



Course Notes and Details – Patuxent River Park, Sunday, May 31, 2026

All courses are in the Chase format. Most participants opt for the optional (but highly encouraged!) mass start; individual starts are also offered. For the Beginner course, the course is standard orienteering with just 1 loop (competitors on these courses are welcome to join the mass start).

The Chase’s traditional mass start means following is explicitly allowed. However, be aware that the people you follow may not be going where you need to go! They could be on a different course, or they might be making an error. The advanced courses share several controls, so someone could be at the same control as you and then head a different direction. Focus on your orienteering (but use the others around you for motivation).

At the start of each loop, a beverage of the competitor’s choice must be consumed. At the end of the last loop, one final beverage is consumed before a very short dash to the finish control. Course metrics are shown in the table below. It’s the orienteer’s responsibility to get the correct map and to do the loops in the proper order. In case you don’t remember, the loop orders will be printed on each map.. The number of controls will look higher than normal because each loop includes the two quaffing controls, at either end of the drinking area (details below). Do not let that discourage you!

Course/Skill Level	Total Distance (km)	Climb (m)	Controls	Loops
Beginner	2.2	15	11	1
Intermediate	5.1	65	17	2
Short Advanced	2.5	25	10	1
Medium Advanced	6.9	220	20	2
Long Advanced	10.1	270	31	3

All the maps will be at the scale of 1:7500.

You will be provided with a map before the start (details are below). Do not look at it until you hear the word GO. Most courses show loops on both sides of the paper. For the loop order, see the table in the upper right corner of each map page. The Long Advanced course will have a map exchange.

The terrain in Patuxent River Park is predominantly flat, but it’s broken up by intricate and deep stream valley reentrant systems. From the flat higher ground, the reentrants tend to drop steeply to the lower flat, and often marshy, stream valleys. Over the past 20 years, the forest has been maturing, thus often allowing for fast running; the “white” woods have both good visibility and are delightfully open.

Mapper Dave Linthicum updated the map in 2024, and it is quite accurate. There are two greens on the map: light green and medium green. Light green on the map may represent closely spaced trees or occasional deadfall. The low vegetation symbols are not used so deadfall tends to be represented as light or medium green, although there is little deadfall overall. Medium green tends to be mountain laurel, but only where it is

thick. Mountain laurel can also be interspersed in areas mapped light green. The courses will only encounter small areas of mountain laurel. There are only a few areas where you may encounter thorns. In some places, the verge along roads and trails is unmapped. Stilt grasses are growing and spreading but are most common in the stream valleys. The large field near the start/finish includes vegetation boundaries, dividing mowed grass from planted fields. The courses do not cross the main portion of the large field. Mapped distinct trees may be deciduous or coniferous and are larger than surrounding trees.

Most of the streams and linear marshes are mapped accurately. However, storms, log jams and beavers sometimes shift the flow of the water in new directions. Some mapped beaver ponds have expanded greatly, so don't plan to pass near the edges that are shown. The Medium and Long Advanced courses cross the House Branch and its valley, and the beaver activity is very obvious here. There is a beaver dam (mapped as an earth wall) next to a large pond that may be useful for crossing; you will get your feet wet but you can stay out of the pond. Where not marshy or green, stream valleys can make fast running corridors. Even after heavy rain, the streams are generally crossable, but you can expect to get your feet wet. Most larger streams have solid sandy bottoms, but those mapped as linear marshes are usually muddy. Your feet can sink in them. Aside from House Branch, the courses mostly avoid the stream valleys.

Quaffing Zone Rules

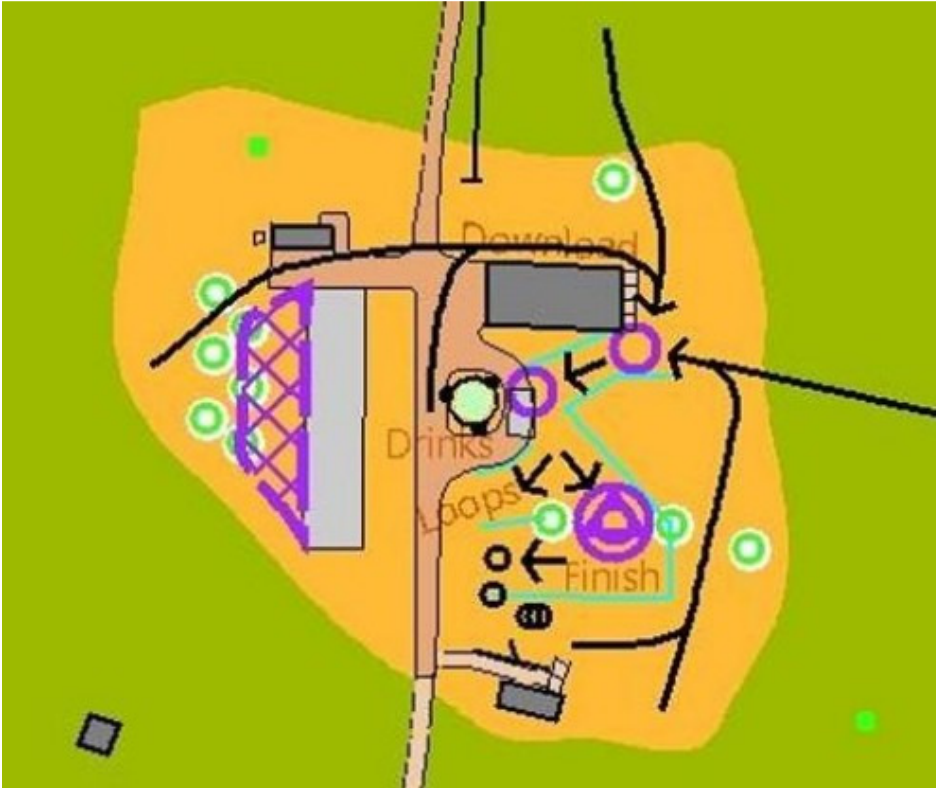
- Maps will be handed out while mass starters are in the starting area; don't look at the squiggly brown lines until the start is announced.
- You will need to have a cup filled with your "race beverage" of choice in hand; we'll have beer and water (at least).
- When the race starts, empty your cup (into you), throw it with style to the ground, turn over and look at your map (that means turn the map over, not turn your body over), and figure out where to go. Or just follow someone and hope for the best. Every orienteer does that now and then, so why not here and now?
- In contrast to most orienteering races, following someone is OK in this race... if you dare.
- After finding your controls in the correct order, you'll wind up back at the starting area.
- Punch the Quaffing Zone Entry Control as you enter the beverage area.
- After that, quaff another cup of your beverage of choice.
- And punch the Quaffing Zone Exit Control before heading out for your next loop (or Finish).
- The finish of each loop is near the start triangle of the next loop, but the second and third loops start and finish in the same place.

Repeat this process until you've completed all your required loops.

- Time stops after you've quaffed the last drop from your beverage of choice AND have punched the finish control.
- At the end of each loop (at the start/finish area), 2 controls must be punched and there will be a chute with beverages between them. The first of these 2 controls marks the start time of beverage consumption. The

second can be punched after drinking to mark the end time of beverage consumption and the beginning of another loop. You will punch these 2 controls upon each loop completion. If you are running Long Advanced, exchange your map before starting the 3rd loop. When leaving the chute area watch out for other competitors, onlookers, and volunteers; please go around the chute, the pavilion, and the barn as needed.

- After all loops are completed, including the aforementioned 2 controls, punch the finish control.



Because of the map scales and very close proximity of the finish area controls, the control circles overlap on the printed map. The chute will help to guide you and event officials will aid you if needed. Once you are done with your course, join us at the Potluck!