Come and Try It events– organisers help sheet

Thank you for offering to organise one of the Come and Try It (CATI) orienteering events. The events have the following aims

* To get people to come and try orienteering.
* To provide sociable, friendly, fun orienteering events for local orienteers of all ability.
* To provide safe, not intimidating orienteering for those improving their skills.
* To be as easy as possible to organise.

Any feedback on the final point would be gratefully received!

Before the Event

Event registration, car park location, land permission and publicity will be arranged by somebody else. You’ll just need to liaise with Andrew Evans through mapping@dfok.co.uk to get to know who is the nominated person for getting the land permissions. You’ll need to liaise with them to ascertain if there are any restrictions on the use of the land.

The main areas of your focus will therefore be a) planning the courses b) preparing a risk assessment and safety considerations c) finding a small number of “on the day” helpers d) arranging for the equipment to arrive at the event.

Planning the courses

This is the most time consuming, but most fun task.

These events have three line courses, a Yellow, an Orange and a Green standard, plus a Score course using all the controls.

The start and finish should be chosen to help ease of organisation, sociability and to ensure an easy first control for beginners. This will normally be near or next to the car park.

Approximate contuse lengths are:

 Yellow 2.5k

 Orange 3.5k

 Green 4.5k

Plan the Yellow course first and use the Yellow course to determine the optimum location for the start/finish. Controls should be on line features (e.g. a path or path junction) or a point feature visible from a path where the competitor goes to the control and returns to the path. A Yellow course follows main paths and has not more than 2 decision points between any two controls. It should be almost impossible to get lost (and a 10 year old should be able to get round with limited map reading). You can make the first control visible from the start if the start is a little confusing. If there are no major paths you can use any other really obvious line feature such as a high fence, or field boundary. Use any controls in the range 50 to 79. with about 8-10 controls on the Yellow course in total. Use the control numbers randomly for this course i.e. not in numerical order. There is guidance on planning a Yellow course here <https://www.britishorienteering.org.uk/images/uploaded/downloads/planners_yellowcourses.pdf>

You then plan the Orange and Green courses. For the Orange course, there should be a path or other line feature that can be used for most of the way between any two controls but the controls themselves should be off the paths as far as possible. Orange competitors should be encouraged to leave the paths to “cut corners” to get used to route options along non-line features. There is guidance on planning an Orange course here <https://www.britishorienteering.org.uk/images/uploaded/downloads/planners_orangecourses.pdf>

In the areas we use for CATI events, there are unlikely to be any control which would meet the Technical Difficulty 5 standard expected for a Green course. The course will therefore be more likely to be of TD4, i.e. Light Green, standard but we call it Green to keep the terminology as simple as we can for newcomers. Controls can be on any feature on the map on the Green course and in the relatively simple parks we use for CATI events, the course can usually be made as difficult as possible. Guidance on planning a Green course is here <https://www.britishorienteering.org.uk/images/uploaded/downloads/planners_lightgreencourses.pdf> because this is more relevant than the equivalent Green course document.

The Score course is designed to provide a challenging course for experienced orienteers, some of whom may also be helpers at the event. The areas are small so there are normally 24, 27 or 30 controls in groups of 50’s, 60’s or 70’s with equal numbers in each group. There would be 30 controls in the smallest of areas and there can be less than 30 in our larger parks. The aim of a Score event is to make time relevant i.e. the participant has to keep thinking about which controls they go to and in which order. In other words, ideally it should not be possible for anyone to visit all of the controls as this makes the course easier.

Score course competitors can start with the 50s or 60s or 70s. However, once they start on one of these sets, they must continue on the same set for as long as they want to. Once they leave that series, they cannot return to it.

The optimum route (if all controls are collected) should be between 8-10 Km to give an experienced runner a good workout. Park areas will need nearer 10km, steep and forested areas nearer to 8km. When armchair planning, it’s best to select more control sites than you need. When you visit the park before the event you will find some control sites are unsuitable for various reasons – eg identify 30-36 control sites, then select the best 24-30 after visiting the area.

If you find map inaccuracies (such as new paths) as long as there is enough time before the event, you should be able to see if one of our mappers can update the map. Liaise with Andrew Evans through mapping@dfok.co.uk. This is the preferred option as it helps us to keep the maps up to date. Otherwise, you may need to simply avoid that part of the area for control sites.

Scoring and penalties for the score event, 10 points for every control, 5 points deducted for every minute or part minute late.

Once you have selected your control sites you then need to produce the overprinted map for the event. There are two ways of doing this:

1. Use the free and easy to use planning software ‘Purple Pen’ (preferred)
2. Write the control sites on a paper map and find someone else to do this job.

Purple Pen really is straightforward to use. *The* software can be downloaded and installed on any Windows based PC, and it will work with an OCAD file, a pdf or a JPEG map file supplied to you. It also allows you to change your mind and can calculate optimum course lengths. The club has produced a guide on how to use it, [which is available here](https://www.dfok.co.uk/documents/organisers-planners/come-and-try-it/using-purple-pen.doc)

Purple Pen can show control descriptions on the map (we use the “Text” option in “Course Properties” for the Yellow and Orange courses.

Every event needs to have a Controller even if only for an independent review of the risk assessment but it is strongly recommended that you also send a copy of your purple pen file and the accompanying map to the Controller as they may spot things that you may miss having been so close to the planning for the event.

Arranging map printing

The club’s mapping officer will normally be able to arrange for the printing the maps for you. We currently use BMLPrint for all our map printing using waterproof paper. The printed maps will normally be sent to your home beforehand.

Risk assessment and safety considerations

Risk assessments can seem intimidating to some, but these are to help you anticipate risks, rather than to test your ability to fill in the form. Contact Andrew Evans at mapping@dfok.co.uk to obtain a previous example already done for that area which you can then tailor to meet your needs. Some of the questions seem a little strange – this is because it is a standard form for all orienteering events. When you have completed the risk assessment please email a copy to the Controller for checking. The Controller for any particular event can be found on the Events page of our website. The Controller is required to check that safety aspects have been considered appropriately. Key safety aspects will include considering water features in the area and other potential hazards especially to children, keeping computer equipment safe when it is a wet day, thinking about other users of the area and knowing where the nearest hospital is providing casualty services. If you have any questions on completing the risk assessment, contact Andrew Evans. When it is approved, please email to Geoff Goodwin for Greenwich/Bexley/Dartford events or David Dawson for Bromley events and Andrew Evans for other Kent events (as they will need to forward a copy to the appropriate landowner). The British Orienteering Accident Report Form, which can be downloaded from the British Orienteering website here <https://www.britishorienteering.org.uk/organiser_library>, should be available at the event if case of any mishap.

**Opening entries**

All our events use Racesignup. Contact Andrew Evans for how to do this and/or for direct help.

Racesignup is also used to send out an email to all entrants, using the Bulk Emails facility, the evening before every event reminding entrants of key points and including anything that has arisen close to the event date.

A further email is sent using Racesignup after the event, usually on the day of the event, when the results have been published on the club’s website, thanking them for coming mentioning the availability of the results and informing entrants of our next few (and Saxons) forthcoming events.

**Getting helpers**

For CATI events it is usually the case that enough club members will enter using the HELPER discount code on RaceSignUp to provide enough “on the day” support but if you feel short of support, Philip Craven is able to send an email to all members in DFOK. Depending on how much you want to do yourself, you can get away with maybe 1 or 2 helpers, though sometimes between 3 or more can seem more comfortable. The main areas you need help for are putting controls out, helping beginners to learn what to do and registration/results. Volunteers are more likely if they can also run (helpers always run for free). Volunteers to collect in controls can be found in advance or, if not then, at the event.

Obtaining equipment

Equipment is obtained by liaison with the equipment officer (who may bring it to the event himself if he is going). A separate document of possible equipment is on the [organisers pages of the website here](https://www.dfok.co.uk/documents/organisers-planners/all-events-other/equipment-list.doc).

On the day – before the start

As the organiser you normally don’t have to do anything, just organise others! This creates the thinking time that is key to being the organiser. But as this is a small event you will probably want to do some of the jobs. Competitors will start arriving up to 45 minutes before the first start so you’ll need to get all of the controls out and the registration set up before then.

Everyone must clear their dibbers.

At all of our events, the controls are set to allow contactless punching (all contactless SI cards are seven digits beginning with “8”. To activate a contactless dibber to work in contactless mode, the user MUST dib into a CHECK box.

All controls will only operate in contactless mode if they have been “woken up” using an actual; dib before hand. This is best done by using any dibber (standard or contactless) to dib all of the controls you are using just before they are put out. Once activated in this way they will work in contactless mode for 12 hours.

Because contactless mode uses considerable battery power, at the end of the event after all controls have been lined up and checked that there is a complete set of them, use the purple SERVICE OFF key to turn the controls off.

Note that the Clear, Check, Start and Finish units do not have to be activated in this way nor do they need to be deactivated after the event by turning them off.

Start

It’s a good idea to give a briefing, pointing out any hazards and reminding people of the event rules. Hopefully there will be many people who are newcomers. It’s worth pointing out about downloading. Also you can give an opportunity to ask questions. Make sure everyone has cleared their dibbers.

There is always a punching start and a punching finish, including for those using contactless punching for all controls..

Finish and prize giving

You will need to tell beginners where download is at the finish or provide direction signs from there to download. At download competitors should usually dib twice into the download unit, one for their own splits and one for the results system.

If the power runs out on the download unit, you can plug in an adapter into a car (car phone charger point).

Prizegiving is just to avoid the anti-climax feeling at a typical orienteering event when you finish and just go home! It also gives people an excuse to hang around and socialise, and to put a few names to faces. Prizes can be very cheap, old things you want to get rid of, or just a round of applause. Give prizes to whoever you want – winner, first junior, best improver, and a random prize drawn from all entries.

At the end of prizegiving it’s worth ending on a positive note, for example thank everyone for coming, say how well everyone did and remind them of future events etc

At some point you may want to ask for help collecting in controls. There will always be a few people who want an extra run.

After the event

Some or all of these jobs could be delegated.

Return the equipment (it’s worth checking the SI kit in case you’ve left one out) to the equipment officer, unless it is able to be passed on directly to the next event organiser at the event or afterwards.

Consider sending a personal email to your helpers thanking them.