Supporting TrailO 2. How to stage a PreO Sprint event



This is the simplest kind of event to put on, suitable for club training and for inclusion in the British TrailO League BriTOL. As the competition takes only about half an hour, a PreO Sprint can be planned in many places in connection with a FootO event, using terrain adjacent to the FootO competition area and/or car park. In most cases the event can be run by one organiser plus just one helper.

Format

The terrain can be forest or urban, with the route along tracks or paths that are suitable for wheelchairs; a 'pusher' can help with a manual wheelchair. Visibility through the terrain should be generally good. You set out 20-25 controls visible from the route, all with one kite which is either correctly placed (A) or at least 4 m away from the correct site (Zero, Z). For 20 controls, the Rules state that maximum course length is 300 m.

For training, a shorter (e.g. 10 controls) course is better.

Any feature that is on the map can be used for a control site, as long as it can be defined by a

pictorial control description. Plenty of variety is recommended. Contour sites included wherever possible.

Competitors are timed at Start and Finish (which can be at the same place). Competitors carry a needle punch to mark a paper control card as they make each decision; controls can be taken in any order. The winner is the person scoring the most points (correct answers); if more than one person has the same highest score, the person from this group with the fastest time wins.

Equipment

- Kites and stakes, not numbered.
- Mini-kites or cards with attached numbers up from 1, as 'viewing point' markers (see right).
- Paper control cards (see example right) + weather protection (unless printed on water-resistant paper).
- Needle punches available for loan (some competitors may have their own).
- Small table and chair at Start and Finish. Timing equipment (electronic or manual).
- Map at 1:4000, 1:3000 or 1:5000, 2.5 m contours, with course marked on (see example at top of page), most easily produced from an existing 1:10,000 map using CONDES software (https://condes.net). The map needs to be accurate in the areas where controls are sited, and generally correct across the area that can be seen.

Above: An example of a card used to indicate to competitors the viewing

the correct location (A) or not (Z)?

point - the point where the control kite is visible. **Below:** An example simple PreO Sprint control card with boxes for the competitor to punch their decision: either A or Z.

NAME					Start time:				
					Finish time: Time taken:				
10	9	8	7	6	J	4	ω	2	ч
A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
z	z	z	z	z	z	z	z	z	z

TRAIL ORIENTEERING

VIEWING POINT

CONTROL

PLEASE DO NOT REMOVE



Above: The map used for the JK 2023 PreO Sprint event.

Notice that the control description shows competitors that

there will only be a single A flag for each control. But is it in

Planning the course

Decide on the route (tracks and/or paths) to be followed. Ideally, a loop beginning and ending at the same place, otherwise linear with Start and Finish points or 'out-and-back' with kites both sides of the route. A course can be split into sections with a time-out in between – but this requires more officials, or more electronic timing equipment, and more explanation to competitors.

Then decide on the control sites to be used. These should not use diffuse features in the terrain, or be so far away from the track/path that features can't readily be seen or distinguished. The features and kites need to be clearly visible and the problem solvable from wheelchair-user/child height.

Then decide which will be A answers and which Z, and if Z, where the kite will be placed in relation to the control circle position to provide an interesting map/terrain reading challenge. You can have all A or all Z or anything in between, but around two-thirds A and one-third Z is commonly used.

Finally, decide on the sites for the viewing point markers. These should be where the appropriate kite can easily be seen. They should be in numerical order along the route, and at least 3 metres apart to avoid crowding. Competitors can, however, make their decisions from any point on the route.

Labels or pins are used to mark in advance the kite and viewing point marker positions, which on the event day have to be precisely placed.

Running the event

Pre-entry is useful, to determine how many maps to print, but not essential (and if necessary, maps can be recycled). Cost of entry depends on your club's outlook – it can be zero if the event is for training or is an enhancement of an existing event equivalent to a String Course, or have an entry fee if a self-standing event or an event with significance in a series of events (e.g. BriTOL, JK).

Full information about the nature of the event and the on-the-day detail is best published in advance, and of course is made available at the event itself.

At basic level, the event can be organised and run by two people. (If Start and Finish are together and competitor numbers are few, the whole event can be run by one person.) First, the course is set out, plus signposting from the assembly area, and timing equipment synchronized.

For manual timing: one person runs the Start – issues a punch on loan if needed, writes competitor name and an advance start time on each participant's control card, folds the card in half and gives it to the participant, then issues the map at this precise time. The second person mans the Finish – notes the precise time of finishing, collects the control card and writes this time on it, splits the card in two with the half with the time written on it kept, the other returned to the competitor, and collects any loaned punch.

For electronic timing, competitors have an SI card or EMIT brick and punch at the point they receive the map and when they reach the finish. Here, the second person operates download and the computer.

Results

Once everyone has started, a set of answers (A or Z) is posted at the Finish or assembly area for competitors to check their own.

You can check cards and post results (manual or computer) as time allows. The maximum allowed time is 1 minute per 30 metres of route, plus 1 minute per control, = 30 minutes for a 20-control/300 m course. Penalty of one point per minute (or part of) over maximum time. The time used on the course is used as a tie-breaker (shortest time wins); it is multiplied by 0.7 for manual wheelchair users, and 0.85 for users of electric wheelchairs + other TrailO Orienteers who compete in P-class.

It's good, but not necessary, to produce/publish a solution map showing where the

kites were, or some notes on how to solve each control, along with the results.



Above: A Solutions Map for a PreO Sprint event. Small kite symbols have been used to indicate the location of the kites in the terrain and the controls descriptions list has also given the solutions: A or Z.

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