earn the cost of their development back for the club by using the 'new' maps for events that attract large numbers of participants. With levies now set so, there is less chance that clubs make enough money from these events to cover mapping costs. Bendigo only make money for mapping through hosting many local events on our maps. It's almost at the stage where our club doesn't want to host championship events because of the participation levies. Many of our members won't pay the higher cost of participating.

This message is not unique.

ISSUES, CONCERNS AND RISKS – as listed in the report

Margi Freemantle & Debbie Dodd
Co-Chairs of Urban Orienteering Committee