



ORGANISING AN ORIENTEERING EVENT

Orienteering events are relatively easy to organise and manage on the day. The biggest part of the event is really around planning your courses, especially with an end-of-term event where you may want a number of slightly different courses for different grades.

On the day, with help from a few assistants, the event will run smoothly.

Pre-event tasks

- **Obtain** permission from the property manager, landowner or head of school to use the venue for an orienteering event. Make sure it does not clash with other sports using the fields (or mark fields out of bounds on the map).
- Issue an **event notice**. This may invite certain grades, the whole school, other schools in the area or the surrounding community. Provide details on when the event will take place, where, how many courses are on offer, entry fees, directions and any other information specific to the event.
- **Design courses** to accommodate learners of different ages and skills as well as first timers. When you're on the grounds looking for locations, remember to note details and direction for the **control description sheets**.
- Create a **control card** that participants punch/mark as they progress around your course.
- If controls are not pre-printed on the map, prepare a **master map** for each course. The master map must be taped to a board and a working pen must be attached by a piece of string.
- And don't forget to prepare a **master control card**. This may either have punch marks, correct answer to questions or numbers/letters. The people marking the control cards at the finish will use this master card to confirm that the participants have visited the correct controls.
- **Recruit volunteers** to help on the day of the event. Teach learners to perform tasks during lessons.



ORGANISING AN ORIENTEERING EVENT

- Prepare an **information board** for the registration area. Include information on courses available, distance, difficulty and any age/grade specifics.

On race day

Use your **volunteers** to set up the event centre while you place controls. Many hands make light work!

Controls can be put out early in the morning on the day of the event. But, if the venue is secure, you can place them the evening before. You will definitely need to check in the morning that they are all still there.

These are the tasks that your volunteers can do.

- Place **direction signs** outside the entrance of the venue to direct entrants to the registration area
- Set up tables and chairs for the **registration area**, putting up the **information board**
- In the **finish area**, set up tables, chairs, an umbrella

(for shade) and a finish tunnel.

- Mark out a **start grid** and synchronising start and finish **digital clocks**
- Ensure there is a **water container** and cups in the event area for finishers.
- Hang **string** between trees or poles to display results.

Post-event tasks

- Designate volunteers to **collect control flags**. Once back, check that all the flags/signs are accounted for.
- Compile results and put them up on a notice board and distribute to other schools, if necessary.

COURSES

Orienteering events always offer more than one course to cater for participants of different age, fitness and experience.

Events usually have two courses where the longer one (approx 4km) should take the winning male runners no longer than 20 minutes. The shorter course approx. 2.5km) is specifically for



ORGANISING AN ORIENTEERING EVENT

young children and novice entrants.



Water points must be provided on courses longer than 4km and if conditions are really hot. A cup symbol on the control description sheet tells runners at which control will find water and this can also be printed on the map. The easiest is to leave a five-litre container at the water point, with a cup attached to the container by string, to prevent the cup from being removed.



The distances prescribed for courses are measured as straight-line distance between controls. In reality, the distance covered on foot will be slightly longer.

COURSE PLANNING TIPS

(Adapted from RACO document, Course Planning Basics – available on www.racorienteers.co.za)

1. Map in hand

For end of term events, bring out your special orienteering map of

the school, created by SAOF. Remember to notify SAOF of updates – like a new structure built since the map was drawn.

2. Basic route concepts

Consider the basic direction of each course. The two courses should take same direction away from start and come in to the finish from the same direction. On the course, make the participants change direction, as opposed to following a purely circular course from the start and back to the finish.

3. Look for good legs

A leg is the section between controls. A good leg is one with map reading opportunities (easy running terrain like a road or path) and route choices. It is considered a route choice when runners can see more than one reasonable route between controls.

4. Selecting control sites

Select easier locations for the shortest course, like on walls, fences, flower beds etc. More challenging courses can have more interesting control locations



ORGANISING AN ORIENTEERING EVENT

– like in a pit, behind buildings or beside thickets. Don't locate controls too close to each other – allow the participants a good run.

5. Mix it up

Vary the difficulty and lengths of legs. Also, change direction at each control point.

6. Check it out

Spend time in the terrain and try options. Walk from one location to another and see what features become significant to you.

7. Control descriptions

When you are out tagging the control sites, remember to describe the control locations. Be accurate. A control should be placed exactly where specified, like building, North corner. Controls on the long course should not be immediately visible on approach; some controls on the short course should be visible on approach (easier).

8. Measure the course length

The length of a course is the straight-line distance measured between controls. Should the straight-line route go across an

out-of-bounds area or a dam, measure the route going around these impassable obstructions.

When planning a course keep in mind the balance of technical and physical ability depending on the age and ability of participants.

Finally, keep in mind respect for the environment, flowerbeds and homes on the property when planning courses.

REGISTRATION & ENTRY AREA

(Content modified from RACO document 'Registration' on www.racorienteers.co.za)

Set up two tables in the registration and entry area. Use bunting tape to direct entrants from the first table to the second.

The first table has registration cards, pens and the course information board (courses available, distances, difficulty). When people arrive, this is their first stop where they decide what course to do and to complete the registration card. It is useful to have a helper at this table to assist newcomers.



ORGANISING AN ORIENTEERING EVENT

Entrants proceed to the entry table, which is manned by two people.

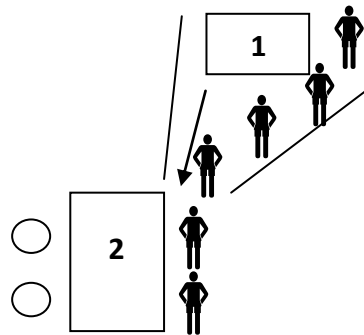
The first helper:

- receives the registration card from the entrant.
- cuts the card into its stubs (start stub and finish stub). The start stub is returned to the orienteer. They will give this to the start person at the start grid. The finish stub is passed to the second helper.
- gives control descriptions to the entrant, for their selected course.

The first helper may give the map to the entrant IF the map is not pre-printed with controls. If a course is drawn on the map, they will only receive it at the start.

The second helper:

- accepts the entry fee from the entrant and gives change.
- passes finish stub to helpers at the finish.



START AREA

The start grid has a back box and a front box. There are usually two starting queues, but there could be more. The start grid is positioned in the direction of the first control.

The start control, as marked on the map with a triangle, may not be exactly where the grid is positioned. Place the start control in the correct location, preferably visible from the grid, and alert the participants' attention to its location.

Participants on the same course start from the same queue. Maps matching the course are placed in front of each box, ready for

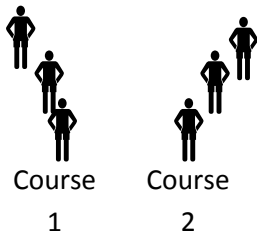


ORGANISING AN ORIENTEERING EVENT

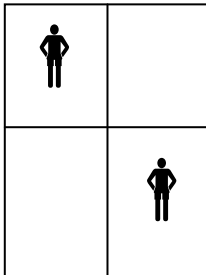
participants to pick up while they're waiting to start.



Use the lids from photocopier paper boxes or 'in' trays to hold maps. Use separate trays for each course's maps.



Back box



Front box

Maps



The race clock should be displayed for participants to see.

Competitors queue behind the boxes when they're ready to start. The start official will direct the next in line into the back box.

Orienteers spend one minute in each box. It is useful to allow two-minutes between each starter, so alternate starts from each queue.



Assign to helpers to be start officials.

Start Official 1

This official:

- controls the queues of people leading up to the back box.
- accepts start stubs from people standing in the back box.
- writes down next starting time on the start stubs (i.e.



ORGANISING AN ORIENTEERING EVENT

just less than two minutes from the present time.

- places the start stubs in a box for transfer to the finish.

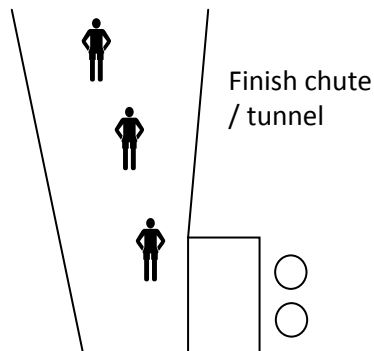
Start Official 2

- At one minute to go, this official asks the orienteer to move to front box.
- The orienteer may pick up their map and staple the control descriptions to their map. They may not look at the map.
- The official may point out the start control.
- The official counts down the last 10 seconds and tells the orienteer to go at the start time.

FINISH AREA

Set up the finish area with the 'funnel' starting from the direction of the last control. Use bunting tape and stakes to make this 'finish chute', directing runners to the finish table.

Provide a table for the finish officials (at least two people) and also remember an umbrella for gazebo for shade.



Finish official 1

- This official has the digital clock at the finish.
- They watch the finish chute and calls the finish time for each runner as they cross a marked 'finish line'.
- They take the control card from the runner, calling the person's name for Finish Official to write down next to the finish time.
- They write the time on the control card and pass it on to Finish Official 2.

Finish Official 2

- Writes down the finish time for each runner on the timing sheet.



ORGANISING AN ORIENTEERING EVENT

- They write down the name of each finisher on the timing sheet.

If you don't have additional people available, the two finish officials would do these tasks. It is better to recruit more helpers – recycle your registration and start officials to assist.

verify that all runners are accounted for and have completed the courses. The start stub goes into a tub for the lucky draw component of prize giving.

- Check that punches / markings on the control card are correct for the course. Use Master Control Card prepared by the planner to



These tasks include:

- Match name on control card with start stub (received from Start Official) and finish stub (from Registration official) to

confirm that punches are correct.

- Calculate total race time from the difference between start time and finish time. Write



ORGANISING AN ORIENTEERING EVENT

this on the control card. Staple finish stub to control card.

- Staple to results string. Slide the cards over as more results come in. Put fastest times on the left and use a separate string (or leave a big gap) between courses.

The planner will use the results string to compile the overall results for each course.

HELPER BENEFITS

The clubs let helpers run at no charge when they assist with the event. If people are assigned as finish officials, they will run first, before the public. People who help with registration and starts can run when their jobs are completed.

PRIZE GIVING

For prize giving we buy edible treats – nothing expensive. The top three runners on each course and category (male, female) are announced but prizes are only awarded to winning runners. Winners get first option to choose from the treats spread on the table. Trophies are only awarded

at Provincial and National competitions. Children prefer the treats!

After the winners have been announced, lucky draw begins. This is an orienteering tradition. Start stubs are picked from a tub, names are called and these lucky people can select a treat from the table. If a group is called, they can only take one treat for the group.



It really just takes a little practise and a few helpers to run an orienteering event. Good luck!



ORGANISING AN ORIENTEERING EVENT

EQUIPMENT

Course requirements

- Orienteering flags and punches (can use boards with letters/numbers)
- String (to attach flags to features)
- Metal stakes and hammers – for locations where flags cannot be hung
- Maps – two or more courses
- Control descriptions

Registration

- Registration cards
- Pens
- Registration table
- Information board with details on courses (distance, difficulty), entry fee, map legend and any special instructions

Entry table

- 2 x tables plus chairs for entry and finish
- Pens for entry helpers
- Cash float for change
- Start time sheet
- Control cards
- Control descriptions for each course

Starting grid

- Tape/rods to mark out start squares
- Digital clock (synchronised to digital clock at finish)
- Pen for start helper
- Container for start cards, which will be moved to the finish
- Stapler (many participants like to staple their control descriptions to their maps – if not printed on the map)

Finish

- Table and chairs for finish helpers
- Digital clock (synchronised to digital clock at start)
- Timing sheet with columns for name and finish time
- Spike for control cards
- Pens & staplers
- Umbrella / gazebo
- String for displaying results

After event

- Water container plus juice (Oros) and cups
- Umbrellas for event area
- Plastic rubbish bags



ORGANISING AN ORIENTEERING EVENT

- Masking tape (to attach black bags to table for used drinking cups and other trash)
- Results sheet
- Lucky draw prizes (low cost sweets and treats)

Other

- Direction signs to mark route to event venue and registration area
- Toilet paper for venue toilets / porta-loos