

Orienteering Cross-Country race instructions

The location of the START is shown on the map by a triangle. At the FINISH (double circle on the map), run up the flagged chute to the banner.

The location of the flags (check points) are shown by the circles on the map. Each control consists of a numbered stand with an orienteering flag and a pin punch attached. The number on the flag matches the number next to the circle on the map.

There is a control (flag) description on the map describing the feature the control is on, e.g. hill, trail junction. The feature will be in the centre of the control circle. The objective is to go to as many locations as you can and get back within your 40-minute window.

Ten points will be awarded for each location visited, but, if you don't return on time, there will be a 5-point penalty for each minute you are late. There are 30 flags set out, but you are not expected to get to all of them. Most teams will not make it to all 30 flags. flags may be visited in any order. Each pair of runners will have a punch card which has spaces for the school name, and the runners' names as well as 30 boxes numbered the same as the flags.

Before starting, write your names on the card. At each flag, punch the box on the card with the same number as the control flag using the pin punch. Each punch will make a different pattern of pin holes.

Punching Errors: There are 3 reserve boxes marked with the letter R on the punch card. If you punch in the wrong box by mistake, (e.g., the punch from control 34 in box 43), then when you get to control 43 you must punch in one of the R boxes as box 43 is already full. At the finish tell the officials collecting the punch cards what you did.

At the finish, the punch cards will be collected at the end of the finish chute. If you manage to visit all the flags and get back before your 40-minute time limit, tell the official collecting the cards. All cards received either have a placement number added to the back of the card - or will be kept in order of finishing to decide the final ranking.

Each pair of runners MUST have a watch or cell phone between them so that they know how long they have left to get back.

Map Reading Preparation: There is a lot of useful information on how to read and orient your map at: www.orienteer.ab.ca. The map has a legend to show you what all the symbols represent. Orienting your map and relating map symbols to park features are probably the most important skills.

The map is very detailed and at a large scale so you will get to places very quickly. Be careful not to run too far, too fast and miss the locations. You may get scratched legs in some places, particularly if you run through the green areas instead of staying in the open areas. Whenever you find a flag, you can find the flag number on your map and that will tell you exactly where you are.

Pre-planning Hints: Maps are available ahead of race day so that you can plan the best routes to suit your speed and map reading ability, this will help you get the most flags in the time available. *Most runners are unlikely to get all the flags.*

SENIORS will start at 12:40 pm and have 40 minutes

INTERMEDIATES will start at 12:50 pm and have 40 minutes

JUNIORS will start at 1:00 pm and have 40 minutes

*** Teams made up of multiple grades/categories will run in the higher grade/category. Example: a team consisting of one grade 7 & one grade 8 athlete will run in the Intermediate (grade 8) category.

Time per kilometre when orienteering will be about twice your normal running time to allow for map reading, flag finding, extra distance because you don't go in a straight line etc.

For planning you should estimate how far you might go in the set time and then, using the scale bar on the map, estimate which controls you have time to collect. (Making a loop of string equivalent to the distance you will run can help) To visit all the flags without any mistakes you would have to run at least 4.5 kilometres. Try choosing a route where you can make a shortcut if you are running late or add in an extra flag near the end if you are faster than you expected. Remember you lose points very quickly if you are late coming back. You may want to choose flags that look easy to find, e.g. on main trails.

Information for Teachers and Coaches: Orienteering can be considered an extreme form of cross-country running. Many top orienteers are also top cross-country runners. Orienteering has the added element of runners choosing their own route between flags. As many of the runners in this race may not have tried orienteering before, maps and instructions are being provided a week ahead of time to let students become familiar with the map and plan their routes.

Runners will go out in pairs as a safety consideration. If a school has an odd number of runners in any category, they will have one group of three. Occasionally schools wish to have all of their teams be in threes (4 teams of three, rather than 6 teams of 2), this does not impact how the race is managed/run.

Each pair/group should stay together and will have only one punch card between them, however they can carry one map each.

Each pair/group of runners MUST have a watch or cell phone between them so that they know how long they have left to get back. We highly recommend that each team set a timer on their watch/phone to provide a time limit warning.

Teams are not allowed to visit the various controls (scout locations before race) on race day. All competitors must stay at the start / staging area until their race begins. The different age groups will use different coloured punch cards: Blue for Seniors, Grey for Intermediates, Yellow for Juniors.

The start (triangle on the map) is between the two main parking lots. Runners should assemble in the open area a few minutes before their designated start time (when the announcer calls teams up). There will be three separate mass starts for the three different age groups. Seniors, both girls and boys will start at 4:30 pm. When they have left, the Intermediate runners will move into the start area, ready to start at 4:40 pm. Finally, the juniors will enter the start area and start at 4:50 pm.

At the start runners will head off in different directions towards the first flag they have chosen. Extra punches will be provided at all the flags close to the start to allow multiple teams to punch at the same time.

With a lot of controls in a small area like this, even beginners who don't have experience map reading will find quite a lot of the flags and every time they do they can see exactly where they are on the map by checking the number on the flag, then finding it on their map.

At the finish, the punch cards will be collected at the end of the finish chute. If you manage to visit all the flags and get back before your 40-minute time limit, tell the official collecting the cards.

All cards received will either have a placement number added to the back of the card - or will be kept in order of finishing to decide the final ranking.

Punching Errors: If your team has any punching errors, please notify the finish line officials. They will ensure any errors are noted and can be accounted for in the results. Cards will be checked, and points assigned after the event. Results will be sent out as soon as they are available, likely by Monday.