

Greater Boston Youth Orienteering Series

Event 1: Menotomy Rocks, Arlington, April 4, 2017

This is the first year we are running a youth orienteering series in Boston and hence we had no idea of how many kids and families would come. With the snowstorm on April Fools' Day, the day before our event, leaving a thin layer of snow on the grounds, we thought that people may not want to get out in the woods, but we would not have needed to worry as almost 100 kids came to try the sport of orienteering!

Orienteering is really about using a map and being out in the woods so we had set up games and activities doing just that. There was an animal scavenger hunt for the youngest kids, where the goal was to find orange cones on a slope, each identified by a different animal, in the order specified on the course card. For those not yet ready to tackle a regular course, but ready to go out in the woods, there was a streamered course, where one could find all the controls by following the streamers. As the streamers didn't take the shortest route between the controls, anybody reading the map could figure out short cuts to save time. This course was an adventure for the smaller kids going up and down hills and balancing over fallen logs.



The older kids started out by finding controls in a maze, practicing what we call "orienting the map", which is when you hold the map so that what is in front of you on the map is also in front of you in real life. The next step was to practice finding real controls surrounding the start and

finish field. Some participants were hesitant in the beginning, but most found their controls easily and zipped off to the next control with lots of enthusiasm and big smiles.



The day ended with an opportunity to run a variety of regular orienteering courses, from the easiest white course, which mainly followed the trails, to the most advanced 'roorange' course (named after the roaring sound you make upon finishing the course), which

zigzagged through the woods of the whole park.

Most of the people we spoke to seemed to really enjoy themselves regardless of all the mud. The great turnout resulted in some logistical issues with the registration and coaching and we apologize to those who had to wait to get going. We are working on addressing these issues and are confident that everything will run smoother next time. Our next event is May 14th at the DCR Beaver Brook Reservation on the border between Waltham and Belmont. We hope that we will see you all there! Each event in the Youth Series is a free standing event so you can still come even if you didn't participate in the first event.



For those who can't wait to do more orienteering, there are many opportunities to get out in the woods in the Greater Boston area:

The **Greater Boston Youth Orienteering Series** is a series of six events with age-appropriate games and activities teaching map reading skills and navigation through unfamiliar terrain to youth (ages 6-9, 10-12, 13+). No experience necessary. After the games, participants can try an orienteering course by themselves or with family or friends depending on age and ability. There are coaching activities for more advanced youth orienteers after which they can compete independently on the longer and more technical courses.

<http://www.newenglandorienteering.org/youth/greater-boston-youth-o-series-2017>

The **CSU Park Series** is an 8-week series of weeknight orienteering events at parks around Boston (generally within the Route 128 area), for all ages, abilities, and speeds. Each race has a beginner clinic from 6:00-6:15pm, and though the formats may vary from week to week (check the website for details), generally the races are ~3km long, individual start between 6:00-7:00pm. No preregistration is needed.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B1gRkL6q570cMVd5R1NvT1dmZ3c/view?usp=sharing>

New England Orienteering Club has orienteering events in parks around the Greater Boston area every weekend during the spring and the fall with some events in Western Mass and Rhode Island. Beginners are always welcome and there are courses for all levels. No preregistration is needed.

<http://www.newenglandorienteering.org/>



Navigation Games introduces the sport of orienteering to children and adults at open-to-the-public events at parks in Cambridge and Somerville. They also provide curricula for schools, teach after-school classes for children, and coach youth orienteering teams.

<http://www.navigationgames.org/>

