**Planner (and mapper) comments**

Thank you to everyone for coming along, I really hope you enjoyed your time in Sherburn-in-Elmet.

Firstly, some thanks – to EBOR for allowing AIRE to use what is technically their area, North Yorkshire stretches quite a long way south! Next to Diane at the Eversley Park centre who was a great help from the moment I approached her. Liz Carter, our organiser extraordinaire who somehow does the work of several folk at most AIRE events, and Richard Foster for diligent and useful controlling. Thanks to David Alcock for his fantastic maze and imaginative string course. It went down a treat. Finally to the always amazing band of volunteers who make these events run so smoothly and are so reliable. More always needed!

I had first mapped my own village, South Milford, and had hoped to present you with a sprint score there in conjunction with this event. Disappointingly despite several approaches, neither Aethelstan primary school nor Sherburn High School were interested, which scuppered having the event centre needed. Maybe next time…

Next the apologies. Quite a few people commented on the lack of an instruction to turn the map over – in hindsight we should have added this in. I had felt that there was sufficient overlap to allow some flexibility in when competitors did this, plus there could have been three on medium/long, but should have covered all bases and added this in. Secondly to those competitors (both Daves!) who struck the barbed wire fence in the top right of the map. Not sure when this appeared as it wasn’t there when I mapped it or the last time I checked that bit 2 months ago, but apologies all the same. Apologies for the confusion regarding side A/B on the medium course, which wasn’t spotted until it was too late. Just in time however, we did spot controls 6 and 9 on the short course were adjacent, which could have been a disaster.

Finally to those caught out by the control collected erroneously early, hope you didn’t lose too much time (but more volunteers to collect controls avoids this!)

You’ll have noticed I did a couple of things differently, things I’ve wanted to try for a while, so thanks to the AIRE committee for supporting these trials. Firstly, afternoon starts. To me, for Sunday events this was well worth trying. It allows public transport access, and greatly reduces the time pressure on planner and controller to put controls out. 3+ hours in the rain would have been twice as bad with time pressure. I’m told by several that a lot of other kids sports are on Sunday morning too. There were concerns that attendance would suffer as a result, but we gained our highest pre-entry for an urban event other than Leeds/Bradford/Dales weekends, so it looks positive on that front too. I think we may do this again. Certainly city centre events after the shops have shut must be worth a go.

Secondly, the course structure. Some other clubs have simplified down to 4 or 5 courses before, and personally I’ve always found having more competitors on my course gives a better experience, particularly running Mopen where numbers are often very low. Also spending time planning x number of courses, for only single figure finishers is both demoralising, and not a good use of time. At the same time, ideally I wanted to give people a free choice of Long / Middle / Short, but being in the YUL meant I still had to recommend a course. I do think this aspect needs to be rethought. Run whatever course you want! It was interesting to see where the pre-entries did/didn’t align with this, and I hope you will fill in the feedback form on this aspect. There is still some work to do, as per comments received, on the balance between a short course, a sprint course and a junior course, but do we need to provide all three?

I accept that some may feel the courses were too long for their recommendation, again this was my personal preference. We have sprint urban, and there are several in the YUL this year, so my view is a ‘long’ urban isn’t such a bad thing to ensure the urban league covers all aspects – most urbans time wise are much shorter than terrain events, consider it value for money! If you look at the finish times but transfer them to a terrain event, they look quite normal. But do fill in the feedback form if you feel strongly on this.

I tried to provide a good mix of legs and changes of direction to make the most of the area. I wasn’t able to get out and observe, but some healthy debate and comments received suggest this was achieved, but do add your routes to routegadget if you can.

Look forward to seeing all your route choices and see you at another event soon!

Leon