

ORIENTEERING

Orienteering is a competitive sport, which appeals to all ages and both sexes. It involves cross-country running, using a map to find your way around a set course.

Orienteering requires physical fitness, skill in map reading, compass work, mental alertness and decisiveness.

Orienteering teaches the participant to assess, understand and "read" the countryside, as well as to appreciate the beauty and variety of the terrain s/he travels over.



Photo courtesy of the Manawatu Evening Standard

A standard orienteering course consists of a **start**, a series of checkpoints called **controls** at different features in the terrain, which must be visited in order, and a **finish**. Participants use an accurate, detailed map of the area to find the controls.

While most orienteers also use a compass to keep their map orientated ("turned to fit"), this is not the only way to do so. With the emphasis in Kiwi orienteering, being on map reading, compass use is not introduced; instead other ways of turning maps are suggested.

Orienteering embodies a wide range of skills both physical and mental. The latter include:

- fitting map to terrain (and vice-versa)
- decision making (route choice)
- determination (sticking to one's decision)
- self-confidence (in unfamiliar terrain)
- planning ahead
- adapting the correct navigational technique for the terrain, e.g. aiming off, use of attack points, compass skills, checking distance travelled.

See the Glossary for explanations of orienteering terms.

Kiwi Orienteering, however, only seeks to introduce the FUNdamental skills involved in navigating with a map. These skills include:

- understanding a map, including Key or Legend
- turning a map to fit the ground
- navigating a simple course, or similar exercise
- setting one's own simple courses

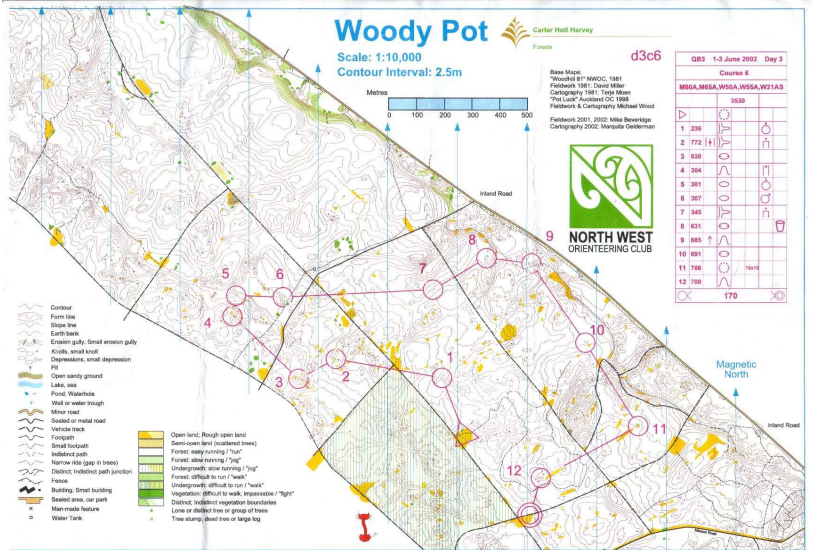
See "Kiwi Orienteering" on page 7.

ORIENTEERING EVENTS

The positions of the controls are marked on the map by circles, connected by lines and numbered in the order they are to be visited,

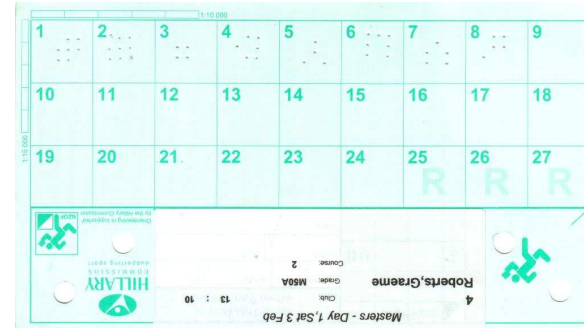
The control site circles are centred on the feature that is to be found. This feature is also defined by a list of control descriptions.

On the ground, a control flag marks the location of the feature that the orienteer must visit.



The route between controls is **not** specified, and is entirely up to the orienteer. This element of route choice and the ability to navigate accurately through the terrain are the essence of orienteering.

To prove a control has been visited, the orienteer uses a clipper attached to the stand, from which the flag is hung, to mark his or her clipcard. Different Clippers make different patterns of holes in the card.



Most orienteering events use staggered starts to ensure that each orienteer has a chance to do his or her own navigating, but there are several other popular formats, including relays and events in which the orienteer must find as many controls as possible within a specified time.

Orienteering is also enjoyed as a recreational activity. Families, groups, couples and individuals walk around a course, enjoying the environment, with the added challenge of reading the map and working out the route to take.

Other forms of orienteering include mountainbike (MTB-O), ski, canoe, trail (for people in wheelchairs), and rogaines - a long distance team version of the sport.

Kiwi Orienteering is modified so special orienteering maps, control flags and clipcards are not needed to introduce the sport to children.