

Coaching Page.

No 27

Many of our club members have just returned from the Australian 3 Day Event, and they achieved excellent results, with Newcastle placed second overall in the club pointscore. It is a great reflection on the quality of our local program.

At the first Coaching Day for this year, it was very pleasing to see a number of participants who had been running orange and even red courses, as well as the newer people. I hope the day provided some inspiration for all, becoming more aware of the skills required for orange navigation.

Early in the year is the time to focus clearly on correct navigation technique. Remember to not only work on improving fitness, but also to practice navigational techniques.

Orienteering Skills for Orange and Red Courses.

Orange and Red courses expect the orienteer to travel cross-country by determining their own route choice. A compass is therefore necessary.

Orange.

1. Orient the map
2. Determine a route choice, that includes a series of features to keep you in contact with the map.
3. Recognise the “attack point” to find the control
4. Interpret the contour lines (know uphill or downhill)
5. Follow a handrail or set a compass bearing, and recognise features being passed (eg. watercourse, hill, rockface)
6. Estimate distance travelled
7. Recognise the “catching feature” that tells you that you have gone past the control (eg. watercourse, track, top of hill)

Red.

1. Orient the map
2. Determine the best route choice, that allows to keep you in contact with the map.
3. Recognise the “attack point” to find the control
4. Interpret the contour lines (know uphill or downhill)
5. Use the features in the terrain as handrails or set a compass bearing, and recognise features being passed (eg. watercourse, hill, rockface)
6. Accurately estimate distance travelled

The second of the Coaching Days is developed for orienteers at Orange and Red level, who would like to develop their skills. The practice activities will be set in short loops to maximise feedback.

There will be no easier courses set.

Basic Techniques Revisited

Contouring.

The skill of navigating around a hillside while stay at the same altitude. it is often required for attacking controls in gullies and watercourses, and can save energy on route choices that take you up and down.

Aiming Off

Aiming off can be used when navigating towards a linear feature at right angles to the direction of travel. If there is a control point or attack point on the feature, the orienteer can take a bearing to either the right or left of the control so that when the linear feature is reached the orienteer knows which way to turn.

Use of Catching features

Typical catching feature are fences, large watercourses, tracks, large hills or a ridge line.

Navigating on ORANGE courses includes recognition of the catching feature as part of the analysis of their route choice. RED courses will also have catching features but they will not always be as obvious. Catching features can also be used during the course, rough navigating quickly to a large linear feature that will be passed on the way to the control. These features enable the competitor to run fast through the terrain with little risk of error as the collecting feature will slow them just before the control, when fine navigation will take over.

Attack Points.

Moderate or hard navigational courses rarely have controls on or near linear features. Orienteers can use a major features near the control to simplify the navigation, and then progress on to the control.

Thumbing the Map

Helps the orienteer keep in contact with where they are on the map. Remember to keep the map oriented.

Distance Estimation.

It is often important to know how far you have gone. Some people do it by judging the distance as they go; others by counting the number of paces taken.

Route Choice.

Route Choice is deciding which is the fastest way for you to get from one control to another.

This can be simple (around the paths or straight, over the hills or round) but is often complicated by the variety in terrain. The secret is to choose a route that allows you to navigate to the attack point, and to stay in contact with the map.

The important thing is to make a calm decision and then to execute the route well.

Leg Analysis

Look at the leg to be attempted, the first thing to look for should be the 'attack point' to lead you to the control. Then you decide on your route choice, and use your navigational skills to get you there, remembering that you may need to use a combination of skills as you progress through the leg.

On this page is some 'armchair orienteering' to help practice your technique. (Courses are from Xmas 5 Day 2007 The Quarry (15-16), and State League 11 2006 Astleys Tower (2-3-4-5))

Draw in your route choice, and write in what skills you will be using at certain points along each leg.

