

Student Preparation for Sydney School Sport Regional Orienteering Championships



What is orienteering

Orienteering is a running race, where participants navigate using a map and their wits to complete their course. Along the way, runners visit check points (controls) which are marked on their map. At each control point, they register their timing chip as evidence of their visit to each control and eventually successful completion of the course.

It is a sport which is great for:

- Developing fitness
- Immersing students in nature and the outdoor world
- Self-confidence
- Development of critical thinking skills
- Spatial awareness
- Growing an awareness of the balance between the body and mind; and
- Applying classroom learning in a practical way.

Orienteering links strongly with curriculum content from multiple streams and at several levels. Obvious examples include mathematics, HSIE and PDHPE but also critical thinking skills, spatial awareness and language skills.

Here are some useful video links about the sport:

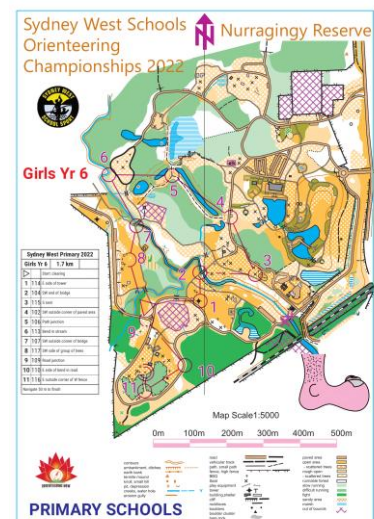
[Orienteering – Do we run?](#)

[Orienteering – Amazing adventures for the young and free](#)

[A Beginners Guide to Orienteering by The World Games 2022](#)

[Go Hard or Go Home – The Hubmann Brothers](#)

Plenty more videos are also available by searching the internet.



What to expect at a Sydney Regional School's event

On event day, the program will include both:

- Individual races, and a
- Three-person relay race.



For the individual races, students are grouped by their age or year group. To accommodate large numbers of students, there may be multiple courses for each age group. All courses will be similar with the same distance and difficulty to enable comparison of results.

Courses are graduated by both distance and difficulty depending upon the age of students. Younger students can be expected to follow tracks or other linear features. Older students will be challenged by more difficult navigation and opportunities to make small ventures into off-track areas.

For the relays, the three runners complete their courses consecutively and the first team over the line wins. The relays tend to be focussed on participation and enjoyment. Schools should form their own teams however if there's students left over then organisers are able to assist with the consolidation of students from various schools.



Safety

Various safety measures are in place for all events. These include:

- Comprehensive risk assessments
- Venues which are well bounded and a suitable difficulty for students
- Avoidance of roads
- Course marshals
- Records of all students on individual courses
- Time limits for course completion after which safety checks are completed
- First aid
- Easy access back to central assembly points with students never too far away
- Search and rescue parties in reserve
- Working with Children checks
- Some events may also have live gps tracking available to monitor course progress by selected students



Equipment

Student Essentials

Sports clothes with enclosed comfortable shoes for cross-country running.

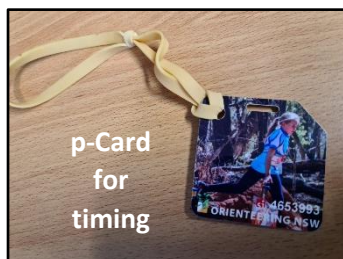
They should also bring along a hat, sun cream, water bottle plus lunch and snacks for an active day.

Optional Extras

If students are regular orienteers and own their own SPORTident timing card and compass, then they are welcome to bring them along to use. Students should please advise the organisers in advance if they plan to use their own SPORTident card.

Teacher Role

At the event, teachers will be provided with a bag of hire SPORTident p-cards for distribution to students. A list of which card numbers have been allocated to which students will also be supplied. It is important to ensure that each student receives the card number which has been allocated to them for timing purposes.



SPORTident number	Student
2014856	Allie Jones
2014857	Joseph Blake
2014858	Edward Chan

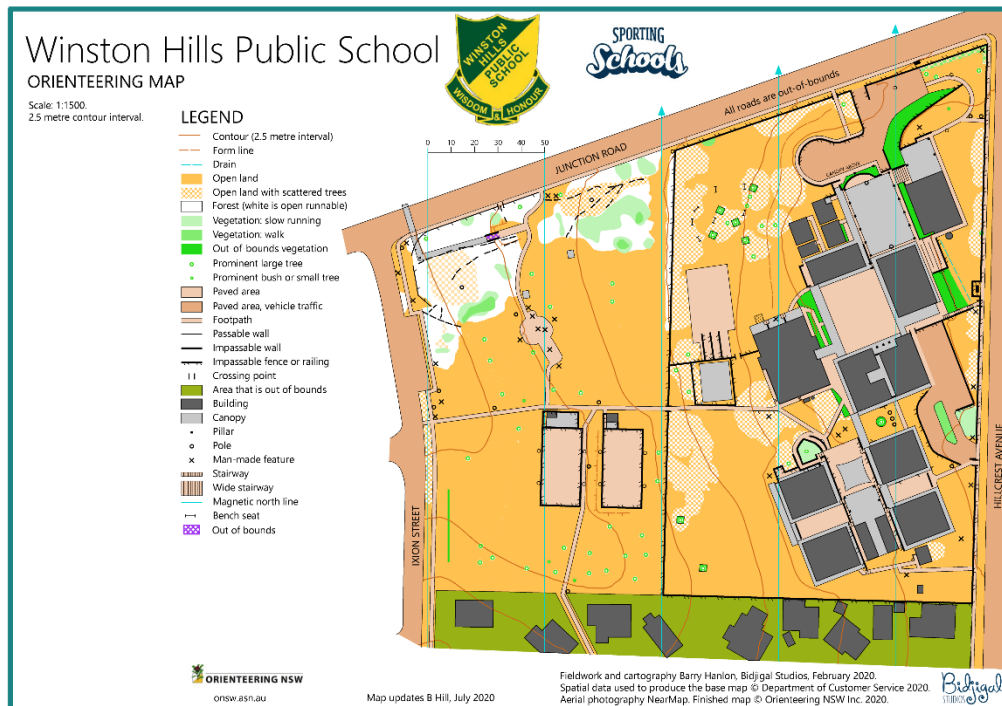
All hired p-Cards will be returned by students when they visit the results computer to download their race data after completion of their individual course.

Any cards allocated to students that do not attend on event day should also be returned to organisers promptly so that they have a record of who is and is not in attendance at the event.

School Preparation

School Orienteering Maps

Please consider having your school mapped for orienteering. Orienteering mappers can prepare detailed maps which are essential for school programs but can also be used across subject areas.



School mapping for orienteering can be arranged by contacting Orienteering NSW (schools@onsw.asn.au).

Costs typically range from \$400 to \$800 depending upon the size and complexity of school grounds. Funding is available through the Sporting Schools program and, potentially, also through the Saturday Orienteering Series initiative.

Teacher Professional Learning

Upskilling courses for teachers can be reserved through Orienteering NSW and Bold Horizons. The NSW School Sport Unit may also be able to coordinate a session.

Student Coaching

Consider delivering a program in-house or booking one-off or multiple skill-building sessions with either Orienteering NSW or Bold Horizons.

Student Preparation

We recommend that students are prepared for the competition through previous orienteering coaching and experience. This could include:

- Participation in a previous Regional Schools event;
- Participation in a Sporting Schools or in-school orienteering program;
- Participation in one or more [Saturday Orienteering Series](#) events. These events are conducted at various schools and parks across Sydney. Often entry is complimentary for students of host schools. If your school would like to host an event, contact Bold Horizons directly (info@boldhorizons.com.au); or
- Participation in regular club orienteering events (see www.onsw.asn.au for details).

Skills that will be helpful for students at Regional School events

Basic map familiarity

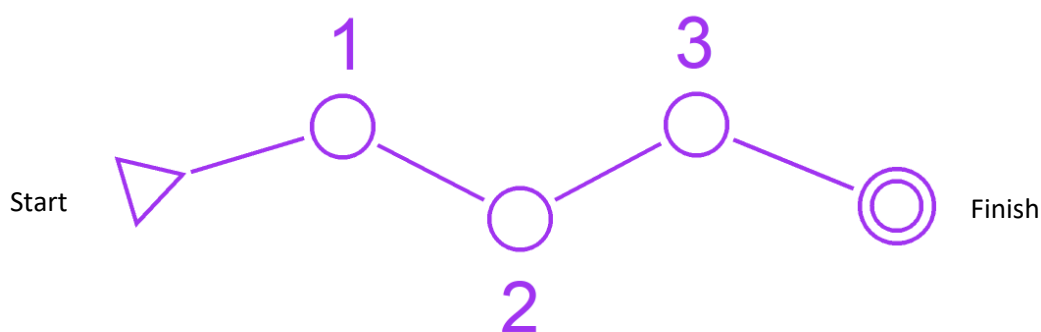
It is helpful for students to know in advance:

- what is on the map and what is not;
- what various symbols on the map represent,
- the map scale and what this means, and
- how a course is represented on the map.

A copy of the base map (i.e., without the course or possibly with a course from a previous year) to be used for your regional event will be available for preparation and can be obtained by contacting event organisers.

The course that students are to navigate will only become available to students when they are at the start of their course on event day. Thinking on your feet is a key skill in competitive orienteering.

Courses are shown on the map using standard international symbols.



Controls to be visited with the sequence number shown

How to orientate or set the map using linear features

A compass will be optional for the event and is not generally recommended for young students.

Learning to match the map to the features on the ground is a foundation skill for accurate map reading. Rather than using a compass, students can learn to orientate their map by aligning linear features on the map with linear features that they can see.

The sun can also be useful. Through winter months, the sun passing lower in the northern sky can be a helpful reminder of which direction north is.

The top of an orienteering map is always the northerly direction and should be pointed towards north at all times. If the map is aligned to visible linear features, then it will also be aligned to north.

Contours

For secondary students in particular, a basic understanding of contours will assist.

Self-discipline

Students should be aware of the need to slow down and navigate carefully rather than rushing off without any plan. As orienteering is a running race, students often find it challenging to slow down and be sure that they are running in the right direction.

Following others is not generally a reliable strategy as other runners are likely to be on another course.

Independent, critical thinking is a valuable skill to develop.

What to do if feeling lost

If students are disorientated and not certain where they are, we recommend the following steps:

1. Students should stop running and take a deep breath. Do not run or wander aimlessly.
2. Orientate the map and consider where they could be.
3. Look around to try to work out or confirm where they are from the features they can see.
4. If still not certain, decide if they can safely return to a point where they know they are.
5. Can they relocate using a nearby control point which may be another check point on their course?

6. If still no, approach a nearby marshal for assistance or return to the central assembly point for help.

Note that marshals will blow whistles 10 minutes before course closure. At this time, all students should head directly towards the finish even if this means that they will not complete their course.

Mistakes

Students must visit all control points in the order shown on the map.

If they miss a control point, they will be disqualified.

Should students realise that they have missed a control point before they finish, they can return to that point and “punch” the control before then completing the course correctly from that point onwards.



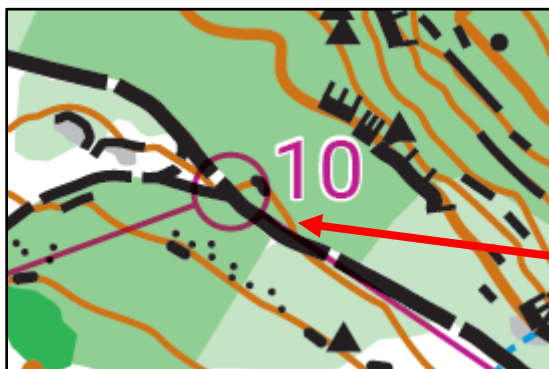
Control collecting technique

Students will each be given a personal timing card (p-Card) or stick for their individual courses.

Students should report to the Start and queue as directed for their turn. Students start individually and will be spaced out by start officials. Their course time will only commence once students officially start the course.

Students should then visit each checkpoint or control in the order they are shown on their map. At each control, students should check that the control is the correct one by comparing the code number on the control timing unit with the one on their map. At a typical event there may be 40 check points in a course area, but students may only need to visit 10 of them on their course. The code for each control point will be printed on the course map, in the control descriptions for the course.

The 10th control on the course map



Control descriptions (clues) will also be printed on the map

Sequence to visit controls
Code number on control timing unit
Clue to help find the control point

8	60	Man made feature
9	208	Fence
10	209	Path Junction
11	52	Water Hole

The code number on the SPORTident timing unit at the control should match the one listed in the control description.



When students “punch” the FINISH unit, their time will stop.

Afterwards, EVERY student must visit the computer download to have their timing card or stick read by the computer and time recorded.

Even if students do not complete the course, IT IS ESSENTIAL that they visit the course timing officials at the computer so that organisers can confirm that each student has returned from their courses safely.

Hired timing cards or sticks should be returned at this time.

Results are then consolidated and published for each course.

Where to afterwards?

Students that enjoy the Regional School's orienteering experience should consider joining an orienteering club and regular participation in the Saturday Orienteering Series, club events and training opportunities.

The **NSW School's Orienteering Championships** are conducted annually over a weekend in August or September. These events are **open entry** with no pre-qualification required. Pre-entry is however essential, so do check entry closure dates. See the Orienteering NSW website (www.onsw.asn) for details.

Keen secondary students will have the opportunity to participate in **NSW Junior Training Squad** activities and vie for selection in the **NSW School's Team**. The Team travels together to compete in the **Australian School's Orienteering Championships** in the October school holidays. A high level of competency in challenging off-track bush navigation and fitness is required at this level. Selection races are announced by Orienteering NSW in February each year with nomination for the team essential. Contact Orienteering NSW for further information (schools@onsw.asn.au).



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