

Route Choice

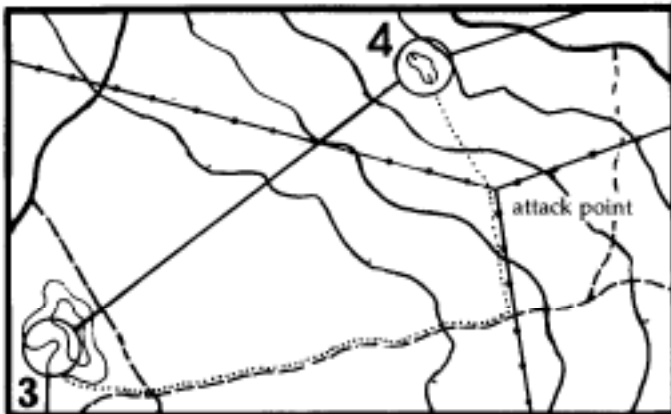
This is simply deciding which is the fastest way for you to get from one control to another.

Often the choice is simple - around the paths or straight, over the hills or round. The choice may be more sophisticated especially when you are orienteering abroad. To be able to make the best choice needs experience, of navigation and of yourself:

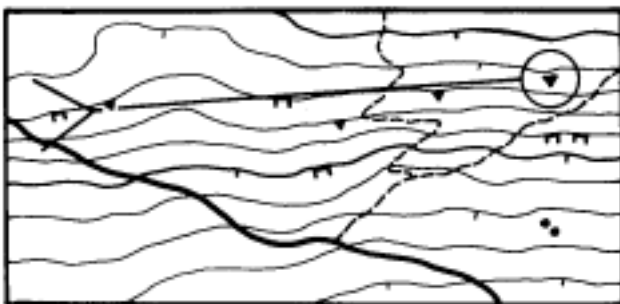
- (a) How fast do you travel over different terrain?
- (b) How far round should you go to avoid a given height of climbing?
- (c) Can you go fast along paths?
- (d) Are you a steady runner who can run nearly as fast in rough going as along a path?
- (e) Do you navigate slowly off paths?
- (f) Have you confidence to go fast across country away from line features?
- (g) Is it early in a race (play safe)?
- (h) Have you just made a mistake (lost concentration)?
- (i) Are you tired, physically or mentally?

If you are fairly new to orienteering it is wise to choose a route following line features. You should also do this if factors e, g, h, and i apply, that is if you are lacking in self-confidence.

Look at the following example:



The direct route from 3 to 4 is the shortest but if you were tired or the terrain was rough you might easily go astray on a compass bearing. The dotted line shows a safe route. Follow the path then the wall, take a compass bearing and pace count from the wall corner. It is invariably quicker to go steadily round a course without making mistakes than to race off and waste many minutes getting lost. The important thing is to choose quickly and to execute the route well. It is also important to read the contours carefully when making a route choice as in diagram below.



If you followed the forest road and the path you would find it easily but you would lose a great deal of height. A better route would be to contour round to the path just below the platform.