**Burley National & UKOL event, Sunday 20th February 2022**

Background

On the morning of the event the force of melt water in the beck coming down the side of Ilkley Moor was significant. The Short Green and Very Short Green courses were expected to cross this beck shortly after the start where the beck was in full spate.

The controller and planner deemed it dangerous for competitors attempting to cross and so agreed, before the first competitors started, that removing controls 1 and 2 on both these courses was the safest option, with competitors being told to proceed from the start direct to control number 3 (186 in the case of Short Green and 223 for Very Short Green).

It was also agreed that all competitors should be advised to proceed to cross the beck via a footbridge which was below & NW of the start before climbing to their respective control number 3. Conditions were very inclement with strong wind and driving rain.

As the event progressed, the instructions to be communicated to competitors at the start may not have been clearly passed to all competitors or may not have been clearly understood by all competitors. Everyone appeared to understand that controls 1 and 2 on these courses were not to be visited, but the instruction to cross the beck by the bridge and why it was important to do this was not made clear to all.

There appeared to be some competitors who had descended direct to the bridge and then proceeded to control 3 as intended by the controller & planner, some who contoured to the beck and upon failing to find safe crossing then had to descend to the bridge along the beck side, and potentially a small number who may have successfully crossed the beck on the more direct line to their number 3. The organiser and controller, faced with competitors who had wasted time trying to cross the beck and others who felt those who went direct would have saved time, took a decision to omit the times from the start to control number 3 on each course, effectively moving the start to control number 3, thus shortening the course.

Protest

A protest was submitted after the event, the complaint being that voiding the times from the start to number 3 on the Short Green & Very Short Green courses was unfair. Competitors who had been successful in crossing the beck would have had less climb than those who had descended to the bridge and then had to climb to control 3, and that therefore omitting the times on the leg was unfair. As such results should either be left unadjusted or courses voided.

Jury review & conclusion

A Jury was convened after the event to review the protest received, effectively the Jury from the previous day’s British Night Champs agreeing to act as jury for the event at Burley.

In establishing the facts, the circumstances behind the decision by the controller and planner to remove controls 1 and 2 from Short Green and Very Short Green courses were reviewed.

It was agreed in the context of the event conditions on the day the decision was good. However, it was also recognised that instructions to starting competitors on these courses were not entirely clear and consistent, nor necessarily understood by all, and were hampered by the poor weather conditions. The Jury accepted that there would have been some competitors disadvantaged or advantaged between the start and control 3, arising from unclear or inconsistently communicated instructions but that it was not possible to identify definitely which competitors or the extent of any disadvantage or advantage.

The Jury considered the protest received and the options available:

- Void the two courses

- Adjust the results to remove times from the start to control number 3

- Leave the results unadjusted

On balance the Jury felt voiding the courses was too extreme in the circumstances and would impact all competitors across the range of age classes on these courses.

Removing the times from the start to control number 3, effectively starting the race at control 3, attempted, in our opinion, to remove much of any actual or perceived advantage, or disadvantage, experienced by competitors on these courses, leaving the remainder of the course as a fair test of competitors’ orienteering skills and fitness, especially in the conditions on the day.

We felt that leaving the times unadjusted would leave a large element of unfairness within the results and that would not be what the majority of competitors would expect.

We acknowledge that none of the options are ideal or will please everyone but conclude that adjusting the times produced the fairest outcome for these two courses.

After deliberating the above options **the Jury agreed to uphold the decision of the Organiser to adjust the results in respect of the two courses and to reject the protest**.

Keith Tonkin (BL, Chair), John Britton (MDOC), Alan Rosen (HH)