

What to do at an event

When are events held?

Local events are often on a weekday evening or Saturday. Other events are usually on Sundays, with starts from about 10:30 to 12:30. Check the club website for details.

What to take – clothing and equipment

- Outdoor clothes and trainers. It may be wet and muddy. Wear full leg cover.
- Take a compass. Normally, the red arrow points to north. Orienteering maps show magnetic north, so your compass will help you to orientate the map. It is advisable to use elastic or a string loop to keep your compass comfortably on your wrist or thumb depending on the style.
- You might need an A4-size clear poly bag to put your map in.
- Take some food and drink for afterwards – few events offer refreshments.

Going to an event

Parking – look out for orienteering signs and arrows pointing you to the event parking. There might be a charge for this. Parking might be on forest tracks, in a public car park, or in a field.



Registration – usually a car or a tent, where you go to register (enter) for the event. Look for a board describing the length and difficulty of the courses on offer. Choose your course carefully! Courses often sound short but will take longer than you think!

- Pay your entry fee
- Supply your name and age group
- Indicate which course you wish to do
- Collect a map and a set of control descriptions for your course.

For local events you might also be given a control card (a rubber band is useful for attaching this to your wrist). This is used to demonstrate that you have been round your course. At each point on your course you will use a punch to make a mark in the appropriate box in your control card. This is then handed in at the end. However, at most events punching will be by an electronic system (see later).

Make sure you know how long it is going to take you to get to the start.

At local events you may have to copy your course on to your map either at registration or at the start. At larger events, maps will already be marked with your course and ready for you at the start.

Some bigger events may require that you pre-enter for your course.

Adults: car keys can be left with an official (ask at Registration). This avoids you losing them in the forest!

Go to the start. Remember to take with you:

- Map (and map case)
- Control descriptions (preferably attached to map)
- Compass
- Control card (or electronic equivalent)



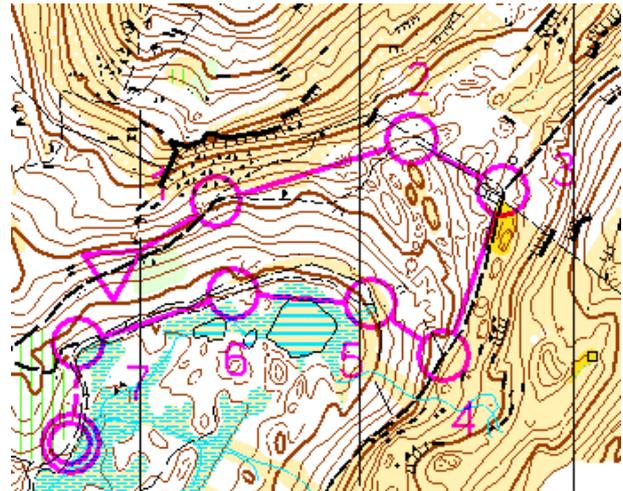
Make sure you know what a control will look like and how you "punch" at each control. There should be a sample near Registration. If in doubt, just ask. There's always someone near the start who will advise you.



Your course

The start is marked with a triangle on your map. Visit each of the controls in the specified order and punch at each one.

If you find you've missed one, go back to it, then continue in the correct order. So for instance if you do number 1, 2 then find yourself at 4, go back to 3 then 4 again, and on to 5 etc.. Even if you punched at 4 the first time you were there, you should punch again when you do it in the right order – otherwise you will be disqualified.



Electronic Punching System (EPS)

Electronic punching is commonly used. There are two types of electronic punching: SportIdent or Emit.

- **SportIdent** - participants carry a little peg or SI card on their finger. The SI card should be placed into a special block or 'Clear station' to clear it of previous information, and then into a 'Check station' before you start, and sometimes into a 'Start station' when you start.



You then 'punch' each control by placing your SI card into a block at each control, and then into a block at the finish. Each of these blocks acts as a clock, and will beep at you as it functions. Each one records a time to your card.

At the finish you then download all of your times, giving you an instant time and set of split times showing how long it took you to get from one control to the next.

- **Emit** - participants carry a card or 'brikke', which is used in a similar way to the SportIdent card. There is no Clear or Check, but there is always a start punch. Again you place your card into a holder at each control and then into one at the finish.



You download in a similar fashion, obtaining a finish time and set of split times.

Finish

The finish is marked with a double circle on your map.

You **MUST** go to the finish even if you do not complete your course, so that the organisers know you have returned safely.

For events using electronic punching, you must punch at the finish and proceed to a download tent or car. You will be given a note or printout of your time.

When using a control card, someone will note the time you finish and take your card from you. Results are calculated quickly and are usually published on the club's website.

A few words about technique: Orienteers continue to learn and improve their skills for many years – that is part of the fun of the sport. If there is just one thing that will stand you in good stead for your first attempts: **ALIGN YOUR MAP**. Turn your map so that it matches the landmarks.

You can do this simply by matching the map to the ground features - if you're on a path at the start and there's a wall on your left and a pond on your right, turn the map so that, as you look at it, the wall is to the left of the path and the pond is to the right. Alternatively, you can line the map's North lines with North as indicated by your compass.

Keep it aligned by turning it each time you change direction. It's like turning the road atlas up-side-down when you drive from Inverness to Edinburgh. (This might also be referred to as **SETTING** or **ORIENTATING** the map.)

Types of Event

Local Events:

The first events you attend are likely to be local events – fairly low-key events, with plenty of club members around to help you. They might be called “Come and Try It” events (CATIs).

Several courses will be available, named by a colour to help you choose one that's right for you. Some (but perhaps not all) of these will be available:

Colour	Approximate Length (km)	Technical Difficulty
White	1.0 – 1.9	Easy
Yellow	2.0 – 2.9	Easy
Orange	2.5 – 3.5	Medium difficulty
Red	5.0 – 7.0	Medium difficulty
Light Green	3.0 – 4.0	Medium to Hard
Green	3.5 – 5.0	Hard
Blue	5.5 – 7.5	Hard
Brown	7.5 - 10	Hard

District Events:

District Events also use the colour coding system, and usually offer the full range of courses shown above. If you're not sure about which course to choose, ask one of the organisers, or another club member.

Regional Events

These events are often called Badge Events as you can gain bronze, silver or gold badge standards.

Anybody can run any colour of course. There are five different standards of technical difficulty offered: from 1 (easy white course) to 5 (hard).

The Scottish Orienteering Association runs a league of seven events each year called the Scottish Orienteering League (SOL). Points are awarded for each event and your top four scores are counted. To compete as part of the league, competitors should select the appropriate colour according to their age (see table below). Competitors can collect points from competing in a harder colour, but not in an easier colour. Age is determined on 31st December each year e.g. a girl turning 14 in a particular year would compete as a W14. Adults can also choose the equivalent of a Short (S) or long (L) course. The open (and most competitive) age group is M or W21 (21-34).

Technical difficulty refers to how hard the course is, and an indication of course length compared with the longest course is also given.

Course combinations:

Course No.	Technical Difficulty	Corrected Course Length Ratio	Proposed New Structure				
			Course	SOL		Adult	
				Men	Women	Men	Women
1	5	1.00	Black			M21L	
2	5	0.85	Brown	M18 M20		M35L M40L	
3	5	0.69	Short Brown			M45L M50L M21S	W21L
4	5	0.56	Blue	M16	W18 W20	M55L M60L M35S M40S	W35L W40L
5	5	0.45	Short Blue			M65L M45S M50S	W45L W50L W21S
6	5	0.39	Green		W16	M70L M55S	W55L W60L W35S W40S
7	5	0.33	Short Green			M75 M80 M70S	W65 W70 W75 W80 W50S W55S W60S W45S
8	5	0.28					
9	4	0.30	Light Green	M14	W14		
10	3	0.50	Long Orange				
11	3	0.25	Orange	M12	W12		
12	2	0.22	Yellow	M10	W10		

6-Day Event

In alternate years (2005, 2007, 2009 etc.) there's the Scottish 6-Day event – a series of 6 “badge” events which make a wonderful orienteering holiday for all the family. You'll meet orienteers from all over the world at these events, and enjoy some of the best orienteering you can imagine.

National or Championship Events

Juniors compete in their age classes determined by their age on 31st December each year. For example, an M12 is a boy who will be 12 or under on 31st December. The youngest age group is M10. Juniors may compete in an A or B class (where B will be shorter and easier than the A class).

Adults use age classes as described above.

Jamie Stevenson

Jamie Stevenson is one of Scotland's top international orienteers, and the Scottish Junior Inter-Club competition is named after him. Juniors of all ages and all standards enjoy taking part in this annual event, which might be your first opportunity to represent your club in a team competition.

Relay Events

In most Relay events, 3, 4 or sometimes more people compete together as a team – one handing over to the other. The start is normally a mass start (all teams start together).

There are different rules for specific Relay events.

There are separate classes for junior teams, and these events are very exciting and great fun.

Score Events

In a Score event, each control is worth a number of points. You decide which controls to visit, and go to as many controls as you can in a set time. There is normally a penalty of 10 points per minute if you are out for longer than the set time.

Night Events

Orienteering in the dark – for the more adventurous! You'll need a good head-torch! This form of orienteering is considered one of the most technically challenging.

Sprint Events

Very short events – sometimes round a park. Street versions may be subject to an age restriction (over 16).

Urban Events

Fast events with lots of route choice, often taking advantage of areas with lots of alleyways. Some courses may have an age restriction (over 16).

Awards

Colour Coded Awards

You can gain awards for competing in colour coded events.

- * To gain White and Yellow badges, you simply have to complete 3 White or 3 Yellow courses on your own.
- * For a badge on Orange to Brown courses, you need to complete 3 courses within 50% of the winner's time or finish in the top 50% of the finishers.

Use your Orienteering Record Sheet to keep track of whether you have gained a badge standard for each event.

Then contact the club secretary to ask for your free badge.



Bronze, Silver and Gold Badge Awards

Badges are awarded when you gain three bronze, silver or gold standards at Regional, National or Championship Events over a two year period. Competitors must compete on their own and reach the required standard in three events in the same class.

To qualify for Gold standard, you must finish within 125% of the winning base time (the average of the top 3 places). For Silver you must finish within 150% of that base time, and within 200% for Bronze. (Things are slightly different if there are only a few people in your class, and for adults doing short courses.)

For Senior (adult) classes, only the results of those entering the competition as British Orienteering members will be counted in determining the base time. There is currently no such restriction for Junior classes.

Applications for badges should be made to the British Orienteering Badge Scheme Secretary, whose address can be found on the British Orienteering website:

<http://www.britishorienteering.org.uk/event/about.php>

For a small fee, you can obtain a

- cloth badge
- age/year flash
- certificate

Championship Awards

To qualify for a Championship Award, you need to achieve a time within 125% of the winner's time in one age class in three of the following events (excludes B or novice courses):

- the British Championships
- the Jan Kjellström Individual Events (Day 1 and Day 2)
- the National Events for that year

Championship awards aren't given for B classes or novice courses.