

## Lincoln City Race 2011

### Planner's Comments

When I began planning the 2011 city race, several months ago, my starting point was Liam's courses from the 2010 event. He'd been given, by lead mapper Steve Bones, the new area of Stamp End and the Arboretum to play with for the very first time. This meant that much of the western part of the city and, in particular, the University campus, was unused in 2010. I therefore wanted, if possible, to avoid going back to the Arboretum area so soon and, instead, use the centre and western parts of the city map, much more than had been the case in 2010. I also began considering areas to use for the start/finish/assembly, as St Benedict's had been a success in 2010 but, again, I wanted to avoid going out of the same venue twice in succession. A number of possible squares were toyed with, before deciding on St. Swithin's. This had the advantages of being central, in full view of the public for marketing purposes and close to the main car park of Broadgate. It also had the unexpected bonus of having a large area of tree cover, which came beautifully into play during the race when the deluge hit!

So, the general course area was decided upon and Sean began to arrange access permissions. We hadn't been able to get into the castle in 2010, but this came back into the mix, along with the usual Bishop's Palace and Cathedral areas. Armchair plans commenced and I immediately decided to throw the majority of courses, with the exception of the junior class and our new D course for Women's Super and Men's Ultra-Vets, pretty much straight up into the old quarter. I also wanted to include a long leg on all courses coming from here and couldn't resist the idea of going from the Cathedral in the NE corner all the way down to the University campus in the SW corner. Many urban courses in the past couple of years have had few 'classic' long legs and I think this is a shame, as one of the points of urban racing for me should be about maximizing route choice and long legs of a km+ do this beautifully, especially when working through such a historic city as Lincoln. By mixing in some control picks around the old quarter and the campus either side of this long leg and I was reasonably happy with courses B-D.

Then came the challenge of the A and the E courses. The A needed to get more distance than was the case in the first draft and I wanted to avoid going over the same area time after time, with runners ultimately becoming bored by this. Therefore, although contrary to my original plans, I decided on using the eastern area of the map, as Liam had done in 2010, with the same crossing points over the main route through Lincoln as before, but I reversed the general flow. At this point I was conscious of the fact that, with a timed crossing, many orienteers use this generous allowance to plan the next few legs and I wanted to avoid this, so I set up a map exchange at this point. I like to think that this worked well, but no-one actually mentioned this at all in their post-race commentary.... The eastern part needed a small tweak to enable use of the hospital accommodation area but, by doing this, it meant there was, again, a nice combination of long-ish legs with some control picking interspersed. The final length was, including the climb, a touch on the long side and skewed the recommended course ratios, but all the A runners I spoke to enjoyed the challenge and seemed to value the diversity from east to west of the city that this extra length allowed.

Finally, the junior (E) course. This is becoming ever more difficult to plan, with the restrictive insurance regs now being imposed, but Lincoln is fortunate in having a great campus that allows for safe urban running, but with a good degree of technicality to keep the juniors interested. So, the courses encompassed this area, with just a few controls leading in and out of the campus. I hope that those running the E class felt satisfied with what was on offer?

The race itself ran remarkably smoothly, with the increasingly experienced LOG team now becoming old hands at arranging a cracking urban event, and this helped take the pressure off me on the day. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank Sean, as lead organizer, and the rest of the club in providing such a great support mechanism to make our premier event such a joy to be involved in. Working with Peter, as controller, for the first time was also very enjoyable, and his guidance and input throughout was essential in helping to shape the finished article!

Finally, I cannot finish without a brief mention of control 50, which caused a good deal of discussion and controversy on the day and has continued to be debated on Nopesport. At the time of planning, I wanted to include a number of the usual urban 'traps' in amongst the courses and this was obviously part of one of those. I tried to be as accurate and as fair as I could with the control description, being very aware of how some that I have personally experienced as a competitor in recent times have led to issues, complaints and, in some cases, courses with voided legs, and I felt happy, initially, with the finished product. It was only when runners were coming back in on the day, and some began to declare that they'd interpreted the 'SW inside corner' symbol as 'foot', both of which are of course very similar, that I realized the ambiguity that existed and the oversight on my part. Peter discusses this at length in his commentary and, as I agree with the sentiments expressed there, I will not repeat them here. Suffice to say that, if I were to plan this control site and the legs using it again, I would probably have gone with Peter's first alternative and moved it north to the other crag bend (ie Crag, NE outside corner). This would then have avoided a description that was open to such misinterpretation and confusion. To those who were affected by the ambiguity on the day, I can only apologize profusely. I hope that this didn't affect your enjoyment of the race too much and would love to see you all back in Lincoln for the 2012 event, one that has extra significance, as it will be part of our club's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary weekend and is also being mooted as a race in the 2012 UK master's cup series.

Paul Murgatroyd (LOG)