

Christmas 5 Days Coaching

It is proposed that there be organized coaching offered to competitors in conjunction with the Christmas 5 Days (X5D) carnival. This is an outline of what might be offered.

Background

The X5D are held on December 27-31 inclusive each year (2020 excepted, due to COVID-19). The usual arrangement is a sprint on the afternoon of the 27th, and then bush events each morning 28th-31st. All events are held within driving distance of one location (e.g. Armidale, Orange). While prizes are awarded to each day's and overall division winners, the competition is much more low-key than Australian Championships or 3 Day (Easter) carnivals. Attendance is usually around 300, the bulk being from NSW, but with good representation from interstate, particularly ACT & Victoria. As usual for orienteering, a wide range of ages & skill levels attend.

Proposal Outline

I believe that coaching sessions could be run on days 2, 3 & 4 of the carnival (Dec 27-30). All events are in the morning; start times from 9 am (or even earlier) are used to avoid heat later in the day, leaving plenty of time afterwards when people are generally able to participate in coaching if they wish.

There would be three types of coaching offered: juniors, elite, and general. "Juniors" would include adults who are inexperienced (i.e. running Moderate courses, or recently started Hard). "Elite" would include more experienced/capable juniors; say, those at or close to NOL standard. "General" would mean able to readily complete a Hard course, but not up to Elite standard. These three groups would cover most orienteers at the carnival; it remains to be seen how many of them are interested in coaching activities at X5D. The groups are based on my understanding of the new coaching system developed by OA.

For each group there would be a coach who would decide on and plan the focus & activities of the day. It would be preferable if there is a different coach for each day, as well, to reduce the load on them; but if needed (and the coach was willing) a coach could run multiple days. Obviously, the coaches for a group would need to co-ordinate their plans across the three days, to avoid duplication of activities. There would also likely be a need for assistant coaches; to answer questions, go out with small groups, etc. The numbers required would depend largely on the numbers wishing to attend.

Matters to consider.

The coaching would need to be coordinated with the setters, organizers & controllers of each day's events. The aim should be that there is minimal additional effort required of them. If the coaching activities also collect controls, that would probably be well received by the organizing team (as one less thing they have to worry about) and help get them onboard with the proposal.

Safety is also a matter to be kept at the top of the mind. There should be a robust system to track who is going out into the bush (in most cases, back out after their course) and who has or has not returned. Further, coaches designing activities are encouraged to have a second person assess their plans for suitability & safety – a coaching controller, so to speak.

Coaches involved

I would envisage that most of the coaches involved would be NSW orienteers, as most attendees come from NSW. However, coaches from outside NSW would be welcome, in order to spread the workload involved, give the benefit of these coaches' knowledge to participants, and enable the coaches to obtain accreditation points.