

GUIDELINES FOR ORGANISERS OF VHI EVENTS

These guidelines are intended for the person who takes on the role of co-ordinator for the weekend of a VHI competition. This is normally a different person from the "Organiser" of one of the events.

The guidelines have been drawn up by team managers and recent weekend organisers, and are intended to be helpful rather than prescriptive.

If you, as event organiser, are tempted to stray from these guidelines, you should consult with the team managers and seek their agreement to any significant changes, since they might have the effect of favouring one team over the others, or introducing inappropriate elements of chance.

NOTE

This document now takes account of the decision to include 35s in the VHI and has been modified after the Team Managers' discussion at the VHI in October 2004.

A WORD OF WARNING ENCOURAGEMENT

The organiser of the VHI is usually in the unenviable position of being the inexperienced one in a situation that is very familiar to the other protagonists. Most team managers have been in post for several years, and many of the runners have taken part in numerous VHIs. Do not allow yourself to feel intimidated by this, but exploit the available experience and expertise.

GENERAL

Normal British Orienteering event rules apply.

TEAMS

Teams comprise representatives of England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland (NB all-Ireland, not Northern Ireland), aged 35+.

Each team has 2 each M and W in each age group 35, 40, 45, 50, 55 and 60+, ie. 24 people per team (though on occasions an incomplete team might be sent). Team managers usually also compete; expect some children and/or spouses accompanying participants. Total number to be accommodated will be approx. 100.

RACES

There is an individual event and a relay event. They are held on consecutive days, usually (but not necessarily) with the individual event on the Saturday. You can usually combine them with events already in the calendar, if the areas are suitable. The individual event would normally be combined with a badge event; the relay might be combined with a colour-coded or short race.

Do not compromise on quality of areas; planner should be technically up to the job.

START TIMES

Start the VHI participants at 10:00, perhaps 9:30 on the Sunday. An early start on the Sunday is particularly appreciated when teams have long journeys home.

INDIVIDUAL EVENT

Two runners per nation compete in each age group for M and W. No reserves run, and every finisher counts for points. (If the relay is held before the individual event, only competitors who ran in the relays may run in the individual event.) No substitutes are allowed once the final declaration of names has been made.

COURSES

At a standard badge or national event, VHI competitors should run the normal course for their age class.

START INTERVALS

Allow at least 2 minutes between runners – preferably 3 or even 4 minutes if the event is on an open area. Allocate start times to countries in rotation, so the two runners from a nation in the same age group are at least 8 minutes apart.

POINTS

Class winner is awarded 10 points, 2nd place 9 and so on down to 3 points for last (8th) place. No points are awarded to a competitor who fails to finish or mispunches. The nation with the highest points total on the Individual event wins. (Note this scoring has been changed to maintain the balance between points totals for individual and relay days with the inclusion of 35s in the event.)

RELAY EVENT

All participants in the relay event must have taken part in the individual event (or be declared for the individual event if it is the next day). Normal British Orienteering event rules apply.

TEAM COMPOSITION

Each country must enter 6 valid teams; to be valid, a team must:

- Comprise 2M and 2W
- Have age points* total equal to or greater than 18

*Age points are equal to the first digit of the age class in which the person is competing at the VHI. Thus 35s get 3 age points, 40s get 4 etc.; someone aged 60 running in 55 gets 5 age points.

LEGS

Each team must do one "long", one medium and two short legs. Leg order should be varied between different teams, though team managers must be allowed to specify the order of their runners (see sample grid which you could use for team declarations).

Note that the last leg should always be short.
Gaffling is NOT required.

COURSES

Approximate course lengths:

Distance Expected
winning time *

"Long" 5.0 – 5.3 km 40

Medium 4.5 – 4.8 km 35

Short 2.5 – 3.0 km 30

- remember that winners are likely to be age 35.

SCORING

Points are allocated in the Relay event to just the first 4 teams from each nation, with 32 points to the winning team, then reducing by 2 for each subsequent scoring team. Team names such as England 4 or Scotland 1 are irrelevant to potential to score points – all teams are "competitive". Some just might not score points at the end of the day.

RESERVES

Teams might want to bring reserves, but must (obviously) declare their competitive runners before the event begins. Competitors in the relays must also run in the individual event – and vice versa. If someone has to withdraw from the event after it has started, the gap must remain in the team.

PRIZES

There are 4 trophies associated with the event:

1. The quaich for the nation that wins the relays
2. The rosebowl for the nation that wins the individual event
3. The wooden trophy for the overall winning nation, ie. the one with the highest combined points total.
4. The "Stonewall Trophy" presented to either Wales or Ireland, whichever has the greater points total overall

You can give one of the prizes at the social on the Saturday evening.

Aim to have the final prize giving at about 13:00 on the second day, when final points totals are known (or at least it will be clear who has won overall).

ACCOMMODATION

Arrange hostel or similar accommodation for the teams – together or separately, depending on what is available locally.

Breakfasts should be provided on Saturday and Sunday mornings.

You should also aim to supply packed lunches for both days. One of the most successful ways this can be achieved is to allow people to make their own sandwiches. Provide bananas and apples as well as sandwich materials and suitable packaging.

Remember that there are quite a few vegetarians in the orienteering world!

Most participants will arrive on the Friday night; some might arrive quite late.

If hostel accommodation is not available, provide floor space in a school or hall, but this is less popular and many participants will prefer to arrange their own B&B. If you go down this route, provide details of local B&Bs and let participants make their own arrangements.

If you can help with local contacts for car hire, suggestions of places to eat etc., that would be appreciated.

SOCIAL

It is normal to arrange a semi-formal dinner on the Saturday evening. Some low-cost after dinner entertainment is always appreciated (but not necessarily expected), especially if it is particular to the location. A ceilidh usually goes down well, though participants are likely to retire to bed fairly early!

COSTS

Each team pays in full its own costs for entry fees, accommodation and meals (including the dinner). Get numbers (provisional early on, then finalised later) from team managers and charge them accordingly. Host clubs should not expect to make much profit from the event – remember that participants are already paying quite substantially for the weekend.

British Orienteering levy does not have to be paid for VHI competitors, provided their entry fees are

part of an all-in package. The VHI competitors must, however, be declared on the ER3 return. Consult your regional body for advice on any levy that might be due to them.

INFORMATION EXCHANGE

Give team managers as much information about the event as possible, as soon as it is finalised. In particular, tell them the exact venue as soon as it is known, so they can save money by making travel arrangements early.

You will probably send out 2 or 3 bulletins as event details are finalised.

Be clear in exactly what information you require from team managers and when you require it. Experienced team managers know what you'll need, but they are also human and have been known to forget things.