Phelps Twin Triathlon 2018 Event Documentation and Follow Up
9-6-18

This is the third year the VCARC and other operators have provided support communications for the event. The consensus is that the event was handled well by the radio team, comments were made that there has been improvement each year. Phelps Chamber Director Celeste was pleased with the radio volunteer's participation and noted that many of the new race participants offered positive comments. A woman spectator at the Vista checkpoint with a husband and son in the race expressed her relief that the radio volunteers were available for safety monitoring. There were 34 racers this year. This is up from 17 four years ago when they started.

The information in this document was compiled from an informal survey of the operators following the event.

Event
August 25, 2018
Volunteer planning meetings were held at the Phelps Chamber office at 6:00 pm on Wednesday the 1st and the 22nd.

Team
Our team this year was 13 operators, including two who are not club members.
Andy N9NBC
Roger KD9EPX
Paul N7EKY
Fred KD9CCE
Lorin KD9CXC
Dave N9DBS
Bob KC9RF
Bill W9ZCL
Scott W9JU
Kyle AB9AX
Phil KF9US
Bill N9JRB
Charles   KD9FIO

Planning and Organization
1. Drive the race route to check propagation at the checkpoints three weeks before the event.
2. All operators use the checkpoint numbering system provided by the Chamber to prevent confusion when referring to checkpoints.
3. Freeze operating instruction communications one week preceding the event. We had map changes, frequency assignments, and other information being updated as late as one day before the event.
4. Communications for process and procedure should come from a designated project leader.
5. 90 days before the event, apply to ARRL for the event call sign. (I put a reminder on my calendar).

Operations and Communication
1. Communication was impaired between SF (the hospital parking lot, or Start Finish), and net control by equipment limitations and the need for the operator to often relay information to Celeste.
    a. One suggestion was to locate net control at SF. Setup of a shelter and providing a generator or adequate battery power would have to be taken into consideration. This is some effort for a three-hour race. However, it could be a good field day-type exercise for the club.
    b. Another suggestion was to provide Celeste with a radio.
2. When relaying from a checkpoint to net control, operators should consider that the net control has to record this in a log book and pause accordingly during your transmission.
3. The team relay tag offs continue to be an issue, item for discussion when planning.
4. The spreadsheets provided by the Chamber were an improvement over the year before. Some operators noted there is room for further improvement. Item for planning discussion.
5. It was expressed that we could do a better job of keeping track of the last runner.
    a. The sweeper follows the last runner but was called off to other duties several times.
    b. If we can improve the accuracy of the information relayed to net control by making a more user-friendly spreadsheet, improving bib number visibility, etc. we can do a better job of following the last runner.
6. The published meeting time at the chamber of 07:00 was too early. Net control needs some help setting up, but otherwise operators could meet at 08:30 or whenever Celeste wants to see us.
7. Following Celeste and before the operators leave for checkpoints, a final briefing and Q&A should be held by the operators.

Radio Network and Hardware
1. The SF checkpoint is in a RF black hole and requires a mast to communicate with net control.
2. When driving the route to check propagation, test the Iron Range and Land O Lakes repeaters from each checkpoint.
3. More masts were needed, by planning earlier as noted above and having the documentation completed early we can identify and cover equipment needs.
4. Assign cross band frequencies to each checkpoint in the planning phase. Use of cross band repeating is the choice of operators at each checkpoint.

Net Control
1. The big digital clock at the operator station was a big help.
2. Checkpoints not communicating times to net control was a huge help this year.

Checkpoints
1. The Vista checkpoint was difficult to manage even with three operators. With bikers and runners both arriving and leaving simultaneously some traffic control is needed. Traffic cones, saw horses, and yellow tape were

suggestions. Having racers enter and leave in single file would make it easier to read bib numbers
2. A goal could be to have two operators at each checkpoint, three at Vista. We would need to recruit more volunteers. An effort should be made to recruit from IRARC and RRA.
3. The Blackjack Road-Hunters Road checkpoint on the run segment was not assigned an operator per Celeste. There was a chamber volunteer present. Some of the operators would like to see a radio at that station next year to help count runners. This could alleviate some of the confusion at the Vista checkpoint.

Chamber of Commerce
1. It was noted that the Celeste spreadsheet was greatly improved this year.
2. Some bib numbers were hard to read, covered with backpacks was the usual problem. Should they be on the front, or both front and back?
3. Request that racers call out their bib numbers as they pass a checkpoint.
4. On Deerskin Road leading to checkpoint 1, a few riders turned on Strong Road. A volunteer and/or signage is needed at that intersection.

General
1. Last but surely not least, schedule a post-event get together at The Great Escape or some other local watering hole to get some lunch and debrief and chat after the event. Everyone including me just kind of wandered off this year. (Thanks for the reminder Bill!)

Action Items
1. Follow up with Celeste. – Fred
2. Note on calendars to begin thinking about this about 90 days before the event next fall.