

SPRINT INTO SPRING SERIES

2014 REVIEW REPORT



Introduction

The Annual 'Sprint Into Spring' series was developed to fill a gap in the Orienteering Victoria calendar when the traditional Saturday events ceased in late September/early October. Sprint Orienteering is a rapidly growing form of Orienteering with its popularity increasing all over the world. This format provides a safe environment for families to participate in (with no streets featured on the courses) and caters for people of different abilities. The series targeted at more advanced and senior competitors with the difficult Mo Farah courses, moderate runners aimed at the Sally Pearson course, and the Usain Bolt course provided a platform for juniors, families and beginners to experience the sport of Orienteering. The time to complete each course ranges from 15-45 minutes depending on the pace of the competitor, ensuring the 2 hour competition window is adequate time to complete the course. The Series is run over the spring months from October to November.

Target Audience

High performance orienteers: looking to hone their skills leading into major competitions including the World Cup and Oceania Championships. A top quality field of national and international representatives took part in the series, and made up approx 25% of total competitors.

Regular Park and Street orienteers: looking for an event to participate in during the spring months on Saturday afternoons. This series provided them with a chance to develop decision-making skills and improve their times as each race went by. It provided a really good lead-up series for the state Sprint Championships and there was a strong flow through from the series into the Champs at this level. This group made up approx 50% of the total.

Families: The outdoor adventure activity appeals to families who want to enjoy a safe active event together.

Juniors: This series provided an opportunity for children to develop navigation skills navigation in a closed environment, and develop confidence to compete without being shadowed or assisted. It included kids aspiring to make schools teams and/or perform well in Schools Championships. Families and juniors made up approx 25% of the total.

Project Officer

The Project Officer's role was to promote the Sprint Into Spring series, ensuring it was successfully run and attracted a high participation level.

The tasks completed included administration duties such as:

- Organising for advertising materials to be distributed around Melbourne before the start of the series.
- Purchasing and organising the design of the Jersey Singlets and certificates for the overall stage winners and placegetters.
- Promotion of the Series via submissions to running websites, newspapers, online groups, O News and social media.

- Inputting results data promptly after each race and writing a race report.
- Liaising with course organisers to ensure the event was on track and answering or referring any questions they may have.

On event day, tasks included:

- Welcoming newcomers; introducing first time participants to this unfamiliar format, including how the SI stick works, and explaining map legends and control descriptions.
- Ensuring noticeboards displayed the results including the current jersey holders.
- Completing any odd jobs that needed doing such as setting up and packing down.

Promotional Activities

Over 2000 Sprint Into Spring flyers were distributed at universities, libraries, some gyms (most wouldn't accept outside advertising) and orienteering events.

The Sprint Into Spring Series was listed on online running calendars, in Runners World magazine, and in local newspapers, and event details were posted on Facebook on the Sprint into Spring Page.

A regular news item was prepared for the weekly O-News electronic bulletins.

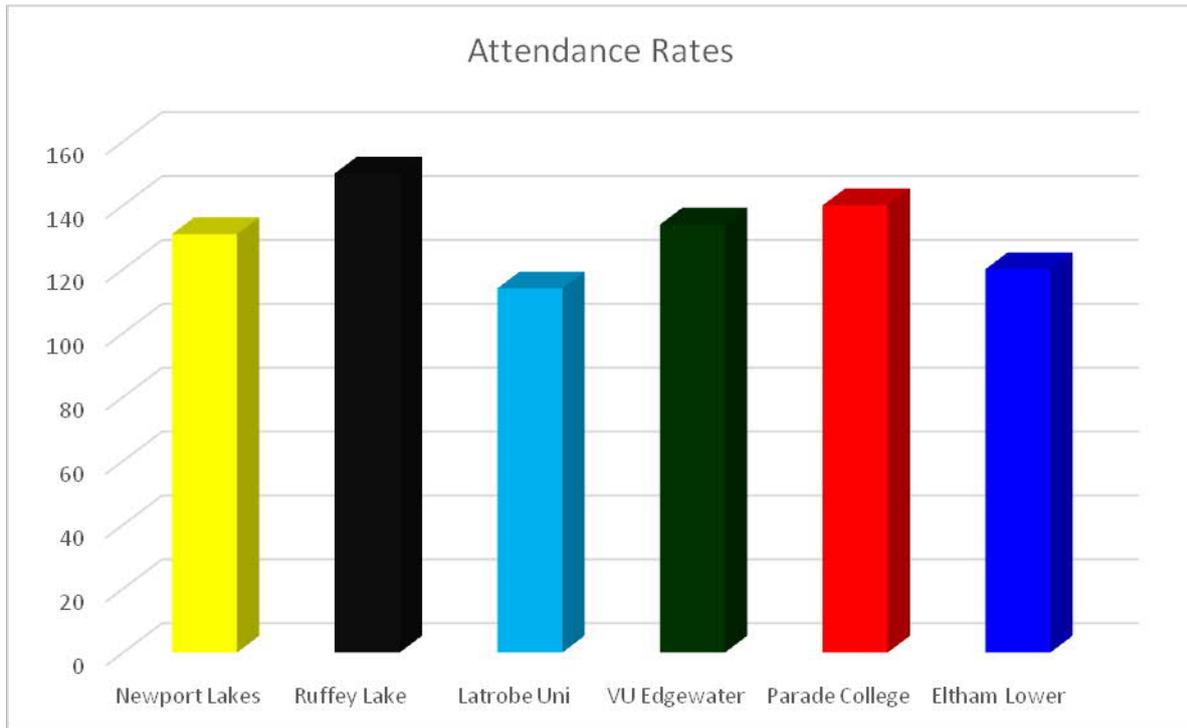
Participation Statistics

Participation from 2013 to 2014 increased by approximately 32%. The Sally Pearson course has become more popular with more runners opting to move down from Mo Farah. Mo Farah had an average of 63 runners, Sally Pearson 49 and Usain Bolt 19. The 6 events held this year were well attended and if it weren't for a couple of hot Saturdays which affected attendance rates for Latrobe Uni and Eltham Lower Park, it could have been even higher. The graph below illustrates attendance at each event.

Participation increase was due to a few factors, including increase in existing orienteers participating in the Sprint Into Spring Series, as well as extra family members, colleagues and newcomers.

The loyalty factor was also very high with over 50 series tickets purchased. There were quite a number of people who came along to "try it out", who kept returning each week (even those who didn't initially buy a series ticket).

Competitor feedback was overwhelmingly positive. Organisers presented a smooth, relaxed but professional atmosphere. Touch screen technology was successfully used to streamline the entry process, significantly reducing volunteer workload. Electronic timing systems allowed interim results to be displayed and refreshed constantly, and official results and split times were always posted online before the organisers left the event sites.



SWOT Analysis

Strengths

- Participation was consistent across the series averaging 131 for each event allowing for variable factors such as weather.
- The dedicated band of (6) clubs and volunteers provided terrific courses.
- It catered for all levels of orienteering skills.
- Sprint Into Spring Series is now established on the Orienteering Victoria Calendar.
- Pre-entries and touch screen entry worked well.
- Attracted high calibre competitors.
- New rules established in light of 2013 worked well with regards to forbidden features and Jersey eligibility.
- Established a social media presence on Facebook.

Weaknesses

- Newcomers were attracted to the events but retention rate could be improved.
- Competitor jersey scoring systems weren't completely clear before the series.
- Need to increase number of juniors running.

Opportunity

- Capitalise on the increased popularity of the series in 2015.
- Promote more heavily to (primary) schools (perhaps run a schools category if enough interest).
- Use and rotate current maps (to decrease mapping costs).
- Promote current Jersey holder at each race by making them wear a sticker or tag.

Threats

- Other sports which are on Saturdays (Cricket, Athletics, Tennis, Basketball).
- Other Fun Runs or Charity walks.

Promotional Costs:

Sprint Into Spring Flyers \$150.00

Sprint Into Spring Certificates (36) \$54.45

Sprint Into Spring 2014 Jersey Singlets \$346.50 (Bought last year)

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