



Orienteering

Leaders Notes Last Reviewed 26 January 2026



Aim: To enjoy the sport of orienteering by learning how to follow a set course on a map and locate the controls on the property in the quickest time possible.

Equipment Provided: Clipboard Folder containing Leaders Notes, 2 Sets of Maps (15 of each course), Punch Cards and Answer Card, Risk Assessment Form, Incident Report Form, and Activity Check Sheet and Log. Control Markers and hole punches positioned around the property.

Location: The orienteering courses all start and finish at the BBQ shed.

Group Size: This activity can be done as part of group rotations (groups of 12 – 16 people) or as a whole group activity to become familiar with the property.

This is a guide to the Permanent Orienteering Courses at the Spring Beach Youth Camp put in by Orienteering Tasmania.

Orienteering is a map sport combining outdoor adventure with map reading and navigation. A great way to exercise, it combines mental and physical activity, providing a rewarding challenge where participants gain confidence and navigational skills.

It's a **sport for life**, catering for the young to the over 90's as a means of fitness, adventure, challenge and competitive sport. Walking or running, all ages and levels of fitness share the same event by choosing the different courses available.

The **aim** is to follow a course set in the bush, parks or streets and to locate controls or checkpoints which are marked on a map and by control markers in the terrain. The skill is to choose the best route for the individual to complete the course in the fastest time. It is this mental challenge that makes orienteering so popular.

Orienteering at *Spring Beach Youth Camp*

The map and the courses

To orienteer you need a map to guide you around a set course. The area covered by this map contains 28 controls. The triangle on the map indicates the start while the double circle represents the finish. At each control, there is a numbered control marker, attached to the feature, with its number plus a unique hole punch

The Courses:

Course 4 Beginners: This is a very easy course of just 7 controls covering only 400 m.

Course 3 Short: The Short Course uses 8 controls and covers a distance of 800 m. It is for those with some orienteering experience.

Course 2 Medium: For older or more experienced competitors this course has 13 controls and covers a distance of 1.2 km

Course 1 Long: This is the top course for the older and very experienced competitors. It has some hard navigation and has 15 controls over a distance of 2.3 km.

Other Courses: Using the map of all controls you can make up a course of as many controls and as long a distance as you wish.

Introduction to Orienteering

1. Orienteering is something we do every day when we find our way from one place to another.

Examples: How can I get from your classroom to the Office?
 Can you tell me the way to the supermarket?
 How can I get from the BBQ shed to the oval?
 Are there other ways I can go?

In your class at school you might like to share a local map with your students and have them create a course on it. Mark the starting point with a triangle, where you visit with a circle, a circle at another known point (eg supermarket, park?) then another etc. Draw a line to join up each of the circles. Now you have a course.

2. What is orienteering?

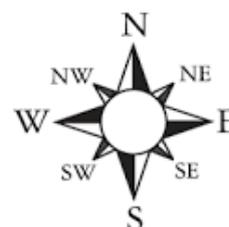
It is a sport - what do you need to play sport?

Sports in General	Orienteering
Somewhere to play	Have to have Terrain / Place
Equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Map of that terrain • Set Course – Controls joined by lines • Control Descriptions – what/where is at the circle • Control markers • Unique punches at each control marker
Skills/Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Map Reading • Orienting the map • Knowing where you are • Choosing where to go
Rules to play by	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Go to the controls in order • No interference with controls • No interference with or following other competitors • Keep quiet – no calling out

Getting started

1. Reading the map

- **The legend** which is on the back of the map, describes all the features used on the map. Orienteering maps use international symbols to represent natural or man-made features such as boulders, ponds and distinctive trees, tracks, buildings and play equipment and colours for vegetation such as garden beds, open ground, thick bush etc.
- **The scale** of the maps vary - 1: 2000 which means that 1cm on the map is a distance of 20m on the ground for courses 4, 3 and 2, and 1:5000 which means 1 cm to 50 m for course 1.
- **Control descriptions** printed on the map tell what you are looking for at the location of each control circle on the course. e.g. a fence end, a rock or a tree stump.
- **A North symbol** and blue North lines indicate the direction of North to orient or set the map.
- **Directions** – North, South, East, West, North West, North East, South West, South East



2. Setting off – Choosing your route

- **Where to start.**
A triangle on the map always represents the start of an orienteering course. A double circle represents the finish. Record your starting time.
- **Set or orientate the map.**
Point the map to the north – this is generally where the sun is at midday – and orientate yourself from there.
- **Choose your route to the control.**
The course map shows a straight line between controls. This is just a guide. You must find the best way to get to each control even if this means moving off the straight line.

3. What are you looking for? - Control descriptions

- The list of control descriptions describes the feature at each of the control sites and the control marker number.
- At the control site, the marker has a control number and a unique hole punch.
- Check the control number is the correct one from your control descriptions and punch your map in the correct spot for that control. **Don't pull the punch out. Slide your answer sheet carefully into place and then push closed.** This proves you have visited the control.
- Take care when removing your card from the punch, making sure it is not caught to prevent ripping your card.

4. When you have finished

- Record you finishing time.
- Check to see you have the right unique hole punch marks in the right places.
- Return your map.
- Try another course or ask for the folder to make your own course.

5. Setting a Course for someone else to do

- **Where to start** – At the BBQ Shed - Triangle - start, Double Circle - end
- **Plan Your Course** – Set the number of controls allowed for course (no more than 16). Plot your course on your map using the pens provided. Don't forget to number the control descriptors in course order
- **Complete Your Course yourself** – so you have the answer card when someone else follows your course
- **Swap courses with someone else**
- **Complete their course and check your answers**

For more information about orienteering you can go to the Orienteering Tasmania website, www.tasorienteering.asn.au. Also, have a look at the New to Beginners section on the Orienteering Australia website, www.orienteering.asn.au

Orienteering Safety Guidelines

- Check the Risk Assessment Form for Orienteering
- Safety is very important – everyone is responsible to keep each other safe
- If group are not experienced in orienteering, they should go in pairs to start with
- Everyone must wear enclosed sturdy footwear suitable for running and be sun safe
- Know where you are on your map at all times and do not go in areas not shown on your map or out of bound areas
- If you are not sure where you are, stop, look for the sun and orientate your map or go back to the last control spot. Do not climb over any fence lines or cross any creeks unless there is a bridge.