



Derwent Valley Orienteers

Notes for Planners of Levels C and D Events

Thank you for agreeing to be a planner at a forthcoming DVO event.

These notes should be read alongside the relevant British Orienteering Rules, Appendices (particularly Appendix B: Course Planning and Appendix E: Event Safety) and Guidelines (all at <http://www.britishorienteering.org.uk/page/rules>) together with other documentation such as the excellent set of articles by Barry Elkington on planning the various Technical Difficulty (TD) courses and notes by Carol McNeil on what the various technical difficulties mean (http://www.britishorienteering.org.uk/page/handbook_mapping)

Our overall aim is to ensure that participants go away from one of our events feeling that they have enjoyed themselves through taking part on a challenging yet safe course and that they want to come back to another DVO event. The Planner and Controller have key roles in ensuring fair, safe and enjoyable courses.

Whilst there are a number of types of event – Long Distance, Middle Distance, Sprint, Relay, Night, Urban, Ultra-Long, Score – these notes relate primarily to Long Distance cross-country events.

Some general points:

- **Your responsibilities** are for everything from the Start control banner (remember to put one out on a mapped feature!) to the Finish line or point (again with a punch unit and control kite). At a Level D event you may also have taken on the responsibilities of Organiser.
- Start by agreeing the **organisational details** between the main officials – where the car park is to be, Start and Finish.
- Draw up a **time line** – draft courses to the Controller, control sites tagged, Controller feeds back to Planner, final courses and control descriptions agreed, any map corrections agreed (see below), courses to Mike Godfree (see below), maps collected from printer, controls put out and checked, equipment returned.
- A **risk assessment form**, incorporating the appropriate risk management measures, **must** be completed by the Organiser of every event, with input from the Planner, and signed off by the appropriate person (normally a Controller). All event officials should ideally have completed an **Event Safety and Welfare course**.
- When **taping control sites** ensure you use an appropriate colour for the time of year – not green in the summer or white in the winter! Many people use garden tags and/or tent pegs to reduce the chance of sheep and/or cows eating them – though nothing is foolproof! The Controller may add a different coloured tape to show they have checked the site.

- The Planner shouldn't forget to recruit **control collectors** for after the event and have some all control maps for them. For level D events try to get named volunteers before the event. Send out a request for volunteers via the DVO e-mail group (derwentvalleyorienteers@yahoo.co.uk) the Organiser may have spare helpers who are willing to assist. Collectors may need to be reminded to collect the tapes as well. For level C events the Planner should contact the Control Collectors team leader to arrange control collection after the event.
- Sufficient all control maps should be available for all Officials who need them on the day, including the Finish team.
- If **control boxes** (not stakes and kites) are to be left out overnight, the Club Treasurer must be informed as they need to be insured. For Level C and D events there would normally be enough time to put the boxes out on the morning of the event.
- Don't forget to let the Organiser/Co-ordinator have the **maps and control descriptions** either before the event or early on the day – they have been left locked in cars before now! Remember to include a number of blank maps for the start lanes.
- Please would you and the organiser take some attractive photos of the event area, suitable for use in promoting the event, and forward these to John Cooke for inclusion in the Gallery area of the website.

Maps

- The **base map** will be provided by Mike Godfree (mike.godfree@btinternet.com) in an OCAD file. Any map corrections **must** be checked and agreed by Mike or a mapper he nominates.
- Most Planners in the club now use the freely downloadable software **Purple Pen** (<http://purplepen.golde.org/>) to plan events on an OCAD map. The Purple Pen file of courses should be sent to Mike Godfree **at least two weeks** before the event, after they have been finalised and agreed between the Planner and Controller. You will need to tell him how many maps of each course you need, There is information on the DVO Database (under Members/Members Area/DVO Database when you are logged on) on how many participants there were for previous events on the area that may help (though Mike may be prepared to give you some advice as well).
- Purple Pen starts numbering controls at 31 – make sure you change them to run from 101 onwards as this is how our SI units are numbered.
- The course maps in Purple Pen should include the course name, event date and course closing time.
- Make sure that **control descriptions** are laser printed or photocopied so that they don't run if it is wet.
- It is good practice to include "**Courses Close at 15.00**", or the relevant time, on the control descriptions. Event Final details should also note that this is the time when competitors should report to the Finish as controls will be collected from this time, if not before.

- Where appropriate, you should try to **visit the area** when the vegetation growth will be similar to the day of the event or talk to someone who knows the area if you do not, to find out what the vegetation will be like.

Types of events

Level D events are an ideal opportunity for novice Planners and Controllers to gain experience, supported by an experienced mentor. However, the event should still provide a quality orienteering experience. Even courses from experienced planners will benefit from a look over by another experienced Planner or Controller and hopefully avoid mistakes creeping in.

Our Level D events would normally provide White, Yellow and Orange courses, together with a longer, more challenging, course such as Light Green or an all-control Score.

Level C events attract participants mainly from the East Midlands, as they are normally part of the East Midlands League, and surrounding clubs, particularly if there are few other events on.

At a Level C event we would normally provide the following courses: White, Yellow, Orange, Light Green, Long Orange (previously Red), Short Green, Green, Blue and Brown. The Long Orange course will have few participants but is attractive to first-timers who are also runners and normally doesn't involve putting out additional controls. The Short Green meets the needs of older competitors who want a technical, but less physically-demanding, course and is now part of the East Midlands League.

Some points to consider when course planning:

- The **White** course should be interesting and ideally not just going round in a circle with only a few controls on path junctions. Controls should be numbered randomly and not a sequence e.g. 101, 102, 103 ...
- The **Yellow** course should not be planned as a long White course, sometimes with the same controls as White with a few added on. The Yellow course should be TD2 with up to two decision points without controls on each leg.
- With the **Orange and Light Green** courses, don't forget that they are part of a progression through the technical difficulties and that all your courses should reflect this.
- The **Green** course is often too physically demanding, particularly for older competitors, who find steep descent difficult and running through deep heather and tussocks too tiring. The **Short Green** course will accommodate some of them but others want a longer course, which is also required for their age class in some competitions.
- A further aspect to consider for the less agile competitors (as well as distance, climb, descent and terrain) is the difficulty posed by crossing streams, wall, fences, locked gates, stiles, etc. Often the difficulties can be overcome by leading the competitor towards the easiest crossing point. Where a climbed crossing is necessary consider the provision of a stile, either way a robust vertical pole to act as a hand hold will make the climb a lot easier. Also consider including details of the type of crossings expected within the event / course details.
- Both short and long Green courses should still be TD5 i.e. have at least one control, and ideally most, that has no collecting feature immediately behind it or obvious relocating

feature close by. This is the main difference with Light Green (TD4) and Orange/Long Orange (TD3) courses where there should be a collecting feature behind all controls.

- There should be at least one long leg on the **TD5 courses** (in particular on Blue and Brown) at Long Distance events to test the route choice and decision making, rather than pure detailed navigation skills, of the participants.
- Don't forget to take account of the climb on your courses to see how well the **lengths adjusted for climb** meet the guidelines in Appendix B – Long Distance Events by adding 0.1 km for every 10 metres of climb. Too often the Green course, in particular, has long finishing times because height has not been included.

Equipment

- As a planner you are responsible for everything between the start and the finish. For that you will require controls, stakes, numbers and control/banners kites for each control site. This equipment is in constant use in DVO but you need to contact Derek Gale (dg.244@btinternet.com) to ensure it is available for your event and how you can obtain it.
- The control boxes are numbered 101-162 so, if you are using more than 60 control boxes, you also need to check with Derek Gale so that extra boxes can be programmed.
- Some areas suffer from high levels of vandalism so you may need the Gripple Kit (also from Derek Gale) to secure the controls. Note that this equipment is not kept in the DVO Garage. Map Boxes are also kept with the controls if you require them. Don't forget to let the Organiser/Co-ordinator have the **maps and control descriptions** either before the event or early on the day – they have been left locked in cars before now! Remember to include a number of blank maps for the start lanes. Provide the control descriptions in clear plastic bags
- Should extra equipment such as tape or map boards be required then these will need to be obtained from the DVO Garage – contact Paul Wright to arrange access (cpstwright@tiscali.co.uk)
- Controllers should make sure they Clear their dibbers before checking the SI units or they will become full and no longer register, leading you to think the units have failed! Older dibbers will only respond to 30 controls but there are two dibbers with a larger capacity with the SI kit, which the Planner will have.

And finally ...

If you have any questions, in the first instance contact the Event Officials Co-ordinator and then the Controllers Co-ordinator who will be more than willing to provide advice, guidance and support.

If you have feedback on these notes or suggestions for additions (without them getting too long!) please let the Event Officials Co-ordinator know.

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