

GUIDE FOR LOCAL URBAN/SPRINT EVENT COURSE PLANNERS July 2025

Each local Urban/Sprint event will have a Course Planner, Vetter, SI Operator & Registration person. The Series Coordinator will select maps for the series and identify planners and vetters. The SI Operator will provide the SI timing and the Rego person will coordinate admin/entries. Thus, on the day the Course Planner should only have to concentrate on making sure all the controls are in place and that the maps are available. This guide is for the Course Planner to aid them in the planning and preparation of their event.

Start Location

Assuming you've been allocated an event map, the first decision is the start location. The Urban Series Coordinator will need this information several months prior to publicise the event. Things to consider in making the decision about a start location:

- Is a different start location to the previous event held on the map possible? (Desired in order to utilise a different part of the map. Previous start locations can be found on the Club website under Urban Menu/Previous Seasons).
- Is there plenty of room for parking?
- Is there shelter from inclement weather, or room to set up the Club gazebos?
- Can people mill around safely and without being a public nuisance?
- Any facilities? (Preferable but not essential) e.g. toilets, water, playground etc.

Planning the Courses

(For sprint events at the state and national level obtain advice from the organiser).

For NOC Urban Series events three courses are required - Long, Short and Mini.

- **Long course** should be around 4-5 km (depending on terrain, climb etc).
- **Short course** should be around half the Long course distance (2-2.5 km).
- **Mini course** should be around 1 km.

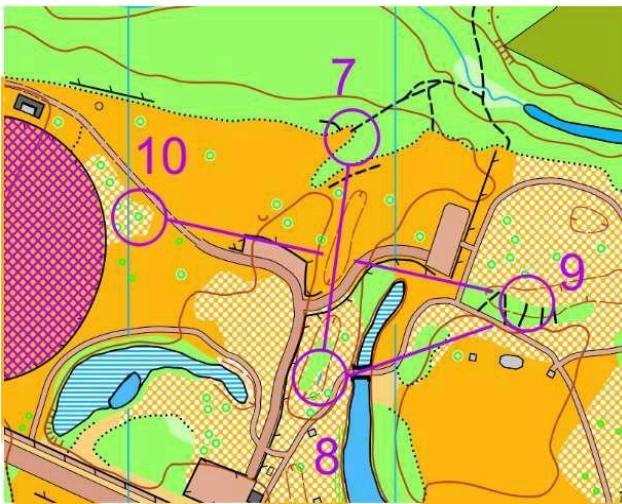
To get enough length the Long Course may need a "map flip" (i.e. the course is split and is printed on both sides of the map).

NOTE: The **length of a sprint/urban course** is not measured as the straight line distance between controls as generally done in forest orienteering, but as the most likely route, measuring around uncrossable features such as private land, buildings, out of bounds areas etc. The length should represent the approximate actual distance to be covered which may be longer than a straight line measurement. (The "most likely" course length can be manually measured in the course planning software and the system generated course distances can be manually adjusted).

Note some older SI sticks, including NOC rental SI sticks, can only record a maximum of 30 controls so this is the **upper limit on the number of controls**. However, plan for no more than 28 controls on any one course to allow for possible competitor punching mistakes.

Because sprint/urban orienteering events are held in fast terrain, the aim is to **plan courses that require many quick decisions**. This can be achieved by:

- having plenty of changes of course direction (including crossovers or butterfly legs that don't obscure other controls. Note the broken line on the later leg crossing over in the example below).



- clusters of short legs (requiring full concentration) followed by a somewhat longer leg with route choice.
- legs with a genuine route choice decision with little or no difference in distance between the different route options.



- ideally, the route from start triangle to the first control can not be seen by competitors waiting at the start area (this can sometimes be achieved by having a taped route from the maps/start punch to the start triangle).

If you're not familiar with the mapped area, it's essential that you first **visit the area** so you're aware of its features. Then begin planning the courses on the map, perhaps by identifying good legs between controls and joining those legs.

[Course planning software](#) - you can use either OCAD (map and course-planning software - the Club's Mapping Officer can provide access) or Open Orienteering Mapper and Purple Pen (course-planning tool). Note OCAD is the preferred file type for the final course file. Experienced NOC members can give you advice on the use of these programs.

NOC's Gear Steward will let you know which **control stand numbers** to use (usually 30 are allocated for each Urban Series event). They can also supply surveyors tape for marking the control sites.

Once the initial course planning is done **visit each control site** to assess its suitability and the routes between controls, create a control description and check map accuracy. You will most likely make changes to some planned control sites. Once a control site is locked in, a tape (ideally marked with the control stand number) should be left at the site. This allows the Vetter to check the accuracy of your work and to reduce the risk of mistakes when you place control stands in the field.

Good control sites:

- are not spotted from a long distance away when approaching from the previous control (may not apply to Mini courses).
- are not hidden - if you successfully navigate to the centre of the circle, and have read the control description, you should easily see the control.
- make good use of complex areas of the map and/or provide route choice.
- allow control stands to be "tethered" and locked in place where there's any chance the stand will be stolen or moved.

Check each route choice option to ensure map correctness. If you notice **map corrections** are required, record them and update the map if you have the skills, or let the Urban Mapping Officer know so they can update it. (The [OCAD Sketch](#) app can be very useful to record map corrections in the field using your phone).

Any significant unmapped corrections should be noted in the event information.

Check that the map displays course **closure time and the event phone number**.

Check that each **control circle is centred** on the control feature you have taped.

Make sure that the **control circles and lines joining the controls don't obscure any details** on the map that are necessary for accurate navigation. If they do, use

the relevant tools to cut pieces out of the control circle and/or make gaps in the lines joining controls. Also check that the **control numbers do not cover important detail**.

When you finalise the **control descriptions** (which should accurately describe which mapped feature and position of the control flag), produce both English and IOF symbol versions. Symbol descriptions should be printed on Long and Short course maps, and English descriptions on the Mini course map.

Printing the Map

Course planning needs be completed early enough to give time to get the maps and descriptions printed and then passed on to you. Printing will be done by NOC's Printing Officer/backup (currently Geoff Todkill, with Jeff Guy as backup).

Printing Officer instructions are:

- Email the course planning and map files to gctodkill@bigpond.com at least 10 days before your event. This usually allows the maps to be given to you at the event the week prior to yours.
- Please keep Geoff advised of progress if there are issues (ph 0447091079, or email gctodkill@bigpond.com).
- The control descriptions and the SI file for the SI Operator will be generated from the print files.

Event Information

The **final details of your event** including location, parking, course lengths/climb, map scale, course notes and facilities need to be sent to the Series Co-Ordinator for publication on Eventor, preferably at least two weeks prior.

Obtaining the Gear

It's the Planner's job to get the required control stands/SI units, flags, tethers (don't forget a key!) and any streamers etc so that they can be put out early on the afternoon of Urban events to be ready for the first start time. Collecting this gear can often be done at the event the week before yours. Otherwise contact the Club's Gear Steward (currently Geoff Peel, leepback1@gmail.com, 0422471353) to make alternative arrangements.

Both the Planner and Series Coordinator should work with the Gear Steward to ensure that all the gear needed for the event will be onsite.

Risk Management

- if courses need to cross busy roads, ensure competitors cross at safe points (e.g. pedestrian crossings or where there's a pedestrian refuge in the middle of the road). Place controls at those safe crossing points to ensure the safe crossings are used. The SI timing software has the option to program an "untimed leg" between two controls to allow competitors time to cross a busy road without rushing.
- avoid placing controls (or having legs between controls) in high pedestrian traffic areas where runners could injure themselves or members of the public (eg. shopping centres).
- be aware that public areas such as sporting ovals may be in use by others when your event is on and plan courses accordingly.
- the Mini course should not cross any roads and ideally should be set entirely within parkland.

To Do List For The Day

Although there'll be helpers on the day, here's a list of things that must be done:

- put up the NOC flag in a highly visible location, along with the red Finish flag at the finish location and the green Start flag (if the Start location needs to be highlighted).
- set up the table for registration/admin/enter on the day.
- set up the finish table for the SI Operator/Download.
- put out the notice board including general instructions and specific instructions for your event, in particular any safety information. Put up a blank copy of the map if the map has been used for a previous event.
- put out loose control descriptions.
- SI Operator will synchronise start punch, finish punch & clear/check.
- set up the start area with the maps/map boxes, start clock, clear & check stands, start punch stand, a start triangle flag and any required streamers.
- put out the finish punch stand.
- put up the results hanger.
- check that the first-aid kit is accessible and the event phone is active.
- you will also need to have volunteers organised to help to collect controls after event closure (hopefully the Series Co-ordinator will have helped organised this).