

## Planners Comments

Ogden woods seem almost perfect for a challenging but (fairly) safe night event especially as the runnability seems to be improving with time unlike many of our other woods. The intention was to plan this in early November but a trapped nerve after November Classic (and associated lack of mobility) meant I could not start on-site planning until 11 days before the event and there was no test running! Thankfully I had a very understanding and helpful controller – and we both live just 20 minutes from the wood which helped too.

The aim was to give the Long and Medium courses the chance to go through the two deep 'cloughs' with their more complex contours and then enjoy slightly longer downhill legs through the two main blocks of more gentle forest. This seem to be welcomed although I appreciate that it made the Medium very hilly for it's 3.3km. The northern of the two cloughs (particularly #8-#9 on Long and #5-#6 on Medium) was quite a physical as well as navigational challenge. A big 'shout-out' here for Henry Marston (M75, SYO) who set out aiming to get round the medium in two hours and achieved it... by 1 second.

The Short was also an interesting planning challenge. It is aimed to be TD3 ('Orange'). I wanted to make it interesting and not too physical for older competitors yet easy enough for an inexperienced orienteer. It originally went out into the fields and semi-open near the end but I took the late decision to shorten it slightly. Given the weather I'm very glad I did. I hope the entrants felt there was enough challenge and did not mind there only being 8 controls. I wanted it to feel like a nice natural lap of the woods.

The other change from EPOC's past regional events was the printing. We decided to use a local printer, Knight Graphics, which meant we could leave numbers and final courses until two days before the event. The feedback on print quality, durability in the weather and readability at night seems good so far. The slight cropping of the Medium control descriptions was all my fault, not the printer's, as I hurriedly made a minor change to the print area after the proofs were reviewed on Thursday night. Any other feedback on the maps?

A few people commented on the inconsistent use of reflective control kites. I didn't realise we had any reflective ones (they were hung in daylight) until I heard those comments. Interestingly there was no consensus on whether we should have used all reflective or all non-reflective but I'll know to consider this next time! Finally, apologies for one small issue on control 100 where the tape and the control were about 15m apart. I know this confused at least one person. The control was where I intended it to be and I simply assumed the tape had been removed (as had a few others near the public car park and paths).

Thank you for coming to our Christmas event. I hope you have a Merry Christmas and a fit 2025 in the forests.

Mike Pedley