



Chief Operating Officer: Further Information

The Scottish Orienteering Association (SOA) is the national governing body of orienteering in Scotland, founded in 1962, with its office at Glenmore Lodge, Aviemore. Although we are a relatively small sports governing body, orienteering in Scotland is a dynamic and growing sport. SOA is also a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity.

We are seeking to appoint a Chief Operating Officer who will support and contribute to the work of the SOA Board of Directors and of our staff. At present there are eleven volunteer Directors on our Board (who are also Trustees of the charity) and we employ eight part-time paid staff.

Orienteering is an exciting and challenging outdoor sport. The aim is to navigate between the control points on a course marked on an orienteering map as efficiently as possible: as a competitive sport the challenge is to complete the course in the quickest time, but as a recreational activity it caters for all ages and abilities and can be taken at a jog or a walk. Although it is associated with remote forest and countryside, it has for many years been taught in schools and nowadays orienteering in urban and parkland areas is as popular as it is in remote areas.

The Scottish Orienteering Association is one of 12 regional or national associations across the UK. The umbrella organisation for these associations is British Orienteering, but in Scotland funding for orienteering comes from **sportscotland** or is generated within the sport in a variety of ways. **sportscotland** strongly supports the development of orienteering. In many respects, Scotland is the best venue for orienteering in the UK, and as a consequence SOA is by far the most developed of the 12 associations. In 2015 the World Orienteering Championships took place in Scotland, in 2016 we hosted the Junior European Cup, we are currently working on a bid to host the 2022 World Sprint Orienteering Championships and every second year we host a major, multi-day international event that attracts thousands of participants from across the world. Scotland is, therefore, very much “linked in” to orienteering on an international scale.

There are 18 open orienteering clubs in Scotland located across the country and 5 closed (university and armed services) clubs. Orienteering is organised by orienteers for orienteers. Clubs and their members are the lifeblood of the sport and volunteers from within clubs manage their club, organise events, plan courses, provide quality control, create the social side of the sport, coach and take on managerial roles at the SOA level.

Much of the work of our employees is in developing the sport in support of the work of clubs and their members. For example, land access is an important part of organising an event, especially a big event, and SOA has a staff member who is expert in this area. We also have an experienced staff member who runs a range of development courses for volunteers who want to grow their skills in organising, quality controlling or coaching: these include courses for school teachers who want to deliver orienteering to their pupils. We support clubs more directly by managing some aspects of membership and by helping them to run development projects of their own.

The current membership of SOA is about 1800, which is not as large as some of the equivalent associations in the south of England, but we are a dynamic and growing organisation in terms of our capabilities and activities.