

TempO

Report on demonstration of TempO and the use of electronic punching systems at ETOC, Carcans/Maubuisson, France on 12th July 2007.

The TempO course was planned by Anne Braggins, with input from and controlling by Vibeke Vogelius on the area used for the Day 1 Trail O competition. The relevant map file was provided by the Trail O Planner, Stephane Ruffio for the preparation by Dick Keighley of the time control maps and the solution sheets. Both SI and EMIT punching systems were used.

The demonstration was some 500m from the Event Prizegiving and Day 2 area. Most competitors relied on minibus transport so that getting them out on the course and back was important and no attempt was made to have any regulated interval between starts. Some competitors therefore had plenty of time to study the terrain.

All competitors were issued with a specific (cleared) recorder for both SI and EMIT; names and both numbers were recorded. To activate the recorders Event Start units, for both, were punched before anyone proceeded to the first controls.

Four clusters of markers provided a short course with eight separate controls, each had four markers (A – D) with the possibility of a zero answer. On each occasion the same site was used twice with a different control circle and description for each, the maps were protected and presented to the competitor with a numbered cover.

One official was able to act for the first four controls, all using the same SI units. This might be repeated in future but not at the first control unless starts could be carefully monitored as on this occasion it caused queuing.

A second official managed the next two controls, which used a second set of SI units. A third official managed the final two controls, which used the same set of EMIT units.

Thirty-four people took part in the demonstration, ranging from the most experienced Trail Orienteers to complete beginners needing assistance. All competitors were positive and enthusiastic to include TempO with other Trail O competitions or even as part of them, and to start with official competitions as soon as possible.

Russia had already included a full TempO course as part of their national championships and Great Britain plans something in conjunction with the BTOC in September. A competition in Denmark had included a number of Time Controls successfully using the EMIT system for recording decisions.

Use of Electronic Recording systems

The SI units were housed in two rows in a document tray on a 'table'. The EMIT units were in one row as the approach was more critical. All sets of units were clearly labelled A, B, C and D, Z, and 'start'.

The procedure at each Control was as with Timed Controls in Trail O. A covered map unit was handed to competitors, who then started the timing by dinging the 'start'; as this unit beeped the map cover was removed, timing ceased as the next unit was dinged. The process, as described above, was repeated for all the control on the course. The light on the EMIT units was difficult to see in sunlight, they do not beep.

Finally, the course was ended by dinging a FINISH unit prior to proceeding to the download station. Using the schools/club training download and printer the recorded decision information was transferred to the results spreadsheet.

The software to provide download from the units to computer and then to the Trail O result format still needs more time and then testing; although transfer from the printout to the results programme was no harder than from a control card it is not desirable as a final system.

All competitors preferred the SI units because the recording was faster and there is a clear beep. This is probably important for TempO. The number of SI units required for a TempO course is likely to be less than 50 and all would have an official at the decision point so the equipment would not be vulnerable.

With a current Trail O course over 100 units would probably be required and EMIT could be the preferred choice as the time taken is less important. The cost of the units exposed along the route is less and I understand they are easier to use by officials.

Initially a set of competitor recording units would need to be on loan.