

What happens on the day of an event?

You should find directions to the event, along with any other details such as timings, on the website of the organising club. Most orienteering events will be signposted when you get close to the area – look for small red and white signs with arrows on them!

When you get to an event the first thing to do is to find the “Registration” area. This is usually to be found in a large open tent so should be fairly obvious, but it may be run out of a car (which should have a few signs on it!). At the Registration area you will find details of the courses on offer, which should set out the length of course as well as the “difficulty” of the navigation required.

Beginners are recommended to do easy or medium courses on their first few attempts. You may think the easier courses seem quite short, but navigating using an orienteering map takes a bit of practice – you can always try the longer courses when you have got the hang of the easy ones!

Many events have “colour-coded” courses, where the colour represents the length and difficulty of the course – the shortest and easiest course is usually the White, with the longest and hardest usually being the Brown. Beginners should probably try a White, Yellow or Orange course – perhaps a Light Green or Red if you want to try something a bit harder or longer. Green, Blue or Brown courses should certainly not be attempted until you have tried several orienteering events first.

At your first few events, it is always recommended that you ask for help and advice from one of the organising officials, who will be only too happy to help you. If you cannot find an official, ask anyone at all – orienteers are a friendly bunch and will always take the time to help newcomers!

When you register, at all but the smallest events, you will usually be given your electronic timing SI card – this usually takes the form of a small red plastic chip, which you can attach to your finger. This will be used to time you through each of the checkpoints on the course.

Once you have registered, and changed into your kit, you will need to make your way to the “Start” – this will always be signposted from the car park. When it is your turn to start you will pick up the map, and away you go!