



BMBO

Blood, Sweat and Gears

Newsletter of the National Governing Body for Mountain Bike Orienteering.

bmbo.org.uk

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After an unusual couple of years, faced with lots of uncertainties, it is good to see that things are gradually coming back to normal. COVID has not gone away and we will have to learn to live with it, but we must still act responsibly as we gradually get back to normal service. The appetite for competition is still healthy amongst riders so a big thanks must go to all of the organisers who have taken the, sometimes brave, decision to start planning events again. Also, a big thanks for the tolerance shown by riders when faced with all of the extra precautions that have proved necessary. There has been a healthy number of events that have taken place in the latter part of the year across most regions. Taking this positive lead, it is sincerely hoped that there will be a National league once again in 2022.

It is good to see that a new club formed in the Lake District this year. XCC folded a few years ago leaving a void in what is arguably the home to some of the best MTB riding in Britain. Lakes MBO has been formed by a dedicated group of riders who, lamenting this loss, launched a successful league which included the British Championship weekend. The series had a big-name sponsor in Wheelbase who were keen to promote the use of EBikes. As a consequence, the E Bike class was well contested and perhaps suggests that this is an area for BMBO to develop more widely. Whilst there was no league in 2021, we did have a successful British Champs weekend courtesy of LMBO and Ben Martin. Based in Tebay Cumbria, the first day, planned by Ben, went into the Crosby Ravensworth fells whilst Day 2, planned by Tony Brand-Barker explored the lesser-known fells around the head of Bretherdale. Glorious weather and bone-dry tracks made it a weekend to remember.

Another memorable weekend was provided by Steve Smirthwaite and members of Moray orienteering club. The weekend provided 4 first class MTBO events around the small town of Forres in the Spey Valley. The areas provided world class competition and it is hoped that a round of the World Master MTBO series will be held there in May 2022. One not to be missed. An MTBO event at Cannock Chase, final round of the 2021 MTBO series, will have happened by the time you read this and we will have a new set of champions. Well done to all. Thanks also to Walter Clark of ESOC, who along with Keith Dawson has worked hard to establish a new group in the Edinburgh area and providing MTBO training opportunities. Again, by the time that you read this, they will have hosted their first open event at Craigmillar on the outskirts of Edinburgh. We wish them every success.

BMBO took the opportunity of the quiet spell during lockdown to overhaul the website. The current provider was not giving the service that we had wished for, so the website was moved to a new host. These things, never being as simple as you expect, provided a challenge for Liam Drew and John Houlihan before it could be launched. There may still one or two little quirks to be ironed out but the website is now working more or less as intended. A new payments system was also adopted. Organisers will be pleased to note that it is now possible to print of a draft of the Risk Assessment before submission. This will make life easier when dealing with third parties. If you experience any problems with the website do not sit there grumbling about it but instead let us know so that we can put it right or make it better. Many thanks to Liam and John.

The quiet period also provided a moment to fully service the SI Equipment and upgrade the laptops. Thanks to Alan Hartley and Ben Martin.

With many of you dusting off your SIACs ready for the new season there is some timely advice from Alan: "You will now see the battery condition printed on your splits print out when you download. All SIAC owners should be aware that the projection on battery life is 3 years of regular use (guaranteed for 2), and although 4 years is not uncommon there is a risk once it goes past 3 years that it might switch off mid event. As long as the event is "mixed punching" i.e., that you can punch conventionally as well as contactlessly, then this isn't a big problem as the SIAC will continue to work for conventional punching even with a flat battery. All the BMBO stations support mixed punching, however, if you plan to travel abroad to an MTBO event it is strongly advised your SIAC should have a battery under 3 years old. Batteries can be replaced via SPORTident UK website in 3-4 weeks usually, current cost is £15."

With the gradual move to Phone based Apps it will be all too easy to neglect your SIAC only to discover part way through an event that the battery has died. You have been warned!

A development brought on by the COVID situation has been the increased use of Phone based Apps such as iOrienteer, Maprun and Sporteering. This has not been without strong feeling about whether this is good or bad. At recent the on-line AGM, whether to include events using Phone based Apps in the National league or not was a hotly debated topic. Strong arguments were made for and against their inclusion. In the end it was decided that, so as to encourage more people to step up and organise events, we would allow their inclusion. They certainly make the organisers job much easier but they do raise a number of questions with respect to fairness for the riders. They are not going to go away so how we accommodate them needs some thought.

Outlined below is a protocol we believe reflects the current spirit in BMBO events that ensure competitions are not hunt the punch but still a fair competition for all. Please take the time to read the protocol and feedback any concerns or ideas you have, either as a rider or organiser.

As with any decision, the used of Phone based Apps will be reviewed throughout the year. It is hoped that, in the best tradition of BMBO, that we continue to provide high quality events no matter what system of recording is used.

From a financial viewpoint, despite not being fully back to what we may consider normal it's been a fairly positive year for BMBO. After a shaky start due to continuing Covid restrictions, a substantial increase of events from May onwards enabled us to turnaround last year's loss into a modest operating surplus. With this in mind we have decided to keep the Membership fees at the same level as they have been for the last few years. Hopefully you all agree that it is £8 well spent! It was also a year that we sadly lost another good friend and supporter of BMBO.

Lisa Welbourn was one of the earliest members of what was then the TCA. She served on the committee for many years and was as often seen encouraging and supporting newcomers to the sport. She will be sadly missed and our thoughts go to her family and friends.

I would like to thank the committee for their work throughout the year. Also, to thank organisers for their endeavours in bringing our sport back to life post COVID. Not forgetting you the rider for taking part and making our sport a success.

And finally, the new Year honours list BMBO style! We are always keen to acknowledge the massive contribution made to the successful running of BMBO by individuals past and present. With this in mind BMBO is awarding life memberships to three individuals this year.

Colin Palmer – Colin was the main driving force to form the Trail Cyclists Association (TCA) which acted as an umbrella organisation for independent organisers. The predecessor to BMBO. Colin came from a foot orienteering background and was an early adopter of mountain biking which aligned with his love of cycling. The combination of orienteering and MTB was irresistible, indeed Colin was also instrumental in early International Orienteering Federation Mountain Bike Orienteering (IOF MTBO) rules and the TCA was formed to help coordinate organisers and the sports rules. Recognising the quality and availability of OS mapping to Trailquest, Colin was instrumental in the early days to get things going.

Mike Hayward – Mike was a serious competitor in Trailquest from the first days, joining the first TCA committee, organising the first TCA AGM after consulting competitors, coordinating the first National and Regional Leagues and winning the first National League Series. Mike organised the first TCA events in Cumbria forming Cross Cumbria Cyclists which became the gold standard in 5 hour competitions in quality and unrivalled MTB terrain. Mike wrote the first organiser guidelines, which is still largely his work, to help the fast growing group of organisers firing questions at him.

Jeff Mew – Jeff has been a key member of the Midlands MBO group since it's rebirth. He has supported and encouraged organisers to put on events as well working hard to take MMBO through the transition from pin punches to SiTiming. This action alone has led to the MMBO being one of the major clubs in the National MBO Score League. This effort has been recognised by his fellow riders by them nominating him for this award.

Congratulations and thank you all for your dedication over the years. Well-deserved recognition.

Merry Christmas to you all.
I look forward to meeting you all again in the New Year.
Tony Brand-Barker
BMBO Chairman.

Phone based App protocol for “missing controls”.

With the introduction of phone-based App events, BMBO is keen to ensure fair and enjoyable competitions are maintained.

A major issue with Phone Based Apps is different phones pickup controls with varying degrees of accuracy. Two riders standing next to each other will often get different results when “dibbing” a virtual control. This could and does lead to some competitors needing to find a point close to a control where their phone-based App will actually register they have “punched” a digital control. This is not an equitable competition for all competitors.

BMBO already has an appeals process for competitors who believe they have been penalised by poor control location or descriptions.

<https://www.bmbo.org.uk/mboscore/controlDescriptions.php>

The premise of this appeals process is to err on the side of the competitor provided strict criteria are met.

- 1, The competitor must report the missing control as soon as they finish/download.
2. From the competitor’s sequence of controls, is it likely they visited the contested control.

Answer NO to either 1 or 2 - the competitor is not awarded the control.

Answer YES - go through points A to C below:

- A. Was the control box at the marked location on the map?
- B. Was the control box at the control description point?
- C. Where the mapped features at the control circle correct on the ground?

Answer No to any of points A, B or C - The Competitor IS awarded the control.

Answer Yes to all points A, B and C - The competitors in NOT awarded the control.

This appeals process is obviously designed to deal with missing or poorly located/poorly described controls. Phone Based App events will avoid many of these issues by default. We are still left with poor performing phones requiring competitors to “Hunt The Punch”.

Competitors are urged to ride to the control location only, do not “hunt” for a digital control in the same way you are urged to not “hunt” for electronic control boxes.

The appeals process still stands but has been amended to include GPS files for clarity which many competitors collect on other devices as evidence of their route and passing through a control. However, GPS files are not a requirement for a successful appeal.

Point 2 has been amended to:

2. From the competitor’s sequence of controls or GPS file, is it likely they visited the contested control?

Competitor and organiser feedback is welcome in developing the use of Phone Base Apps for BMBO events.

Keep up to date with by logging on to the BMBO website and forum <http://www.bmbo.org.uk>
Newsletter contributions to newsletter@bmbo.org.uk