

## **Southern Centre Championship Timing Problem Update.**

As we all are aware, we have had serious malfunctions with the timing system at our first two rounds of the Southern centre in Doon and Vernon Mount.

Problems of this nature are extremely damaging to our sport and a reoccurrence is simply not acceptable.

We have used the electronic timing system from AMB in almost every race since 2002 and we have not had any problem like this. AMB are the market leaders in timekeeping and the same system is used in MXGP. There are currently 3 separate timing systems in use by our clubs. (System A, B and C) The current hardware and software was updated in 2012 (Cost €18,000) and the system has been in use since without any problem whatsoever until the event in Doon last month. In fact, we take great pride in the quality of our timekeepers and our equipment.

As you all probably know, the timing works when your transponder sends a radio signal to the timing loop which is buried under the finish line.

The transponders are designed so that they produce a steady signal which is just strong enough to record when it is close to the timing loop.

If the loop is buried too far underground or the transponder is too far away or does not have enough power (poor battery), the loop will not pickup the signal.

If there is too much ambient interference (from mobile phone masts, strong radio signals etc) the signal from the transponder can be lost.

On the timing system there is a readout which records interference to the signal from the transponder to the timing loop. This is measured in units from 1 upwards.

AMB recommends shutting down the system if the interference reads over 45.

According to soil, moisture and depth conditions different tracks would have different standard interference levels.

**Doon: March 14/15** The same system (A) used by the same timekeeper was used without any problem in Doon on the Saturday before Sunday's issue. The interference was reading 18 all day Saturday, 18 on Sunday until lunchtime where it spiked at 140 resulting in timekeeping failure

**Gormanston 28 March:** A different system (B) with a different timekeeper was used with an average reading of 19 all day.

**Ferns April 4.** The system averaged all day at 10 and worked perfectly. (System A)

**Clonroche April 5** System A operated all day with no problems at a reading of around 18.

**Vernon Mount April 18/19.** System A worked perfectly all day Saturday with a reading of 24 and worked until lunchtime on Sunday where it spiked at 110 again at lunchtime which led to failure of the system.

We have now contacted AMB where they are now examining the technical report which the timekeeper sent to their office in Holland this morning. The reason for the "spike" is being investigated. If they cannot determine the answer with an online link to the system, it will be sent to them by courier tomorrow. We have to find an explanation and a fix for these interference spikes.

In the meantime, for the next round in Birdhill, we will install another complete timing system. This will run along with our normal timing. We will have 2 laptops, 2 decoders, 2 loops and 2 trenches. We will have 2 completely independent timing systems with one acting as a live backup.

We cannot have a problem like this again.

In conclusion, the timing problems seem to have been caused by technical issues and not by operator error. In fact, we have complete faith in our timekeepers who have always done an excellent job.

On behalf of the Motocross Committee I apologise to all the riders who have been let down by these equipment failures, I would ask that you stand by us at the start of a really promising season and I assure you that I will do all in my power to make sure that this does not happen again.