

# Scottish Orienteering 6-Day Event Company Limited Strategy and Business Plan 2017-2025



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## Foreword

The Scottish 6 Days events have been held every two years for the last 40 years. Originally run solely by volunteers, the events now employ a paid official and utilise outside event service companies to assist with the organisation. The numbers of competitors has increased from 850 to a typical entry of 3000 to 3500 with over 6000 competing in 2015 when the event was held in conjunction with the World Orienteering Championships.

The events have benefited from technical advances made in the sport with new technology being adopted when appropriate. This has helped to maintain the series as one of the major international multi-day events. It has also enabled the events to win a number of awards recognising the high quality of the competition and the professionalism of the organisation.

This success would not have been possible without the full backing of the Scottish orienteering community and the support provided by bodies including EventScotland and various Scottish local authorities who have appreciated the economic advantages accruing to Scotland from attracting orienteers from around the world to each event with the vast majority of competitors coming from outside Scotland.

This document sets out the aims and objectives of the Scottish Orienteering 6-Day Event Company and our future plans to maintain the event as one of the premier multi-day events in the world.

Dave Kershaw  
Chairman, Scottish Orienteering 6-day Event Co Ltd  
November 2017

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## 1 Executive Summary

The Scottish 6 Days Orienteering event has been staged biennially since 1977, and this Strategy and Business Plan is intended to show how we will continue to meet our aims and objectives:

- To maintain the Scottish 6 Days Orienteering Event's position as one of the major multi-day orienteering events on the world circuit
- To work collaboratively with the Scottish Orienteering Association in the development and advancement of the sport of orienteering in Scotland
- To encourage partnerships between orienteering, national bodies and the local communities in which the Scottish 6 Days takes place

The event should be self-sustaining, but key partnerships need to be developed, for example attracting funding for event enhancements or working in collaboration to stage events such as future World Orienteering Championships or World Ranking Events.

Maintaining competitor numbers, including all ages and a good mix of entrants from outside Scotland, is important from the economic impact point of view as well as offering a quality event experience. Excellent maps and terrain with good planning and controlling, appropriate technology, and efficient event organisation (good practice) will all lead to a great competitor experience. The Scottish 6 Days must offer competitive orienteering, but the event must also offer a great holiday experience including social activities and opportunities to visit the many attractions Scotland has to offer. The event has to be sustainable, from the economic, social and environmental perspectives.

Volunteers are essential to the successful staging of the Scottish 6 Days, and are very much a key part of the event support which includes a Central Organising Team of lead clubs, an Events Manager (employed through the Scottish Orienteering Association) and event services and professional support as required.

Competition for our key customers (orienteers) is increasing, and effective publicity and marketing of the event has three main aims:

- To develop and continue the long-term success of the event through attracting new and returning competitors
- To facilitate community engagement including local sponsorship opportunities and growth of the sport
- To raise the profile of the event and orienteering across Scotland to improve funding opportunities and attract new participants to the sport

The event is non-commercial and not for profit. The Financial Policy recommends that sufficient cash reserves should be maintained at all times by the Company to cover liability and costs that would have to be settled in the event of cancellation, postponement or other major issue impacting the conduct of the event.

The Board of Directors look forward to the successful staging of the event to 2025 and beyond.

## 2 Introduction

Orienteering is a challenging outdoor adventure sport with widespread appeal across all age groups. *The aim is to navigate between control points marked on an orienteering map; as a competitive sport the challenge is to complete the course in the quickest time choosing your own best route; as a recreational activity it does not matter how young, old or fit you are, as you can run or walk making progress at your own pace on the courses planned to suit you* (Source: British Orienteering). The Scottish Orienteering Association (SOA), Registered Charity SC043563, has overall responsibility for the promotion and development of the sport in Scotland.

Since 1977 the Scottish 6 Days Orienteering Event (“the event”) has been held biennially, and is recognised internationally as one of the premier orienteering events on the world circuit. The Scottish Orienteering 6-Day Event Company Limited (“the Company”) was established in 1988 as a limited liability company to provide protection against personal liability, and through its Board of Directors is ultimately responsible for the continuing success of this multi-day event.

The event is staged in regions of Scotland that offer quality orienteering terrain and attractive venues that will encourage participation from within Scotland, the United Kingdom and overseas. The legacy of new maps and new areas is a significant factor in the development of the sport in Scotland. Technical advances in the sport in Scotland have largely been led through their trial and adoption at the event.

The staging of the successful World Orienteering Championships (Highland 2015) would not have been possible without the support and involvement of both the SOA and the Scottish Orienteering 6-Day Event Co Ltd. This event saw an economic boost of over £9 million to Scotland, much of this spend within the local area of Highland and Moray. Around one third of competitors came from overseas, part of the 80% from outside Scotland.

Financial surpluses from the event (if any) are reinvested in the sport including an appropriate contribution to the Scottish Orienteering Association.

## 3 Aims and Objectives for the Scottish Orienteering 6-Day Event Company Limited

- To maintain the Scottish 6 Days Orienteering Event’s position as one of the major multi-day orienteering events on the world circuit
- To work collaboratively with the Scottish Orienteering Association in the development and advancement of the sport of orienteering in Scotland
- To encourage partnerships between orienteering, national bodies and the local communities in which the Scottish 6 Days takes place

The business plan detailed below describes how we will continue to meet these aims and objectives. Recommendations are shown in *italics*.

## 4 Business Plan

### 4.1 Key Partnerships and Funding

Over recent years the event has benefitted significantly from partnerships and funding, primarily through the public sector. EventScotland, who promote Scotland as the “Perfect Stage”, have provided expertise in many aspects of successful event management and their funding has helped in the provision of various event enhancements.

The Company collaborated with British Orienteering to stage three World Orienteering Championships (WOC), with 2015 the biggest and most complex orienteering event ever staged in the UK. Partnerships for this event included British Orienteering, the Scottish Orienteering Association, EventScotland and funding bodies Highland and Moray Councils.

Each event should be self-sustaining and third party contributions should be for enhancements or step-out expenditure.

*Though the overall budget and income of the event is significant, the company should continue to look for external sources of funding from the public and private sector to maintain the high standards expected of this premier event.*

### 4.2 Competitor Numbers

An important challenge to the sport and for the event is to continue to attract a wide and diverse range of competitors. The number of competitors, age profile and country of origin are all important factors to consider in the staging of the event.

An analysis of numbers of competitors shows a year-on-year increase in numbers which reached a first peak at the same time as WOC1999. Foot and mouth caused a dip in numbers in 2001 (as the event was only given the ‘all clear’ in late spring after potential competitors had already made alternative plans) but the event has seen a gradual increase but fluctuation in participation since then to around 3,500 in a “normal” year. WOC2015 was exceptional, with over 6,000 individual participants, 5,100 competitors taking part on any one day.

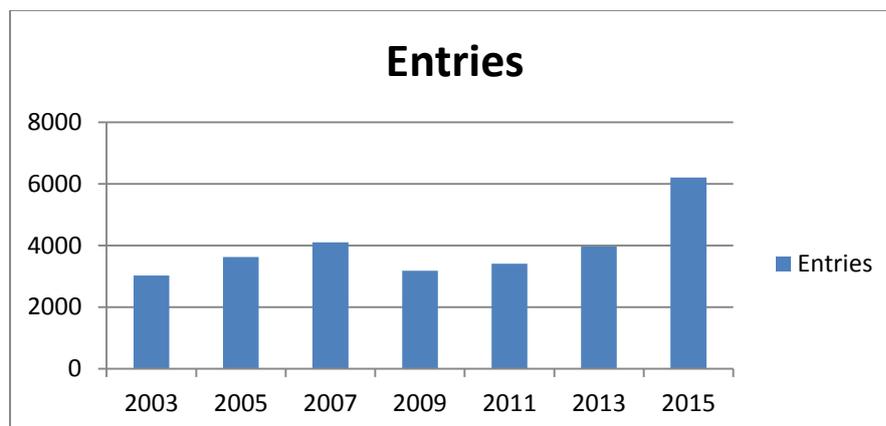


Table 1: Entries for the Scottish 6 Days from 2003 to 2015

The age profile of competitors in the sport generally has changed over the years, a trend seen in many comparable sports. The event has had to adapt and adopt new age groupings, including

competitive classes starting at 10 year olds and now looking to provide courses for 85 year old plus competitors. Non-competitive competition includes popular string courses for younger children and, in some years, additional Trail O competitions (for both disabled and able bodied competitors) have now been introduced. Around 20% of attendees are 16 or under.

The number of competitors from outside Scotland has increased to over 80% in recent years, including 25% from outside the UK (50% in 2015). Support from the Scandinavian countries, especially Sweden, remains very high and around 40 different nations are now represented at the event.

*The event should continue to maintain or increase competitor numbers from both the UK and overseas. Challenges to achieving growth will come from environmental constraints, limits on the capacity of competition venues and an increasingly competitive market for multi-day events in Europe.*

*The company needs to balance growth of the event with satisfaction in the standard of delivery of the event i.e. there should not be growth for growth's sake, the event has to be sustainable in terms of the demands it puts on the organisation. There is a need to record and compile event and competitor satisfaction data to enable historical analysis for improvements, and to support future funding as stated in the previous section. Methodology includes customer surveys, analysis of entries (including demographics of competitors) and analysis of website statistics and use of social media.*

### 4.3 Good Practice

Every Scottish 6 Days event is unique but valuable lessons can be learned from each staging of the event that can be applied for future Scottish 6 Days. These will include updates to the Day Organisers and Technical Manuals (see section 4.7) as well as key officials submitting post-event reports and analysis of what went well and importantly areas for improvement. This information should be disseminated to future Central Organising Teams and reviewed by the Board of Directors of the Company. Some examples of good practice and lessons learned are as follows:

- Recognition of volunteers – without a huge volunteer effort, from individuals and clubs, the event could not happen. There must be sufficient recognition and acknowledgement of volunteers, for example in post-event award ceremonies or external reports.
- Community liaison - the organisers must make every effort to ensure that local communities and residents impacted by the event are kept informed. Issues will always arise at events, and it is best that a local contact who can deal tactfully and sensitively is appointed within the organising committee.
- Dogs at events – land managers may be very reluctant to allow dogs in the parking fields or race arenas, but a number of orienteers are unwilling to accept that on some days or in some circumstances dogs cannot be brought to events. Dogs on leads in parking areas and a specified dog exercising area may be agreeable to both parties, and at an early stage this needs to be discussed and agreed with the land manager.
- Parking – adequate parking areas including reserve capacity need to be established at an early stage, and agreement reached between all the main officials including Assistant Coordinator, Day Coordinator and Day Organiser. Joint arena visits are recommended. Aluminium trackway (in addition to ground protection mats) at the entrance to parking fields

will facilitate entrance and exit of vehicles. Depending on ground conditions special arrangements may need to be made for motorhomes or campervans. The option of free bussing to each competition day from a central location should be considered to reduce the number of vehicles needing parking spaces.

- Event Services – the use of a professional event services team greatly reduces the demand on volunteer time. Realistic estimates of event services time must be agreed on award of contracts, and during the event every effort must be made to avoid overrun of chargeable time and services. This is facilitated by clear lines of reporting.

#### 4.4 Maps and Terrain

The event, and the continuing legacy for Scottish orienteering, is enhanced through the production of high quality maps. The availability of high-quality LiDAR data (detailed terrain and vegetation data acquired by laser technology) has assisted in the production of accurate geo-referenced maps but national coverage is limited and will increasingly become out-of-date. Base mapping derived from aerial photography is increasingly difficult to acquire.

*The use of professional orienteering mapping services is now seen as the norm, and a significant element of the event budget will continue to be needed to cover new and updated mapping, quality assurance and map printing.*



Figure 1 Glen Affric orienteering map produced for Highland 2015 using LiDAR base map

Scotland is fortunate in having a diverse range of terrain and vegetation types. Within a limited geographic area competitors have experienced everything from plantation forests on sand dunes to open deciduous forest or rough mountainous terrain. Feedback from competitors has shown that the wide variety of terrain types experienced at the event remains a major draw. With the exception of the southeast, far northwest and island groups the event has been staged across most regions of Scotland. Speyside, Deeside and the Moray/Highland areas have seen the greatest number of events – unsurprising given the superior quality of terrain but also the added tourism potential that is part of the 6 Days experience for many.

*As one of the aims of the company is to help in the development and enhancement of the sport the event should be spread around Scotland subject to the availability of quality terrain. The event reputation has been built up over our use of excellent orienteering areas, and going forward we must continue to use our best terrain. A map showing the distribution of events since inception in 1977 is shown as Appendix A.*



Figure 2 Sunlit forests in Glen Strathfarrar. Superb and challenging terrain

*Terrain new to orienteering should be explored and new areas developed to support a wider spread of orienteering across Scotland. In areas where the staging of the event is unlikely or impractical the company should assist orienteering, for example through a mapping fund or contributions towards Regional Development Officers or Club Development Officers costs. Appendix B shows the distribution of all orienteering events in Scotland since 1999 including locations of the Scottish 6 Days.*

#### 4.5 Technology

The continuing development of the use of technology in the sport of orienteering such as up-to-date computing, electronic punching systems, Wi-Fi results, GPS tracking, big screens and live video feeds has enhanced the experience for the competitor. For the organisers of the event advances in technology can be a mixed blessing, and finding volunteers willing to take on aspects of the technology can be difficult. There can be significant cost implications, for example the hire of a big screen will continue to be a major item and external funding is essential. The company will continue to purchase items such as electronic punching systems and computers, but it is recognised that all these have a limited life as technology advances.

*The event has been an early adopter of technology in Scotland and the company should continue to anticipate, develop and keep up with technological advances and wider developments in the sport e.g. introduction of touch free electronic punching and other futuristic innovations.*

#### 4.6 Competitor Experience

For many competitors the event is a holiday in Scotland as well as a sporting experience. Each event has an event centre, race arenas, prizes and certificates and a varied social programme (reflecting Scottish culture) which all contribute to the reputation of the event.

*These experiences will continue to evolve and attempt to surpass rival multi-day events. The Scottish brand is very strong, and for example “themed” years promoted by VisitScotland have a part to play in attracting competitors from outside the country. Additional overnight stays before and after the event as well as future visits (related to orienteering or not) are also desirable and contribute to the wider economy.*

*The event should also have direct appeal to those of a more competitive nature, including Elite competitors. This may involve the introduction of new or different race formats e.g. Middle Distance Races and application for World Ranking Event status. The quality of maps and terrain described in*

*previous sections is vital to attract this level of competition and competitors, and the Scottish 6 Days will be judged against and be in competition with other international events.*

## **4.7 Event Support**

### **Central Organising Team**

The organisation of the event comes under the auspices of a Central Organising Team (COT), including the Event Coordinator and with key roles including Treasurer, Day Organiser, Mapping Advisor, Technical Advisor, Information etc. Each event is assisted by the appointment of one of the Board of Directors as a co-opted member of the COT.

*Support materials including a Technical Manual and Day Organiser Manual play a key role in the continued success of the event. Procedures have been developed over many years but it is important that there is continued revision to take account of new developments and changes in the sport. The materials produced support officials involved in other large events in Scotland.*

### **Volunteers**

The support of individuals and clubs across Scotland and further afield is crucial to the successful staging of the event. Around 100 helpers are required for each day of the competition, and on-the-day tasks include car parking, marshalling, manning start locations, assisting with download and computing and so on. Each day is managed by Day Officials drawn from selected clubs. There are also Course Planners and Controllers (Event Overseers) along with their Assistants receiving mentoring for each different day or location.

*Across Scottish orienteering there is a wealth of experience of organising and planning events gained over many years, and the Scottish 6 Days offers an opportunity for more experienced orienteers to mentor relative newcomers to the sport. The company will encourage the continued training of volunteers, supporting the Scottish Orienteering Association who provide formal qualifications and who stage an annual volunteers training weekend.*

*The support of clubs may be recognised by a financial contribution from the company should there be an event surplus.*

### **Events Manager**

Participants have an expectation that they will attend a high quality event. Through the use of paid professionals and contract staff (see below) the company will seek to ensure that the responsibility for holding this event does not fall solely on the volunteer workforce. The part-funding of a Professional Officer(s) from the Scottish Orienteering Association has significantly contributed to raising the quality of the event and the development of the sport generally in Scotland.

*With effect from 2016 a new role of Events Manager was created within the SOA, and the company (through successful events) will continue to substantially contribute towards this part-time post. The Events Manager will support the event in the role of Assistant Coordinator.*

### **Event Services and Professional Support**

A variety of services has always been contracted in for the event, for example chemical toilets and track hire. Through external grants as well as entry fees (the main source of funding for the event) it has been possible to contract in companies specialising in event services to provide additional

manpower and resources. These have included marquees, crowd barriers, ground protection mats, start and finish gantries, staging boards, award ceremony platforms etc. Event enhancements such as a big screen need to be supplied from external sources, but where possible the supporting infrastructure such as arena production and commentary can be provided on a semi-professional basis by individuals involved with the sport.



Figure 3 Ground mats, crowd barriers, trackway and fencing provided through contractors

A number of major infrastructure projects have been part of the event on occasion. These have included permanent footbridges built for Oban 2011 and Highland 2015, very much a legacy of the event assisting the local community. Temporary structures have included a floating footbridge in 2015, manpower provided through 71 Engineer Regiment (Army Reserves). Financial assistance has come from various sources including LEADER, local councils and the one-off Active Places fund.



Figures 4 Bridging the gap with assistance from Marine Harvest and the Royal Engineers

*The event should continue to be volunteer-led, to retain the level of expertise and experience essential for staging future events and other lower level events in Scotland. The event is however also a holiday occasion for most of the volunteers, and they would hope to compete on all or most of the competition days. The continued use of event services is to be encouraged, and other opportunities to sub-contract elements of the event need to be considered.*

#### 4.8 Sustainability

It is widely accepted that to achieve sustainability we must balance economic, environmental and social factors in equal harmony:

- Economic sustainability requires that the company uses resources efficiently and responsibly so that it can operate in a sustainable manner to consistently produce an operational (accounting) and cash surplus. Each event is planned and executed to be self-financing in its own right. Without acting responsibly and using its resources efficiently the company will not be able to sustain its activities in the long term.
- Social sustainability is the ability of society, or any social system, to persistently achieve a good social well-being. Achieving social sustainability ensures that the social well-being of an organisation or a community can be maintained in the long term. Practically this means maintaining the ethos of the company and the raison d'être of the event.
- Environmental sustainability is defined as the maintenance of factors and practices that contribute to the quality of the environment on a long term basis.

*The Scottish 6 Days at Oban 2011 was promoted as “the greener orienteering alternative”, and the company must continue to take positive steps towards managing a more sustainable event. Practically this should include options for recycling, availability of a shuttle bus service, encouragement to share cars, use of local contractors and suppliers and considerations for the natural environment. The Scottish Orienteering Association has written a Good Practice Guide: Orienteering and the Environment in Scotland which is of particular relevance to major events such as the Scottish 6 Days.*

#### **4.9 Publicity and Marketing**

There are three main aims for publicising and marketing the event:

- To develop and continue the long-term success of the event through attracting new and returning competitors
- To facilitate community engagement including local sponsorship opportunities and growth of the sport
- To raise the profile of the event and orienteering across Scotland to improve funding opportunities and attract new participants to the sport

Repeated surveys have shown that the Scottish 6 Days website is the main point of information for raising awareness of the event. With a high number of competitors attending as regular participants at the Scottish 6 Days they will seek information from an early stage about the timetable for the event and the wider attractions of the area. The use of social media is now a major marketing tool, and previous approaches such as leaflet drops at major events across the UK and overseas are likely to only account for small numbers of additional competitors. Advertising in publications including local “what’s on” magazines has had little impact. Other UK competitors may respond to articles on websites such as British Orienteering or their occasional newsletter Focus, though editorial and other articles are probably more influential.

Engagement with the local community is important, and independent economic impact assessments show what a significant contribution the event will have. A promotional leaflet explaining orienteering is helpful; along with specific local contact including mail drops where the community may be temporarily inconvenienced by the event e.g. increased traffic flow on narrow local roads and imposition of speed and traffic restrictions. There are opportunities for businesses to be involved as sponsors including donation of prizes and giveaways, and for them to benefit directly

from increased custom. Some events, including the staging of WOC2015 with the Scottish 6 Days in Highland and Moray, have helped drive an increased interest in orienteering including the development of permanent orienteering courses, an updated and improved legacy of maps and areas, increased club membership and increased participation.

The event needs to be affordable and offer good value for money against competing international events. The higher the profile of the event and of orienteering in general the easier it is to secure funding, especially where increased competitor numbers increase the spend in both the local and the Scottish economy. Where we have achieved an event surplus, this has been invested in the grassroots of the sport including disbursing of funds to clubs, purchase of capital items, setting up a mapping fund and contribution towards development posts.

Orienteering does not have a high profile amongst the general public, and it is difficult to promote orienteering as a challenging outdoor sport and get greater recognition against other sports such as athletics, football and rugby. The staging of major events, and recognition of orienteering at award ceremonies e.g. Scottish Thistle Awards and The Drum Event Awards, remains an important factor in the promotion of our sport.

*The company will ensure that there is a local contact or ambassador for the event, and who will act as a point of liaison with local businesses and community groups. This will help the event meet the needs of the community and vice versa.*

*The event is an excellent opportunity to promote and develop local orienteering initiatives, for example the Community Orienteering and Protection of the Environment (COPE) project in Royal Deeside supported through the Cairngorm LEADER fund in 2017-2018.*

*The Events Manager, including his/her wider role within the Scottish Orienteering Association, will continue to work with organisations including EventScotland, local authorities, Scottish Government, Forestry Commission Scotland, Scottish Land & Estates, Defence Infrastructure Organisation and others to ensure that the company receives the assistance and support needed for successful staging of the event. This includes financial assistance as well as ensuring access to areas in line with appropriate legislation or guidance e.g. Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 and Outdoor events in Scotland: guidance for organisers and land managers. Reports e.g. Economic Impact Surveys provide information that show the economic benefit of the event to local communities and across Scotland as a whole.*

#### **4.10 Financial Policy and Reserves**

As described in the introduction the event is non-commercial and not for profit. Surpluses are reinvested in the sport. The company does however need to maintain sufficient reserves to cover costs should the event be cancelled for whatever reason e.g. outbreak of foot and mouth closing countryside access. Prior to the event taking place it is likely that major costs will have been incurred on mapping, officials' expenses and deposits on event overlay and infrastructure.

The Company and the event operate on a 24 month cycle which usually begins, from a financial point of view, during the previous event. The timeline of the Reserves Policy is summarised as follows:

- 24 months in advance – some expenditure is being incurred in marketing the next event
- 24 months-6 months out – a small number of potentially large amounts being incurred on pre-event expenditure, primarily mapping but also some operational expenses (e.g. deposits) or equipment. Mapping costs will vary depending on the areas being utilised and the quality and/or existence of previous mapping. Such expenditure is likely to be in the range £25,000-£50,000, and is covered by advances from the Company to the event account managed by the event treasurer
- 6 months out – the first entry cut off is usually 31 January in the event year. At this point the event becomes self-sustaining in terms of its own expenditure. Entry fees received at this stage are approximately 55% of the total. From this point the event should be able to cover all of its committed expenditure as the pace of incurring (and settling) the costs is matched (or anticipated) by the flow of income
- 1 month – the last month is characterised by late entry cash inflow, with a relatively small proportion of cash from merchandise or other income
- Event itself and subsequent 3 months – settling all event costs and liabilities. Analysing overruns and additional expenditure not included in the budget. This is a time of financial risk, especially if income and anticipated expenditure is finely balanced

*Sufficient cash reserves should be maintained at all times by the Company to cover liability and costs that would have to be settled in the event of cancellation, postponement or other major issue impacting the conduct of the event. In the interests of financial prudence this reserve policy should be maintained. Any reduction below the current level should be analysed by the Finance Officer and approval agreed by the Board. Two members of the Board including the Chairman should sign off any such decision. The Finance Officer should not be part of this approval.*

#### **4.11 Risk Assessments, Risk Register and Insurance**

Risk assessments and rescue plans for each competition day of the event are a requirement, and the Assistant Coordinator will normally act in the role of Safety Officer for the event.

Separate Risk Registers for the company and for each individual event are to be maintained and reviewed by the Board of Directors.

Insurance is a complex subject and at time of writing each day of the event has to be registered by the organising (lead) club with British Orienteering. Additional insurance may be required for equipment hire, cover of officials and volunteers involved in the set-up and take down stages, event campsite (if not covered through a third party commercial organiser) or special projects such as bridge construction.

*The company will ensure that obligations towards risk management, safety and insurance requirements are adhered to.*

#### **4.12 Look Forward**

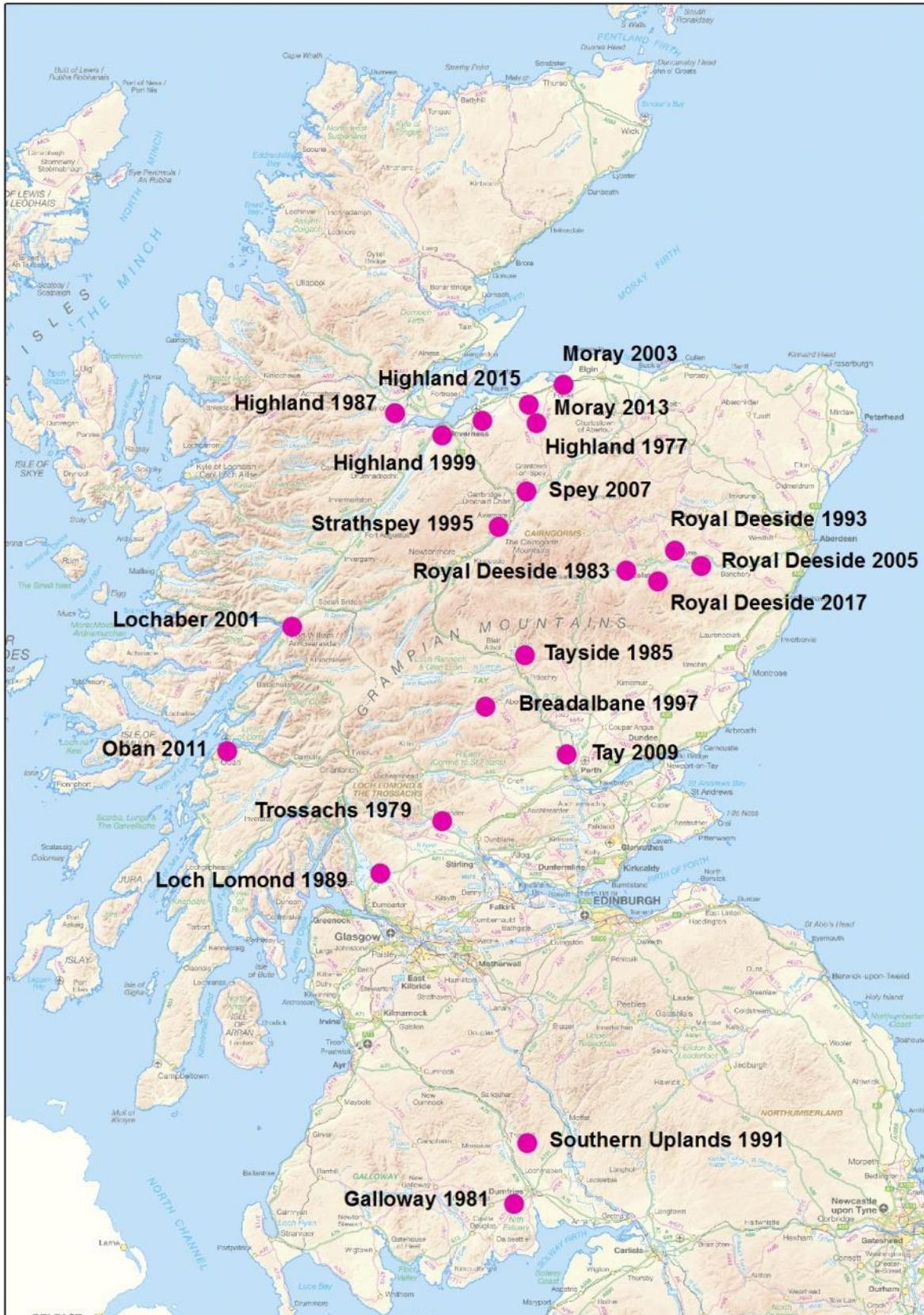
Through the Scottish Orienteering 6-Day Event Company Limited and the staging of the Scottish 6 Days Orienteering Event the standard of orienteering in Scotland has been continually improving. This has included:

- Production of quality maps of challenging areas

- Well trained and experienced event officials
- Attracting competitors from around the world raising the standard of competition

Raising the profile of orienteering in Scotland has helped attract major competitions such as the World Orienteering Championships but there will always be opportunities to stage further national and international competitions including future World and European international events.

## Appendix A Map showing Scottish 6 Day locations 1977-2017



## Appendix B Map showing distribution of events 1999-2017

