

From all the comments I heard nearly everyone appreciated Drew's excellent courses on the Muir of Dinnet. This was always going to be full on night orienteering – complex technical terrain and rough going in some places which was going to punish mistakes. We were aware that there were likely to be some very long times, but we had to plan for clean runs from the best orienteers in the country and Drew got it pretty much spot on with some great courses of the right lengths. We were of course very lucky with the weather and the forest was faster this weekend than I have ever seen it. We had contingency plans in place for bad weather but always suspected that if we needed them there would have been even bigger problems getting to the event.

Drew took full advantage of some exceptional orienteering terrain. I heard a few competitors comment that the first couple of legs were quite easy owing to the clear path network, and this lulled them into a false sense of security before crossing the road into the more difficult hillside. The longer courses visited higher more remote forest and had some long testing legs, including across the Burn O'Vat gorge. It will be interesting to see what choices were made on route/gadget. Nearly every course visited the plantation forest on the north side of the road with its numerous rock features and re-entrants, and everyone encountered the pathless and very complex Muir.

We were caught out by the thinning operations and apologise if this affected anyone's enjoyment. Unfortunately this work took place in some unexpected areas right up to the day of the event - the massive extraction track encountered by nearly every course was created late on Friday afternoon. The appearance of a few "ponds" on the Muir was also a surprise – a couple were not even mapped as marshes until a few days before the event. They were very shallow but this is less obvious at night.

There is a long history of using reflectors on Deeside for the Deeside Night League. The BO rules are silent on the use of reflectors for the BNC and MAROC were very keen to use them as in their opinion they make night orienteering much fairer and more enjoyable, especially in complex terrain. I agree with them and cleared this with BO but didn't make it clear that we planned to use reflectors instead of kites. Hence the last minute decision to use kites at the control sites in addition to reflectors to be consistent with rule 23.1. This is probably a debate that will run and run but it would be interesting to hear your views as to what you thought.

As you will be aware this was a level A event and everyone had to start at their allocated time. You were asked to punch the start primarily to make sure your brikke was cleared as this has occasionally been a problem with Emit. The results team used the time you lifted your brikke as your start time to make sure nobody was penalised by a few seconds for queuing at the start line. This is not the same as a punching start and if you were a late starter your time has been increased by the number of minutes that you were late. This did not affect many starters and has only affected the top 3 positions in one class – W60L. There were a few comments about the distance from the hall to the start – having walked there and back I can safely say that it did indeed feel like a long way in the dark. In practice it was about 10% longer than the advertised distance of 2km and in our view any late starters should not have been unduly affected by this. If you think otherwise please contact the organiser directly.

Finally it was a privilege for me to spend time in one of the finest orienteering forests in the country and I would like to thank Jon Musgrave, Drew Tivendale and the MAROC team for all their hard work putting on such a fantastic event.