

Organising and the running of orienteering

Introduction

In circumstances that we know have been challenging and unique, British Orienteering appreciate that you will no doubt be keen to allow activities and events to recommence once the government guidance allows and it is safe to do so. We are also very aware you may have concerns over how and what activities you would consider at this time.

The purpose of this letter is to go some way to explain how the sport of Orienteering is very well placed as a Sport that can adhere well with current guidelines such as social distancing, and the mitigation that we have put in place to protect you, your staff, volunteers and other public users from COVID-19.

Experts agree that the chances of picking it up outdoors are far lower than catching it in enclosed spaces;

“SAGE, the government's group of scientific advisers, said the risk of infection outside is significantly lower than inside.”

Overview of orienteering

Orienteering is an exciting outdoor adventure sport which involves walking or running whilst navigating around a course using a detailed map and sometimes a compass. There's no set route between the controls, participants / competitorshave to decide their own way to go and find their own way there.

People take part in orienteering for many reasons including, for outdoor exercise, the opportunity to explore nature with it's great scenery and to enjoy an activity casually or as a competitive sport.

The nature of orienteering, being an outdoor and individual sport, means that clubs and individuals have been able to introduce a number of simple measures that will be put in place to ensure that social distancing can be maintained at all times and the risk of spreading the virus minimised.

Orienteering is an individual or family sport, run as a time trial and is not a spectator sport.

COVID 19 Additional Guidance

British Orienteering has issued guidance to clubs to ensure that social distancing is maintained, including reviewing the management of entries, safe map distribution, starting & finish process/layout to ensure large gaps between athletes and issuing of results. There will be no social mixing before or after the competitors run.

Each competitor will sign up to a new Code of Conduct which states: maintaining social distancing of 2m at all times, only arriving during aprior agreed starting time set window, not congregating in groups, only sharing transport with members of their household and respecting the landowners, local communities, and other users of the area.

We will, of course, be more than happy to talk these through with you in more detail and add additional measures in if you feel that it is appropriate.

Brief Summary:

- Orienteers stay apart when competing,
- Orienteers don't start at the same time,
- Competitions don't have spectators,
- Orienteering is a safe sport,
- Numbers are small, predicable and can be managed by requiring pre-entry to events (typically 50-100 max). The reality is that rarely are the number of competitors equal to the number of people on site due to the sport being completed as a time trial basis where start times can be spread over a block of several hours duration.
- The activity has a low impact on other area users with no grouped packs of runners to cause annoyance or damage to the environment.
- Orienteers are conscientious, disciplined and environmentally aware.

We are a responsible sport both to the landowners and our participants

- All events are covered by British Orienteering third party insurance and all participants are covered by a Combined Liability Insurance (£10m)
- A full risk assessment is written and agreed with landowners
- A contract for access is agreed with the Landowner
- In Scotland, the Outdoor Access Code actively supports activities such as orienteering which are well organised and can be safely managed through the local club working in partnership with landowners.

Ethos of Orienteering

British Orienteering wants to continue to be able to give their members fantastic new and varied experiences of physical and mental exercise in stunning locations. We also want to attract new participants to enjoy the wonderful sport of orienteering and experience the health benefits of being involved in the orienteering community and outdoors.

Summary

Orienteering is a safe and responsible sport that wishes to work with landowners and other stakeholders in giving people an opportunity to enjoy the outdoor environment safely.

We look forward to working with you.

For further information please contact:

Club

British Orienteering National Office

Peter Hart, Chief Executive

peter.hart@britishorienteering.org.uk