

Your First Event



*All you need to know
to take part ...*

Orienteering is a sport combining navigation and exercise. You find a series of 'controls' marked by an orange and white 'flag', using a map and, for more difficult courses, a compass. Participants do not start together.

Before you go:

Clothing and footwear

- At most events leg-cover will be insisted on. An old pair of trackie bottoms or similar, old rugby/hockey shirt, not your best gear. Wear old clothing, it will get muddy and perhaps torn. Avoid white!
- Footwear with studs will help, like old football/hockey boots, some wear walking boots or wellies. Again, if you wear new trainers they will never be white again!

Equipment

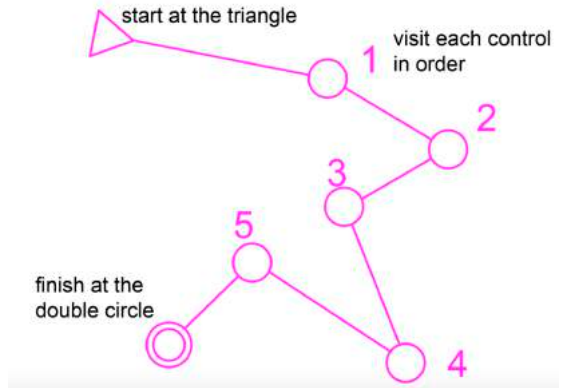
If you know how to use a Silva-type **compass** (one with a base-plate) bring it. You will need a **whistle**, any type – in case of injury. You will be given a plastic bag with everything else you need.

At the event:

Registration

1. Open between 10am and 12 noon for Sunday events. It is a good idea to arrive as early as possible, as you will not be able to judge how long the course will take. Go there as soon as you arrive. It is usually two or three cars, with notices on their windscreens and a queue/crowd. There should be someone standing around in a hi-vis top with "Ask me for Help" on it. They will be pleased to answer any questions, and

Purple = the course



- maybe take you through the registration process.
- One of the notices will tell you which courses are available, usually named after colours. By each colour there will be the length of the course (in km), the total climb of the course (in metres), and how many controls there are.
 - Fill in a **Registration form**, including the safety information (car registration, phone no. etc). Leave the Course box and the SI number blank.
 - At Registration, hand over your Registration form and pay – usually £3.50 for a beginner at a Sunday event – and you will be given a Beginner’s Pack. This includes a dibber (a timing chip) and everything else you need. The pack includes map and control descriptions for both Yellow and Orange courses. You can choose which you do, or if you think you might do both, in which order to do them.
 - This is a dibber. It’s about 3cm long, and the thinner end is inserted into a SI unit to ‘dib’ (see p. 4). It has elastic to fit round a finger, and sometimes a security loop to go round a wrist.
 - Go back to your car and study the Control Descriptions (opposite). They are printed on the map as well. These tell you the kind of feature to look for when you get to the correct place, for example, a path junction. They also tell you the **control code**, which when you see the same code on a Control gives you proof that you are where you think you are.
 - You will also see in the first column a **triangle** at the top (indicates the Start), and usually a **double circle** at the bottom (indicates the Finish), and these are the same symbols as are used on the map.



EM League Kedleston 2017			
	Yellow	2.6 km	15 m
▶		Start: N side of path	
1	101	Bend in path	
2	108	Bend in path	
3	116	Path	
4	109	Path	
5	112	Path crossing	
6	118	E end of path and gate	
7	117	S side of copse	
8	113	NE outside corner of fence	
9	111	SW outside corner of fence	
Navigate 70 m to finish			
Course closes at 2.30pm			

Note also **Course Closing time** – Controls are collected from this time.

Now leave behind anything you don’t need with you, take off outer layers (if weather good!) and go to the Start.

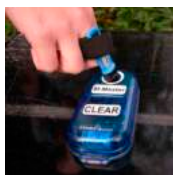
The Start

- Follow signs (and other participants) to the Start. The route is marked by streamers of red and white tape. You need: map, hired dibber, control description sheet, whistle and compass



if you're using one. The dibber can be fixed to your finger – pull the elastic tight!

- At the Start, you will see one or more tape squares ('boxes') on the ground, and participants moving through the boxes at each minute (marked by a loud bleep).



You will also see a **Clear** station. Put your dibber in until it beeps/flushes (will take up to 10 seconds: at all the other times you use your dibber, it is almost instantaneous, but always wait for the bleep/flash). The Clear station 'clears' the data from the last time the dibber was used.

- When you are ready, go to the first box. A Start Official will ask which course you are on (this is to make sure only one person starts on each course each minute), will **'Check'** your dibber in a hand-held Check SI unit, and may make sure that you have a whistle. There may also be Notices to read about the area, or the map, and blank maps to look at ('blank' means it has no courses on it).
- It is always a good idea to look at the **blank map** – See Appendix 2 – but you, as a beginner, have been given your map at Registration. Note the scale (much larger than most maps you have used before), look for anything you don't know on the key, possibly even guess whereabouts the Start is on the map.
- Move through the tape boxes, as everyone else will do, on the beeps, until you get to the Start line.
- In front of you, you will see the **Start SI 'box'**, where you will soon 'dib' with your dibber to start your own personal time, and the large plastic **boxes** where, at future events, you will get the appropriate map for your course. You will also see the **Start kite**, or be told where it is. This is the orange and white marker flag on a 'stake'. You don't dib at this one, but it shows you exactly where the middle of the Start triangle is on the map. Every other kite you will see has a SI 'box' on top where you will dib, if it is on your course (that is, if it has the correct control code, see Appendix 1).

Dibbing (sometimes known as 'punching'). At each control, there is a 'box' or 'station' on top of a waist-high stake. These boxes are also used to Clear, Check and Start. The box, whose proper name is an SI unit, is usually red, rounded oblong about 12cm long, with a hole through it. The 'dibber' is put into the hole and there will be a bleep and a flash when it has finished recording data. You can now remove the dibber. It will store the exact time you visited each control, and in which order. It proves that you have been there, and you will get a print-out of this information when you Download.

- On the start bleep, **dib the Start box**, and go to the Start kite. Fold the map so that Start triangle and No 1 are visible, and try to orientate* to the ground (a compass helps here). Decide on the best route – not necessarily the shortest on the map, and may not coincide with the purple line. Ignore other people who may be charging off in all directions: they are doing different courses.

*Orientate = turn the map so that you see in front of you what the map indicates what you should see.



A Control. The SI unit, at top; underneath is the flag, or 'kite', all held on a stake. Hanging from the top of the stake is an orange pin-punch, to be used on the edge of your map if the SI unit fails (i.e. doesn't flash or beep), as proof that you have been there. At the top left is a wire loop sometimes used to secure the control to an object such as a tree to prevent vandalism.

Once Started ...

- Look at the area round the Start kite and compare it to the map. Begin to get an idea of what the map might actually represent on the ground, see Appendix 2. Try to keep the map orientated, by turning it as your route changes, or after a control.
- Are there any tracks or paths that take you near to Control No 1? Which are they on the ground? Check with compass if using one.
- Don't try to go too fast! It is a good idea to **walk** round your first course. When you start running you'll start making mistakes!
- Navigate round the course, making sure you dib all the controls on your course in order. It's up to you which way you go between the controls – some people go round the paths, others sometimes go direct following a compass bearing.
- If you get lost, don't worry. Orientate your map to the ground and go back to the last place you were certain of your location. You can always ask another orienteer.

More information on colour-coded orienteering and the map symbols are available at: https://www.britishorienteering.org.uk/newcomers_guide

The Finish



Once you have dibbed at the Finish, your race time stops. Walk back to **Download** which may be in a tent, car or building, following the red and white streamers again. Put your dibber in the

download SI box when the official allows it, and again keep it there until the bleep/flash. (This takes about as long as the Clear did.) A mini-printer will give you a print-out of your times at each control – you can see which ones you did well – and your total time, with usually an indication of how well some others have done. Ignore the latter, it's your first time!

Well done! You have completed your first orienteering course. You don't have to do anything else. You can enquire about the next event, or look at any displayed results, perhaps talk to someone else who has done your course. Or go home for a shower, and something to eat. If you want to do a second course, you will have to go through the Registration process again. It is important for your safety that you don't do a second course without registering. Remind them you shouldn't have to pay.

There is sometimes a display of results so far, but remember other participants may have started after you and will not have finished yet. Final, official results will be on the website mentioned on your print-out, usually on the evening of the event.

It is important that **all participants report to Download**, even if you decide to retire. Otherwise a search will be set up on the assumption that you have had an accident. You must report to Download by **Course Closing Time** (on the bottom of the Control Descriptions), usually 2.30–3.30pm. Controls will be brought in from then, so you cannot continue your course.

Appendix 1 Control Descriptions

The Control Descriptions sheet has each control on your course in number order (and you must visit them in this order), and next to it the control code, then other column(s) of information about the control site. The **control code** in the second column is a three-digit number, which you will see on the control when you find it. This proves to you that you are where you thought/hoped you were. If the control code is not the one you expected, you are somewhere else!

The other column tells you the feature that you are looking for, such as path junction, or pit (see example).

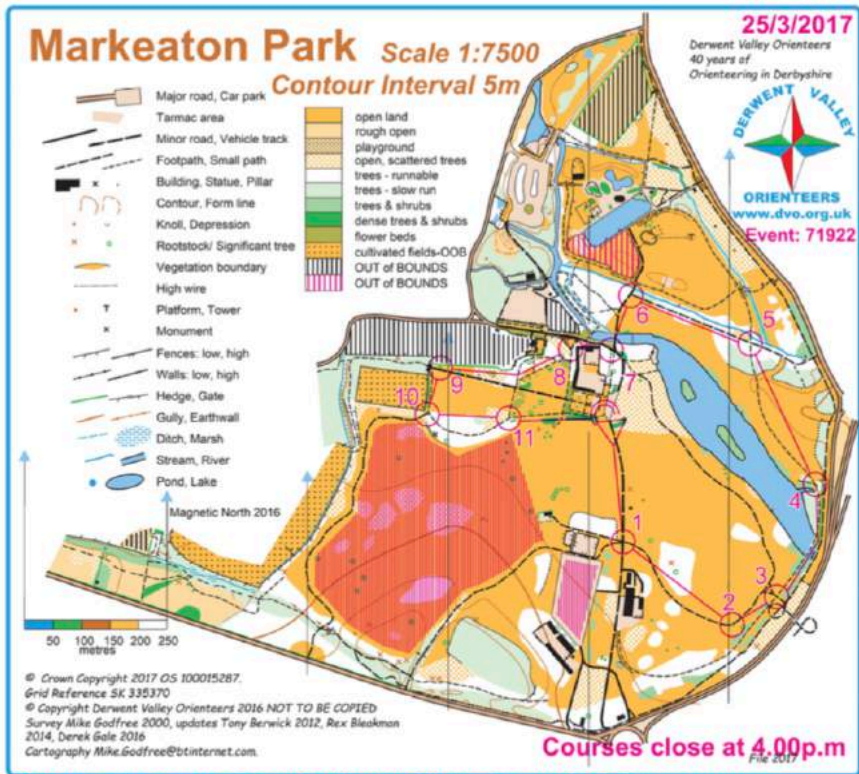
EM League Kedleston 2017		
Orange	3.5 km	45 m
▶	Start: N side of path	
1	108	Bend in path
2	104	Top of knot
3	157	N outside corner of fence
4	133	NW outside corner of fence
5	112	Path crossing
6	118	E end of path and gate
7	117	S side of copse
8	119	N outside corner of copse
9	114	W side of gate
10	113	NE outside corner of fence
11	111	SW outside corner of fence
Navigate 70 m to finish		
Course closes at 2.30pm		

Appendix 2 The Map

Look at the **scale** of the map. Most are **1:10,000** (some 1:7,500, occasionally 1:15,000) so try to readjust if you are used to OS maps (1:25,000 or 1:50,000). The north lines (blue or black) point to **Magnetic North** so no need to add the few degrees if using a compass. The key will be very different, and especially how woodland is shown. Most of our areas are mainly woodland, so this is shown by **white** on the map. Increasingly darker shades of **Green** indicate increasing difficulty of travel (light green = slow run, medium green = 'walk', dark green = 'fight'. White = 'run'). Avoid dark green areas, which are usually very thick rhododendrons. Open areas are in **yellow** (two shades, again related to ease of travel). Green parallel lines show 'undergrowth' (usually brambles).



OS 1:25,000 map showing Markeaton Park



You must report to Download even if you do not finish your course

Orienteering map of Markeaton Park

Appendix 3 Useful Websites

www.dvo.org.uk Has, among other things, future events, and results from past ones. To join DVO, see British Orienteering below.

DVO stands for Derwent Valley Orienteers, and covers the county of Derbyshire.

www.emoa.org.uk Website of the East Midlands Orienteering Association. Has events in Notts, Leics, and Lincs as well as DVO ones.

www.britishorienteering.org.uk National Orienteering. Has events throughout UK. You join DVO when you join British Orienteering online, by selecting us as your local club. Fees are £13 for adults and £4.30 for children. There is also a family rate.