



QOC Training Weekend

Session Descriptions

Prince William Forest Park - Happyland Camp 5
March 16-17, 2024

Fundamental

Instruction and Training on Fundamental Orienteering Skills and Techniques

The Fundamental track is intended for any orienteer of any ability level interested in learning or reviewing the fundamental skills and techniques of orienteering, including those who are regularly or occasionally succeeding at Advanced-beginner (Yellow) and Intermediate (Orange courses) and wish to improve. The collection of content, experience, and practice among all 5 sessions of the Fundamental track covers the skills and techniques that would be needed to regularly succeed on Intermediate (Orange) courses including both advanced-beginner and advanced legs.

Morning Session

Skills Instruction

[Map Reading – Color, Scale, Symbols]

The most fundamental aspect of orienteering is map reading. Orienteering maps are made specifically for the sport to standards unlike those of any other maps. They provide a large amount of information designed to support navigation at running speeds. Only the map can tell you what land, water, vegetation, natural and unnatural features lie between you and your target. Maps can show features along the way that will keep you located and let you know that you are going in the correct direction.

This session will discuss the colors, scale, and symbols of orienteering maps. An orienteering map is a communication, like a letter, from the mapmaker to you using color & symbols to communicate the features you can use to navigate through the area at speed. Orienteering mapmakers (usually called mappers) use 6 basic colors and a variety of patterns and symbols to represent the prominent and recognizable features in the area. Being able to interpret and understand the map is the most important orienteering skill you can master.

The session will also include a fun relay to practice recognizing and interpreting map symbols at speed and a “Map Walk” with the instructor to go out in the woods and along the way see and discuss some of the features on the ground and how they are represented on the map.

Exercise: Map Symbol Relay

Training: Map Walk

Mid-morning Session

Skills Instruction

[Compass Usage & Distance Estimation]

Of course, alone maps are far more important for getting successfully from one location to another over any appreciable distance, but a compass and a map together are the orienteer's toolkit. A compass can be a very useful tool to help you align what you see on the map to what you see around you. Knowing if you are even holding the map the right side up or facing in the right direction is faster with a compass than without. Measuring an angle and walking in a straight line is not a fundamental orienteering skill, but how to quickly use a compass to make your navigation faster and easier will be covered in this session.

Estimating distance is a key orienteering skill at all levels. Knowing how far you have gone and how far you have to go helps you decide which way to go, keep track of where you are, and know when you've gone too far. Good distance estimation supports and improves all your other orienteering skills and can be the difference between 15-second mistakes and 15-minute mistakes. And your compass is as useful or more at estimating distance than it is telling you which way to go.

This session will focus on distance estimation, measuring, and pacing as well as rough compass usage, map orienting, and error checking. There will be a pacing exercise to practice measuring distance on the ground and how terrain can affect your measurements; there will also be a training course in the woods that will not require any navigating to follow but will test and practice your map reading, rough compass usage, and distance estimation skills.

Exercise: Pacing 100m

Training: Streamer-O

Now that you have the essential, fundamental orienteering skills it's time to get into the fundamental techniques to successfully navigate orienteering courses.

Afternoon Session

Techniques Instruction

[Planning (PPD: Plan, Picture, Direction) – Projection/Visualization, Control Enlargement, Attackpoint, Route Choice, Route Selection]

"If you fail to plan, you're planning to fail." As the adage goes, and the Cheshire Cat would agree, which way you ought to go is important once you know where you want to get to. Planning your travel on an orienteering course is a collection of techniques as important as the techniques that are part of executing that plan.

This session will focus on the fundamental planning techniques in orienteering. Projection & or visualization is the technique of creating a picture in your head of reality as it is represented on the map.

The better your mental picture from the map, the easier it is to recognize what you see in the terrain. Control enlargement is the technique for creating larger targets to hit and reducing errors. Attackpoints are easy-to-find locations a short distance from the control from which you can more precisely navigate to the control. Beginner courses are designed with minimal different routes to choose from to minimize the risk of failure. More difficult courses will present you not only with more difficult control locations but also with more options how to get there. This session will help you identify what the different options or route choices are and the important considerations that go into making the best choice or route selection. Games and exercises to put this into practice will be included.

Exercise: Connect the Dots (variant)

Mid-afternoon Session

Techniques Instruction

[Executing – Handrail, Catching Feature, “Green light, Yellow light, Red light”, Seeing]

So you’ve got a plan? The fundamental techniques you need to execute that plan are included in this session. Handrails are linear features that are easy to follow, take much less concentration, and are less prone to errors to navigate by than point-feature navigating or following a heading. Knowing how to identify and use catching features to know when you have gone far enough (or too far) is a useful technique whenever possible. Using “Green light, Yellow light, Red light” techniques for going faster when rough and simple orienteering is good enough, slowing down when you need to be more cautious especially at transition points, and slowing even further or walking if necessary to locate the control is a fundamental technique that will be included in this session. And you’ll discuss and practice methods for “Seeing”, or matching what you see around you to the map as you go. A fun exercise and training course to practice these techniques will also be part of this session.

Exercise & Training: Map Simplification (Simple-O)

Morning Session

Control Symbols Instruction

The purpose of a control description is to give greater precision to the picture given by the map of the control feature, and to indicate the location of the control flag in relation to this feature. This will help you better visualize the control site, but a good control is found primarily by map reading.

Orienteering is a worldwide sport. IOF control description symbols provide a standard means for orienteers from all countries to be able to understand control descriptions without ambiguity or the need for language translation. This session will teach you how to recognize control description symbols, how to read and interpret control description sheets, and ways to study and practice the whole set of control description symbols to make finding controls faster, easier, and more accurate.

Exercise: Control Symbol Relay

Training: Relocation Streamer-O

Intermediate-Advanced

Instruction and Training on Intermediate Orienteering Skills and Techniques

The Intermediate-Advanced track is intended for Intermediate or Advanced orienteers who regularly succeed on Intermediate (Orange) or Advanced (especially Brown/Green) courses interested in learning or reviewing Intermediate-Advanced skills and techniques of orienteering. The collection of content, experience, and practice among all 5 sessions of the Intermediate-Advanced track covers the skills and techniques that would be needed to regularly succeed on Advanced courses of any length or level at club, national, or international events.

This track is intended to build on and advance the Fundamental skills of orienteering. If sessions in this track are too much or too fast, it would be more advantageous for you to select Fundamental-track sessions to fill-in knowledge gaps and practice executing.

Morning Session

Skills Instruction

[Map Reading – Color, Scale, Contour Interval, Symbols, Thumbing, Simplifying;

Distance Estimation – Estimating, Pace Counting;

Compass Usage – Rough compass, Precision compass, 3-step Method, Aiming off]

This session will cover intermediate map reading skills, including color and symbols but emphasizing contours and contour intervals. Additional map reading techniques of thumbing and simplifying will help you better read your map and keep “map contact” while running on a course. The session will also briefly discuss distance estimation skills of visually estimating and pace counting. The core concepts of these skills are fundamental and primarily covered in the Fundamental track, but more advanced concepts or techniques will be covered in this session.

After the brief introduction described above, this session will primarily focus on Rough compass and Precision compass usage. This will include the 3-step method of compass bearings at speed and Aiming Off skills.

A pace-counting exercise will be available on both level and uneven ground, giving you the opportunity to practice how to adjust your distance estimation skills for the terrain you’re running; but the primary training course will be a mixed-skills practice on a Streamer-O course.

Exercise: Pacing 100m

Training: Mixed-Streamer-O

Mid-morning Session

Techniques Instruction

[Planning (CAR: Control, Attackpoint, Route) – Control Enlargement, Attackpoint, Route Choice, Route Selection]

Being able to quickly make a good plan and then executing that plan well is the set of techniques that makes the difference between being successful on advanced orienteering courses or not or makes the difference between being fast or not. This session will discuss how to improve your ability to navigate quickly to control locations using techniques of Control Enlargement and Attackpoints. You will also learn techniques to identify good Route Choices and make a good Route Selection as part of your planning.

This session will incorporate the intermediate planning technique of Control-Attackpoint-Route, or CAR, and will give you the opportunity to practice these techniques with a Simplification exercise and a Memory-O training course.

Exercise: Simplification

Training: Memory-O

Afternoon Session

Techniques Instruction

[Executing –Catching Feature, Collecting Features, Handrail, Contouring]

Other than fitness factors, attention to the map and attention to the terrain are the two factors that makeup your speed on an orienteering course. This session will discuss map features along your route that you most want to pay attention to, so you maintain good contact between your attention to the map and your attention to the terrain. When you are confident in your location on the map along your route you can navigate into the control location more accurately and more quickly.

The session will have a Map Pieces Relay to practice attention to the map quickly and while running; you will also have a specially designed training course to practice these techniques.

Exercises: Map Pieces Relay

Training: Short-course

Mid-afternoon Session

Techniques Instruction

[Executing - “Green light, Yellow light, Red light”, Map Contact: Refocus and Relocating]

“Green light, yellow light, red light” orienteering describes a method for using rough and fine orienteering. “Green light”, or rough orienteering is used on the easy part of a leg where you can move fast, “Red light” means to slow down or walk if necessary to use fine orienteering to locate the control, and “Yellow light” means to slow down, be cautious, and focus particularly in the transitions between rough and fine orienteering.

This session will specifically cover techniques to use when you might lose or be losing map contact. Sometimes you need to refocus to get back in good contact, and sometimes you need to relocate to get back in contact. Using these techniques quickly and well when needed will minimize your mistakes on your course. You will run a Leapfrog-O training course with a partner and take turns navigating or focusing on good attention to the map and terrain while following your partner doing the navigating.

Training: Leapfrog-O

Advanced

Instruction and Training on Advanced Orienteering Skills and Techniques

The Advanced track is intended for Advanced orienteers only. Fundamental and Intermediate skills and techniques will not be covered and instead will focus on advanced skills and techniques that will help those regularly successful on Advanced courses (of any length) navigate with more precision and consistency and decrease their overall course times.

Morning Session

Skills Instruction

[Map Reading – Simplifying, Map Memory;

Distance Estimation – Variation;

Compass Usage – Precision compass, Drift]

You already have the skills you need to regularly succeed on Advanced orienteering courses. This course will review the ideas that advanced orienteering skills include Map Reading, Distance Estimation, and Compass Usage. This session will focus on some of the particularly advanced skills in these areas; specifically map simplifying and map memory, distance estimation variation, and precision compass skills including managing drift.

There will be a Map Pieces Relay to practice attention to the map quickly and an advanced Simple-O training course designed to also emphasize variation in distance estimation or pacing.

Exercise: Map Pieces Relay

Training: Pacing Variation / Simple-O (dead-reconning?) course

Mid-morning Session

Techniques Instruction

[Planning (PPD: Plan, Picture, Direction) – Plan: Control Enlargement, Leg Length, Route Choice, Route Selection

Picture: Projection / Visualization, Map Memory

Direction + Distance: Aiming Off, Drift]

Based on research of Elite orienteer and sports scientist applying sports science and research in other sports to orienteering, the Plan Picture Direction(+Distance) model of orienteering performance devises 3 deterministic factors to orienteering performance. This session covers PPD at a high level and specifically focusses on the Planning techniques of Control Enlargement, Leg Length, Route Choice, and Route selection; the Picture techniques of Projection/Visualization and Map Memory, and the Direction+Distance techniques of Aiming Off and Drift.

The PPD approach and these specific techniques can be practiced on a Flow-O training course (a customized Memory-O from Attackpoint to Attackpoint designed to emphasize pre-planning and flow through the control.)

Training: Attackpoint / Flow-O

Afternoon Session

Techniques Instruction

[Executing – Rough Orienteering, Fine Orienteering, Flow, Map Contact – Refocus / Relocating]

This session will discuss Rough Orienteering and Fine Orienteering techniques and methods to quickly identify in route planning where each technique is appropriate. Planning the direction you will leave a control and ahead to the next control while successfully approaching a control and quickly leaving that control is your Flow, and techniques for optimizing your Flow will be discussed. Advanced techniques for recovering Map Contact by Refocusing or Relocating will be discussed.

A Connect the Dots Live training course will also be available to practice the techniques from this session.

Training: Connect the Dots Live

Mid-afternoon Session

Training

This Advanced session will be a training course with a Circular Map without north-lines which will facilitate increased focus, concentration, and map reading. Training: Circular Map