Scottish Orienteering Association

Top tips for beginners at an event

1. Events are usually well signposted and pre-event information will indicate where Registration is. Many events have someone there who can answer all your questions.

2. Find out what the different colours on the map mean – ask for a map legend if there isn't one printed on your map

3. Look at the map scale and check what that means in terms of distance on the map equal to 100m on the ground. Do you know what 100m looks like? How many double paces do you take to cover 100m?

4. Fold the map so you can focus on the bits that matter. Re-fold it as you go round the course.

5. Turn the map so the way you're going is always straight ahead; keep it set all the time. Use your thumb to keep track on your progress.

6. Make sure you know what a control marker looks like and what you have to do at each control to prove you've been there (usually referred to as "punching") – ask someone at Registration to show you.

7. Visit all the controls in the order shown. Each control is marked on your map with a circle, and there is a straight line from one to the next; you choose your own route between the controls. If you accidentally go to no.4 before no.3 (for example), go back to no.3, punch that one, then go to no.4 and punch that.

8. Don't try to follow the straight line, but use line features (paths, fences, streams) and cut corners when you feel confident.

9. If you get slightly lost, don't just run on in the hope that it'll all become clear! Stop, check your map is set, think where you last knew where you were (perhaps the last control you visited) and if necessary go back there.

10. Always go to the Finish, punch there, and go to "Download" so the event organisers know you've returned safely – even if you haven't visited all the controls. Please keep within the "courses close" time shown on your map.