

What to do at an event

When are events held?

Local events are often on a weekday evening or Saturday. Other events are usually on Sundays, with starts from about 10:30 to 12:30. Check the club website for details.

What to take – clothing and equipment

- Outdoor clothes and trainers. It may be wet and muddy. Wear full leg cover.
- Take a compass. Normally, the red arrow points to north. Orienteering maps show magnetic north, so your compass will help you to orientate the map. It is advisable to use elastic or a string loop to keep your compass comfortably on your wrist or thumb depending on the style.
- You might need an A4-size clear poly bag to put your map in.
- Take some food and drink for afterwards – few events offer refreshments.

Going to an event

Parking – look out for orienteering signs and arrows pointing you to the event parking. There might be a charge for this. Parking might be on forest tracks, in a public car park, or in a field.



Registration – usually a car or a tent, where you go to register (enter) for the event. Look for a board describing the length and difficulty of the courses on offer. Choose your course carefully! Courses often sound short but will take longer than you think!

- Pay your entry fee
- Supply your name and age group
- Indicate which course you wish to do
- Collect a map and a set of control descriptions for your course.

For local events you might also be given a control card (a rubber band is useful for attaching this to your wrist). This is used to demonstrate that you have been round your course. At each point on your course you will use a punch to make a mark in the appropriate box in your control card. This is then handed in at the end. However, at most events punching will be by an electronic system (see later).

Make sure you know how long it is going to take you to get to the start.

At local events you may have to copy your course onto your map either at registration or at the start. At larger events, maps will already be marked with your course and ready for you at the start.

Some bigger events may require that you pre-enter for your course.

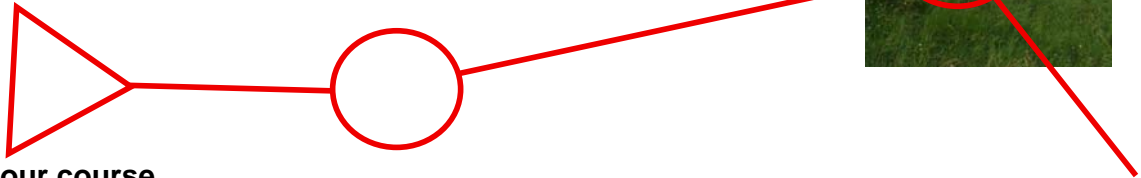
Adults: car keys can be left with an official (ask at Registration). This avoids you losing them in the forest!

Go to the start. Remember to take with you:

- Map (and map case)
- Control descriptions (preferably attached to map)
- Compass
- Control card (or electronic equivalent)



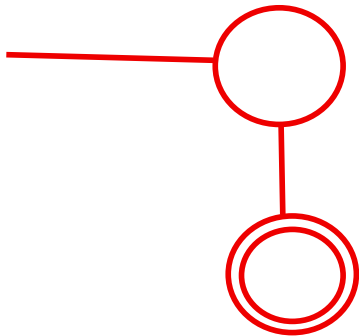
Make sure you know what a control will look like and how you "punch" at each control. There should be a sample near Registration. If in doubt, just ask. There's always someone near the start who will advise you.



Your course

The start is marked with a triangle on your map. Visit each of the controls in the specified order and punch at each one.

If you find you've missed one, go back to it, then continue in the correct order. So for instance if you do number 1, 2 then find yourself at 4, go back to 3 then 4 again, and on to 5 etc.. Even if you punched at 4 the first time you were there, you should punch again when you do it in the right order – otherwise you will be disqualified.



Finish

The finish is marked with a double circle on your map.

You **MUST** go to the finish even if you do not complete your course, so that the organisers know you have returned safely.

For events using electronic punching, you must punch at the finish and proceed to a download tent or car. You will be given a note or printout of your time.

When using a control card, someone will note the time you finish and take your card from you. Results are calculated quickly and are usually published on the club's website.

A note about technique

The most important technique you must learn is to **set your map**. This means line it up with what you can see (and with North, if you're using a compass). Every time you turn a corner, you turn your map as well, so you keep it set. If you see a path on your right, it'll be to the right on your map.

Electronic Punching System (EPS)

Electronic punching is commonly used. There are two types of electronic punching: Sport Ident or Emit.

- **Sport Ident** - participants carry a little peg or SI card on their finger. The SI card should be placed into a special block or 'Clear station' to clear it of previous information, and then into a 'Check station' before you start and sometimes into a 'Start station' when you start.



You then 'punch' each control by placing your SI card into a block at each control, and then into a block at the finish. Each of these blocks acts as a clock, and will beep at you as it functions. Each one records a time to your card.

At the finish you then download all of your times, giving you an instant time and set of split times showing how long it took you to get from one control to the next.

- **Emit** - participants carry a card or 'brikke', which is used in a similar way to the SI card. There is no Clear or Check, but there is always a Start punch. Again you place your card into a holder at each control and then into one at the finish.



You download in a similar fashion, obtaining a finish time and set of split times.