

Big Summer Trailquest (Mountain Bike Orienteering)

Sunday 10th July 2011....

At long last, the Manx "Big Summer Trailquest" (MBO) actually lived up to its name, with dry trails, light winds and pleasant hazy sunshine for most of the day. A total of 88 competitors actually took part on the day, with 34 opting to ride as a pair.

The event centre was at the very well equipped Union Mills Football Club House, which offered excellent facilities and plenty of off-road parking. This gave us plenty of space and we are grateful to them for the use of the facility.

During the day, we experienced a succession of heavy showers and were concerned that conditions may be difficult out on the hills but, from all reports, the showers seemed to have been confined to the Peel-Douglas valley, with everyone experiencing dry conditions everywhere except in the immediate vicinity of the event HQ!

The event area extended to the west and north, with controls as far afield as Greeba, Beary Mounain, Glion Gill and up to Tholt-y-Will and the Millennium Way. For the 3-hour event, controls beyond the Brandywell Road were off-limits, which presented the option of a tough loop around Slieau Dhoo, Tholty and a tough deep valley crossing on the Millennium Way. The latter loop was definitely ridden more easily in an anti-clockwise direction, avoiding the boggy sections on the north-facing slope.

In the 3-Hour event, Elliot Baxter & Rob Sorby blitzed the surrounding area, managing to visit a whopping 15 controls and picking up 521 points, being just 9 minutes over the time limit. In the 5-Hour, Lee Clayton & Juan Kinnish visited an impressive 23 controls to scoop a massive 700 points with a well-judged 3 minutes to spare – well done indeed.

We produced a small selection of trophies for this event, with the emphasis on the 5-hour event (although some of the controls in the 3-hour carried higher values than in the 5-hour, this was always weighted towards the longer event).

- ❖ Best solo male was Stephen Wood with 596 points.
- ❖ Best men's team were Lee Clayton and Juan Kinnish with 700.
- ❖ Best female solo was Claire Cavanagh with 280.
- ❖ There were no female teams this time round, so this trophy was awarded to Serena Wood & Sarah Moore who, although entered as solos rode the entire course together and notched up 260 points. However, they actually took over 5 hours – thus losing ALL their hard-earned points! So this trophy could be counted as a "spirit of the event" award ☺
- ❖ Best generation team were William & Matthew Clague just ahead of Jacqui and Jamie Fletcher with 160 points.
- ❖ Best mixed team were Cat Price and David Goberman with 535 points.

The full results are available on www.manxtimingsolutions.com along with the routes taken by all teams (which provides some interesting comparisons) and the statistics that show how many visited each control.

Above all, though, we hope that you all enjoyed a great day out in the hills. We have to count ourselves fortunate to have such an immense variety of fantastic Mountain Biking terrain on our doorstep!

Thank-You

As well as the advance planning and reconnaissance, it took me 3 separate days to put out the controls during the preceding week - and I would like to thank John Swindlehurst, Nigel Morris, Gary Hinds, Mark Caley and Tanya Sanderson for helping to collect them in again. Sue and I managed to collect 13 of the controls straight after the event but, with a busy week at work following the event, the help was very much appreciated! Thanks are also due to DEFA for being so supportive of the event and to the landowners who gave us permission to use trails across farmland at Trollaby and Bawshen. Final thanks, as always, go to Sue for looking after the refreshments - and helping with preparation of the maps, instructions and all the organisational bits and pieces that no-one sees!

The next Trailquest (MBO) will be on Sunday October 31st and will be a 3-hour event.

The venue is not finalised yet, but will be in the central area around St Mark's / Crosby. We will announce this via MMBC and in the local press as soon as it is confirmed. See you all again then.....

Graham Hughes

16th July 2011.