

OACT Guidelines For Event Management – Doc 3

Successful Course Planning

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- Appendices:** A. Guidelines for Planning Blue, Green and Orange Courses
B. Guidelines for Planning Long, Middle and Sprint Distance Courses

- 1) Plan your courses on paper and get an experienced orienteer (vetter or event controller) to comment on your courses to ensure they are the correct distance and technical difficulty.
- 2) Visit the area and tag all sites a few weeks before the event. If a site is unsuitable (the feature has disappeared, is poorly mapped, or nearby features are poorly mapped/changed) move it to a better feature or redesign the course.
- 3) At every control site, always cross-check any surrounding features to ensure you are at the correct location, and also to check the accuracy of the map.
- 4) If possible, try to run the courses in the same direction as the competitors. This gives you a much better idea of what the competitors will encounter and will identify any problems with the map from the approach side of each control site.
- 5) While checking each site, record the control description.
- 6) If you plan to use linear features as control sites (such as watercourses or tracks) try to choose a specific and identifiable point such as a bend or intersection. This provides a more definite feature for the competitor to navigate to.
- 7) Once you have field checked all control sites, and made any corrections to your courses, the vetter or event controller should also visit the area and check all your taped control sites to ensure they are in the correct location.
- 8)¹ After the vetter or event controller is satisfied with all control sites, draw up final master maps for each course and write up the control descriptions. Take great care that you transpose each control site accurately! Once the master maps and control descriptions are completed, the vetter or event controller should carefully check every master map to ensure each control site and control description have been copied accurately. If maps are to be pre-printed, see the separate document 'Procedure To Obtain Pre-Marked Maps' **Document 4** at <http://act.orienteeing.asn.au/event-management/> for further information.
- 9) The day prior to the event (or the morning of the event for controls near tracks or public areas) place all control flags in the forest. At each control site, carefully check that you use the flag with the correct control code!
- 10) If you get other experienced orienteers to help you put the flags out, advise them that the flag must be hung from the exact location that the tape is placed. All helpers should report back to you with any problems.
- 11) The control flag must be hanging freely and visible when the competitor is standing at/or near the feature, in accordance with the control description. Do not attempt to hide the flag. Also ensure that the flag is fixed firmly so it won't be blown away, and check that the punch is attached and the number visible.

If you follow these procedures (and the guidelines at Appendix A), allow yourself plenty of time, and pay attention to detail, the chance of a misplaced control is greatly reduced and you're most likely to have a successful event, as well as enjoy the experience.

¹ The procedures in this paragraph relate only to courses drawn manually. Using CORPSE for computerised drawing of courses on maps is a separate matter.

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APPENDIX: A. GUIDELINES FOR PLANNING BLUE, GREEN AND ORANGE COURSES

The follow provides a guide to planning **Blue**, **Green** and **Orange** courses and sets out the objectives one should be aiming to achieve, the means by which these are achieved, and the typical characteristics of courses at these levels of difficulty

BLUE-VERY EASY

Objectives:

- to provide an introduction to basic skills such as understanding and orienting the map, and
- to ensure that all competitors successfully complete the course.

Course requirements:

- must be based on handrails - strong linear features such as tracks, fences and well-defined watercourses and vegetation boundaries,
- must have controls sites which are part of the handrail, eg track bend, or on obvious features beside or visible from the handrail,
- must have controls at turning points from one handrail to another and catching features beyond them,
- be navigable without compass,
- require no contour recognition nor accurate distance estimation,
- avoid steep and rough terrain, thick vegetation and difficult fence and watercourse crossings,
- must have an easily identifiable start triangle that permits map orientation by linear features, and
- must have the marker visible on the approach side of the control site.

Course characteristics:

- short legs and many controls add interest for young children and give practice in code checking and punching,
- route choice is unimportant - there should only be one obvious route, and
- streamers should be used if the linear feature is weak or none is available (note that this should be a last resort where no other course options are available)

Area requirements:

- a good network of linear features,
- good visibility and runnability, and
- well-defined boundaries.

GREEN - EASY

Objectives:

- to provide an introduction to basic skills
 - o basic contour recognition,
 - o simple distance estimation, and
 - o elementary route choices., and
- to ensure that all competitors successfully complete the course.

Course Requirements:

- be built around handrails, such as tracks, fences and watercourses but which may also include strong contour features when used in conjunction with good catching features;
- have control sites either on handrails or on large visible point or line features within 50 metres of the handrail;
- permit the map to be oriented by linear features alone and be navigable without compass;

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- avoid steep and rough terrain, thick vegetation and difficult fence and watercourse crossings; and
- have the marker visible on the approach side of the control site.

Course characteristics:

- short legs and many controls, which add interest for young children and give practice in code checking and punching;
- control sites away from corners or changes between hand rails;
- basic route choice of the corner-cutting variety; and
- use streamers if linear feature is weak or none is available, (last resort)

Area requirements:

- a good network of linear features to act as handrails and catching features;
- some prominent point features near handrails;
- good visibility and runnability; and
- well-defined boundaries.

ORANGE - MODERATE

Objectives:

- introduce more elementary skills such as compass skills and distance estimation
- provide technical challenge without allowing serious errors to occur.

Course Requirements:

- provide cross-country legs with handrail options,
- handrail options should be the least attractive, ie cross-country routes must be potentially faster,
- allow good map contact throughout the leg by crossing or following well-defined
- contour features or passing prominent point or vegetation features or "sign posts",
- have control sites on easier (upstanding not depressed) point features and well-defined contour features,
- must have strong attack points to, and good catching features behind, controls,
- have markers on the far side of features so that the feature is seen first,

Course Characteristics:

- may include rough compass running and fine compass navigation up to 100 metres,
- should have good boundary catching features.

Area requirements:

- broad network of linear features,
- good visibility and runnability,
- well-defined boundaries,
- less complex contour formations,
- prominent point features readily located from handrails and contours.

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APPENDIX: B. GUIDELINES FOR LONG, MIDDLE AND SPRINT DISTANCE COURSES

The follow provides a guide to planning **Long**, **Middle** and **Sprint Distance** courses and sets out the objectives one should be aiming to achieve, the means by which these are achieved, and the typical characteristics of the courses.

When orienteers make decisions they are affected by stress, that is when they make mistakes. The course setter's job is to make the orienteer make as many decisions as possible. Course planners do this by variation, tempo changes, and different techniques. For example, include:

- Route choice
- Technical, slow running
- Fast orienteering
- High visibility to low visibility
- Long legs, short legs
- Approach from above, underneath, diagonal down hill, diagonal up hill, on the contour.
- Direction control
- Mix up legs, mix it up within the leg

Long Distance

The features of Long Distance courses are:

- 90 min winning time men, 70 women
- Long route choice legs a must
- Athlete should be tested in their ability to plan for a long and physically demanding race
- Techniques can be used for breaking up groups of runners, such as butterfly loops.

Middle

The features of Middle Distance courses are:

- 35 min winning time
- Technically difficult
- Direction changes
- Route choices small to large scale
- High speed with runners having to adjust their speed to technical difficulties
- Fast accurate orienteering

Sprint

The features of Sprint Distance courses are:

- High running speed
- Difficult route choice
- Technical areas for tempo changes
- Terrain can be city, park, forest or a mix
- Promotional tool
- Spectacular controls
- As many opportunities for spectators to see the runners as possible
- On the ball exciting commentator
- Fair course setting