

Newcomer Retention Group

established by the

Orienteering Foundation

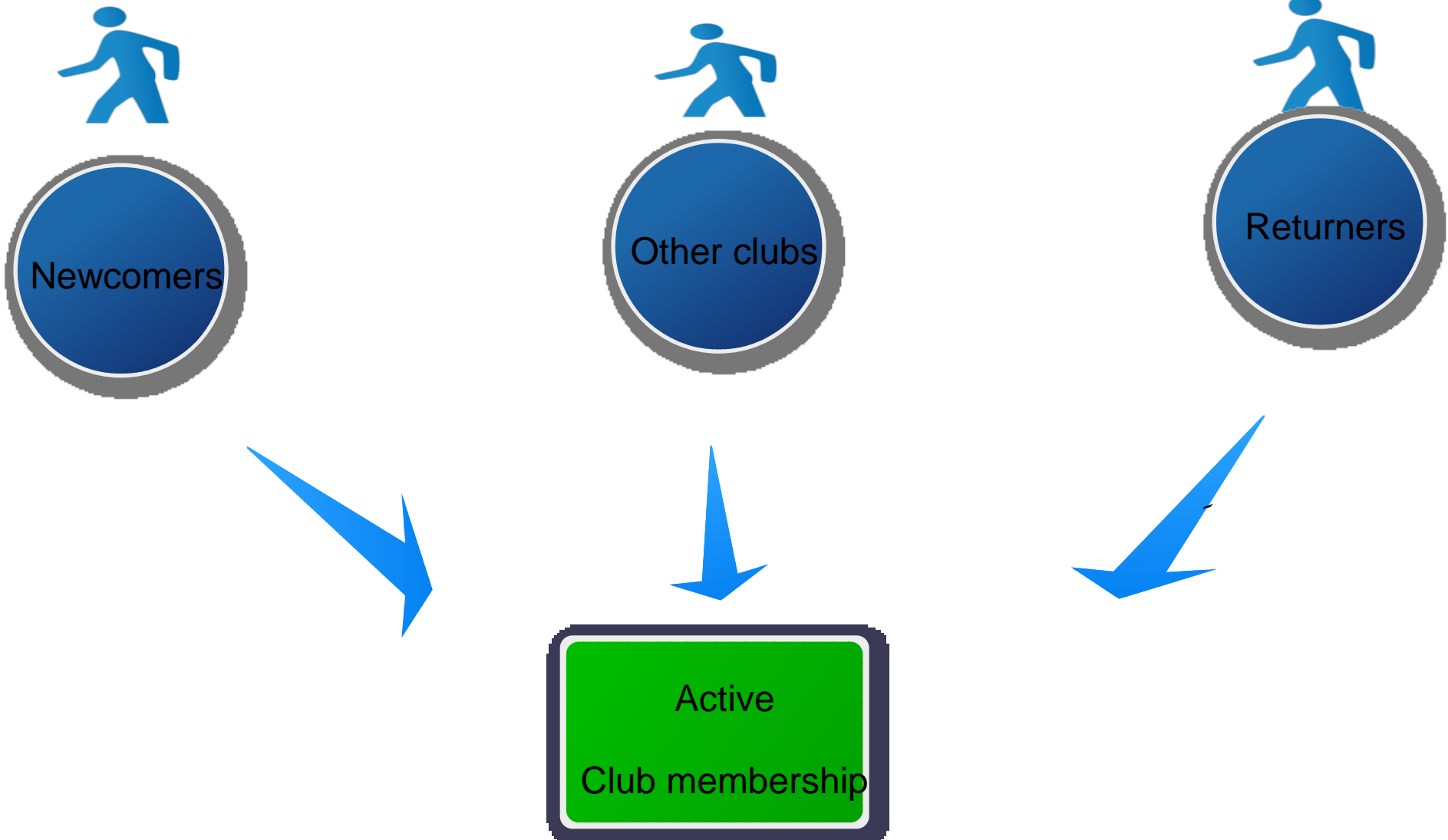


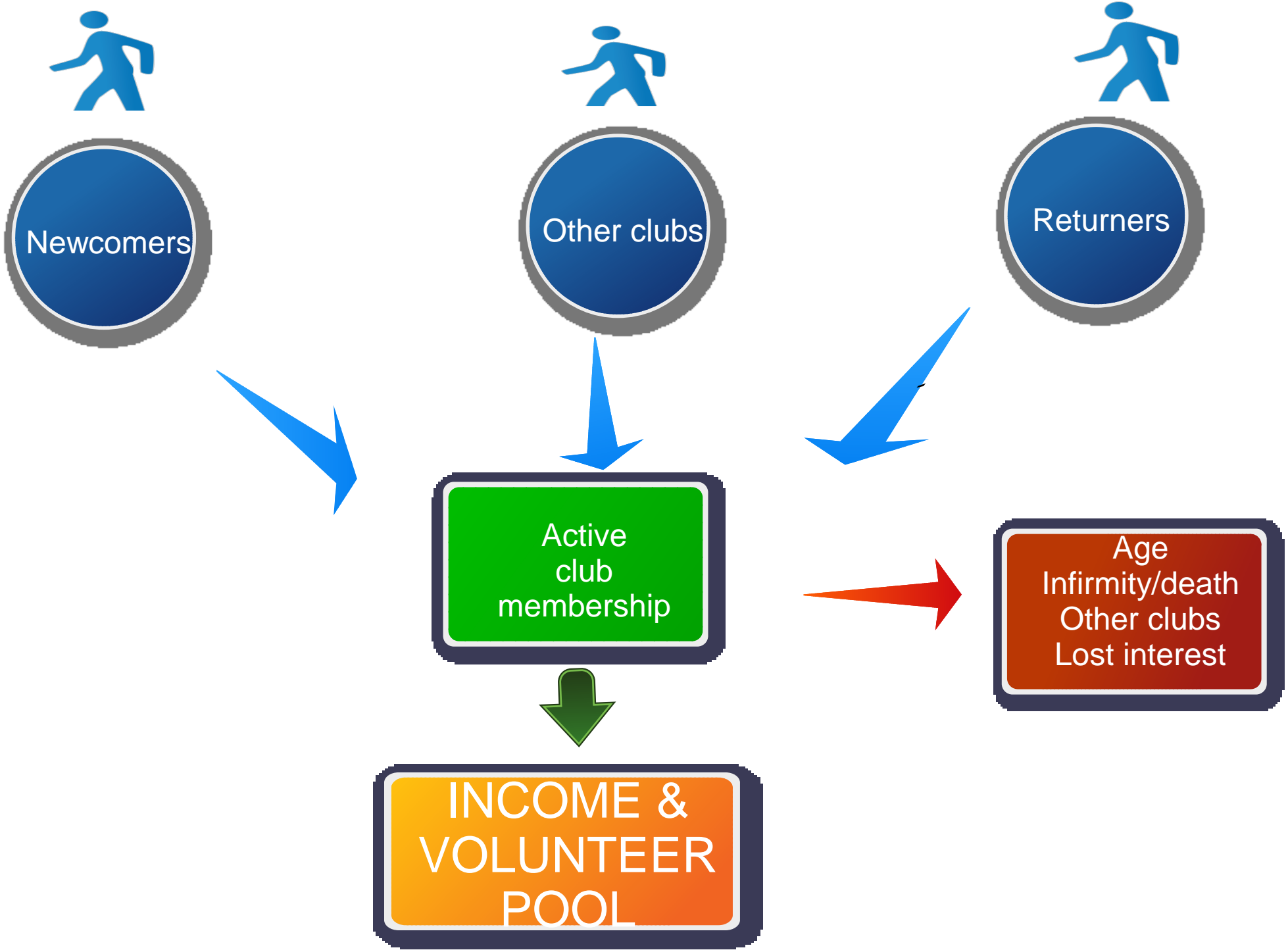
- Why NRG, remit and membership
- Methodology
- Club website survey
- Mystery visits
- Good practice
- Self-audit checklist
- Recommendations

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Newcomer Retention Group



Remit

- Define "orienteering newcomer", and define and research the current retention rate
- Define "regular participants", and research and quantify reasons why newcomers do not become regular participants
- Identify and document examples of good practice in dealing with newcomers
- Make recommendations designed to improve retention of orienteering newcomers
- If appropriate, identify follow-up work that could be considered
- Produce a written report on the group's work and conclusions

Newcomer Retention Group



Membership

Neil Cameron	NGOC	Chair
Mairi Eades	Interlopers/EUOC	
Jon Eaton	WCOC	
Ian Gamlen	COBOC/HOC	
Kay Hawke	PFO	
Ingebjørg Holmedal	OROX	
Carol Iddles	BOK	
Bertie Kingsley	OROX (until Sep 2021)	

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NRG Methodology



- Seek input from the orienteering community
- Discuss remit
- Exchange knowledge within the group
- Resulted in:
 - Website surveys
 - Mystery visits
 - Club self-audit checklist
 - Good Practice list
 - Recommendations

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What was surveyed?



Newcomer/beginner section only

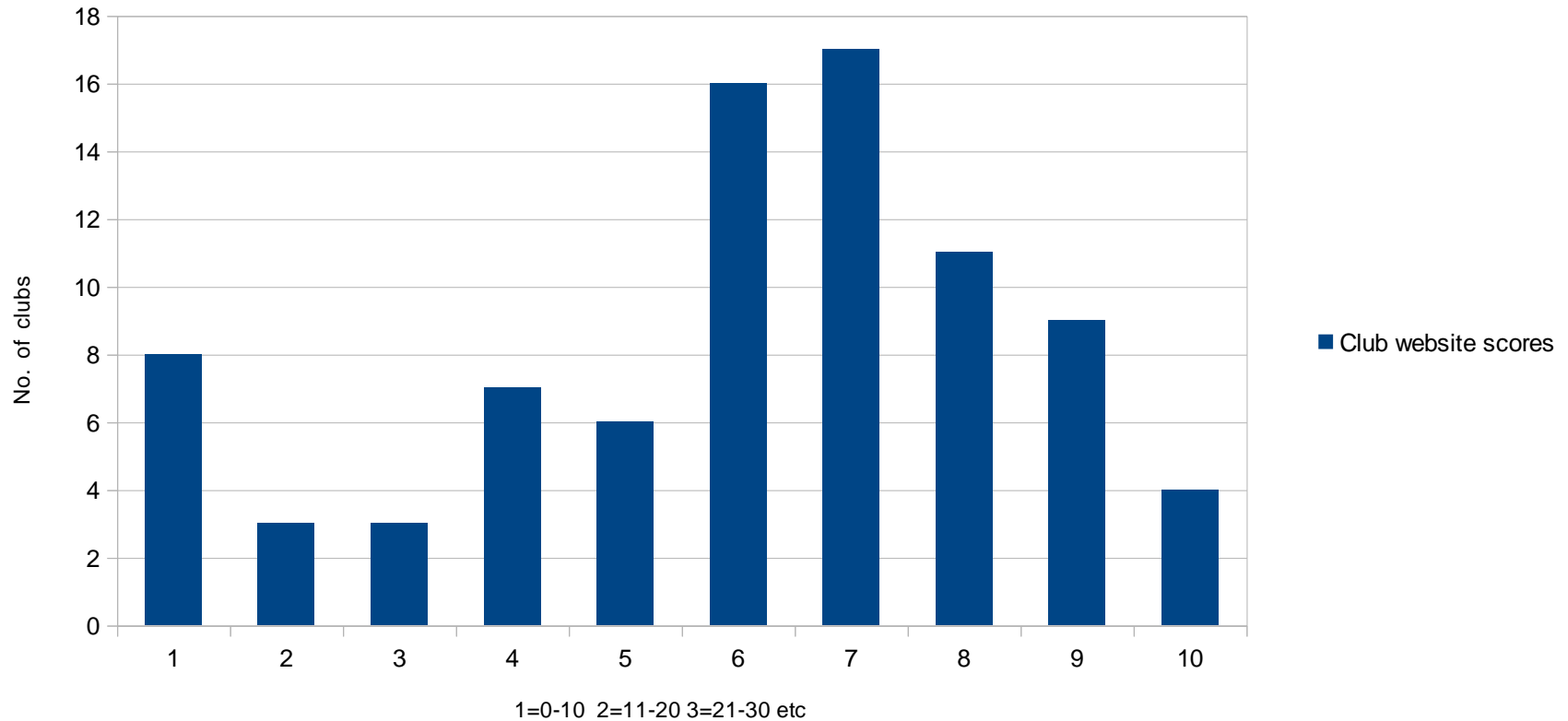
- Exists? / Easy to find? / Visual appeal?
- Concept of O / Ages? / Run or walk?
- Equipment? / Clothing?
- Map basics?
- Future event info?
- POCs and VOCs?
- Photos? Videos? Map extracts?
- Contact name or email?
- Adventure/challenge/excitement/enjoyment?

Club website survey results



- Websites of 84 open clubs
- Average rating 56
- Median rating 60
- 3 clubs rated 0
- 1 club rated 100

Distribution of ratings



Typical reasons for low scores



- No newcomer section
- Newcomer section poorly labelled and/or difficult to find
- No map extracts, ideally with a few legs shown with explanations [fundamental to understanding O concept?]
- Relevant section(s) not linked to from Newcomer section
- No explanation of why section being linked to

The good news



Most reasons for low scores (or less than 80+)

can be easily fixed

Website suggestions



Beginner/newcomer sections should be:

- identified as such very clearly
- highly visible on and easily accessible from the home page

Sections important for beginners should be:

- linked to from within the beginner section (and not just assumed that beginners will know to look at them)
- where relevant, the reason for linking should also be explained

Sample text for beginners re POCs & VOCs



Permanent Orienteering Courses (POCs) and Virtual Orienteering Courses (VOCs) are a very valuable resource for all orienteers but especially for beginners, because you can:

- do them on whatever day and at whatever time that suits you
- use them to fill in periods between local more formal events
- practise techniques without the pressure of competition
- modify the course(s) available (eg run in reverse or do odd numbers and then even) or use them to practise specific techniques
- re-run a leg to compare times and see if lessons learned have generated an improvement.

You'll find local POCs on our POC page [here](#)

Sample text for event info and beginners



You can find the most up-to-date list of events run by our club [here](#) and you should also consult the British Orienteering fixture list [here](#), as other clubs may be running events that you could attend

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Mystery visits



- Sport England sponsored, partnered with British Orienteering
- Carried out by Right Directions at 3 “newcomer friendly” events
- Beginner attends an event and produces a detailed report on findings for club, British Orienteering and Orienteering Foundation

Key findings

- 3 events at 3 clubs (out of 84 open clubs)
 - Can't draw too many lessons
- but
- All 3 welcomed visitors with positive enthusiasm to help
 - Visitors commented favourably on wide age range of participants
- although
- None of the 3 clubs contacted the beginner afterwards

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Good practice - selected examples



- Display a poster with some orienteering basics at events to reduce volunteer time in explaining the sport and enhance understanding
- Ensure that outgoing and knowledgeable people are allocated to dealing with beginners at events - setting a welcoming tone and trying to ensure that first experiences were positive.
- Have flyers available at events with details of upcoming events and the club's social media details to try to build on any beginner's event involvement
- Have POC/VOC info available and draw beginner's attention to it and why it's relevant [free POC maps?]
- Have clear follow-up plan to offer a beginner after they finish their first event (likely to involve POCs)

A reviewing approach



- Imagine the ideal beginner experience
 - How would you want them to feel as they arrive?
 - What might their motivations be?
 - How will you adapt what they experience to match their likely expectations?
 - Why might they need help & how will they get it?
 - How would you want them to feel as they finish and leave?
 - How can you get feedback and encourage further participation?

Review structure



5 sections

- Before beginner attends an event
- At the event but before the run
- At the event but after the run
- After the event
- Structural considerations

Sample Questions



“Before the event”

- Does the club website beginner section excite and enthuse a beginner with no jargon, and liberal use of photos, map segments, and videos (or links to these)?

“At the event, before the run”

- Has the whole club been encouraged to interact positively with beginners when the opportunity arises?
- If you have the capacity, have you considered a welcome team or person whose role is to identify and welcome beginners?

“At the event, after the run”

- Will someone remind the beginner about future events and supply information on relevant POCs and VOCs? This can include giving out free POC or VOC maps to eliminate a hurdle to trying again

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Selected recommendations



Mostly covered already, and all in the report

One not mentioned - Entry On the Day

REASONS FOR NO EOD

- Know map numbers better
- Reduced on-the-day volunteer effort
- Can use online entry to direct beginner to introductory material
- Easy to follow-up with beginner

REASONS AGAINST NO EOD

- Will beginners commit?
- Difficult entry systems?



Thank you for your attention!