Title: Programming Si Controls

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Version: 5

Purpose: This note describes the process to program the control boxes for a Sportident event. It is the electronic equivalent preparing the punches for use at a conventional event.

Applicability: This note applies to the use of SiManager V9.8 27.3.2002. ***It does not apply to the new, smaller transparent red (BSF8) controls which do not require programming before use and are switched on by the insertion of an ordinary e-card.***

Overview: Each of the control boxes to be used for the event must be programmed with its function and switch on and switch off times. The internal clock of the controls is synchronised with the clock of the PC. It is usual to program the control boxes a day or so in advance to allow them to be put out on the course in good time. There is a slight risk of clock drift so it is preferable if the Start and Finish boxes are programmed on the morning of the event, and the Check and Clear boxes can be done at the same time.

Process:

1. Check that you have sufficient Si control boxes. You require one for each control, Start, Finish, Clear and Check as a minimum. It is recommended to have duplicates for each of the special stations, and two or three spare controls. The total number required therefore is:

   No. of controls + 8 + 3.

2. Early in the week before the event label all the controls with the control numbers or function. You will usually find that some are already labelled as you require. If you have to re-label REMOVE the old tape. Use white insulation tape and an indelible marker pen to label.

3. Check the battery levels in the controls. This is done using the Si manager program in the same way as controls are programmed, except that you use the read option rather than write. This will read the battery state from the control. If this is 90% or higher change the battery. Although it is easy to change batteries (see separate sheet) it is time consuming and it is best done early.

4. If using a HOC laptop login as user hoc, password hoc. Connect a Master Station (red box) to the serial port (RS232, 9 pin D type connector) on the laptop or PC. The control to be programmed will be placed face down on the Master Station, with the white ferrite rod linking the two controls together. Switch the master station on with the magnet that is attached to the cable by wiping it across the top of the master station. The master station will beep.

5. Run Si Manager by selecting the icon in the tool bar, SIManager from Programs>Sportsoftware or the SIManager icon on the desktop.

6. When you are ready to program controls you must synchronise the PC clock. The best way to do this is to run a 'DOS' command shell, (Start>Run and type cmd then OK) and use the time command. Set the time to that of the speaking clock. IT IS IMPORTANT THAT THIS IS DONE ACCURATELY. Any clocks for the event should also be synchronised to the speaking clock – i.e. use BST/GMT as the time for the event.

7. If this is the first time that controls have been programmed for this event, select Event,New. Type the name, date and base time into the appropriate boxes. The base time is 10:00 unless you are told otherwise.

8. Select the Si stations, Prepare, Competition Mode. A dialogue will appear and you must confirm you have checked the PC clock.

9. Into the "Prepare Si Stations" dialogue, set the power on date and time, and the switch off date and time. Power on time should be set early enough for checking, normally around 06:00 on the day of the event. Power off time will normally be 30 minutes after course closing, in case starts have to be delayed. Set the TASK of the first box to be programmed – e.g. control. Set the control number to the first number you require, e.g. 101. Check that the drop down menu above the WRITE button is set to Master – this tells the program to use the master station to write to the control. (The alternative setting, Directly, allows the programming of the Master Station).

10. Switch the control to be programmed on with the magnet. Put it on the master station, upside down with the white ferrite rod in the holes linking the two controls together. Press write. The control is programmed, the details of the control contents on the dialogue are updated, and the progress bar moves to 100%. The status changes to Prepared, Mode Competition and Finished! appears in the bottom of the dialogue. Note that the battery indicator shows the before and after battery state.

11. The control number will be incremented ready for the next box. You only need to change this if this number isn't used. *(This is the most likely point to make an error when sequential control numbers aren't used.)* Otherwise repeat step 9 until all boxes are programmed.

12. The process is identical for the 'special controls' (Start, Clear(completely),Check and Finish) except that the TASK must be set as appropriate and the control number should be less than 32. By convention I use the following for normal morning events:

Number	Function	Switch On	Switch Off
1	Start 1	09:00	Last start + 30m, e.g. 13:00
2	Start 2	09:00	Last start + 30m, e.g. 13:00

3	Clear 1	09:00	Last start + 30m, e.g. 13:00
4	Clear 2	09:00	Last start + 30m, e.g. 13:00
5	Check 1	09:00	Last start + 30m, e.g. 13:00
6	Check 2	09:00	Last start + 30m, e.g. 13:00
7	Finish 1	09:00	Course Close + 30m e.g. 15:00
8	Finish 2	09:00	Course Close + 30m e.g. 15:00

13. Select Protocol, and check the log. If possible print two copies of the log, one for the controller and one for the planner to check.

14. The Master Station may be turned off by setting the drop down menu above the WRITE button to Directly, and then selecting Turn Off. The master station will beep and turn off.