

What makes a GREAT orienteering event?

Orienteering Events:

Orienteering is an exciting outdoor adventure sport that exercises mind and body. The aim is to navigate between checkpoints (controls) marked on a special orienteering map.

At an orienteering event, organisers will plan multiple courses, each to suit participants of varying skill level and experience.

Each course has different requirements, depending on difficulty. For the most complex courses, greater intricacy of the land is required, as this increases the challenge.

The Key Components:



Contours of the Land

- A primary feature to a great orienteering area is the contouring. If the shape of the land is **complicated**, runners are forced to make a plan to identify the most efficient route. For example, to make a choice to avoid running across unnecessary hills.
- These areas will not allow runners to run in a straight line, and may create a challenge in identifying their position on the map.



Varied Vegetation

- **Diverse woodland** creates visual contrast and route variation. The density of thicket affects **visibility and runnability** through particular sections, resulting in the need for route planning.
- Open and dense areas are valuable for orienteering. For complicated courses, planners will identify sites with big areas of forest, as this makes for **challenging navigation**.

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The Key Components:



A Physical Challenge

- The greatest courses will provide a physical challenge, even for beginner courses.
- **Thick and dense forest** increases the difficulty of runs due to reduced visibility of key features and controls.
- For the hardest courses, a **mature mixed forest** is optimal. Visibility is interchangeable and vegetation allows competitors to run hard in some parts but also slow them down. This increases the thought needed for routes.



Route Choice

- A course must provide competitors the **mental challenge** of choice.
- A forest where participants can take very different routes between controls creates the basis for a great orienteering event. If there is no obvious route, because of complexities in the contours and vegetation, then individuals must **create a plan** as to where they will run.



Other Considerations

- Water features such as streams, ponds and marshes are key landmarks on an orienteering map. These features are mapped and used as **route defining elements**, which is useful for orienteering at all levels.
- If a location that is fantastic for orienteering, cannot hold the capacity required for parking, event organisers will be happy to explore alternative parking locations within walking distance or will provide a shuttle service or a car share system.

What makes a GREAT orienteering event?

Discovering Diverse Areas for Orienteering Beyond the Forests:



Stately Gardens

- Formal stately gardens increase difficulty because their repeating, symmetrical features, hedges, walls, paths, mazes(!), make it harder to pinpoint your exact location.
- Movement is restricted by walls and buildings, so unlike open moorland where you can travel more directly, you must choose routes carefully and navigate around barriers, adding complex decision-making to the challenge.



Moorland

- Open moorland presents challenges because the terrain can appear featureless at first glance, making subtle contours and small features like marshes or old quarry workings crucial for navigation.
- Tussocky ground slows movement and disrupts rhythm, while scattered or irregular landmarks require strong map interpretation to stay on course.



Sand Dunes

- Sand dunes have very subtle, constantly changing contours.
- On the map, dunes can appear similar and repetitive, making it hard to distinguish them from another. Participants must read the map carefully and match it precisely to the terrain.