

Event Guideline C: Middle Distance Events

This Guideline is only intended to provide advice to Organisers and Planners. No compulsion is intended, and it is accepted that the particular circumstances of an event may make it sensible not to take up all of the suggestions made.

1 General Information

Levels: This Guideline applies to Middle Distance events with Colour Coded courses registered at level B, C or D.

Purpose: To provide domestic competition for orienteers of all abilities.

Nature of Event: Cross-country competition held in daylight. One characteristic is that the winning time for the usual competitors on each course should be in the range 30 to 35 minutes. Runners compete as individuals on courses designated by colour, where each colour represents a course of a certain length and level of technical difficulty (generally the darker the colour the longer or harder the course). Note that the colours denote the *relative* lengths and not *absolute* ones. Thus a Blue course might be 6.5 km long at a Long Distance event, but only just over 4 km at a Middle Distance event on the same area. This ensures a consistency of course standards between events so that someone entering a Blue course at a Long Distance event one weekend is encouraged to enter the Blue course at a Middle Distance event the following weekend in order to be running the 'right' course, i.e. the one which will produce the appropriate winning time for the competitors on the course.

A youngster would be expected to start on either the White or Yellow course, whilst an adult novice would begin with either the Yellow or Orange course depending on his or her confidence. A competitor's progression can then be made either towards longer courses with the navigation remaining relatively simple, or on to technically difficult courses up to the appropriate length for his or her fitness.

Age Class Competition: It is expected that some of these events will also be used for age class competitions, for example Regional Association Championships or other traditional events. The appropriate relationship between the Colour Coded courses and age classes is included within the course table later in the Guideline.

Officials: See Rules 4.1 to 4.4 (roles), and Appendix C parts 1.2, and 1.3 (recommended experience for organisers and planners), and 1.4.2 (level of controller).

Responsibility: The organising body shall take financial responsibility unless prior agreement has been reached with British Orienteering. [Rule 2.3.1]

2 Map and Terrain

Quality of Terrain: The terrain should be appropriate for the level of competition and the courses planned. It is possible to use smaller areas for Middle

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Distance races since the longest course is to be planned such that a top elite-standard competitor would win it in 30-35 minutes. However areas should ideally be chosen which offer more technical interest than needed for standard events with Long Distance courses.

Map: Maps should be produced to the latest version of the International Specification for Orienteering Maps. The map scale should normally be 1:10,000. See also Appendix H of the BOF Rules.

3 Course Planning

Courses: The Planner should decide which courses are to be provided. Whilst the colour scheme is not intended to restrict a Planner's options, it is essential that if a course is designated as a particular colour then it must be of the appropriate length and difficulty. In those areas which only provide orienteering of a lower than ideal technical difficulty for the Green courses and above, courses up to Light Green must be planned to the correct absolute standard.

At larger events it may be necessary to plan parallel courses. For example, if the Blue course is oversubscribed, introduce courses called Blue1 and Blue2. These will be of the same length and may have a number of common legs (but obviously not the first leg).

Smaller events may offer a more limited range of courses, but should still try to provide a range suitable for most abilities. Courses (including String) can be offered depending on the size of the area, terrain, expected number of competitors, etc.

Planners should note that it may not be possible to provide certain colour courses on some areas. For example, a technically difficult area with few or no paths may not allow a White course.

There should be an opportunity for competitors on the White and Yellow courses to inspect their courses (and even discuss them with their parents) before they start. This could be achieved by making these courses available in the start lane or in the pre-start area. See Rule 8.2.4.

Planning Philosophy: Middle distance orienteering requires fast, accurate orienteering for a moderately long period of time. Even small mistakes will be decisive. TD5 courses should be planned to be as consistently technically difficult as possible. Very long legs should be avoided but small and medium scale route choice is encouraged. The emphasis should be on high speed running where competitors need to adjust their speed for the complexity of the terrain. There will be a higher density of controls than for an equivalent long distance race.

Technical Difficulty: The definitions of the levels of Technical Difficulty, as used in the following table, are explained in Appendix B. Adhering to them ensures that standards are comparable across all events.

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Colour	Course Length Ratio <small>M21L</small> = 1.0	Minimum-Maximum Length (km)	Technical Difficulty	Men Classes	Women Classes
Black	1.00	5.0 - 7.0	5	M21 M35 M40 M18 M20	
Brown	0.83	4.1 - 5.8	5	M45 M50	W21 W18 W20
Blue	0.75	3.7 - 5.4	5	M55 M60 M16	W35 W40
Green	0.60	3.0 - 4.2	5	M65 M70	W45 W50 W16
Short Green	0.50	2.5 - 3.5	5	M75 M80	W55 W60 W65
Very Short Green	0.40	2.0 - 2.8	5		W70 W75 W80
Light Green	0.45	2.2 - 3.1	4	M14	W14
Orange	0.30	1.5 - 2.1	3	M12	W12
Yellow	0.30	1.5 - 2.1	2	M10	W10
White	0.20	1.0 - 1.5	1		

Notes: (a) The Black course would equate to the M21E course at the British Elite Middle Distance Race, with an expected elite winning time of 30-35 minutes. All other course lengths should be scaled to the length required for this course, which has been allocated a course length ratio of 1.00. Winning times for all the technical courses should then be within the same range of 30-35 minutes.

(b) Planners should note that course length ratios refer to course lengths which are "corrected" for height climb (by adding 0.1 km for every 10m of climb).

(c) For the courses of Technical Difficulty 1, 2 and 3 it is more important that the course is of the correct TD than of the correct length. It will often be the case that the nature of the terrain forces the course length away from the precise course length ratio given above.

(d) The lengths shown are intended as a guide. For easy areas the course lengths will be towards the top end of the range. For

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difficult or more physical areas the course lengths will be towards the bottom end of the range.

(e) Larger events may also wish to offer a Short Green course with a length ratio of 0.40 for the eldest competitors (M75+ and W65+) in order to provide them with a true Middle Distance race.

Course on Map: Courses should be marked on the map in accordance with Rules 5.2, 5.4 (master maps), and 6.2.3 and 6.2.4 (proximity of controls); and Appendix B parts 3.1 to 3.3 (symbols), and 3.4.1 (start position).

If pre-marked maps are not being used, competitors may be allowed to copy their courses from master maps either before or after the timed start (Rule 5.4.1).

Control Descriptions: See Rule 6.1.2/3/4 (course length and climb), 6.6.3 (issue to competitors) and Appendix A (layout of description sheet and symbols to be used).

Control Descriptions may be written or pictorial. They should be produced in accordance with Rule 6.6 and Appendix A.

4 Further Information

Other Information: Appendices B (Course planning), E (Event safety), and G (Juries, protests and appeals).

Further Advice: If you cannot find the answer to a question within the published Rules, Appendices and Guidelines then please contact your Association's representative on Rules Group, or failing that the Chairman of Rules Group via the British Orienteering National Office.