

Supporting TrailO

4. TempO stations and PreO timed controls management at full-scale TrailO events



Introduction

Both TempO stations and PreO timed controls operate in exactly the same way. Six control markers (flags) are set out in the terrain; at TempO stations there are usually 4 or 5 tasks and can include zero (Z) answers, with a penalty per wrong answer of 30 seconds. At PreO timed controls there are usually 3 tasks, Z-answer tasks are not allowed and the penalty per wrong answer is 60 seconds.

The normal staffing at a TempO station or PreO timed control is three marshals: the recorder plus two timing-officials, but stations can be staffed by only two marshals.

The competitors are held at a stop point some distance away, from which they cannot see the control terrain and flags or hear the previous competitor giving their answers. They are brought forward in turn – either called forward from the stop point by a marshal (shouting “Next!”) or brought forward behind an umbrella.

Competitors sit in a chair located precisely over the decision point. For wheelchair users the chair is placed to one side and the wheelchair manoeuvred into position in exactly the same place, so that wheelchair users have exactly the same view as those who are seated.

Greeting the competitor

The marshals stand in front of the chair to block the view of the terrain and flags as the competitor approaches, sits and settles. As the competitor arrives, the competitor control card is handed over to a marshal, who finds the competitor’s name on the recording sheet.

The marshals will assume that the competitor will speak their answers. It is the competitor’s responsibility to let the marshals know if they prefer to point instead of speaking. A pointing board is made available at the station, and can be placed on a trestle or table in front of the competitor, or in another suitable way. Very few competitors use this method of giving answers.

One of the marshals standing in front of the chair asks:

“Loose or Bound?”

The competitor is handed the set of maps with a cover sheet, loose or bound as requested. The map sets have prominent sequence numbering that need to be checked by the marshals before being handed to the competitor, AND can be checked by the competitor before timing starts.

Pointing out the terrain

Then the competitor is introduced to the terrain with a standard routine. The marshals step aside and one of them points out the flags by saying, not too quickly:

“There are 6 flags: Alpha, Bravo, Charlie, Delta, Echo, Foxtrot.”

The marshal should stand very close and at the level of the competitor’s eyes when pointing out the flags. Sometimes flags can be difficult to see quickly and easily (shadow, flags at very different heights or distances, etc.). In these cases, the marshal shall add additional information to precisely indicate flag positions to competitors, such as: “far away”, “beside ...”, “behind ...” Whatever is said, the marshal’s statement shall be the same for all competitors.



Right: Marshals at a TempO station with one pointing out the kites in the terrain to a competitor.

If the competitor is still unable to see any of the flags, the competitor can ask the marshal, but only after the start of timing. Equally, the competitors are not allowed to speed this process by saying they can see all the flags without them being pointed out. The pointing procedure is a ritual to give the same viewing time for each competitor.

Procedure during task decisions

Immediately following the pointing out of the last flag, the marshal says:

“Your time starts now.”

Times are measured using two timing devices. If the competitor says they cannot see one of the flags, the official can point again to the flags, but with the time counting. The competitor considers the problem on the first map and gives an answer, usually by speaking, saying one of Alpha through to Foxtrot, plus Zero (for situations where there is no flag at the site indicated by the centre of the circle). Some less experienced competitors may say A, B, C, D, E, F or Z.

The competitor’s answer is repeated by the recorder, and written on the recording sheet as a letter (e.g. A for Alpha) or recorded on a mobile phone using ANT (see below). [The reason the recorder repeats the answer is to confirm the selection and avoid problems of pronunciation.] Without delay the competitor considers the problem on the second map and gives an answer, which is repeated and recorded. In like manner, the competitor continues to the last map and with the final answer, the timing is stopped. Competitors must follow the map order and consider each map without reference to earlier or later maps.

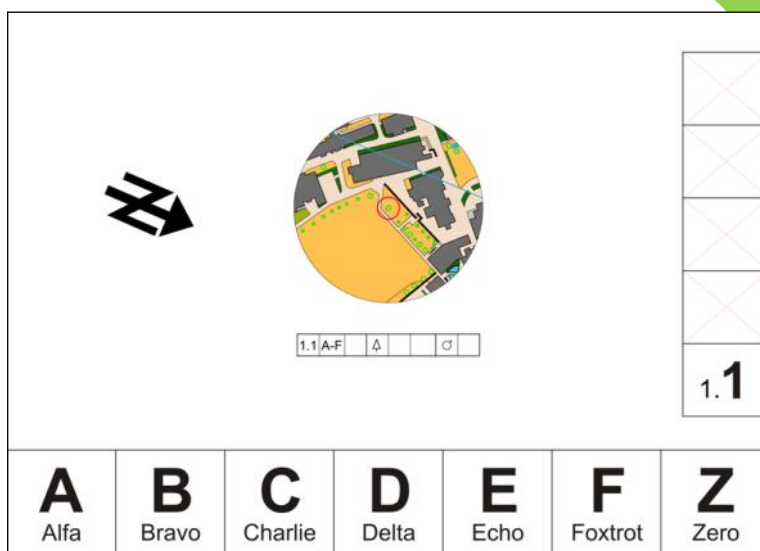
At a TempO station or PreO timed control, the maximum total time allowed is 30 seconds multiplied by the number of tasks. For example, with 5 tasks at a TempO station, this would be 150 seconds. As the maximum time is approached, a twenty seconds-to-go warning is given – in the example, after 130 seconds.

Recording the time taken

The times from the two timing devices are rounded down to completed seconds. The average time is entered on the recording sheet (unless an operational error has occurred with one of the timing devices, then it’s just the one correctly operated), and in ANT if used, and written on the competitor’s control card. The answers given are then also copied from the recording sheet on to the control card, which is returned to the competitor.

The competitor then departs, and the next one is called forward. In a TempO competition, depending on the surrounding course layout, it may be necessary to indicate the route to be followed to the next station.

Note: The free mobile app ANT is available for recording answers – see <http://ant.yq.cz>.



Above: An example map as used by a competitor at a TempO station. Note that the map is orientated to match the view from the seat but the direction of North is indicated. The control description is also provided.

| Name | | Used time | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------|------|--------------|---|---|--------------|--------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|------|
| | | Start number | | | Penalty time | | | | | | | | | |
| Country | | Class | | | | Result | | | | | | | | |
| Station 1 | Time | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | Time |
| Station 2 | Time | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | Time |
| Station 3 | Time | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | Time |
| Station 4 | Time | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | Time |
| Station 5 | Time | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | Time |
| Station 6 | Time | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | Time |
| | Time | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | Time |

Above: An example of a TempO recording sheet. For each station, there are boxes for the separate controls and another box for the time taken. A duplicate set is provided on the right so that the competitor can keep a record of their answers once the course is completed.

Need help or guidance? Contact the Chair of the British Orienteering Development Group at trailcommitteechair@britishorienteering.org.uk who will put you in touch with an experienced trail orienteer living in your part of the country.