

British Orienteering

Every Junior Matters

A Strategy for Juniors & Youth 2018-25



Short version

April 2018



Dear Member,

I am pleased to sponsor this strategy “**Every Junior Matters**” to improve orienteering for young people. Over the last 20 years, we have seen fewer juniors at orienteering events. This is verified by statistics that apply to orienteering and sport in general:

- 75% of British teenagers do not take regular exercise
- Across National and Regional orienteering events, 18% of participants are juniors
- Of all British Orienteering junior members, 70% will drop out by the age of 21.

This is disturbing for all of us who believe that orienteering is good for all ages and is an excellent way to develop mind and body for young people. Orienteering has the “Unique Selling Point” that all members of a family can take part. However, as young people grow through teenage years, the majority are leaving the sport due to academic pressures, social reasons, hobby prioritisation and a proliferation of choices in busy lives.

This strategy aims to increase the number of juniors and youth retention in orienteering by offering a more satisfying and accessible sport to juniors and families. We need clubs to have junior programmes that are fun, active, local and safe. There are some good examples, such as SYO, MAROC & SARUM with excellent junior sections, and we would like to help more clubs achieve this. We will deliver a more “joined-up” sport that removes existing inhibitors for young people and offers clear pathways and incentives for juniors, up to and including university. And we will offer a more inclusive sport for juniors that enables friendships, promotes teams and is simply much more fun!

We all need to play our part, so I am asking everyone to help. I would like every club to review and improve what they offer for juniors and families. British Orienteering will help clubs in this process and will take the lead to deliver a more joined-up sport with more opportunities for all juniors to have a safe and enjoyable experience.

Ultimately over the long-term, we aim to shift orienteering to a more balanced demographic, with all ages participating, as a pre-requisite for long-term sustainability. We will all benefit from a stronger presence of juniors and families in the sport. By 2021 we aim to raise junior membership in all regions and by 2025 our long term aim is to have juniors as a third of overall membership and participation.

May everyone – of all ages – enjoy their orienteering!



Judith Holt, Chair of British Orienteering

Executive Summary

This British Orienteering Youth Strategy “**Every Junior Matters**” is based on several months of research, consultation and testing of ideas. The funding for this work comes from Sport England who have a strategy “Towards an Active Nation” for 2016-21, encouraging the population to be more active.

Context

Internationally, there is widespread concern about inactivity levels in young people, with long term issues of health & wellbeing. Many developed countries indicate that 70-80% of young people drop out of sport during teenage years. For orienteering, the situation is equally severe, with countries such as Sweden and France reporting high drop-out rates. In the UK, junior participation rates in club-based orienteering varies across regions between approximately 12-35% of total participation, with Scotland considerably higher than England, Wales and N. Ireland.

The concern over youth drop-out in sport is giving rise to a new focus on **youth retention** – giving young people a rewarding experience that motivates them to stay in the sport.

Objective

The objective of this strategy is to raise junior membership and participation to a third of overall membership and participation by 2025.

Strategy

The British Orienteering strategy “**Every Junior Matters**” presents three broad areas of work to build up and sustain the population of young orienteers.

- 1. Clubs to offer junior programmes that are fun, active, local and safe.** A junior programme can take many forms, there is no one set formula. Good examples in clubs include:
 - section for juniors & families on club website
 - targeting families on social media
 - monthly coaching
 - clear safeguarding advice for parents and children
 - weekly after-school clubs
 - youth leagues
 - overnight summer camps
 - juniors helping at events

British Orienteering will:

- Lead & support clubs to place a focus on juniors so that every club has a clear offer for juniors and families that is easily accessible locally.
- Advise clubs on offering activities that are safe and enjoyable.
- Prepare and maintain a list of development-skilled coaches across the country who can help clubs execute good quality junior programmes.
- Share with clubs the existing [Junior Development Framework](#) which gives ideas, advice and examples of good practice
- Start a University start-up programme, encouraging and supporting entrepreneurial students to set up and sustain new university-based clubs

2. The overall provision of orienteering for juniors will become more “joined-up” with clearer pathways, links and changes to make the sport more suitable and accessible for young people.

The main focus areas will be:

- Build links from schools orienteering into clubs via closer involvement of parents, smarter working with schools and a strategic approach to primary schools.
- Support for the British Schools Orienteering Association (BSOA) to develop a series of regional school championship events that signpost to clubs in the region
- Encourage the Junior Regional Orienteering Squads (JROS) to continue their role of regional talent development and provision of summer camps.
- Raise the profile of the Yvette Baker Trophy/Shield and Peter Palmer Relays, with improved marketing and competition classes for small clubs/teams
- Enhance coaching for juniors via a new CPD module that builds on the L2 coaching qualification
- Deliver one national incentive programme for juniors based on colour coded achievement, with automatic notification, as per the adult ranking scheme
- Leverage the Xplorer programme of introductory Park-O for young families to pass leads to clubs
- Address specific areas of concern raised by young people and families including the gap between M14 & 16, urban orienteering for M/W16-, ranking points for first year M/W16, the mini relay for youngest children.

3. The sport will be more social and accessible to all young people at all skill levels

“Two things matter most at this age: basic competence and enjoyment. The sense that ‘you can do this’ whatever your level of ability and that you can get something out of it that matters to you, builds strong foundations. What matters to each child varies – it might be winning, spending time with a parent or just the freedom of running around with friends. Children are customers too and we will focus on their needs and wishes. They deserve a voice and choice, especially if we are to engage groups who are under-represented even at this early age, for example girls and disabled children.”

“Towards an Active Nation” – Sport England

In orienteering, we want young people to want to stay in the sport, whatever their performance level. The following initiatives will be delivered:

- A series of short regional youth camps during the autumn, with the objective to develop social ties & friendships
- A programme to encourage teenage young people to take on orienteering delivery roles such as event & training course planners, organisers, buddying & coaching support, webmasters, magazine and social media editors
- A junior membership initiative with format & T&Cs to be decided e.g. “refer a friend” type initiative, to encourage new members

- A limited number of Mountain Trail Bike (MTB-O) events marketed to orienteering juniors, to be developed by cooperative working with the British Mountain Bike Orienteering (BMBO)
- New technologies such as Virtual-O, Sporteering, maprun.org and The Outdoor Classroom will be encouraged. We will trial a “Virtual-O Champs”.
- Cooperation with the Swedish & French orienteering federations to develop an exchange programme for teenage orienteers
- A new Young People’s Advisory Board, composed of older juniors. This will be consulted and listened to, giving them a voice on how to improve the sport.
- A focus on orienteering for disabled & special needs young people with more orienteering for special schools and community disability groups, and a forum for families with disabled children to convey their needs in mainstream orienteering.



Safeguarding

- British Orienteering complies with the requirements of the Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU).
- The British Orienteering safeguarding policy is O-Safe, accessible via www.britishorienteering.org.uk/safeguardingandsafety.
- Every orienteering club must have an up to date safeguarding policy regularly reviewed by the club committee.
- Safeguarding must be seen as a pre-requisite to junior development activities.

Strategic Linkage

The following tables demonstrate how the strategy “Every Junior Matters” links to and supports the British Orienteering Strategic Plan 2025.

Strategic Programmes	Increasing Participation	Competitive Orienteering	Podium Success
Every Junior Matters initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased youth retention leading to increased participation in 14-25 year age groups Increased junior participation in activities at club level e.g. weekly/monthly junior training or families running in activities for all members Increased number of university clubs Regional youth away-day style camps Sign-posting Xplorer families towards club orienteering Providing more fun & social opportunities at club level e.g. Virtual-O, maprun or Sporteering Supporting families with disabled young people, listening to their needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving YBT & Peter Palmer events with greater levels of participation Regional Schools Championships Club junior programmes which help families plan ahead and attend more weekend events Identifying clearer pathways e.g. increasing take-up of incentive schemes Encouraging younger juniors with more prizes Addressing specific areas of concern raised by young people and families e.g. M14-16 gap, M/W16- urban orienteering, and ranking points for first year M/W16. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Widening the base of juniors at club level gradually leads to better populated regional junior squads, with eventual long term success at British Orienteering Talent Squad level. <p><i>(Note the primary focus of the Every Junior Matters strategy is not junior talent development)</i></p>

Underpinned & supported by	Supporting volunteers	Leadership & good governance	Raising profile & public image	Working with partners	Developing financial sustainability
Every Junior Matters initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased numbers of young people taking on volunteer roles e.g. course planning or website update Signposting volunteers to safeguarding policy and training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listening to the views of young people at all levels e.g. Young People’s Board, or appointing junior club captain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased communication that is relevant to, or about, young people e.g. articles published on British Orienteering website 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seeking junior sponsorship opportunities e.g. Tio Mila Collaborate with British Mountain Bike Orienteering (BMBO) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encouraging clubs to apply for grant funding to cover start-up costs of junior programmes Budgeting for junior activities in club annual financial plan

Conclusion

For a variety of reasons outlined in this report, orienteering has struggled to keep young people engaged in the sport. Nevertheless, examples of outstanding practice exist in Scotland, the regional squad system and clubs such as SYO, MAROC and others. With focus and determination, we can engage young people in all nations, regions, clubs and schools, and give them a sport that is fun, safe, exciting and rewarding. This is our long-term aim and British Orienteering commits to deliver on this.

