

Key reviews Sunday's MapRun event . . .

Our first club event using this newfound technology. It has been a long time coming — for me anyway. I first learnt about MapRun nearly two years ago whilst running at an event in Waikato but it took until lockdown for me to start to learn how to create them for us here in HB.

Sunday started out nice and sunny, set up was done in just a few minutes. Not having to put out a bunch of controls, gazebos etc makes these types of events really quick and easy for our volunteers.

Competitors soon started turning up with differing experiences of MapRun. Some had tried it during lockdown when I initially set it up, some had looked into trying it but not actually done it and others were totally green and wanting to know how it worked.

With the app loaded and a bit of education over, it was time to select which course to run.

On offer were 4 courses: a white course around the carparks and mall, a standard score course with a 30 minute time limit, a course where you could collect any random 18 controls shown on the map and then the fun one — a score course with a 45 minute time limit with a twist. The twist was you had to collect odd numbered controls and even numbers separately: a great way to increase the distance covered on a small map. How it worked: of the first 3 controls collected at least 2 will be of one polarity. These are the ones you collect first. You may pass by one of the other polarities without it affecting your results. You can go back on get these ones later when collecting that polarity. When you pass by two of the other polarity in succession it changes you to collect that new polarity. You cannot change back to the first ones now. Continue collecting these ones until the end. You didn't need to collect all the odds or all the evens just as many as you think you could get in the allotted time.

This seemed a bit complex for a few, others grabbed it with both hands and ran, and then some just ran thinking they knew what they were doing.

The results: most succeeded and did really well. One tried to collect just all the odd numbers but ran past 2 even numbers changing them to evens, so half the run didn't count towards the point value as they continued to collect odd numbers during the even section.

One other started out really well collecting a lot of controls then realised they should be going for the higher point value ones.

Another started off strongly collecting odds then changed over to the evens then it fell to bits, they tried to go back to try odds again — no points, then evens — these ones counted towards points because they were meant to be getting the evens now, then finished on odds again — no points. Another runner did a very similar thing but not quite to the same extent.

Route choice was definitely the name of the game on this course.

We even had an out of towners trying it out for their first time and they are now going back to their own club to spread the word.

We had one runner who got carried away on the 'collect any 18 controls' and ended up collecting all of the controls on the map, in a very good time too I must admit, proving that if I had provided a 1 hour normal score event all controls would have been easily collected by the faster runners.

We had a runner come and do it without using the app, just running with the map like normal. It must have been a bit different running to somewhere with no physical flag or any notification that you are in the correct spot.

As I had cleverly placed all 3 events on the one map, some went out and ran another course there and then. The best part about these events is they can be run any time, any day, so if you were there and still have your map go for another run one day, either on the same course and try and better your time/score or try a different one. There are a number of other courses available on our club website for everyone to try out, and there are more in the pipeline.

Unfortunately there were, as expected, teething problems. It was our MapRun first event so a good time for us all to learn and grow. Some turned up with the wrong app loaded but that was an easy fix: load the correct one and they were off. Some had trouble with data, & location, but once a few settings were changed they were off. Two people went away without starting because of technical issues, one had no data and I am totally puzzled about the other one, the map just wouldn't load. They had both run these types of events during lockdown without issue so this was a bit unfortunate. They have the map now, so I do expect them to come back one day and try again.

A couple of people mentioned that when they got to a control site that their phone took a bit of time to pick up the control, whilst walking around in circles and waving phones in the air. Every phone reacts differently and it's something that I can't make any better. Most had no problems with this.

Another issue was phones going into sleep modes. If the app is allowed to run in the background it shouldn't have been a problem —again not many had this issue.

I don't know for sure what needs to be turned on. My phone has data, Wi-Fi & location on all the time and have never had a problem so maybe I need to do some testing so I can advise with a bit more certainty in future.

In the end everyone came into the finish with big smiles on their faces and positive comments saying how much they had enjoyed it, so I will take that as a positive result for the day and feel happy about putting in some more time to create other events like this for both casual and club events.

I already have one member who has volunteered to help create these events and has provided me with three maps to date (since lockdown, not overnight!) which are now ready to go up on the website.

Numbers at this event were a bit lower than I expected, but as we run more of these, I do expect new people to come out and try it. The Waikato club, who I believe were the first in NZ to try this, now run their entire summer series solely using this app.

There are a lot of options that can be offered using this app so stay tuned for the next club MapRun event. I have a new twist in mind already for that one.

I really enjoyed putting this first event on and look forward to the opportunity to provide more. The fun it has created and ease of doing so plus now after the event, anyone can view the route choices that were made. Some are both amusing and interesting as we all learn about this app's capabilities and things to avoid.

For Sundays results and to see the routes others took visit: <http://maprunners.weebly.com/results.html>

Kevin Harvey

23/08/2020