

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.

| Course Name | Distance | Difficulty | # Controls be found | Typical winning times (minutes) | Typical time to complete (minutes) | USOF A-meet competition classes |
|----------------------------|----------|----------------|---------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|
| White (beginner) | 2 - 3 km | easy | 4-12 | 25-30 | 30-45 | F-10 F-12 M-10 M-12 M/F-WHITE Grp-WHITE |
| Yellow (advanced beginner) | 3 - 5 km | easy to medium | 5-12 | 35-40 | 60-75 | F-14 M-14 F-YELLOW M-YELLOW Grp-YELLOW |
| Orange (intermediate) | 4 - 7 km | medium | 8-12 | 50-55 | 60-90 | F-16 M-16 F-ORANGE M-ORANGE Grp-ORANGE |
| Brown (advanced short) | 3 - 5 km | hard | 8-12 | 45-50 | 60-90 | F-18 F60+ F65+ F70+ M65+ M70+ F-BROWN M-BROWN |
| Green (advanced short) | 4 - 7 km | hard | 8-12 | 50-55 | 60-90 | F-20 F35+ F40+ F45+ F50+ F55+ M-18 M50+ M55+ M60+ F-GREEN M-GREEN |
| Red (advanced) | 6 - 10km | hard | 8-15 | 60-65 | 80-120 | F21+ M-20 M35+ M40+ M45+ M-RED |
| Blue (advanced long) | 8 - 14km | hard | 10-18 | 75-80 | 80-120 | M21+ |

Notes:

F=Female, M=Male, Grp=Group

Age classes: The numbers denote age on December 31 of the year of the event.

A dash indicates no age limit on that side: example, M-18 is open to all males that will be 18 years old and younger on Dec 31 of the year of the event.

A "+" after the age indicates it is for that age and older: example, M35+ is open to all males that will be 35 year old and older on Dec 31 of the year of the event.

"age 21" classes have no age limit (Age 21 on Dec 31 of the year of the event)

Course classes have no age limit: example, M-RED is open to males of all ages.

(always check meet announcement for recreational and non-standard courses)

LOCAL MEET COURSE PLANNER'S NOTES

Easy Courses (WHITE and YELLOW):

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 (Orange):

1. Points should be on a major terrain features with a close attack point. Example: 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 (Brown, Green, Red and Blue):

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.

LOCAL MEET COURSE DESIGN GUIDELINES

General Course Design -- All Courses

1. Beginners are equally important people.
2. The time it takes to complete courses is more important than the length.
3. White, Yellow, and Orange courses should not share legs.
4. Every leg on Orange, Brown, Green, Red, and Blue should have route choices.
5. Direct line by compass should only rarely be the best way to go.
6. Streamers should be used on White and Yellow whenever there can be confusion.
7. Legs should get longer as the difficulty increases.
8. In hot weather and dense vegetation, make everything a bit shorter and easier to find.

Course Design -- WHITE -- beginner

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 -- advanced beginner

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 -- intermediate

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:
 - a. easy-to-find features less than 200m from attack point
 - b. very large re-entrants and ponds
4. more difficult points near easy to find attack points
5. easy to find points with many route choices
6. Some legs should be almost Yellow, others almost Red.
7. Have some handrails but emphasize cross country.
8. Always have catching features beyond the feature.

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

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.
8. Controls should be easily found once at the feature.
9. The map must be good in the area of the control or you must give good map corrections before the runners start.
10. The best route choices should not be the most miserable physically. Avoid swamps & fight except as route choice problems
11. Trail running should be only about 10% of the total distance.