

## Thoughts on route choice for the 2000 Parks Tour

Steve Gruhn asked me to compile some notes on route selection and decision process for the recent meet.

Leg 1: After much thought I decided not to pursue the high point controls up around the ski area. Facing a long hot day, I felt the climb would be too much work and that there were lots of other high point controls to the west. Before the start, I decided to go to 93, 104, 82, 81, 90, 74, 72, 91, 73, 80, 101. I left the option open to possibly going from 91 down to 94 and 100 if I was moving fast. Also, I wasn't sure what to do after 101 but felt there were options with 44, 71, 24 and 62 depending on time. I was a bit concerned with wandering into all the green but realized there was a lot of white and the green area had good ridges to run and two good survey lines from 73 to 80 and 101. The last consideration was whether to pick up 34 and 84 on the way to 93. I decided against 84 because of the climb and 34 didn't seem worth it but in retrospect may have been worth the time.

I proceeded as planned and was surprised how good the orienteering was out in the flats. The leg from 82 to 81 was short but technical. It would be easy to miss the reentrant and travel to far west. Fortunately I dropped into the top of the reentrant and followed it down to the control. At 91 I decided I didn't have enough time to deviate south and pick up 94 and 100 without a potentially long, hot nasty sprint for the finish. Again, I was thinking, that there was a long day ahead, especially with the 3 hour leg coming up next. 73 seemed a bit risky and would be easy to miss. I used the spur as a good feature to follow and the used the tip for an attack point.

At 101 I still had quite a bit of time left so decided to pick up 63 and 44 and then consider whether it was worth the climb and time to go up to 71. I decided to pass on 71, picked up 24 and headed for 62. After blundering around for a while on 62 (thinking it was an easy one) I punched 62 and made it to the finish a few minutes early. As it turns out I could have picked up 71 or I could have added 34 and 14 at the start.

Leg 2: There didn't seem too much choice to me for the first part of the leg. I wanted to run in the good terrain so focused on that for the first part. Before the start I had decided to go to 28 and 65, skip 47 as it was too far out of the way, and then head for 106 and 75. During the planning phase, I struggled with the best way to get 106, 75, 107, 86, 67 and 76 but ultimately went from to 106 first then to 75 by keeping the large ridge in site to my left, and on to 86 using the trail, then to 67 by following the veg boundary. However, I wandered too far west and had to retrace my route to the hill for an attack point. This was particularly frustrating as I have done this exact leg twice before this summer and twice last summer and I still blew it. I ran up the spur to 107, down the trail to 76 and on to 68 and then north up the power line. 66 seemed like a struggle to get, a potential time sink and it would be a real thrash crossing all that green if attacked from the well house. If it had been an 80 – 100 point control I would have gone for it. I opted to go the trail to 95, 96, 97, 69 and then 89. From 89 I crossed to 85 then south to 35 and 49.

That was the end of my planning ahead of time. I had hoped to have enough time to cross the road to 49 and 99 and then run down south and grab 87, 98, 105 and 78 on the way back. However, I wasn't feeling like a long hard run and time was a bit short so

I headed west and my main goal was to have enough time left to get 56, 109, 88 and 57 and not have a killer sprint to the finish like I have done in the past.

From 45 to 99 I could have easily grabbed 9 but I was so busy studying the map on the west side of the airstrip that I blew right past and didn't even notice it. I ended up running right past 99 and stopped when the trail entered the dry ditch I was watching on my left. It was a short overrun. From 99 to 77 was going to be a difficult leg. I think I was down to about 45 minutes so decided that I would run a straight compass and pace leg and if I found it great, if not just keep going. I didn't see it. At my pace count for distance, I did one large circle, saw the reentrant to the south and then found the trail. Apparently I overran the control and decided it wasn't worth messing with as there were plenty of high pointers that would be relatively easy near the finish. At the time I failed to notice that if I had gone north from 99 to the survey marker and then turned west, I might have been able to follow an old cut line, although the woods are pretty open and it may not have worked.

I skipped 37 to save time, and picked up all the others along the Tour trail. Controls 56, 109, 88 and 57 were quite a bit quicker and easier than I thought so I ended up with plenty of time and had a nice walk to the transition from 29. In retrospect I should have taken a few minutes and found 77 since I was so close but at the time I remember thinking that this is a high risk control, no good attack points without going west to the trail, flat featureless ground and a potential time sink.

Leg 3: At APU I decided before the start that I didn't have the energy to get them all so quickly decided to ignore the ones around the central and east parts of the lake. I laid out a straightforward route around the rest of the map and ended up with a relaxed run to the transition with a few minutes to spare. 52 was hard to ignore, but it was so far from all the others that I didn't think it worth the effort.

Leg 4: I thought I could probably get all of them. 20 was the one I was most willing to drop. I figured I had to get 60, 50, 51 and 102 so headed there first. 102 looked risky, but by using the manmade features as attack points I went right to it. By the time I got to 30 I was a bit dazed. I ran down the trail on the north side of the hill, thinking I was on the south side. I got real light headed and just stood there for a few minutes wondering what was wrong. I finally realized all I had to do was run up on the little hill and see if there was a control there. At that point, I figure I was starting to bonk. I recovered enough to get 1, 0, 40 and 21 in that order. However, not thinking clearly led me to do them in a poor order and climb the same hill twice. I should have gone 1, 21, 40, 0 and finish.

Overall it was a great fun day of orienteering. Steve did a great job on picking control sites and hanging controls. All that I visited were well placed and good controls. It was really nice to arrive at the transition, have the gear bags all laid out, fresh fruit, cold water and friendly volunteers. Thanks to all who helped and we all owe Steve a huge thank you for doing such a great job!

--Kimball Forrest