

Mobile-O: a bizarre way of orienteering or not?



Personally I also believe, there is nothing better in orienteering to run alone in the forest and nothing more challenging to find a control point on your own. But sometimes we need to play.

There exist several novel attempts to make our sport more attractive for the audience and playful for the competitor as well. Mobile-O (i.e. orienteering running based on the use of mobile phone networks) is just one of these, but with a fundamental difference: this is the only of all when you have to find your way without having the map in hand. Sounds bizarre at the first sight, although it is nothing else just a development of orienteering sports as a natural consequence of recent technical improvements around us, namely the revolutionary progress of mobile phone communication.



Do you know Mobile-O?

Mobile-O is a game for two: a navigator and a runner. The navigator holds the map completed by the controls to be found as for classical orienteering, while the runner is equipped with a compass only. The navigator, located at the home (i.e. at the finish area), has to guide the runner between the controls with the aid of precise instructions given by mobile phone. During the competition the feedback from runner is of high importance and the interdependence of the two partners is somewhat similar to the confidential relation between driver and navigator at Rally races.



History

Hungary presented itself during the past years with a number of remarkable inventions in the world of cellular telephony, and also the first mobile phone aided sport is a Hungarian "innovation". In summer of 2004, as a supporting program of Hungária Cup, this special way of orienteering was introduced as a world-wide novelty. It made a hit right at its debut: Tamás Gajdos, prominent media figure of TV channel Sport1, designated Mobile-O as a "sport of the 21st century". Since that time two seasons have been completed with many similar supporting events. Organizers were forced to experience and learn a lot during this period, as it was an extremely accelerated evolution driven by the demand of orienteers once ever experienced Mobile-O. Nothing explains the popularity of mobile phone orienteering better than in some cases during these Mobile-O events the competitors saturated the capacity of the local cellular phone system and temporarily blocked the communication channels. Many visitors found this sport challenging and took home the message of this novelty, and in summer 2006 Southdown Orienteers could "break through the borders" of Hungary, organizing an event at Tilgate Park in England. Since that time the Mobile-O concept was tested in many countries worldwide from Sweden to the US.

Mobile-O: not only for the generation next

There is an increasing competition among outdoor sports to win the young and orienteering has to keep up with them. It is not enough just to point on the beauties of nature, we have to follow the trends in appearance and we have to be more technical that is one reason why electronic punching and GPS tracking is so beneficial in orienteering. Now, with Mobile-O we have another tool in hand. Trial school-competitions for absolutely beginner students of age 10-16 pointed out that mobile phone navigation is an extremely big fun and can help them to learn orienteering easily while playing in pairs. At the birth of the idea our concept was clear, Mobile-O aimed at the handy-fan young. The practice has shown, however, that adventurous people from elder generations take part in this communicative game as enthusiastically as the young ones. One can like mobile phone or hate it, it is just a tool, and by now it is a tool also for sports.



Come and try!

The 10th Mobile-O race in the history of Hungária Cups provides an excellent location and an exciting multinational atmosphere. Free rental of mobile phones with SIM cards are provided by T-Mobile. It's your time now to try.

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