

Orienteering Association of NSW

General Information to Members

September 2004

INTRODUCTION

Since its foundation in 1972 the Orienteering Association of NSW has been formulating policy on a wide range of activities relating to our sport. Many new members of clubs would not be aware of all these items and older members have probably forgotten!

This information booklet has been prepared to provide all orienteers with a complete record of what the sport in NSW has to offer. This is the 4th Edition of the information that was previously distributed in 1986, 1991 and 1998.

It is suggested that you keep this information handy (with your orienteering kit?) for ready reference.

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1 OFFICE

With the assistance of Sport and Recreation NSW, the Association has an office in Sports House, 6 Figtree Drive, SYDNEY OLYMPIC PARK 2127. The Association postal address is PO Box 3295, NORTH STRATHFIELD NSW 2135 and other contact details are: telephone 8116 9848; email orienteering@sydney.net; website www.nsw.orienteering.asn.au

The Association employs Dave Lotty as Professional Officer with the financial assistance of the Department. Dave is our only full-time employee and as many of his activities (mapping, lecturing, meetings, etc) take him away the office is not manned all the time. If you need to visit the office for any reason please telephone first (see above) to ensure Dave is present.

2 MEETINGS

The Association's affairs are managed by a Board of 9 elected officers, which meets monthly at Sports House. Meetings of the full Association (which fixes policy) with delegates from each of the clubs are held up to 3 times per year.

3 NEWSLETTER

All full members of a club affiliated to the Association receive the quarterly* NSW Newsletter. The Newsletter includes:

"The Australian Orienteer" - the National orienteering magazine (a glossy magazine of around 40 pages)

"Orienteering" - the NSW Newsletter/supplement, which includes general information, coming events and results. Special event information sheets are also included.

Associate members of a club receive only the NSW Newsletter/supplement.

Both the National magazine and the NSW Newsletters/supplement would welcome contributions - especially the National magazine. Contact the Association for further information.

* *actual months of dispatch are March, June, September, December and an abridged version without The Australian Orienteer in January*

4 EVENTS

The Fixture List of the Association is formulated over many months. Dates of the events that form part of the National Fixture List (NSW Championships, Badge Events, etc) are fixed by Orienteering Australia about 18 months ahead in consultation with the Association.

These events are allocated to clubs, also well ahead (up to 4 years) and the dates and allocations of the other major NSW Events are determined by June of the year prior. The rest of the Fixture List (which comprises minor, mainly suburban events and training days) is determined by October of the year prior and a program card is printed for despatch with the December Newsletter. Clubs occasionally conduct events and training activities, which are not on the Fixture List.

The policy on allocation of events does vary slightly from year to year but basically major events are allocated on the basis of one or two per club each year with as many minor events as each club wishes.

5 RULES

Orienteering is a sport without a great number of complicated rules but some are needed to ensure fairness. The OA Competition Rules are available from the Association and are held by your club secretary or can be accessed through the OA website www.orienteeing.asn.au. These rules apply always to major events and the spirit of them applies to minor events.

Appendix A explains the requirements relating to competitors and Appendix B sets out Personal Safety considerations.

6 CLASSES/COURSES

Appendix A also describes age classes and how they operate. In most minor events they are not relevant as competitors can enter whatever course is most appropriate. In major events (where pre-entry is usually required) age classes are as specified.

The Association has formulated a colour coding for difficulty of courses. The coding is:

BLUE Course must follow handrails and use large obvious features along the handrails as control sites. Many controls should be used. Limited compass for orientation of map only - no bearings.

GREEN Easy controls using handrails and introduction of contour handrails (spurs, gullies). Some route choice (follow handrails or cut across). Large, obvious features just off the handrails as control sites. Limited compass but no accurate bearings required.

ORANGE Route choice with good attack points near controls and catching features behind. Use of compass bearings and pacing introduced. Control sites on smaller point features.

RED Very difficult navigation. Small point features, no obvious attack points, no handrails, etc. Use of detailed areas on map. It may be impossible to set red courses on some maps.

Event organisers will indicate the colour coding of the courses available in their event information. Suburban events by having more "handrails" tend to be less difficult navigationally, although many areas have dense vegetation, reducing visibility.

If an age class, or a grade within an age class (W21AS, W21B, etc) is not considered by a competitor to be appropriate (due to either difficulty or course length) the competitor may enter any class offered at the event. Naturally if the competitor were not eligible for this class he/she would be an unofficial competitor.

7 EVENT ENTRY

Pre-entry is usually required for major events in the main age classes. There are always some courses available for entry on the day at all NSW major events (except the Night Championships).

It is expected that event organisers will provide an entry form with information on pre-entry events with the Newsletter. If you mislay the entry form, you should provide the required details (name, address, telephone, club and class of entry). Many organisers have an event website (printed in the coming events pages) and some may offer on-line entry.

Minor events are usually entered on the day with a range of start times published. Unless otherwise stated in the event information, courses close 2 hours after the last advertised start time and all competitors must report to the finish before this time.

8 TECHNICAL STANDARDS

There are a number of books and booklets available giving detailed information on many aspects of orienteering. The Association holds many of these books and others can be quickly obtained.

A full list of available material cannot be included here, as it changes fairly rapidly, but subjects available are:

- Event Organisation
- Course Planning
- Mapping
- Coaching and Training
- Schools Orienteering

Symbolic Control Descriptions are used at all major events in NSW and some maps for major events do not include a legend as they are drawn to International Standards. To assist orienteers, explanations of the Symbolic Control Descriptions and the International Map Specification are attached.

9 COMPETITION EQUIPMENT

Major events in NSW (and other states) use Sportident electronic control "punching". This requires each competitor to have an e-tag, which can either be hired for the event (\$2 per event/day) or you can purchase your own from the Association (contact the office for details of cost).

Personal equipment (compasses, competition suits, shoes, socks, etc) is available through one of the orienteering gear shops to be found at most major events (particularly National). The NSW Orienteering Gear Shop is managed by Peter Shepherd (9525 3703) and Gayle Shepherd (9526 6229) makes orienteering suits to order. The Association can provide further information on equipment for clubs, schools or groups.

10 BELANGLO HOUSE

The Association leases a house at Belanglo State Forest (near Berrima) from State Forests NSW. The House is available for the use of clubs and schools (and also for individual orienteers) for training or even a holiday. Contact the Association for information and bookings.

11 ORIENTEER OF THE YEAR

A point score competition is conducted for NSW Orienteers in the full range of age classes each year over the designated "State League Events" (a minimum of 11). The classes included are subject to change but include all the usually conducted classes.

The scoring system involves allocating the class winner (provided he/she is a fully registered member of a NSW club) at each event 100 points and other competitors lesser points depending on the percentage behind the winners time they finished. The best 7 scores for each competitor out of those contested are totalled to give the final score. The placegetters in each class receive a cloth badge at the Association's Annual Presentation Dinner.

12 CLUB COMPETITION

A competition to determine the Interclub Champion is conducted in association with State League Events. Points are awarded to the top competitors (up to 5) in each age class and grade. The scores for each

club over the full number of State League Events is totalled to determine the result. The top club is awarded the "Interclub Competition" Trophy also presented at the Association's Annual Presentation Dinner.

13 METROPOLITAN O LEAGUE

This is a competition that commenced in 1994. Clubs enter teams in various grades and meet the other clubs in that grade in a "round robin" at various venues throughout the year before finals. All grades compete on the same day. Awards for winners of each of the grades are made at the Association's Annual Presentation Dinner.

14 BADGE SCHEME

OA (Orienteering Australia) conducts this scheme to reward competitive achievement throughout Australia. A number of events each year (Australian Championships, Australian 3-Days, State Championships and designated Badge Events) are used to determine "Badge Credits". Three credits of a certain level or above entitle the recipient to claim a badge from the OA Badge Scheme Secretary (John Oliver, 68 Amaroo Street, WAGGA WAGGA 2650) for a fee of \$5 per badge. Many clubs arrange for appropriate badges to be obtained on behalf of their members each year.

The credits are awarded in 3 levels (gold, silver and bronze) and are calculated by adding 25%, 50% and 100% respectively to the winners time in each class at one of the events listed above. Only silver and bronze credits are available in AS or AX grades and only bronze credits in B grades. In M21 and W21 where Elite grades are sometimes offered, the A grade also qualifies for gold silver and bronze.

15 CHAMPIONSHIPS

Australian and NSW Championships (over Long, Middle and Sprint Distances) are conducted each year in a wide range of age classes and grades. Entry in these Championships (and Championships in other States) is acceptable only from full members of affiliated clubs (associate members are not eligible). There are no qualifying requirements for entry and all orienteers are encouraged to compete.

16 NSW TRAINING SQUADS

All full members of affiliated clubs are eligible for selection in one of the NSW Training Squads, which conduct training activities throughout the year. There are two Squads – a senior squad for orienteers over 20 and a junior squad for orienteers from 14-19. Squad members are expected to be conscientious in their desire to improve their performance. The selection criterion is gold credit level at the Australian 3 Days or Australian Championships (in M-20 W-20 M21 or W21 for the senior squad and M-14 W-14 M-16 W-16 M-18 or W-18 for the junior squad) or equivalent performance as determined by the respective squad managements.

17 NSW TEAMS

NSW Teams are selected each year to contest the W21E and M21E team races at the Australian Championships; the Australian Schools Championships; the Australian Relay Championships and other interstate competitions (such as Australian O League, Southern Cross Challenge, etc). A NSW "Honour Team" is also selected in all age classes. Only full members of affiliated clubs are eligible for these teams.

18 PRESENTATION EVENING

The Association has conducted an Award Presentation Evening in November each year since 1994. A number of presentations (including Orienteer of the Year Awards, MetrO League Awards, Interclub Trophy, Presidents Award, Rookie of the Year Award, Club of the Year Award, Course Setter of the Year Award and the "Wombies") are made at the evening, which includes a dinner.

Orienteering is a sport that relies on the integrity of all competitors to be successful. The fairness of the competition is determined by the willingness of all the participants to act in a way that ensures equality of opportunity.

This guide to the rules governing orienteering which directly affect the competitor and over which they have personal control, has been derived from Orienteering Australia and International Competition Rules. Some clarification has been added where necessary. References given are to the Orienteering Australia Competition Rules, which should be consulted for full details.

Participants in orienteering compete at their **own risk** (6.1). Event organisers should nevertheless note that they have a duty of care for participants in their event.

Membership of a club is required for entry into Australian and State Championships, but not the Australian 3-Days or other State events.

Courses at major events are offered in a number of age groupings and different levels of difficulty (5.1). Competitors should enter a class in which they are eligible by age; however, any course may be entered on an unofficial basis.

Age is that at 31st December of the year of competition (5.2, 5.3).

Age groupings for both males (M) and females (W) (5.2, 5.3) are:

- From 10 and under to 20 and under in two year intervals (eg M/W-10 - up to and including the age of 10, M/W-12 up to and including the age of 12))
- Open Class - Aged 21 and under 35
- Age 35 to 70+ in 5 year intervals.

Up to age 20 you may compete in a higher age grouping up to M or W 21. From age 35 and above you may compete in a lower age class down to M or W 21 (5.2, 5.3).

Map - Only the map provided by the organisers may be used. If the printing of the map and /or course is recognised by the competitor before starting as unsatisfactory, a new map may be requested and shall be provided if considered justified.

Equipment - Competitors may carry a compass and watch, and a torch for night events. No other aids may be used (21.3). A whistle must be carried if requested by the organisers in the information on the event (21.5). Note that the distress signal is six blasts of the whistle at 10 second intervals, repeated after one minute.

Clothing - The type of clothing worn is optional, unless specified by the organisers. In certain areas the wearing of spiked shoes may not be allowed (21.1). Arm and/or leg protection may be recommended. If competition numbers are required they should be worn on the chest; be clearly visible and not folded or cut (21.2).

Control Card or e-tag - The course must be completed by visiting the controls on foot, in the sequence specified by the organiser. This means that if you miss or can't find a control and you then find the next control on the course, you must return to the previous control before marking your card at the control you have found.

Where the Sportident system is used (20.1) the e-tag you carry records the sequence that you visit the controls and taking them out of order will mean you being recorded as **Did Not Finish**. Failure to record a "punch" at a control (for any reason other than failure of the Sportident unit) will mean you being recorded as **Did Not Finish** and in the case of failure you must punch on your map with the reserve pin punch (20.5, 20.6, 20.7).

Where the Sportident system is not used a control card is carried and must be marked at each control (20.3, 20.5, 20.6). Failure to mark the card at a control (for any reason other than failure of the pin punch) will mean you being recorded as **Did Not Finish** (20.7, 20.8).

Finish - Always report to the Finish and hand in your control card or down load your e-tag whether you have completed your course successfully or not.

Emergencies - If a competitor is injured, other competitors are expected to render all necessary assistance (26.2).

Fair Play - A competitor shall not seek unfair advantage over fellow competitors (26.1). A competitor shall not seek nor give assistance except in an emergency (26.2). If you are lost and require assistance, this can only be given on the condition that you will abandon the course and return to the Finish - especially in major events. Shouting or calling to attract (or distract) other competitors is not permitted, except in an emergency.

Competitors shall not collaborate over running or navigating or run with or behind other competitors to profit from their skills. It is often impossible to avoid being in the company of other orienteers on a course, but as long as no collaboration occurs and all are attempting to navigate, this requirement would not be violated. In a night event, failure of your light means that you are unable to complete the course unless you are able to do so without making use of other competitors' lights.

Prior investigation of an area in order to gain an advantage is forbidden (26.5). At some events this would include bringing a map of the area to an event - especially a previous O-map of the area. If you need to study a map of the area beforehand, do it at home and not at the event! Organisers of events on previously used maps will frequently make copies of that map available at the start so that all competitors have an equal opportunity to view the map.

Competitors shall not wilfully interfere with a control site. If you knock over the stand or flag, you should return it to its original position or as close as is possible. This includes returning the stand to its original height in soft ground! Even if you are sure the site is wrong, leave the control marker where it is and report it to the organisers for them to take any appropriate action.

Don't enter areas marked as out of bounds either on the map or on the ground (17.2). You must follow the full length of any "compulsory route" on your course (17.3).

Complaints - Competitors have the right to complain to the organisers (in a reasonable manner at the appropriate location - usually the information tent) on several grounds, such as missing, misplaced or incorrectly identified control markers; other organisational errors or other competitors considered to have contravened the Competition Rules (27.1). There is no fee for a complaint (27.4). The organiser will make a decision on this complaint as soon as possible and advise the complainant (27.3).

Protests - Competitors can protest about the organiser's decision about a complaint (28.1). Such a protest must be in writing to the organiser or a jury member as soon as possible after the complaint decision (28.3). There is no fee for a protest (28.4).

Pets - Pets and other animals are not permitted at events unless expressly permitted in event information.

Water - While organisers are expected to provide water at events (and in some cases even on the course), competitors should consider their own needs and bring their own supplies. This will reduce the impact on what can be limited supplies at the event.

Start Times - Competitors start in the order determined by the organisers. In NSW start times will be grouped by course rather than age class due to the small numbers in some age classes.

Late Starts - Orienteers who are late for their start are started at the convenience of the organisers and are considered to have started at the listed start time (22.8).

A competitor who is made late for their start through some fault of the organisers is entitled to a new start time (22.9). A competitor in this situation should request the starter to note the actual start time and take up the position with the organiser at the finish. The starter is not entitled to make a decision in regard to whose fault it is.

Care of Environment - Competitors are expected to respect property used for orienteering events (17.1). It is only through the good will of property owners that our sport can continue. Competitors should take care when crossing fences by doing this at corners, solid posts or through "wombat holes". If a fence is damaged it should be reported to the organisers.

Gates must be left as they were found. This includes during travel to the event by car. **If you open a gate, then you are responsible for closing it.**

Competitors are expected to take due care of the environment. Take or damage nothing - leave only your footprints.

All orienteers are expected to take responsibility for their own safety at events organised by the Association or its member clubs. "Event Safety" – Association Manual 4.13 sets out those matters that organisers should take into account to ensure a safe environment for the competitors but there are aspects that are clearly up to individuals.

1. Selection of Course

All competitors are expected to enter a course appropriate to their navigational skill, level of fitness and the ability to complete that course in a reasonable time. Organisers are entitled to refuse an entry on a course they deem inappropriate but in practice they are usually not aware of the competitor's level of ability. Competitors **MUST** take responsibility here.

2. DO NOT "Finish at all Costs"

The historical attitude of completing the entire course (and not recording a Did Not Finish - DNF) regardless of the time is **NOT** appropriate. Organisers, family members and other competitors should not be put in the position of concern about a late-finishing competitor.

3. Course Closure

The stated course closure time is the time that controls will commence to be removed from (and in the case of Sportident events when control units will turn off). If competitors are injured or otherwise in need of assistance they should (if possible) wait at a control and the course closure time will be an indication of when assistance can be expected. It is **NOT** a personal time limit.

4. Time Limit

At all minor events (including MetrO League, CATI's, Winter Challenge, Summer Series) and Saturday afternoon major events (State League and equivalent) the time limit for each competitor is 2½ hours and for Sunday major events (State League and equivalent) the time limit for each competitor is 3 hours **REGARDLESS OF THE COURSE CLOSURE TIME**.

Any competitor who has not returned to the finish before this personal time limit will automatically be recorded as DSQ (Disqualified) instead of DNF. Any competitor recording three DSQs in a season will need to show cause to the OANSW Board why they should not be required to compete only in easier courses for at least the next year.

5. Safety Instructions

All competitors should be aware of any safety instructions provided by the organisers in information on the event in case they become badly disoriented. Slavish adherence to these instructions is however not appropriate. It is possible that you could have left the mapped area and it is pointless walking for more than an hour or so. Find a track and stay on it – you are more likely to be found quickly there than in the forest.

6. Water

Competitors who expect to take a long time to complete their course should take the precaution of carrying some water supplies. While there may be water on the course it is spaced on the basis of every 25 minutes for the winning time of less than 1 hour.

7. Clothing

All competitors should consider the clothing they wear on the basis of the speed they compete at, the likely time they will take and the weather conditions. All competitors should also wear bright coloured clothing (or fluoro/reflecting strips or panels on clothing) to facilitate any subsequent search that might be required.

8. Communication

High-risk (health or navigation) individuals should consider carrying communication and/or location devices, particularly in remote areas.