

I was living in Somerset and running in the Quantocks about 4 times per week, so I offered to do something helpful and visit the control sites of the QOFL event 1. Little did I know that QO were desperate to find a controller for the event, and I ended up being the controller despite the short timescale and the fact I did not feel competent as I am rather out of touch. This is the first time I have been involved in the organization of an event (beyond helping on the day) for a little over 20 years, before the introduction of electronic punching, GPS, Purple Pen (course planning software), internet, mobile phones things have moved on a long way!

But when most of Jeff's blue marker tapes appeared exactly where I would have put them myself, I got the feeling he knew how to do it, and trusting in the experience of the other members of the team, I agreed to be the controller. It was not ideal; the controller and planner should first get together and agree on course lengths and some general strategies, but Jeff had gone rather too far with the courses and getting him to replan them was not realistic, in any case Jeff came up with convincing reasons for rejecting my suggestions: too similar to previous events on the same area and evidence from leg times / routegadget info relating to previous events that on long legs people would charge round on the paths with what Jeff described as "devastating results". Since this is a previous criticism of my courses (ok for elites who can charge confidently thru the forest; for everyone else that's a path run ie Ben Chesters and probably Will Kromhout would be most of the minority of people who would go straight) I gave him the benefit of the doubt. It would also have been good to build some more cairns and hides, as the area is short of point features. I would have liked to tell Jeff to draw a circle anywhere he wanted then see whether there was suitable material to build a hide or cairn but it was too late.

In the end I felt the blue times were a little on the short side, but the only serious criticism was a control on a depression on the Yellow course, which was not as visible as it should have been from the nearby path. BOF guidelines specify that the kite (or banner) should be visible from the path system, and whereas adults could see it, not children. In the optimum place, I could see the top of the punching unit from the path whilst I was doing pressups, with my head arm's length above the path so it's fair to say the young lady who was complaining could have looked a bit harder, all the same, the kite should have been more visible, so an apology is due. I wonder whether other yellow course competitors lost time?