SportIdent A-Event Procedures for Organizers

Registration

- The event invitation should clearly state that the SI system will be used. Runners have to enter their SI punch stick number on the registration form. If they don't they will have to rent (or buy) a stick for the event. The invitation should also say that the start list will be drawn at the registration deadline and published on the club website. It is recommended to set the deadline two weeks before the event. Late registrations will be inserted into vacant spots and if the vacant spots run out they will be placed at the beginning of the start list.
- The course planner supplies the SI official (or the registrar) with information about courses and classes. The names of all the classes and courses, as well as which class runs which course, needs to be entered into the database.
- The registrar enters the runners in the database as the registrations drop in.
- The registrar assigns an SI punch stick for the runners that have specified that they want to rent cards.
- The registrar draws the start list at the deadline and it is published on the club website. To be able to draw a start list it is necessary to know how many start locations there are and how many start boxes are used at each start. This information is supplied by the course planner.
- Late registrations can be added to the start list using the vacant spots assigned in the draw.
- The registrar prepares SI packages/envelopes with the punch sticks for the runners that rent them. They can be picked up by the runners as they arrive on the day of the event.

Programming SI units

- The SI official has close contact with the course planner. When courses are finalized the code number sequence of the controls on the different courses are entered into the database.
- Before programming the units make sure the computer clock is set correctly. The time on the computer from which the units are programmed is going to be the official competition time.
- The SI units have 3 different states:
  - Active: The unit is fully operational and can receive punches. 100 % battery usage.
  - Standby: The unit is waiting to turn on at the programmed time. 20 % battery usage.
  - Off: The unit is only running the RTC (if it has one). ~0 % battery usage.
- The units can be programmed in two different modes called Competition and Training. Newer SI units are equipped with a Real Time Clock (RTC) and such units can be used at an A event programmed in either mode. Older units that are without an RTC can only be used at an A event if they are programmed in Competition mode. The organizers have to decide which mode to use depending on what kind of an event it is and how they want to handle the units.
- In Competition mode the units are programmed with exact turn on/turn off times. The units are in standby mode between the time they are programmed and the time they are automatically activated Each unit can only be programmed with one turn on time and one turn off time. The advantage of this mode is that once the units are placed in the forest they take care of themselves. They all turn on automatically at the same moment in time. The disadvantage of this mode is that a lot of valuable

battery power will be wasted as the units are in standby from the moment of programming. Also, at a multi-day event all the units have to be brought back from the forest to the competition center to be reprogrammed after each day.

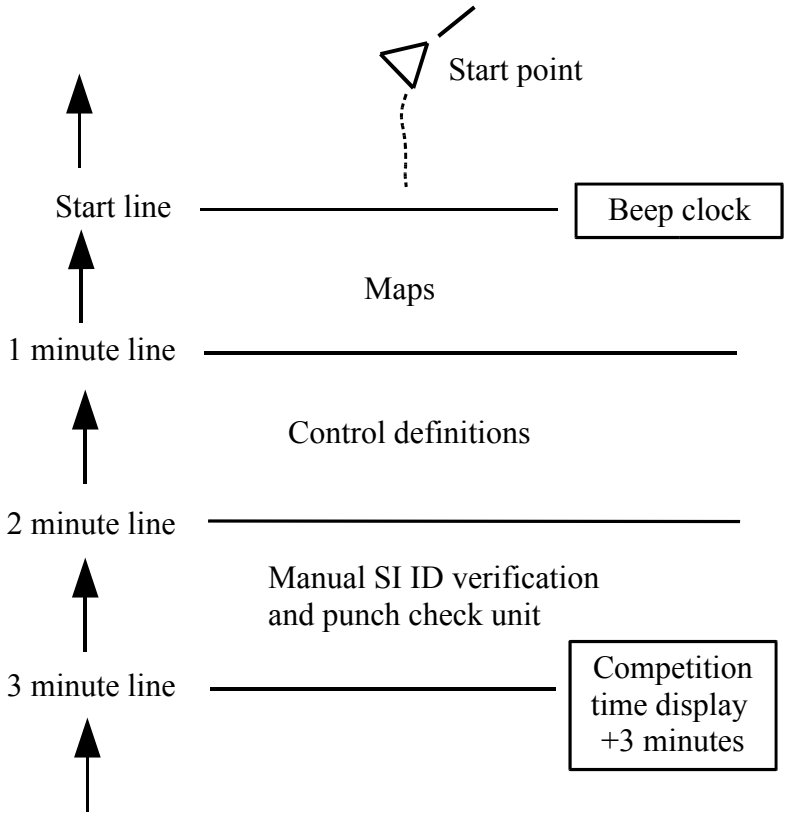
- In Training mode the units are only programmed with the time they will stay on once they are activated. They have to be activated manually by swiping a magnet across it, but it can be swiped any number of times and it will be active for a new time period. This is an advantage at a multi-day event on the same map. The units does not have to be brought back to the competition center for reprogramming. However, all the units have to be manually swiped before the event. This could be done by vetters that carry magnets or, at a smaller event, the units might not be placed in the forest until the morning of the event itself and they could then be swiped as they are put out at the control points. NOTE! Again, Training mode can only be used at an A event if the units have an RTC.
- As the units are programmed with a code number they also have to be labeled with this number so that they can be identified and placed at the correct control in the forest.

Placing the SI units in the forest

- Several people are probably needed to place all the units, stands and flags in the terrain. Don't underestimate this task. It takes quite a while to place the stands firmly in the ground and attach flags and SI units. Place the right unit at the right spot!
- Manual needle punches have to placed at every control for backup purposes. If the unit fails to verify the punch with a beep and a light flash, it is the runners responsibility to use the manual punch to punch the map.

Organizing the start

- It is very important to clearly post the distance to the start location, so that people can plan how much time they need to get there. It is the runners responsibility to be on time. If the runner is late to the start, that time will be added to their total time.
- Put up signs saying "Don't forget your SI card!" on the way to the start.
- Put up a clear unit (or more units on big events) somewhere on the way to the start. Use flags and signs to make sure no one misses it. “Clear your SI stick here! Hold it in the unit until you hear a beep and see a flashing light”
- Drawing 1 shows how to set the start up. The runners enter the start box as their start time comes up on the competition time display. The displayed time is 3 minutes ahead of the “real” competition time so that the runners are beeped off at their correct start time. A start official has a printout of the start list with the SI ID numbers on it. As the runners enter the start chute the official verifies that the runner is carrying the correct SI stick and ticks him off on the start list. The runners then punch the check unit. This unit will store that the runner has in fact started and that is now stored both on paper and in electronic form. At the next stage the runners pick up their control definitions and at the last stage they pick up their maps and wait for the start beep. Synchronize the beep clock with the competition time. NOTE! Remember that this is the time on the computer from which the SI units were programmed.



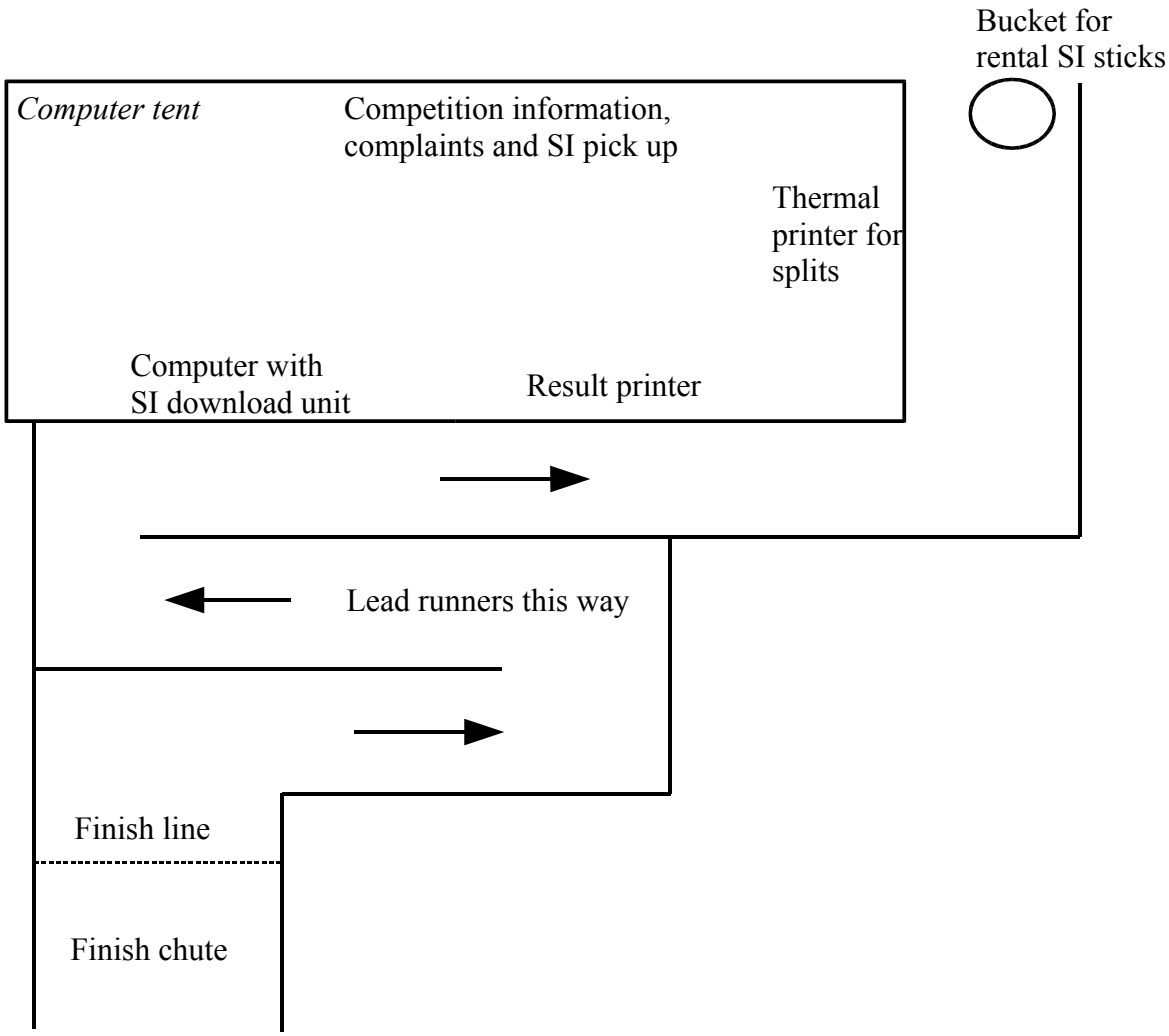
Drawing 1: Start procedure.

- Late runners must also have their names ticked off from the start list and punch the check unit. They can then take off as soon as possible. They don't have to wait for the beep. The time that they are late will simply be on their total running time. There will be no changes of runners' start times in the database. NO exceptions!
- When all runners have started the start official brings the start list and the check unit to the SI official at the finish area. The SI official can then enter the non-starters as DNS manually from the start list or through the check unit.

Organizing the finish area and computer tent

- An information board should be placed at the competition center. The start lists, instructions on the SI procedures for the runners, the distance to the start and any other important competition information should be posted on the board.
- A result board should be set up with room for result lists from all classes.
- The computers and the other electronics need to be protected from rain as well as sunshine. It is very difficult to read the computer screen in bright sunlight.
- The number of computers needed depends on the number of competitors at the event and what kind of flexibility the organizers want to have. The SI software on one computer can only perform one specific task at a time. If only one computer is used at the event this resource can become a severe

bottleneck. Consider the following scenario as an example. The competition is well under way and runners arrive at the finish line at an average rate of 2 per minute. The software is in download mode to be able to take care of the finishing runners. As this is going on a runner, that have not started yet, comes to complain that his SI number is not correct on the start list. Also, the result board has not been updated in 30 minutes and a print out is needed. The SI officials only option at this point is to leave the download mode. Runners that finish have to line up and wait. He has to find the right runner in the database and correct the SI number. After that he has to generate the result reports and print them out, which takes quite some time on a small ink jet printer, and then he can go back to the download mode and the runners can start to download their times again. This is a very stressful situation and things can easily get out of hand. The solution is to have several computers that can be used to handle the different tasks simultaneously. One computer acts as a server and holds the database. All the other computers can access the server and change information in the database, generate result reports, fill it up with splits and so on. The downside of this is that a computer network needs to be built with cables and a hub, which adds another level of complexity to the event. As a conclusion, this is an important issue that needs to be though over carefully before the event.



Drawing 2: Layout of finish and computer tent.

- Drawing 2 shows an example of how the finish can be set up. Create some room for the runners to line up for the download. Especially if only one computer is used at the event. The finishing runners are led to the download unit and they download their times. The official at the computer should tell the runners their total time or if the runners has mis-punched. In that case direct the runner to the complaint area. Don't stop and argue at the download unit! The runners are then led further away to the thermal printer for splits.
- If it is a single day event or if it is the last day of a multi-day event, place a bucket at the exit of the chute in which the runners can drop their rental sticks. Put up a big sign " Drop rental sticks here!"
- Several SI finish units are needed on the finish line.
- A "real" printer is needed to print results for the results board which should be updated regularly.
- An official that can give information and handle complaints is needed. Complaints are almost always runners that have mis-punched and demand an explanation. The code number of the control the runner mis-punched is printed on the splits from the thermal printer. Show the runner a master map with all the controls on it and explain his mistake on the map.
- A PA-system is a very nice feature that adds a professional touch to the event. You can welcome people to the event, give announcements and call the main classes if the runners wear bibs. All that is needed is a person that can be the speaker, a microphone, an old amplifier or something like that and a pair of old speakers.
- Electricity for the equipment needs to be supplied. Different options are some kind of batteries, diesel generators or extension cord from a nearby house. If batteries are used on a multi-day event they might need to be recharged over night.

Equipment check lists

Start

- Flagging tape to mark the start line and the 3 different minute zones.
- Beep clock
- Competition clock display. Could be the old fashioned model with numbers on paper that can be flipped back and forward or an electronic clock with a big display.
- A printout of the start list including the SI ID numbers. Pencils.
- A stand and an SI check unit.
- Something to hold the control definitions. (Like a table).
- Baskets in which to place the maps for the different courses.
- Chairs for the officials.

Computer tent

- Flagging tape to mark the finish chute.
- Several tables and chairs.
- Pencils and paper.
- Master map with all the controls (and their code numbers) on it.
- Computers and their accessories.
- Network cables and a hub.
- SI master unit.
- Thermal printer.
- Ink jet or laser printer for results.
- Extension cords and power bars.
- Electricity supply. Battery, generator or something else.