

Stockholm Indoor Cup



On the rest day at last year's O-Ringen I took part in an indoor event at the IKEA in Uppsala. I really enjoyed it and thought it would be fun to take part in a proper indoor event. I don't think there is a bigger indoor event than the Stockholm Indoor Cup so when I saw cheap tickets to Stockholm in the British Airways Black Friday sale, I took it as a sign.

I did some geeking from home before I left, finding some YouTube videos and previous maps so to a point I was prepared. But there were two things I didn't expect: how long the races would take, and the heat and humidity inside the buildings. I had never looked for any results for previous SIC's so when looking at the live results before I started, I was surprised to see almost no finishers under an hour, and people still out on the course after almost two hours! With hundreds of orienteers in the school building at any point, it was very stuffy inside and really hot in confined parts of the building.

Day 1 took place at Nacka Gymnasium, a high school south-east of central Stockholm which was easy to get to by bus. Assembly was in the school auditorium, with food being sold and O equipment on sale. The auditorium was jam-packed with people waiting for their starts or recovering from their runs. There was a big screen above the stage showing live-streams from the competition area. The finish was on the stage, as was download and enquiries.



To get to the start, we had to go outside for about 100m to another part of the school. Not too far, but the temperature was around -7C with snow on the ground, so it was definitely not a warm up! I had entered the Tantes (aunts) class. There were 6 non-age group races, 3 junior age groups (M & F), seniors (M & F), tantes and gubbars (old men). There were just over 200 entrants in my race.

It was a pretty standard 4 minute call up, with the usual loose control descriptions. The start boxes were in a bit of a corridor, then into another room with the start kite and out into a

corridor. Every start time had a small group bursting out into the corridor and then stopping immediately to study the map. I tried to make the first control as difficult as possible by trying to go upstairs before realising that there was a much easier route on the same level.

It took me a while to get into the map and work out a strategy. Most controls were very easy, either very close (even in the same room) or with a single change of level via a single staircase. But others were monster controls, that could involve 6 different staircases and multiple changes of level. I felt that I got better in the second half of the event and finished 76th out of 158 with another 31 mis-punchers. My time of 1:24.51 was a long way behind the winner's 38.31, but still I was much faster than the slowest finisher with 3:30.34. Yes, you read that right: 3½ hours! Pro tip for next year: take sandwiches. I was fairly happy with my finish in the top half of the field (just) and already looking forward to day 2.

Day 2 was back at Nacka Gymnasium, and extending into the neighbouring Ekliden's School. It was a different start, but still outside through the snow to reach it. Day 2 would have a map exchange with the two maps having different scales. During the first day, I had seen people carry a pencil or pen round and on day 2 I did the same, with a little notepad courtesy of my hotel. Writing the route down was very useful when having to remember a route like "go up F, then down the corridor to B, up B, along to P, down P, through the one-way to H, etc. Day 2 started off much better and I was 19th at the map exchange after control 12. I had no idea I was so far up the field, I certainly didn't have any expectation that I would be considering that it taken me an hour to get that far! I had a couple of rubbish controls on the second map and faded to 43rd out of 114 finishers, with another 48 mis-punchers. The winner's time on day 2 was 52.11 and the slowest time was 3:46.21.

Lasting memories are the sheer bonkers-ness of the event: the number of people, sitting at desks in classrooms to plan routes, clambering up a rocky crag in a crawl-way basement below the school, seeing a woman sitting on the floor at the bottom of a staircase studying her map and seeing her in the same spot when I passed again about 15 minutes later. I can't wait for next year!

Maps for this year's event can be found here: <https://www.stockholmindoormap.se/kartor/>

