

Thank you for joining the first event in this year's Essex Midweek Summer Series.

On my drive to the pub the sky darkened and it looked like rain was due, but luckily the clouds cleared and it was a nice dry evening with enough light for the 35 people taking part - 16 people on the short course and 19 people on the long course.

Welcome to the eight people who joined us last night for your first event in our midweek series - I hope you enjoyed it and we will see you again in future events in the series.

I chose to plan my event in Great Notley as I wanted a mixture of urban street running and off road running in parkland now that we have lighter evenings. To aid navigation and route choice in the park I opted to use a standard orienteering map, opposed to the Open Orienteering Map we usually use in the series. I hope this change of map with slightly more detail provided enough of a challenge while not being too confusing.

With sunset being just before 8pm, I wanted to take the courses into the park as soon as I could to maximise the amount of time in the park before dusk. I took the routes slightly north before entering the park, firstly to give everyone a chance to get used to the slightly larger scale of 1:7,500 in the easier streets, and secondly because I wanted everyone to approach the road crossing from the north side to avoid the potentially busy roads around the supermarket. I found setting the course in the park enjoyable, but also a slight challenge as there wasn't always a suitable control site where I wanted to take the route. I was also torn between making the routes thought-provoking while also not making them too challenging with this being the first event after a short break and with new members taking part. Heading back into the urban area, I tried to include some shorter legs with multiple route options mixed in with some longer legs where attention is still required.

You may have noticed that I re-used a few control sites between both courses, with some legs being the same on both courses and then diverting to different controls, or some controls being approached from different directions on both courses. I thought this would be nice to have people running/walking in multiple directions crossing past each other and I like seeing other people while out orienteering.

I tried to ensure the control lines on the printed map didn't obscure paths and other junctions by bending the lines where required, however I didn't realise that control 22 on the long course wouldn't be clear when printed. Sorry to the three people who missed that control. We discussed in the pub how it would be best to handle this as 5 minutes is a large penalty in this case. From looking at the tracks, it looks like some people ran straight to the control and some almost missed it then ran back on themselves to find it. To be fair, we have instead given a 1 minute penalty for those that missed that control.

Lulu and Rodger completed the short course in the fastest time and took the 100 points. Dale finished with the second fastest time followed by Colin Jackson and then Sarah. After handicaps are taken into account, Sarah takes second place followed by Dale and then Colin. On the long course, Luke was the fastest back followed by Stephen and then Allen. The handicaps don't change the order so Luke also takes 100 points.

The next event in our series is on Thursday 30th April at Writtle. Details of this event can be found on [HAVOC's website](#).

