

WHAT IS ORIENTEERING?

Orienteering is not a debating contest, a new form of karate, or a program for new students. It is a sport for every person, regardless of athletic ability. Teams, individuals, families, clubs, hikers, skiers, runners, men, women, children - orienteering offers both mental and physical challenges to all of these groups. That's why it is known as "The Thinking Sport."

In simplest terms, orienteering involves navigation with a map and compass over a forested area to a sequence of destinations. The orienteer is given clues as to where checkpoints are and a map that shows their exact location; but s/he must find his or her own way to each checkpoint - there is no required route. It's like a car rally where the fastest car to locate all the checkpoints wins; but the orienteer is on foot. It's like a treasure hunt in the forest; but the orienteer is seeking orange and white numbered markers.

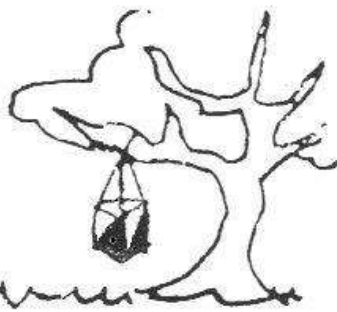


There are many variations on foot orienteering (foot-O): bike-O, ski-O for the winter, canoe-O for the summer, string-O for young children, and trail-O for people with limited mobility are just a few. Orienteering is a year-round sport for all ages and abilities.

Competition is up to the individual. If you enjoy hiking through the woodlands, you may walk the courses; if you prefer to race, the pace is faster at the intermediate and advanced levels. Orienteering is a very popular sport in Europe; and competition in the U.S. is increasing every year.

WHERE DID ORIENTEERING COME FROM?

Orienteering began in Sweden in the early 1900's as a navigation drill for military troops. It soon developed into an organized sport and spread to the other Scandinavian countries and to



the rest of Europe. Great Britain, Canada, Australia, and Japan already had widespread participation when orienteering was introduced into the U.S. during the late 1960's. Today Orienteering USA (OUSA) is the main force in sponsoring the growth of orienteering in this country. It sanctions meets for national competition, determines national rankings of individual orienteers, and selects the U.S. teams for the World Championships and World University Championships held in alternating years.

WHAT DOES THE ORIENTEERING CLUB DO?

The Western Pennsylvania Orienteering Club (WPOC) became a chartered member of OUSA in 2003. It was formed by a small group of people who were very interested in promoting the sport in this area; WPOC was created by former members of the IUP Orienteering club.

Today the club is active in providing orienteering opportunities through local events that are open for public participation. These events attract a wide variety of participants: orienteers from WPOC and nearby orienteering clubs, adventure racers, hashers, Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts working on merit badges, college

students taking orienteering as a class, ROTC cadets practicing for Ranger competitions, Search and Rescue personnel and hunters who want to improve their map and compass skills, runners, and hikers.

The club has provided orienteering instruction to elementary and secondary school students, scouts, several outdoor youth and adult groups, and university physical education students. WPOC has helped Allegheny Parks and Indiana Parks and Trails with mapping projects, has worked with DCNR and Stackhouse Park Foundation to develop permanent orienteering courses, has made presentations in many venues on the sport of orienteering and has helped produce a television program on orienteering for WQLN, *Outdoor Family Adventures*.

If you are tired of being a spectator, or if you would like to try a unique activity that you can continue throughout life, contact the Western Pennsylvania Orienteering Club at our Web site www.wpoc.org or send e-mail to jlwolfe@atlanticbb.net or call **814 255-6606** or just show up at one of our events. We always provide courses for novices, as well as experienced orienteers; and we always provide free instruction.

Schedule for 2016

Jan 10	Laurel Ridge S.P.
Mar 20	Raccoon Creek S.P.
Apr 10	Mingo Creek Park
Apr 24	Deer Lakes Park
May 22	Keystone S.P.
Jun 12	Frick Park
Aug 21	Yellow Creek S.P.
Sep 10	North Park
Oct 1	Blue Spruce Park
Oct 16	Boyce Park
Oct 30	Laurel Hill S.P.
Nov 8	Pine Ridge Park

Western Pennsylvania Orienteering Club

