

# SPORTident Mixed Punching FAQs

## **What is Mixed Punching?**

The latest update in the SI control box software allows the box to be used as a touchless beacon as well as a traditional punching box. It supports running events with both touchless dibbers (SIACs) and older style dibbers on the same control boxes and on the same courses.

## **What is the IOF statement?**

“With the latest contactless punching control stations (both Emit and SPORTident), a successful punch can be obtained at a small distance using a contactless card. But they can also be punched in the “traditional” fashion using a contact card. For most competitors, contactless punching will save a second or two per control compared with contact punching.

The relevant IOF Commissions (FootO, SkiO, MTBO, IT and Rules) have recently discussed whether any rule changes are needed. In particular, they discussed whether competitors should be allowed to use their contact cards in an event using contactless punching.

They decided that no rule changes are needed at present. They feel that it is obvious that at an event using contactless punching, contactless cards must be available on loan (if necessary for a small fee) for all those who do not have their own contactless card. However, those competitors who wish to use their contact card, perhaps because they feel more confident punching that way, should be allowed to do so.”

## **How does a competitor punch with a SIAC card?**

A SIAC card will register at the control once it is within 0.3m of the SI box. So the competitor just needs to ‘swipe’ his or her SIAC card close to the box and then check that the control has registered successfully.

## **So I just need to get within 0.3m of the control?**

No, the competitor must make sure that their SIAC passes close to the SI box. We recommend that you ‘swipe’ close enough to brush the SI box with the card. Any gain in speed comes from not having to dib, not from taking the risk of pushing the limit of the SIAC punching range

## **How does a competitor know if the SIAC has successfully “punched” if it is not inserted into the control box?**

All SIAC units will either beep or flash or both, so the runner will receive instant feedback. If the SIAC unit does not give feedback after being in close proximity to a control box, the runner can revert to ‘dibbing’ in the traditional way.

## **Is this fair?**

Runners with a SIAC may save a second or two at each control site. So there is an advantage that could add up to significant saved time over the course. The competitor barely has to slow down at the site and so it does significantly improve flow and concentration and hence the challenge of the competition. This is one reason why we want to transition to this technology! It is indeed in line with the use of fast-set compasses, high quality running shoes, sophisticated contact lenses and so on, that improve speed and concentration during orienteering. Provided there is access to a large stock of SIAC cards available for hire by competitors, this is fair in this transition period.

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## **What about control sites across impassable barriers?**

It is possible that the control box beacon is accessible to SIAC units across barriers and we recognise that this is a common feature of sprints and urban events. Our planners aim to ensure that units are sited so this does not happen

## **What safety concerns are there?**

The main concern is about recording who has gone out in the forest and has everyone returned. Control boxes do not record a 'swipe' from a SIAC dibber like it does from an older style dibbed visit. To address this, there are checks at the start and at the finish to ensure that a record of passage for each runner is captured.

## **Is there a risk that the battery runs out on the SIAC units?**

It is possible; however, the battery life can be tested before the start of an event. Should any unit fail whilst the runner is orienteering, then they can continue their race using the SIAC to dib at the remaining control boxes in the normal way.

## **What happens at the start?**

Competitors using SIACs should dib to Clear and Check as normal. If the SIAC is not checked, then it will not have its radio turned on and it won't work in touchless mode. Similarly SIAC competitors should dib at the Start as normal.