



About parkrun

Parkrun organise free, weekly, 5km timed runs around the world. They are open to everyone, free, and are safe and easy to take part in.

The Challenge

Although events are free to enter, parkrun know that it is important to continually motivate runners to improve their performances. Each runner is automatically emailed their results on the same day as each event that they attend. Furthermore, the results are posted on the parkrun website, along with historical results and stats including age group records and age-graded performances.

In order to achieve this, a reliable, user friendly (timing is taken care of by volunteers) method of recording runners' times, together with a straightforward method by which those times could be collated for rapid sharing within the parkrun community, was required.

parkrun approached Electronic Reading Systems – a long-time partner of Opticon, to see if there was a more efficient way of collecting and compiling the data needed. Being a non commercial organisation, parkrun were also keen to minimise their financial exposure too!

The Solution

Electronic Reading Systems (ERS) have developed a timing system using the Opticon OPN-2002 portable data collector with built-in barcode scanner and 1MB of memory. A custom application was developed for the OPN-2002 that allows the each participant to have their completion time to be recorded, using simple button presses:

STEP 1 - START THE EVENT

To start the event press and hold the main trigger button for approx 6 seconds. During this period the OPN2002 LED will illuminate amber and the beeper will sound continuously. After approximately 6 seconds the beeper will sound in a upward frequency sweep to signify that the event has been started and the data collector is now ready to log times. A Start Event record will automatically be stored in memory.

STEP 2 - LOG TIMES

To store the time for successive race positions press the OPN2002 trigger button once for each time to be logged. The data collector will beep and store the position (starting at Position 0) and the associated time in memory. Simultaneously, an additional OPN-2002 is used to record the finishing position of each runner – this is achieved by scanning the unique barcode assigned to each signed up member of the parkrun scheme.

STEP 3 - END THE EVENT

On completion of the event press and hold the trigger button for 6 seconds. The OPN2002 will emit a continuous beep for 6 seconds and then sound the beep in a upward frequency sweep to signify that the end of event has been recorded. An End Event record will be stored in memory.

To download stored data from the OPN2002 parkrun timer, simply connect the OPN2002 to the PC USB port using the cable provided, or place the OPN2002 into an empty slot in the multi-way cradle.

Within a few seconds, the parkrun_timer_DL (PC application developed by ERS) will detect the connected device and proceed to download stored data.

STEP 4 – COLLATION OF RESULTS

The finishing positions are married to the recorded finishing times in a simple spreadsheet. This information can be quickly and easily made available to the participants via email and through the parkrun website. It also forms the basis for several levels of statistical and performance analysis, keeping the runners' informed and motivated.

For More Information about parkrun, visit www.parkrun.com

The logo for parkrun, featuring a stylized silhouette of a person running above the word "parkrun" in a lowercase, rounded font.