

Event Guideline H: Ultra Long 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

1.1 Nature of the Event

1.1.1 Ultra Long Distance events challenge the competitor to race over a distance, normally much longer than the guidelines for an event using 'classic' long distance.

1.1.2. Ultra Long Distance may take the form of a cross-country or a score event.

1.1.3. The guidelines refer to events that would be registered with British Orienteering. They do not apply to mountain marathons and adventure races that may have important navigation content.

2. Organisational Requirements

2.1 The responsibility for Ultra Long Distance events follows that of cross-country events of the same level.

2.2. Officials

2.2.1. The officials of an Ultra Long Distance event shall meet the requirements set out for the appropriate level of event in Appendix C (Event Officials).

2.2.2. The grade of controller will depend on the level of event.

2.2.3. The officials shall consider the safety of competitors to be of prime importance.

2.3.4. The organiser shall be aware of additions to the normal equipment list such as extra communication equipment and the availability of larger capacity EPS cards.

3. Planning Requirements

3.1 General Considerations

3.1.1 Guidelines to planning cross-country events are given in Appendix B to the Rules. They have evolved to indicate best practice and except where modified in this guideline should be followed for Ultra Long Distance events. They require planners to provide courses of varying technical and physical difficulty and through length, varying times.

3.1.2 The essential feature of Ultra Long Distance courses is that they should not only test the navigation and route-choice skills of the competitor, but they may also test, by choice of course,

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their strength and endurance. The competition may also be a test of the competitor's ability to judge their own rate of progress to enable them to complete the course without reliance on aid from another person.

3.1.3 The use of control sites requiring fine navigation may have significant time implications and overuse of such sites may be inappropriate for this event.

3.1.4 The density of control sites may be lower than that of 'Long' courses, with legs of several kilometres appropriate in some cases.

3.1.5 The competition is not a test of mountaineering, climbing, camping or survival skills.

3.1.6 In the case of a score event or where there are score courses on offer they should follow Guideline G for Score Events.

3.1.7 Very long courses may be unsuitable for novices or those with health and fitness problems. The provision of alternative shorter courses at the event should be considered.

3.2 Time Limit

The planner shall plan the longest courses with a clearly stated estimated leading time assuming a high quality entry. The officials shall allow a reasonable time for slower competitors to complete courses before they are closed.

4. The Competition

4.1 The Competition Area

The area should be large enough for competitors on the longest course to be presented with a challenging course without the route crossing itself frequently.

4.2 The Map

The map may be an orienteering map of a large area, drawn to ISOM specification or a composite of smaller maps of adjacent areas that can be linked in an obvious way. Purpose-surveyed and drawn 'mountain maps' may be used, as may specially produced OS extracts providing that they meet the appropriate approval of the Club or Association, and of the Controller, and can be overprinted with essential information such as crossing points and 'out of bounds' areas.

5. Safety

5.1 General safety obligations

5.1.1 British Orienteering safety guidelines apply as published in Guideline E (Event Safety). The controller will be responsible for reviewing and signing-off the British Orienteering Risk Assessment Form.

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5.1.2 Essential Minimum Equipment

The organiser will be responsible for ensuring that the competitors are aware of mandatory minimum equipment and sustenance, as specified in the compilation of the Risk Assessment.

5.1.3 Contingencies for bad weather

The officials shall consider the provision of shorter courses if the weather forecast indicates the likelihood of a high risk to competitors. In the case of a severe weather forecast they shall consider the cancellation of the event.

5.1.4 Novices/juniors in pairs

On specified courses, novices and juniors may be allowed to compete in pairs and still remain competitive. The organiser has the right to insist that specified age groups cannot compete alone.

5.1.5 Manned controls

Some strategic controls with emergency assistance should be provided. The assistance may take the form of radio/phone control, first aid and water. However, the competitors should be self-sufficient and not require more than emergency provision.

5.1.6 Retiral Plan

There shall be a plan to enable the evacuation of competitors from remote sites in the competition area, in cases where they cannot proceed with the rest of the course or make their own way back to the assembly area.

5.1.7 Incident Plan

A major incident plan should be prepared, and a manager be appointed to take charge in the event of this happening. This would enable the smooth operation of any action required to deal with the incident.

6. Further Information

6.1 Other information in Appendices B (Course Planning), E (Event Safety), F (Environmental good practice), G (Juries, protests and appeals), and I (Electronic punching).

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