PREPARATION BEFORE EVENT

1. Make sure that all your kit is cleaned, packed and ready after your last event. Keep your compass and 'dibber' in a small box/bag and then they don't get lost or damaged.
2. Have I run here before? If yes, then get out the old map along with your post race notes/analysis, and get a feel for the terrain and types of leg. Whilst the course will be different this time the terrain will have changed little. If you haven't run there before then look up the OS map to get a rough idea of the terrain from the contours and any 'Blue' features.
3. Get to the car park/event centre in plenty of time especially if you have a timed start. Orientate yourself with the old map if possible (which is N?) and identify distance/time to the Start. Do not forget to CLEAR your 'dibber' before starting and make sure you pick up the correct course map.
4. I have always tried to estimate the appropriate time I should take! As an M75 (approaching M80). From the distance and height given I calculate 10mins per Km plus an extra 10 mins per 100m of climb. Rough, but relatively accurate for me.

RUN ANALYSIS

Mark up your course from memory on your map. Look up the results on line and particularly the 'split' times. These give you the opportunity to see where runners of a similar age/capability were faster, or slower than you on particular legs. If they were faster than have a good look at your marked course for that leg and start to ask yourself why you think they were faster. If you have the advantage of seeing their route on 'Route Gadget' then all the better.

When analysing your route try to identify other routes than were available - why did you take your route? Was it because the route was best for you with your fitness and experience? Or, did you just leave the control taking what looked like the obvious route - more common than you would believe. Try to be identifying your next route out before you get to the control. Practice planning your routes out in advance on one of our POCs, we spend far too much time competing and not enough training to use the essential 'O' skills.

So, for each leg of your course, identify the key 'O' skills that you used to your advantage or the ones you should have used to have made you faster.

THE 'O' SKILLS YOU SHOULD BE USING

1. Have you mastered the skill of orienting your map and 'thumbing' throughout your run?. Do you fold it up so that you can concentrate on a few legs at a time? Do you spend time trying to identify where you are on the map? These are skills that help to keep you in contact with the ground.
2. Did you take advantage of line features (hand railing) whenever possible to make good progress?
3. Did you use an 'attack point' for each control?
4. Were you able to use 'traffic lighting' effectively on your legs?
5. When you used your compass was it effective? i.e. rough bearings across country or specific bearings to get in to the control from an attack point.
6. Did you use 'aiming off' on any of your legs?
7. And so on.

These are all examples of the effective use of the essential 'O' skills. They are no different to anything else you want to do well, you have to practice them.

All these 'O' skills are being reviewed within this new 'Niche' and examples/reviews from various members will be added each month. We are always pleased to receive comments/reviews from klubb members to publish and help other members.