

South Midlands Orienteering Club

Procedures for running event IT using the SMOC computers

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Steve Hardy Minor Updates 4 May 2021

Dorien James Minor Updates 22 July 2022

Dorien James Minor Updates 1 August 2022

Dorien James Minor Updates 19 May 2023

These procedures assume the use of:

- Purple Pen for course planning
- SiTiming software (but not the SiTiming online entry system)
- Fabian4 online entries. Sections marked [Fabian4] can be skipped for Entry on the Day (EOD) events.

For smaller events use the SMOC Master PC 'Kachanga' without the Slave PC 'Mashaka-Lila'. The complications of networking the two PCs outweigh the benefits.

1. Leading up to the event

1.1 [Fabian4] Define the course names

- The extract file from Fabian4 uses the course short names. These may not always be what you expect and may not match the names used by the planner
- Liaise with whoever completes the Fabian4 event form to ensure that the short names are the same as the long names. At the time of writing (October 2020), the default is for Fabian4 to ask for long names, and then create short names - often just a single letter - automatically. They plan to change this so that the short name defaults to the long name. Until then, short names need to be manually specified to be the same as the long names
- Ensure that the planner knows the short names and uses these in Purple Pen.

1.2. Create the event in SiTiming

- Launch SI Timing
- You will probably get a message telling you SQL Server is not running. Select 'Yes', and 'Yes' to the pop-up message that doesn't seem to have anything to do with SQL Server.
- It will probably ask whether you would like to set SQL Server to delayed start. Answer whatever you want, it doesn't seem to make any difference.
- Once 'Connect' button is no longer greyed out *Select Database: **SMOC Events Database - localhost\events4*** (usually the default)
- Click *Connect*
- Add *Single Event* from the sidemenu
- Enter name, date and choose **Orienteering** from the *Event Type* dropdown
- Add text giving the location and date of the next event in the *Splits Advertising* box
- *Save*

1.3 [Fabian4] Load the start list into SI Timing

First extract the start list from Fabian4. At the time that the event is set up on Fabian4, Adrian Moir sends an email to the organiser, entries secretary and treasurer giving an administrative login link.

- Click on this link, or follow other login details provided by Fabian4, to log in to the Fabian4 administration system
- *Export* from the Organisers section of the sidemenu
- Any of the three Competitor Data options should work, but **SI Timing CSV format - for SITiming** seems to give the fewest problems.

Then in SiTiming:

- Choose the event from the event list
- If we are using start blocks (i.e. competitors have an allocated time) then turn off the validation that start times must be unique: *Event Details* --> *Key Settings* and untick *Validate start times are unique on each course* then *Save*
- Then *Entries* --> *Import/Export Entries*
- Choose sidemenu option corresponding to the export file used to export from Fabian4
- Choose *Import*, locate the file, and if appropriate select defaults for *Delimiter* and *Encoding*
- Choose the *Entries Import Mode* - usually **Delete Existing Then Add All**, but the options are reasonably self-explanatory
- *Read File*
- *Up* to the main *Entries* sidemenu, then *Search*. This will show the full competitor list in the main window. Check at least one competitor from each course to ensure that all courses have loaded correctly and mapped properly.

Check the course names that have been loaded by reviewing the entries. Ask the Planner to ensure that Purple Pen uses exactly these course names when the extract file is produced in the next step.

1.4 Load the courses into SiTiming

The courses should be saved in an IOF XML file (most likely by the Planner):

- Open the event file in Purple Pen
- *File > Create Data Interchange File (IOF XML)...*
- *Save as IOF XML version 3.0.*

Then in SiTiming:

- Choose the event from the Event List
- *Courses* from the sidemenu
- *Import XML Courses* from the sidemenu
- Select **Import**, locate the XML file, select **Create Default Classes** and *Read File*
- The courses should be visible in the main window.

1.5 [Fabian4] Print a competitor and start time list.

1.6 Arrange who will upload the results to the website following the event.

Currently Helen Nisbet, Dorien James and Steve Hardy have the necessary access.

2. The day before the event

2.1 Charge everything, using the correct labelled charger:

- Kachanga laptop
- splits printer
- start clock
- reserve battery. Be careful - the "DC in" and "DC out" sockets are very similar.

2.2 Synchronise the control boxes, in particular the Start and Finish boxes. The most thorough way to do this uses the computer. Section 2.3 gives a quicker way using only the SI kit. Using the computer:

- Dib each box with the Purple *clear backup* stick to clear the memory of old events
- Start SportIdent Config+
- Plug the MiniReader into a USB socket. It should show correctly under *Devices* at top left
- If you are connected to a WiFi network:
 - toggle the large button on the left, which may say *Direct* or *Remote*, until it shows *Remote*
 - choose *Clock* at the top
 - click *Set Time* to get current time from the internet
- Toggle the large button on the left, which may say *Direct* or *Remote*, until it shows *Remote*.
- Put the coupling stick in the MiniReader
- Put the first control box on top of the MiniReader with the stick through the hole
- click *Settings* at the top of the screen
- the system should read the box automatically.
- The control boxes have a baseplate that prevents the stick going right through the hole. The boxes can be placed so the top of the stick is in the hole. They are at a bit of an odd angle but Most boxes should read OK. However, some can take a number of attempts. Be persistent they will read eventually.
- then, until there are no more boxes
 - check that the control code number is what you would expect.
 - check control boxes are in Beacon mode to enable contactless punching.
 - check Start and Finish boxes aren't in Beacon mode.
 - check operating time is set to default for control boxes.
 - click *Set Time*. You should see a fast-moving progress bar, then the screen updated with the corrected time
 - put the next box on the MiniReader
 - click *Read*
- Once all boxes are processed:
 - do a quick visual check times are right – the little screen on the bottom of the boxes shows this
 - dib each box with the purple *service off* stick until the display goes blank.

2.3 Alternatively, if you don't have the computer or you're in a hurry, synchronise the control boxes thus:

- Dib the SI-Master box (which in our kit doubles as the CLEAR box) with the purple *service off* stick until the display shows EXT MR
- Put the coupling stick in the SI-Master

- Put each control box on top until it beeps. (Remember that the START and FINISH boxes are the most important of all.)
- Dib each box with the purple *service off* stick until the display goes blank.

3. Morning of event day

It's a good idea to leave the laptop off for as long as possible. So far we have always had about an hour's contingency at the end of each event, with the reserve battery as a backup, but all batteries degrade over time.

For an EOD event, turn on the laptop when you need to start entering forms; for a pre-entry event, turn it on either if you have to change an entry, or when the first competitor returns.

It isn't possible to use other parts of SITiming while the system is ready to download, so you will get practiced at cycling between steps 3.3 and 3.4.

3.1 Start up the laptop (Master, Kachanga)

- Connect the mouse, MiniReader and printer. Recommended configuration is mouse plugged into the USB socket on the left of the laptop, miniReader right side upper socket, printer right side lower socket. The printer requires the blue serial-USB adaptor, which may not already be attached.
- Power up the laptop.
- Launch SI Timing
- *Select Database:* **SMOC Events Database - localhost\events4**
- Click *Connect*
- (As with the old AutoDownload software, it takes a few minutes for SQLServer to start up. You may get an error message. Click *Connect* again until successful)
- (It may ask whether you would like to start SQL Server which may require administrator privileges. Answer *yes* to any related questions.)
- (It may ask whether you would like to set SQL Server to delayed start. Answer whatever you want, it doesn't seem to make any difference.)

3.2 Change Entry details

- Choose *Entries* from the side menu
- The initial screen is a search screen. (Beware: it's easy to type all the details for a new entry into this screen.) Choose *Add Entry* to add a new entry, or use the search to find the entry that you want to modify.
- The entries functions are mostly self-explanatory. Click *Help* at the top for the electronic User Guide.

3.3 Download

- Choose *Data Collection --> Downloads* from the side menu
- Choose *Download SI Cards*
- *Port* should be automatic, usually **COM11 (SPORTIdent USB device)**
- *Download Mode*, usually **Automatic, Manual on Error or Mispunch**
- *Splits Printer* will usually show the COM port used last time e.g. COM6 (Serial)[Drip Feed]. Check that this is correct:
 - Click the ... three dots in the box to the right of the Splits Printer field
 - Ensure that *Serial* is selected on the left
 - Choose the COM port from the dropdown. One of these will be the miniReader. Choose the other.
 - Click OK
- Ensure that *Print automatically on download* is ticked

- Click *Connect* on the right of the screen
- Confirm that you want to switch off all SIACs
- There is no confirmation that the connection was successful. The *Connect* button turns slightly greyer, and a message appears **Download time: xxxxx (this should match the time set in the timing stations)**
- You're now ready to invite competitors to download.

The most common problem on download is missed or wrong punches. General orienteering policy is "tough luck", but for our level D events, we're usually willing to reinstate competitors with a good story. Make a note of any cases for further action. If multiple competitors complain about the same control, alert the planner and set the control as optional (*Courses* from the main menu, select the affected course, select the control, modify *Control Type* to *Optional Linear*, repeat for all courses using this control, confirm that it's ok to recalculate results.)

3.4 To leave Download and return to other SITiming features:

- Click the *Up* button on the sidemenu
- Confirm that you want to stop downloading SI-Cards

3.5 Safety check. This should be done once the last competitor has started.

- Download the *START* box. Put the coupling stick in the miniReader, put the *START* box on top, choose *Data Collection --> Collect Punches --> Read Punches (Slave)*. Then click the *Connect* box followed by *Read Station Memory*. It usually takes 10-15 seconds to read all the punches off the box. Then click *Save Punches*.
- It's best practice, although not essential, to read the *CLEAR* and *CHECK* box as well.
- *Safety Check --> View Outstanding Participants*. This shows who is still on course, and gives an early view of whether there is anyone to worry about. This can also be viewed by course which may help the Planner to get started on control collection.
- Outstanding participant false positives are often caused event officials: typically either the planner or controller waking controls or checking. Keep this in mind as an explanation for very early punches or those unmatched to an entry.
- Once courses have closed, you can also read punches from individual control boxes to try to track the missing participant through the course.

4. Afternoon of event day

4.1 Correct any manual reinstatements or timing problems

4.2 Extract results file

- Before starting SI Timing create a new folder in the documents/events folder. Follow the existing naming convention.
- Start SI Timing and select your event.
- In sidebar select *Results*.
- Select *HTML Results*
- Use the browse button at the right to select the folder you just created.
- You can change the *Index Filename* to something more appropriate but don't add a file type extension; this will default.
- Tick the *Results* box.
- Tick *Split Time* box if you want these available.
- Unless there are lots of entries with known age classes don't tick *Age Class*

- Click the Green Arrow to select all courses – it should show *Selected n/n* where n is number of courses.
- Click *Write Now* to create your web page. There should be a significant delay.
- In file manager navigate to the directory you created. Double click the HTML file to open it in the browser and check it looks OK.
- Send the HTML file to whoever has agreed (step 1.6) to upload it to the website.