

2009 Lake Macquarie Rogaine -

From A Setter, Vetter, Control Hanger/Collector's Point Of View

Feedback from competitors, land owners and other officials was mostly positive. It was very pleasing to hear that it was an event enjoyed by almost everyone. Good weather always helps.

I am a firm believer that all controls should be vetted by someone other than the setter. This year a very busy Ian Dempsey took valuable time out to set approximately a third of the course located on the western side as well as producing the map. The two invalids, Bert van Netten and I, set the rest. Bert and I vetted and hung Ian's controls while Ian vetted and hung a number of ours. Kim and Jamie van Netten also took time out of their busy schedules to vet and hang many of ours as well. The remaining few were set, vetted and hung by either Bert or myself. This was not the ideal method but they were "easy" ones we had visited together and were confident of their position. As usual, there were some left until the morning of the event. They were (except one) controls that were in "vulnerable" positions that may have been disturbed before the event started. Due to unforeseeable circumstances control 71 was actually placed after the event had started when the invalids raced to beat teams to it. Fortunately we won, just. One team, who I won't embarrass, should have beaten us but had dismissed the correct creek junction (to the east) due to its difference in actual shape compared to the map. They did retrace their steps and get it. Within a few minutes another team arrived and the third was spotted heading in as we were about 100m south along the main creek.

It was very much appreciated, the help given by competitors and officials, including our regular and much valued safety officer, Dug Floyd and his team in collecting controls after the event.

There was a camera located next to the flag at control 45 which was not there when the control was retrieved after the event. I hung the control and camera a couple of days before the event. When the camera was not sighted when the control was retrieved a thorough search was conducted without any success. We would appreciate feedback from everyone who was at control 45 letting us know what time they were there and if they saw the camera. It was disappointing not only to lose the camera but not to be able to show the pictures (if) taken.

Some feedback concerned the accuracy of the map. In setting the course it was found that in many locations there were many unmapped tracks and watercourses. Most of the eastern side of the main ridge has been mapped accurately for use by Newcastle Orienteering Club. The scale of those maps are, of course, different. All of those maps were compared to the rogain map and it was found that the difference in scale was the main problem. Some alterations were made but due to scale differences it was not practical to make others. When on foot, in an event, it is essential to relate the actual size of the land to that shown on the map. When that is done well and taking the contour interval into account it will be seen that the map cannot show everything. I have and will continue to be a victim of that problem. I guess that is a major reason some competitors are regularly more successful than the rest of us. That is not to say there were no errors in the map. Aerial photography has been used to produce maps. Where features, such as creek junctions, are hidden below trees the mappers make judgements of the actual shape. They are often but not always right, such as the junction near 71. Experience shows that most map errors occur when man made features are shown. Tracks come and go, are extended, altered by nature, 4WDs and motorbikes and also suffer sometimes from bad aerial photography judgements. However, the most common misleading map track "errors" I have found are the result of rogain mappers. There are those who go to a lot of trouble being precise adding tracks accurately to maps and there are those who just do

not see the relevance in being that accurate. The lesson is not to base your position on single features that may be inaccurate but to look at the bigger picture. (I wish I would take my own advice).

In this year's event two of the controls I vetted and hung were 53 and 45. The control positions were correct but due to map inaccuracy in the way of unmapped watercourses and the shape of the mapped watercourses I was pleased I was not looking for them at night. To rub salt into the wounds of those who gave up on 53 there was an unmarked track leading to it from the marked track to the north. Toward the end of the event one finishing team reported there were no electronic punches at 24. The control was checked and all three punches were still in place within 2m of the flag. The nearest one would rub on your back if you were facing away from it to use the manual punch. (Why were they not seen????)

Please let us know if you find obvious errors on the maps as they can be fixed for the next time they are used. Eg the intersection south east of 64. It was shown as crossroads when in fact there was an offset ? sorry bout that ?? we simply missed it. Last year control 25 should have been very easy to find as it was visible from the road but caused many teams problems as the dam it was next to was shown on the map 100m too close to the intersection. The error was found but unfortunately was forgotten to be passed onto the cartographer – I'll wear the blame for that one. In 2004 control 35 escaped some teams. The control was in the right place but the hand drawn track coming in from the out of bounds area to the west had its intersection drawn in the wrong place. Teams who used the intersection as their reference point ended in the wrong creek where there was no control. The position of the intersection was not checked. The vetter confirmed the correct position of the control using the correctly positioned quarry as an attack point and then proved it by a second bearing.

May you never get lost or have fun in doing so,

Neil Chappell