



# ORIENTEERING

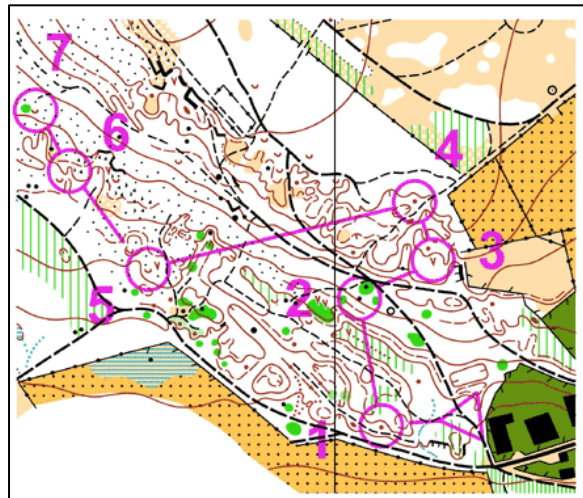
## An Introduction

Orienteering is a challenging outdoor adventure sport that exercises both the mind and the body. The aim is to navigate in sequence between control points marked on a unique orienteering map and decide the best route to complete the course in the quickest time.

Orienteering can take place anywhere from remote forest and countryside to urban parks and school playgrounds. The most challenging orienteering takes place in areas, which has demanding terrain and few paths.

## The Maps

Orienteering maps are drawn to a large scale, most commonly 1:15000 (1cm=150m) or 1:10000 (1cm=100m) but for orienteering in parks you use a map drawn in a scale of 1:5000. All maps use an internationally agreed set of symbols and these are logical and easy to learn. You will absorb much of the information simply by attending your first few events but a comprehensive booklet of these symbols can be ordered through the National Office. Most orienteering maps will also provide a detailed legend to help you understand the map.



Orienteering maps are drawn using magnetic north rather than 'grid' or 'true' north, and are printed in up to five standard colours. The colours are an integral part of the map symbols:

**Black** is used for most man-made features such as buildings and rock features such as cliffs, crags and boulders

**Brown** is used to show landform, including contour lines, gullies, pits and knolls (small hills).

**Blue** is used for water features such as lakes, ponds, marshes and streams

**White and Green** are used to depict the density of woodland and the extent to which it impedes progress. Open 'runnable' woodland is left white with progressively darker shades of green mean increased density, ranging from 'slow run' to 'difficult' (or walk) through to 'impenetrable'(or fight).

**Yellow** is used for unwooded areas with a solid yellow for grassy spaces such as playing fields and a paler yellow for rougher terrain ('rough open') such as heather. Combinations of yellow and green show other types of terrain which will be explained in the legend.

## Route Selection

By using the map, legend and control description sheet, imagine you are trying to navigate from control 3 to 4.

You will have found control 3 just before the major road. Just to be sure, check the code matches your control description sheet and use the punch to confirm that you have been to that control.

Now it's your choice how to get to Control 4. You could use any route, but the three most obvious are;



- A. Go north up the road until you reach a path on your right. Follow this until it passes through a gap in the fence and then continue along a wide ride. When you reach the vehicle track, turn right (south east) and follow it for 150 metres, bringing you to Control 4.
- B. This time you go to your right (due east) across the rough open land until you reach the fence bend. Follow the short section of fence until a wide ride is reached at the next bend in the fence. Now follow the ride as it curves around to the left. Upon reaching the vehicle track, go left for 250 metres until you come to control 4.
- C. The first two ways involved following tracks and rides, but you could follow a more direct route using a compass and go straight across the rough open land and through the open forest until you reach the vehicle track. If you do, it will be best to 'aim-off' to the left, so you will know that you need to turn right to Control 4 when you reach the vehicle track. If you aim straight for the control but can't see it when you reach the track, you won't know which way to turn. Although slightly longer and a bit slower, aiming-off can save time in the long run.

## Top Tips

Below are four basic skills that you need to practice to help you progress with orienteering.

**1. Fold your map** - Always make sure that you fold your map so that you can easily see the part of the map where you are.

**2. Orientate your map** - Always make sure that your map is the correct way round or orientated. This means that the features which are in front of you on the ground are in front of you on the map. You can also orientate your map using a compass by making sure that the north lines on the map point the same way as the north or red end of the compass needle. Each time you change direction you should change your grip on the map so the map is still orientated north.

**3. Thumb your map** - To help you know where you are on the map it helps if you mark your position on the map with your thumb. As you move along the ground you should move your thumb to your new position on the map. It is usual to move your thumb to the new position at a "Check Point" such as a path junction or some other obvious feature where you will stop or slow down and check where you are.

**4. Check your control card** - Once you have found a control you always need to check that the code on your control description sheet matches the code on the control. You should also check that the control is situated on the correct feature on your map. You will then know for sure that you have reached the correct control.