



Boy Scouts

NOTE: While some COVID-19 policies remain in effect, things are a bit different than described below. For example, all registration is done online in advance (including that for all groups), social distancing will be practiced, and participants must provide their own water on and/or off a course. For full details, see our [COVID-19 Policy](#) [1].

What is this page about?

Orienteering is a great activity for Boy Scouts. This page outlines how attending QOC events will help Boy Scouts satisfy the requirements for advancing to First Class or for an Orienteering Merit Badge. If you are the leader of a Boy Scout group, this page also gives tips to help you and your Scouts get the most out of your experience, including what you should do before coming to one of our events.

Before Attending a QOC Event

It will be more fun for your troop and easier on you and us if you read our [For Group Leaders](#) [2] webpage. If you are bringing a group of 4 or more, please make sure to divide your starting groups (scouts going out together) into subsets of a total of 4 or less (adults + scouts) per group.

First Class Advancement Requirement

The orienteering-related requirements for First Class advancement are listed online [here](#) [3], and they include the following:

- Using a map and compass, complete an orienteering course that covers at least one mile and requires measuring the height and/or width of designated items (tree, tower, canyon, ditch, etc.).

QOC events usually include beginner courses, color coded as white or yellow, that are usually one mile (1.6 km) or more in length. Therefore, to meet this requirement just attend one QOC event and at that event choose either the white or yellow course, as long as it is 1.6 km or more in length. The length of each course is usually listed a few days before the event on the webpage with details about that event, and it is also always available at the registration area of the event. We do not provide measurements of any "designated items" at our events, so that part of this requirement is up to each Troop Leader to coordinate.



Orienteering Merit Badge

The requirements for this merit badge are listed online [here](#) [4], and that webpage also includes blank Word format and PDF format worksheets for working towards the requirement. [Wonder how we answer # 2? Something like this: Orienteering is the general term for any sport where you use a detailed map to find as quickly as possible a series of marked places, called checkpoints or control points. It's a navigational race based on using maps, whether it's on foot, skis, a bike, a canoe or any other way of getting around.] We also definitely recommend studying the Merit Badge Series booklet, Orienteering (BSA [item 35925](#) [5]).

This Merit Badge requires attending three orienteering events, one of which must be a "cross-country" course. All QOC beginner courses, which in color code terms are named white and yellow courses, qualify as cross-country courses for the purpose of this requirement. Therefore, one way to meet this requirement is to attend three QOC orienteering events and at each of them to run either a white or yellow course.

What If We Can't Attend a QOC Event?

Attending a [scheduled](#) [6] QOC event is the best way to meet your requirements, since we always offer free beginner instruction and it's a fun and supportive environment for learning about orienteering. If that's not possible, though, other ways to meet your requirements include:

- Visit a local permanent orienteering course with your troop. A list of these venues is maintained on our website's [Permanent Courses](#) [7] webpage.
- Look online for ideas on how to set up your own course. Scouter.com is one forum where there have been reasonable discussions in the past.

Keep in mind that orienteering is an activity based on using - and understanding - a map, and that's a major part of why it is useful in many aspects of scouting (and life). It is **not** an activity based around pacing distances on a bearing, even if that sometimes seems like the focus of (some) online discussions about the sport.

Orienteering Merit Badge Counselors

QOC holds events in parks spanning two BSA councils - the National Capitol Area Council (NCAC), and the Baltimore Area Council (BAC). A counselor registered in one council may approve merit badges for Scouts in any other. For merit badge counseling, feel free to contact the following QOC members who are also BSA counselors:



- [James Chaplin](#) [8] (Bull Run District, NCAC)
- [John Vierow](#) [9] (Powhatan District, NCAC)

If you are a QOC member who would like to become an Orienteering Merit Badge Counselor for the BSA, please contact James Chaplin to learn more about the (free) application process.

I Still Have Questions!

If you have carefully read both this page, the [Your First Event](#) [10] page, and the [For Group Leaders](#) [2] page and feel we have not answered something you need to know before attending a QOC event, please feel free to email us using the QOC [Contact Form](#) [11]. [Share This](#) [12]

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Links:

- [1] https://qocweb.org/sites/default/files/QOC_COVID_Risk_Reduction_.pdf
- [2] <http://qocweb.org/content/group-leaders>
- [3] <https://usscouts.org/advance/boyscout/bsrank4.asp>
- [4] <http://usscouts.org/usscouts/mb/mb080.asp>
- [5] https://www.scoutstuff.org/BSASupply/ItemDetail.aspx?cat=01RTL&ctgy=PRODUCTS&c2=BOOKS_LIT&C3=MB_PAMPHLET&C4=&LV=3&item=35925&prodid=35925^8^01RTL&
- [6] <https://qocweb.org/events>
- [7] <https://qocweb.org/content/permanent-courses>
- [8] <https://qocweb.org/contact/Chaplin/James>
- [9] <https://qocweb.org/contact/Vierow/John>
- [10] <https://qocweb.org/content/discover-orienteering-discover-yourself-your-first-event>
- [11] <https://qocweb.org/contact>
- [12] <https://www.qocweb.org/content/boy-scouts>