

LOCAL MEET COURSE SETTING GUIDE

This document is designed to meet the needs of the course planner of a local orienteering event. It is comprised of suggestions, not rules. Course planning for regional and national events are covered in USOF's Rules of Competition and USOF's Course Design Guidelines.

LOCAL MEET COURSE PLANNER'S NOTES

Course Name	Distance	Difficulty	# Points
White	2-3 km	easy	4-12
Yellow	3-5 km	easy to medium	5-12
Orange	4-7 km	medium	8-12
Brown	3-5 km	hard	8-12
Green	4-7 km	hard	8-12
Red	6-10km	hard	8-15
Blue	8-14km	hard	10-18

Easy Courses:

1. Points should be on two features with linear route between, for example, points might be a stream and road junction or a trail at vegetation boundary.
2. Controls should be highly visible, usually hung 3-4 feet high.

Medium Courses:

1. Points should be on a major terrain features with a close attack point, for example, on a boulder 100 meters from a trail junction.
2. Controls should be visible when at the feature, usually hung 3-4 feet high.

Hard Courses:

1. Points on minor terrain features with no convenient attack point, for example, at the foot of a one meter cliff in a complicated re-entrant system.
2. Controls should be visible when at the feature, usually hung 1-3 feet high.

Water stops are a necessity on all courses whatever the weather; on longer courses, water stops should be approximately every 3km.

Course Setter Timetable:

1. Plan the courses 1-2 weeks before the event.
2. Hang vetting tape one week before event.
3. Have vetter check courses and resolve problems together.
4. Make copies of map corrections for Registration area.
5. Make Master maps and control codes and descriptions.
6. Hang control markers the day before, double checking bag and punch codes; remove vetting tapes and put out water stops.
7. Send out volunteer early competitors on event day to check for stolen markers; replace if necessary before event begins.
8. When event is over, collect all markers, punches, water stop items, etc.
9. Count all markers, find missing ones, repack neatly and return all items to the Meet Director.

LOCAL MEET COURSE DESIGN GUIDELINES

Course Design -- WHITE

1. Stay on obvious handrails 100% of the time, preferably trails.
2. Controls should be hanging on the near side of the feature.
3. Controls should be very easy to find, especially the first few.
4. The first control should be visible from the Start
5. Later legs can have two route choices, both on handrails.
6. Use positional controls to keep runners on the handrails.
7. Don't hang the controls too high for kids to reach.
8. Avoid putting controls from other courses where White course people can see them.

Course Design -- YELLOW

1. The Yellow should follow handrails but points are off handrails.
2. Handrails may have short gaps or be subtle (fences, streams).
3. Attack points should be on the handrail. The feature can be visible from the handrail but should be off the handrail to encourage map reading.
4. Have various types of features for variety.
5. There should be a some route choice alternatives.
6. Have good catch features behind points so to stop overshooters.
7. Use positional controls to keep runners near handrails.
8. There should be very little contour reading necessary.

Course Design -- ORANGE

1. Orange should bridge the gap between attack points on handrails and difficult-to-find attack points.
2. Err on the side of too easy.
3. Use features of medium difficulty:
 1. easy-to-find features less than 200m from attack point
 2. very large re-entrants and ponds
 3. more difficult points near easy to find attack points
 4. easy to find points with many route choices
4. Some legs should be almost Yellow, others almost Red.
5. Have some handrails but emphasize cross country.
6. Always have catching features beyond the feature.

Course Design -- BROWN, GREEN, RED, and BLUE

1. Test navigation and route choice skill, not compass ability.
2. Use intricate areas of the map as much as possible.
3. Make the competitor concentrate on navigation all the time.
4. Offer difficult-to-decide-between route choices on every leg.
5. There must be some variety in the features.
6. The most difficult navigational route should be the fastest, easy routes should take longer.
7. Avoid poorly mapped areas or make the legs easier in these areas.
 1. Controls should be easily found once at the feature.
8. The map must be good in the area of the control or you must give good map corrections before the runners start.
9. The best route choices should not be the most miserable physically -- avoid swamps and fight except as route choice problems.
10. Trail running should be only about 10% of the total distance.

LOCAL MEET COURSE SETTING PROCEDURES

1. Select the parking area, headquarters area, and facilities.
 2. Select a Finish area near the parking area, then a Start area not too far away.
 3. Select your general routes for the White and Yellow courses. If there are no good routes for these courses, move the meet to another part of the map and start all over with #1. The White course must be 100% on handrails or flagged when there are no handrails, the Yellow should be very close to actual handrails.
 4. Select general routes for the rest of the courses, starting with the lowest level and working up. Select tentative points for all courses after doing this.
 5. Field check your courses and move your points as needed.
 6. All points must be on correctly mapped features. No points may be hung on mapped corrections.
 7. Make a map of corrections for copying before starting the course.
 8. Pick water stop locations for all courses that are easily accessible.
7. Basic Principles to Follow:
1. Place the controls where they are shown on the map.
 2. The codes must be as shown on the descriptions.
 3. Use appropriate difficulty but better too easy than too hard.
 4. Make the navigation more important than the physical difficulty.
 5. Test the skill of the competitor, not his luck.
 6. It's impossible to make a White course too easy--if a person finds it too difficult, there is no place to drop down.
 7. Courses should be fun. White and Yellow should not get feet wet.
 8. Beginners are equally important people.
 9. The time it takes to complete courses is more important than the length.
 10. White, Yellow, and Orange courses should not share legs.
 11. Every leg on Orange, Brown, Green, Red, and Blue should have route choices.
 12. Direct line by compass should only rarely be the best way to go.
 13. Streamers should be used on White and Yellow whenever there can be confusion.
 14. Legs should get longer as the difficulty increases.
 15. In hot weather and dense vegetation, make everything a bit shorter and easier to find.

Guidelines on Course Time

course	winner's time	majority time
White	30 minutes	30-45 minutes
Yellow	40 minutes	60-75 minutes
Orange	55 minutes	60-90 minutes
Brown	50 minutes	60-90 minutes
Green	55 minutes	60-90 minutes
Red	65 minutes	80-120 minutes
Blue	80 minutes	80-120 minutes

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