Guide For Course Setters

In an ideal world each NPT event would have a Course Setter, a Vetter, an Event Administrator and a Computer Operator. The job of the Event Administrator is to arrange that the gear required for the start/finish/assembly area makes it to the event and is set up in time for first starts at 5pm. The job of the Computer Operator is to set up the SI timing software prior to the event, transport the computer equipment to the event and then run the system at the event. Thus, on the competition day the Course Setter should only have to concentrate on making sure all of the controls are out and in the correct location. This guide is for the Course Setter, to aid him/her in the planning and preparation for a NPT event.

Start Location

The first decision you will have to make is the start location. The series coordinator will need this for the Park Tour brocher which comes out in early February (at the latest) so as to be available at the concluding Street O events. Things to consider in making this decision:

- Is there plenty of room for parking?
- Is there some sort of shelter from inclement weather, or room to set up the gazeebos?
- Can people mill around without being a public nuisance?

To a lesser extent you might also want to consider if there is access to facilities such as water, toilets, playground etc.

Setting The Courses

For the NPT there are to be two courses, a long course and a short course. The long course should be in the range of 4km - 6km in length and the short course should be around half the length of the long course (i.e. 1.5km to 3km). Since some of the early SI sticks can only handle 30 controls this is the upper limit on the number of controls that can be used on any course.

Because park orienteering events are held in parks the terrain is "fast". Thus the aim for the course setter is to set courses that will require lots of quick decisions. Unless the area you are using has lots of buildings the navigation itself won't be too difficult and so the courses should have plenty of changes of direction. (Of course you will have to balance this with having the course on the map being readable.) Another good idea is to have some longer legs followed immediately by some short sharp legs. Other ideas that you might consider:

- If possible, have at least some legs with route choice options
- Have the first control so that competitors waiting at the start area only get only a general idea of which direction to head.
- Have a spectator control at some point through the course (i.e. have the course come back in view of the start/assembly area).

The usual way in which course setting is done is to begin with planning the courses on the map. By doing your initial planning on the map you will be seeing the orienteering challenges of the course in the same way as the competitor will initially see them. The software that you will use to produce the courses is the course setting component of OCAD. You should already have the OCAD file of the map that you will be using. If you are unfamiliar with this software you should speak to either the Mapping Officer or the Park Tour Coordinator. It is probably a good idea to use this software fairly early on in the process because it automatically calculates course lengths for you. The software will want to know what numbers to label the controls. Talk to the Club's Gear Steward about which controls you will be given. At this stage we recommend that you should use less than 35 (field) controls for the entire event.

Remember that it is quite often the case that the long course will need to be spread over two versions of the map (i.e. printed double-sided) for the course to be readable.

Once the initial planning on the map has been done you will then need to go to the competition area and visit each control site. Firstly you will need to check that the control feature still exists. If it does and you are happy with the site (e.g. the control can be locked to something if it is in a very public location), then hang some tape on the site and determine a suitable control description. (Taping the sites enables the Vetter to run the course and check it well before the event actually happens and reduces errors when putting out the controls on competition day.) Things to check about the control site include:

- Can the control be locked to something if it is in a very public location
- Will the control be seen from a long way away when running to it from the previous control. Competitors should have to navigate to the control as much as possible. At the other extreme don't hide the controls. Competitors who have succesfully navigated to the centre of the control circle and have read the control description should see the control.

While you are out doing this field work also keep an eye open for map inaccuracies and updates. Let the Mapping Officer know of any such corrections that need to be made so that the map can be kept up to date.

Following the field work phase, you will need to finalise the courses on the map. Check that each control is centred on the control feature you have taped. Also make sure that the control circles and lines joining the controls do not obscure any features on the map that are necessary for accurate navigation. If they do, use the relevant tools in Purple Pen to cut pieces out of the control circle or joining lines. You may also need to bend joining lines. (Before each season's series we aim to have a course setting training session where we will show you how to do these sorts of things.)

At this stage you will also have to finalise the control descriptions. You should produce control descriptions for both courses in English and using the standard orienteering symbols. This can be done in Purple Pen (and will be covered in the training session).

It may not always be possible but we strongly encourage you to print out your own versions of both courses and their associated control descriptions and to have someone else run the courses. An independent check on the courses and descriptions gives you much more confidence in your courses.

Printing the Map
The planning stage of course setting needs to be completed early enough to give time to get the maps printed and then passed on to you. Printing is done by the Club's Printing Officer on the club's colour laser printer. Currently the Printing Officer is Geoff Todkill. Geoff's instructions are as follows:

- Email the course setting file to Geoff at todkill@hunterlink.net.au.
- If you haven't already discussed with Geoff also include in the email any map corrections you need necessary.
- Allowing at least 2 or 3 days printing time, get the email to Geoff in sufficient time that the maps can be passed on to you at the event on the week prior to your event. If required, control descriptions can also be printed. It would be essential to contact either Geoff or Cheryle (49585920), in advance, to arrange details.

Obtaining the Gear
It is the Course Setter's job to get the required stands (with SI units attached), flags and locks so that they can be put out on the afternoon of the event. Usually this equipment is picked up at the event prior. If this is not possible then it is up to the Course Setter to contact the club's Gear Steward,

(currently Peter Newton, bap1551@cnn.net.au) to make alternative arrangements. This needs to be done early enough that arrangements can be made that will be suitable to all parties involved (i.e. don't leave it until midnight on the night before the event. That might suit you but probably not the Gear Steward!!)

Risk Management

This section needs work!

To Do List for the Day

While it shouldn't be the Course Setter's job to set up the assembly area for the event, here is a checklist of things that should be done.

- Put up the Orienteering banner in a highly visible location
- Synchronise the clocks
- Set up a competitor pre-registration table, including control descriptions, pens, block tags and one of the small clocks.
- Set up the registration table with the box of blocks next to it. Also have a container for competitor's keys.
- Set up a table for the SI gear.
- Set up a start area with start clock and maps.
- Put out the notice board including general instructions and instructions specific for your event (if applicable)
- Set up finish table with small clock and your answers ready to mark returned control sheets
- Put up a blank copy of the map
- Put up the rope to hold the results blocks
- Put out water and cups
- Make sure the first-aid kit is accessible