

FYWTO guidance part 2 – continuing club activity

If you've done your introductory sessions well you should have a group of people wanting to do more orienteering. Regularity is key here – whether it's monthly, fortnightly or weekly, the pattern is essential. Don't be over-ambitious – it's better to have simple weekly sessions with a particular focus than to put on multi-course events at wider intervals.

You might find some existing members have a very narrow view of what orienteering is for them – don't be afraid to broaden that view! Many newcomers want the challenge of navigation but without the running; others might want to go round with a friend, enjoying the social side as well as the physical and mental challenge. Some won't want to be timed, and many will want to cut a course short. Be flexible!

You can go back to an area many times and still do valuable orienteering; even if you know the area like the back of your hand, a terrain run can be enjoyable. And of course it all becomes quite different in the dark. Many newcomers are quite interested in night orienteering, so you can continue year-round. People will bring torches, bike lights etc. before they buy a headtorch.

If your weekly sessions are midweek evenings, you may well find that people who come to them don't go to weekend events. Reasons for this are as varied as the individuals themselves – people have other things to do at weekends, perhaps their desire for orienteering is satisfied by the weekly club sessions, perhaps they just don't want the competition. But doing it once a week midweek is surely better than not doing it at all!

Putting on regular sessions need not involve a huge workload; there are many ways of having good orienteering fun with few or no controls. This is by no means an exhaustive list:

- run with map, controls marked but no kites out. As a group, take turns to navigate to intended point, discuss; run hard for interval training session. No need to plan control sites in advance, make it up as you go along! Split into small groups as required. Map could be OS map.
- as above but half the group goes one way to a control, half the other. Brief chat about route choice.
- as above but start with simple TD1 legs, gradually progress to TD2 and 3 as people gain confidence. Allow dropping out at any stage.
- as above but go as individuals or pairs
- maze courses (great to encourage planning ahead, control flow, also good fun in themselves)
- map an adventure playground – put controls on top of slides etc..
- micro-sprint round an interesting school or group of buildings – could use map made using open source mapping software, or architect's plans; combine with a hill run
- the same controls can give differing levels of challenge if you use Condes or mapping software to do things with the map, eg.:
 - for an area that has lots of paths, either hide all the paths, or hide everything except the paths!
 - to practise compass and pacing, use an area with lots of similar features (eg. boulders) and hide everything except them
 - for an experienced group, just print a circle of map, with the grid lines removed

- put out about 20 controls, some quite close together (suspend normal planning guidelines!), plan a few courses using different control combinations, and for experienced people print the courses without the control codes. Use electronic punching or pen & paper to check if people identify correct controls. Do it with or without control descriptions.
- outdoor gym – use a local wood or park for circuits where the exercises use items found in the forest, eg. logs, ditches, boulders. Could combine with map.
- there are lots of indoor games based on orienteering, some can be done outdoors too
- make putting out kites part of the warmup (slower running): go in pairs to talk through how they decide where to put it, then get a different pair to check it before you do the exercise
- make putting out part of the exercise itself:
 - pair runs head to head in opposite directions round loop of 5 controls; each takes 3 kites, place them until they find a kite already there, at which point they start collecting them in (they might have seen each other in passing)
 - “place & chase” – each person has a kite (numbered) for a different first control on a common loop (same direction), place that first control then proceed round the loop (specify direction/order), then collect in the kite they placed and race back to the finish. Give fastest people longer first leg or 2 kites. Slowest people can have a shorter loop. Minimal prior planning required.