

Appendix L: Selection, Seeding and Start Lists

Text in bold below has mandatory status and shall be followed by relevant event officials. Other content refers to material provided for guidance and for information. This Appendix shall be read in conjunction with the British Orienteering Rules and shall have the same authority. They shall be considered as their extension.

1. Selection

1.1 Definition

1.1.1 Selection is the process of choosing which entrants are to run in a particular class.

1.2 Selection for Elite Classes at British Championships and JK

1.2.1 The qualification criteria for entry to elite classes at the British and JK are determined annually by the Elite Competitions Group (ECG). The criteria are published on the British Orienteering website in Appendix M (Elite Competitions Seeding and Selection)

1.3 Selection in General

1.3.1 The number of places available in a class should be as large as possible, subject to the spread of start times and the nature of the terrain. However, cases will arise where the number of entrants to a particular class is larger than the number of places available: this is when selection must occur. In practice, this occurs only for the Elite classes as per 1.2.1 above. Thus sections 1.3.2 to 1.3.6 below will only apply in extreme situations.

1.3.2 Only the premier class in an age category shall be subject to selection. NB where there is an elite class, the E course is the premier; otherwise, it is the L or A class which is the premier class.

1.3.3 When demand is such that all entrants cannot be accommodated in an A or L class, then two equivalent courses shall be provided. For example if M45L is oversubscribed at the British Championships, then two M45L courses (M45L1 and M45L2) of similar length and technical difficulty would be provided. The selection criteria of 1.3.6 below would be applied to choose the runners for M45L1, and the British Champion would be the winner of that class.

1.3.4 Where demand on non-premier classes is such that all entrants cannot be accommodated on one course, then two equivalent courses shall be provided with entrants allocated to the classes at random, e.g. the provision of M21L1 and M21L2 (in addition to M21E) at the JK.

1.3.5 In some cases, the need for selection may be avoided by using a longer start list

1.3.6 If selection for non-Elite classes is necessary, then it shall be based on the British Orienteering Ranking List, using the most recently published edition at the closing date for entries. This can be obtained from the Rankings pages on the British Orienteering website. Select the following entrants:

- the highest-ranked entrants in the appropriate class;
- deal with cases of 'special pleading' on their merits, on the basis of such information as is provided by the entrant.

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2. Seeding

2.1 General Principles

2.1.1 The principles described below apply to the following Level A Competitions:

- British Long Distance Championships
- British Middle Distance Championships
- JK Sprint Championships
- JK Individual Championships
- Area Championships

2.1.2 The purpose of seeding is to ensure as fair a competition as possible for the better competitors in a class. This is achieved by preventing good competitors on the same course from starting too close together. Note that these competitors may be in different classes when more than one class uses the same course.

2.1.3 Minimum separation times between seeded runners shall be applied as follows:

- Sprint: 1 minute
- Middle Distance: 2 minutes
- Long Distance: 4 minutes

2.1.4 Only where the minimum start interval on a course is less than the minimum separation time, is seeding necessary.

2.1.5 It may be possible to avoid seeding for a particular course by:

- extending the start list, so that the start interval equals or exceeds the minimum separation time;
- planning separate courses for separate classes.

2.2 Seeding for Elite classes – the “seeded block”

2.2.1 Under the ‘seeded block’ system, nominated competitors are allocated start times within one part of the start list. No other competitors start within that period.

2.2.2 In order to better simulate the conditions to be met in international competitions, the Elite Competitions Group (ECG) may ask that this system be used for some, or all, of M/W18, 20, and 21 in selected Level 1 Events.

2.2.3 The list of those competitors to be allocated to the seeded block will be provided by the ECG. See Appendix M for full details.

2.2.4 Competitors on this list who enter an event are to be started at times determined by the ECG.

2.2.5 Where the “seeded block” system is not requested by the ECG, Elite competitors shall be seeded using the principles described in 2.4 below.

2.3 Seeding for Junior classes

2.3.1 The best Junior competitors (M/W14 to M/W20) shall be seeded.

2.3.2 The Junior Competitions Group (JCG) will provide a list of those competitors who are to be separated in the start list in accordance with 2.1.3.

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2.4 Seeding for Premier classes not covered by 2.2 and 2.3 above

2.4.1 A “premier” class is as defined by 1.3.2 above.

2.4.2 The best ranked 20 premier class competitors on a course, irrespective of class, shall be seeded (when 2.1.4 applies). These rankings shall be as at the most recently published edition at the closing date for entries.

Example: course 8 (M45L/M50L) at an Area Long Distance Championships has sufficient entries that the start interval is between 1 and 2 minutes. Thus, by 2.1.4 the entrants have to be seeded. All the entrants are then ranked in order, according to the relevant British Orienteering rankings, and the best 20 are then seeded so that they are kept at least 4 minutes apart in the start list. Other runners may, of course, occupy the start positions between the seeded runners (2.5.4).

2.4.3 A copy of the full rankings list (including BOF number) may be obtained from British Orienteering. It is suggested that this list is used as a data source from which rankings points can be matched to competitors’ names on each course, thereby considerably simplifying the task of identifying the best 20 ranked runners on the course.

2.5 Seeded Start Times

2.5.1 The allocation of start times for seeded competitors is subject to the following constraints:

(i) competitors identified under 2.3 and 2.4 are to be kept at least the minimum separation time apart in the start list;

(ii) competitors should also be allocated to their preference of early/middle/late start bands, as with all other competitors (see 2.6.1)

2.5.2 Subject to the constraints above, seeded competitors should be allocated start times that spread competitors as evenly apart as possible.

2.5.3 Competitors should be evenly separated as much as possible to avoid congested sections within start blocks. A competitor is more likely to gain an unfair advantage or be distracted by another competitor in a congested section whereas this is less likely in an un-congested section.

2.5.4 If a seeded block is not being applied (see section 2.2), un-seeded competitors may be allocated start times between seeded competitors.

2.5.5 Where the ECG request a seeded block, start time allocation shall be governed by Appendix M.

2.6 Preferred Start Times

2.6.1 Entrants should be allowed a choice of early/middle/late start times (for the JK this should apply to each day separately, e.g. an entrant may choose late starts on both days). Each entrant should then be allocated a start time at random within the appropriate band, except for seeded competitors who should be dealt with as under 2.5.1 above.

2.6.2 Note that the size of the bands need not be equal. If, for example, 75% of the entrants choose the late band of a four hour start list, then the late band can occupy the last three hours.

2.6.3 For large events it is sensible to spread start times over at least four hours, as this:

- reduces the number of competitors on the area at any one time;
- reduces the number of courses for which seeding is required;

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- reduces the peak flow rate of competitors through the finish;
- makes it easier to use a shift system for helpers.

2.6.4 Consider not using the last half hour or hour of the start list for the youngest competitors (up to M/W12A and M/W14B), to avoid the slowest of them getting lost in an emptying forest.

2.6.5 Also, not using the first half hour for them can avoid the earliest youngsters not having a flow of competitors to follow through the finish itself.

2.6.6 Consider not using the last half hour or hour of the start list for the oldest competitors (e.g. M/W75+) also.

2.6.7 At the request of the JCG, un-seeded Junior competitors should be separated by a minimum of 2 minutes on Long Distance courses.

2.6.8 It is advisable to try to give competitors in the smaller classes a reasonably even spread through the start list. Situations to avoid include:

- starting all ten entrants at two minute intervals in one block (making it difficult for them to get away from each other)
- starting most of the entrants at five minute intervals at one end of the start list, a few others (who requested split starts) at the other end, with a couple of hours unused between the two sets.

2.6.9 When two different map scales are being used, beware the problem of two classes actually running the same course but at different scales -they need to be treated as one when allocating start times.

2.6.10 When two (or more) courses share the same first leg, consider allocating them to different minutes in the start list. This applies particularly when the leg is a relatively short one, and the competitors are of similar speeds. e.g. if course 15 (with M55L) and course 16 (with M60L) share the same first leg or two, course 15 could use the odd-numbered minutes and course 16 the even ones (provided, of course, the entry is small enough for this to be done).

2.6.11 When seeding is used for a particular course, note that it is only the seeded competitors who need to be at least four minutes apart; the three minutes between seeds can still be used for unseeded competitors. [This does not apply when a seeded block is in use: see section 2.2.]

2.7 Seeding advice

2.7.1 When drawing up a start list for a course, it is helpful to keep blank “slots” at intervals of 4 minutes (or 2 minutes if a Middle Distance competition) and reserve these for seeded runners only. Only where there are no other alternatives should these “slots” be filled with un-seeded runners.

2.7.2 Where an event has a policy of allowing late entries, this will allow competitors who enter late and who should be seeded to be kept the minimum separation time from other seeded starters. NB there will be more than 20 seeded runners in this situation but following 2.7.1 should provide more than enough “slots” to keep all seeded competitors apart.

2.7.3 Where seeded Juniors share the same course as seeded Seniors, treat all seeded runners in the same way keep all the minimum separation time apart.

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3. Other Considerations

3.1 The Controller's Role

3.1.1 The Controller shall review the systems used for selection, seeding, and start time allocation, and be satisfied that the criteria set out above have been fully and consistently followed. Once this has been done, the Organiser's decision is final.