

YOC FEEDBACK –THE 2011 SHORT COURSE

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Background

The Young Orienteers Challenge (YOC) is a participation incentive scheme for pre-teenage kids.

The aim is to assist in growing orienteering in South Africa by providing age appropriate incentives for kids to complete events. These incentives take the form of stamps, suckers, certificates and the ultimate prize of badges.

Once off participation in an event is just that. YOC tries to incentivise kids (and their families) to return and complete at least 3 events.

We run one badge for the short course events and one for the colour coded events. This is the third year of this participation challenge, and we are on our third different badge-this year its "compass buddy". (Previous years were control buddy and emit buddy)

YOC piggybacks on existing orienteering events organised by the orienteering clubs. It does however help attract a younger age group (and siblings of older kids) if the clubs add an extra event to the day, being a string course for the short course series and a yellow or white course for the colour coded series.

The success of YOC depends on the following:

- clubs agreeing to run YOC at their events and supplying manpower for the admin side
- marketing of orienteering events to pre teens and their families
- clubs having events at venues that can draw crowds within the target age group

2011 Short course season (SC)

Changes in 2011

The 2011 season was impacted by the following:

- the Cape decided not to run YOC in their short course season
- the Gauteng season was restructured, with the previous years' two big draw card events being the Jhb Zoo and the Scouts event at Delta not forming part of the normal YOC calendar.



- less support from the juniors to man the YOC desk. Without the necessary manpower cards were therefore not necessarily given to all newcomers

In 2010 these two events contributed 105 of the feet at events, although the reality was that there was a low hit rate from these events (hit rate being defined as kids who returned for at least one more event). The analysis below therefore makes adjustments to the figures for these “high impact events” to try enable a better comparison of the trends.

Marketing

Flyers were created again for the SC season. Unlike 2010 however their impact was minable-if any. Success of the flyers is very much dependant on distribution. In 2010 we managed to get one posted on the Jhb website which had a lasting impact.

We continued to do general marketing for all events through www.jozikids.co.za. This website again had very positive success rates. The one downside being this year they started to charge a fee. But the R60 per month fee, which began in April is not excessive for the exposure we get.

No adverts were placed in the Joburg kids magazine for the short course season. The two month lead-time required for adverts doesn't give much room for planning. This avenue has, however been used for the CC season and has attracted some interest

Overview

- We had 236 YOC feet over the 8 SC events with 41 badges being earned.
- 23 of these badges were awarded to families trying orienteering for the first time in 2011 (many being introduced through a friend),
- 8 came from families who started orienteering through the YOC program in 2010, with the remaining 10 being orienteering families from 2009.
- 59% of the badges were white badges i.e. people doing the minimum 3 events.

Comparative Statistics

Whilst the number of YOC feet was down (even on an adjusted basis), the number of badges earned remained constant and the hit rate is good. There seems to be some traction from previous years, and over 3 years we have doubled what we could call “regular” Orienteers.

	2009	2010	2011
Numbers of feet over the 8 event season	242	270	236
Cards given	99	72	86
badges earned	34	41	41
new families -2011			23
new families-2010		28	8
new families-2009	24	3	1
old families 2009	10	10	9
Hit rate: % badges vs cards given	34%	57%	48%

This table excludes the following non returners from the 2009 and 2010 high impact events, summarised below:

	Yoc feet	feet never returning
2009- Jhb Zoo-2009	67	33 49%
2010- Jhb zoo & delta park	105	61 58%

The hit rate including these high impact events was 20% in 2009 and 23% in 2010. So 2011 shows a dramatic improvement to the 48% level.

White badges are awarded for completing 3 events, a coloured badge for 5 events and 6 events earns a gold badge. The comparative breakdown of badges is as follows:

Break down of badges earned			
	2009	2010	2011
white	19	11	24
colour	4	7	5
gold	11	23	12
total	34	41	41

Impact of YOC on numbers at events

The table below summarises the statistics of the SC events over the last 6 years. One card is issued per group, so the figures after the blue column showing “feet” takes account of the number of people in a group. A lot of these people will be YOC families, as parents and kids tend to go out together.

Whilst there has been a slight decrease in the numbers at official SC events 2011 (due to the factors mentioned above) the positive impact of YOC is evident. 2009 saw a 35% increase in the number of feet at events. YOC was the main driver in both this increase and ensuring that the increased attendance was at least maintained. 23% of the feet at events over the last three years have been YOC kids (excluding their parents).

Year	Total Cards	# of events	Average cards per event	Total feet over season	average feet per event	YOC kids as % total feet
2006	439	6	69	444	74	
2007	699	9	71	707	79	
2008	500	6	85	508	93	
2009	788	8	99	1,003	125	24%
2010	828	8	104	1,117	140	24%
2011	781	8	98	1,019	127	23%

Note: These figures capture numbers at the official SC events. In 2011 the GOC clubs introduced a new concept of “Come and try it events” aimed at demystifying the sport for newcomers. My unofficial figures indicate there were a further 472 feet at these 3 events, although it is not clear how many of the estimated 245 newcomers returned to do any SC events.

The future

YOC will continue to be a tool to assist clubs to:

- attract newcomers within the target age group, and
- incentivise them to return to more events

Importantly YOC plays on the family aspect of the sport, bringing kids and parents together.

Its success in the future remains tied to clubs marketing events to families. The more people that come and try an event, the more numbers we can try get through to badge level. The traction (i.e. flow through from one year to the next), whilst improving from 12% in 2010 to 29% in 2011 remains low, so again success will depend on constantly attracting new people to events.

Success is also dependant on having manpower to sell the YOC concept to new families. Despite our big banner, many newcomer families did not come over to sign up to YOC. People are deterred, assuming you have to pay for these things.

Thanks

The continued success of YOC would not be possible without the help of many. Thanks go to

SAOF

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The main YOC team

Cally de Klerk-for designing the badges, cards & new banners.

Leila Venter for collecting badges, sweets, and YOC caps; email correspondence & manning the YOC desk.

Tania for co-ordination of printing for badges, cards, banners, collection of cards & manning the YOC table.

Others

The team of Zoe Brentano & Christie Courtage for assisting to man YOC desks in the SC season.

The Gauteng clubs for providing some extra man power to the YOC table and arranging string courses at the SC events.

To all orienteer's for promoting YOC and brining a friend