

British Championships and World Masters MTBO New Forest September 27/28th 2025

Middle distance - Hurn Forest
Sprint distance - Moors Valley
Long distance - Ringwood North

The three races had 171 riders across the events with competitors from Australia, New Zealand, Belgium, Spain, France, Sweden and Portugal competing in the World Masters League. Riders came from as far away as Inverness in the British Championships.

The Middle distance event was held on Saturday morning with the Sprint late afternoon in a different forest, a bit of a logistical difficulty but overcome with help from Wimborne and Wessex orienteers. Thank you again to all who helped.

The afternoon event in Moors valley had a couple of small mishaps, Kevin had given the gripple keys to riders to clear Hurn forest and when they came to need them in the afternoon there were not enough, luckily a bent car key chain does the job nearly as well. Also signs directing riders to the starting area were turned in the opposite direction and even tape was moved from trees to another track less than 30 minutes after being placed. It gave some riders a longer warm up, but everyone started on schedule.

Sunday's race in Ringwood north had one very large gentleman suggesting we did not ride in his forest as we were putting out control boxes. A small argument occurred, but the Stag finally decided we could race

All 3 races were held in forests that had you slowing down on narrow twisting one-way trails, then going very fast on wider gravel forest roads and included some hills on the long race that had you pushing your bike up them. All races had a good element of orienteering in them and there was much discussion after the races as to the best route to go, sometimes backwards from the control to access faster paths. Riders must keep to paths and tracks that are marked on the map and mistakes are sometimes larger than FootO as you are going so much faster.

Several paths were marked one way, as they were very narrow and in places quite fast, to save riders crashing into each other, and these worked well. We also had bridledways in the areas, on which UK traffic regulations forbid racing, so several controls were used to make sure you didn't break these rules and gain an advantage.

After 18 months of planning, over 300 emails sent and received, it was a big relief when everything went as well as was expected.

The feedback from The MTBO riders was certainly positive. The challenge now is to try and provide more MTBO events in the South of England to keep these competitors interested in our sport.