Better orienteering

Summary
Duncan Bayliss

BetterOrienteering.org

Improve your orienteering skills

Intermediate

Beginner

Advanced

Videos   Skills Tool Kit   Free downloads   Navigation strategies

This summary is web-linked to the Betterorienteering.org website

Better orienteering

Better Orienteering in overview
What the Betterorienteering.org covers

Beginner
What you need to get started

Basic Navigation Routine
The basis for all successful orienteering navigation

Skills Tool Kit
The core orienteering skills to progress

Skills progression
Skills in stages from Beginner to Intermediate to Advanced

Strategies
Ways to implement the skills in practice

Resources and links
Where to take your orienteering further

A key principle of Better Orienteering – Visual skills are explored in a visual way

Use this summary together with the Betterorienteering.org website

Better orienteering

What is included ?

New to orienteering

Basic Navigation Routine

Plan, Picture, Direction

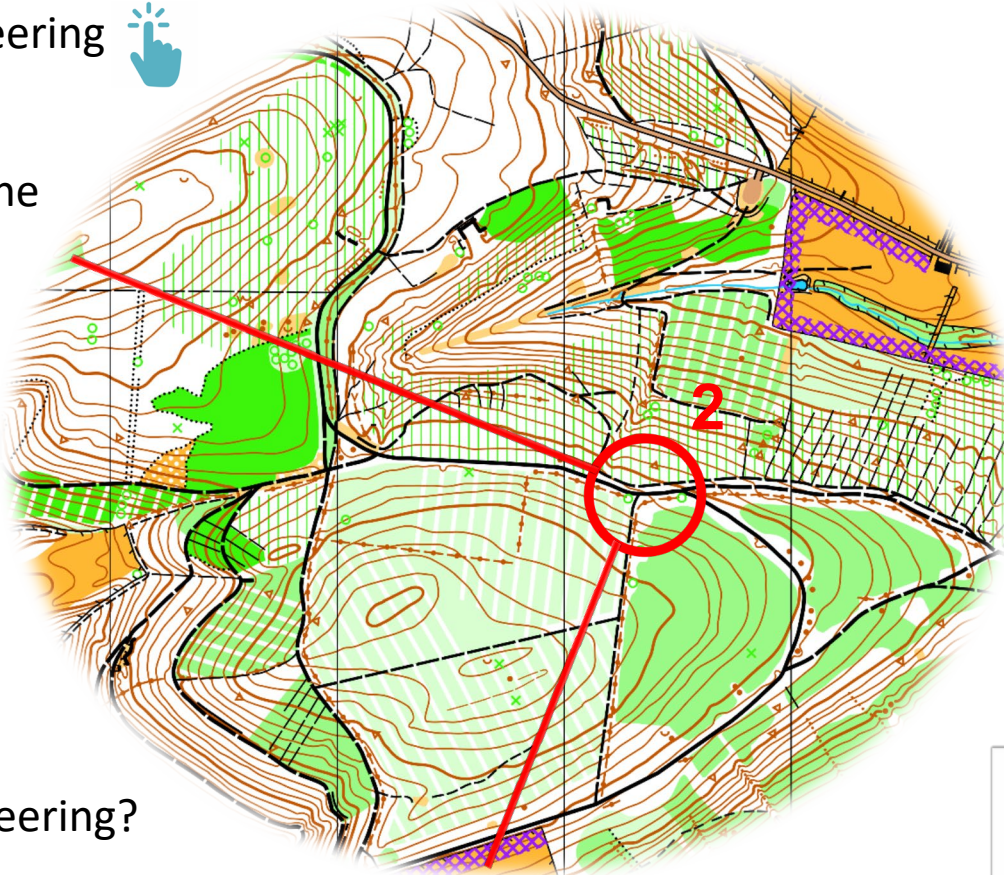Skills Tool kit

Better Orienteering
Navigation model

How well am I orienteering?

Race analysis

Click on a heading
to go to that section

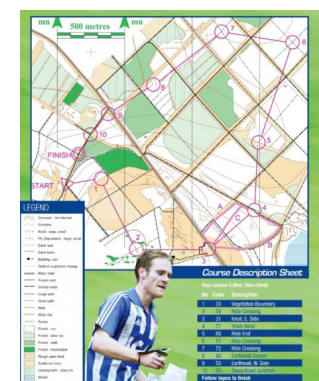Each info-graphic can be downloaded separately

Use this summary together with the Betterorienteering.org website

This is an overview of what is contained on Better Orienteering.org

Better Orienteering - Download, Links, Resources, Books

The resources Better Orienteering connects you with to improve your orienteering

Videos

Free resources and downloads
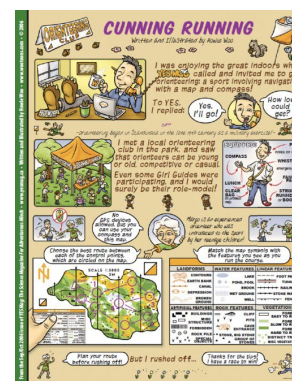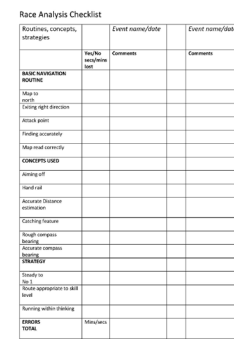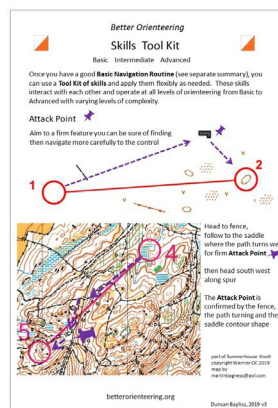
Suggested Books

McNeil (2010) Orienteering: skills, techniques, training

Ferguson and Turbyfill (2013) Discovering orienteering

Gueorgiou (2019) The winning eye

Use this summary together with the Betterorienteering.org website
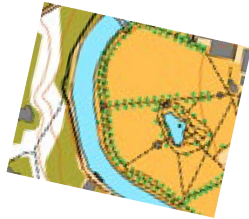
Beginner

New to orienteering

Start Orienteering || A Newcomer's Guide || Pres...

Think Fast
Run Hard
Start
Orienteering

Try this introductory video

An excellent introduction video

Better Orienteering

New to orienteering? Here's some tips

Keep the map lined up to north

Know the scale

scale 1:10000, contours 10m
500m

1:10,000 --1cm on map = 100m on the ground

1:7,500 – 1cm on map = 75m on the ground

Fold the Map
Thumb on map where you are
Tick off features you pass

Know what the symbols mean – see other side of this card
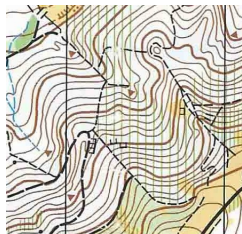
It is OK to walk
You can lose more time by running in the wrong direction

Dib each control in order with your timer

Orienteering navigation is not the same as using a smartphone or road atlas

When you finish always go to download so that a search is not sent out for you

Duncan Bayliss

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Use these tips to help beginners understand the basics they need to orienteer

If you download them separately from Betterorienteering.org they are scaled for easy viewing on a smartphone

Colour coding of courses explained

Easy / Short

Beginners and juniors

Technical courses

Hard / Long

ISOM 2017 Orienteering Map Symbols

Land forms

- Contour
- Index contour
- Form line
- Slope line
- Contour value
- Earth bank
- Earth wall
- Ruined earth wall
- Erosion gully
- Small erosion gully
- Knoll
- Small knoll
- Small elongated knoll
- Depression
- Small depression
- Pit
- Broken ground
- Very broken ground
- Prominent landform feature

Water and marsh

- Uncrossable water
- Shallow water
- Waterhole
- Uncrossable river
- Crossable watercourse
- Small crossable watercourse
- Minor/seasonal water channel
- Narrow marsh
- Uncrossable marsh
- Marsh
- Indistinct marsh
- Well, fountain or water tank
- Spring
- Prominent water feature

Man-made features

- Paved area
- Wide road
- Road
- Vehicle track
- Footpath
- Small footpath
- Less distinct small path
- Narrow ride
- Visible path junction
- Indistinct junction
- Railway
- Power line, cableway or skilift
- Major power line
- Bridge/tunnel
- Footbridge
- Wall
- Ruined wall
- Impassable wall
- Fence
- Ruined fence
- Impassable fence
- Crossing point
- Area that shall not be entered
- Building
- Canopy
- Ruin
- High tower, Small tower
- Cairn, Fodder rack
- Prominent line feature
- Prominent impassable line feature
- Prominent man-made feature

Rock and boulders

- Impassable cliff
- Cliff
- Rocky pit, Cave
- Boulder, Large boulder
- Gigantic boulder
- Boulder cluster
- Boulder field
- Dense boulder field
- Stony ground: slow
- Stony ground: walk
- Stony ground: fight
- Sandy ground
- Bare rock
- Trench

Vegetation

- Open land
- Open land with scattered trees/bushes
- Rough open land
- Rough open land with scattered trees/bushes
- Forest: easy running
- Vegetation: slow running
- Undergrowth: slow running
- Vegetation: walk
- Undergrowth: walk
- Vegetation: fight
- Vegetation: impassable
- Forest runnable in one direction
- Cultivated land
- Orchard
- Vineyard
- Distinct cultivation boundary
- Distinct vegetation boundary
- Prominent large tree
- Prominent bush or tree
- Prominent vegetation feature

Overprinting symbols

- Start
- Control point
- Control number
- Marked route
- Finish
- Out-of-bounds boundary Crossing point
- Out-of-bounds area
- Out-of-bounds route
- First aid post, Refreshment point

Technical symbols

- Magnetic north line
- Registration mark
- Spot height

These are the symbols you need to refer to as you learn how to read orienteering maps

IOF Control Descriptions 2018

This is a summary of the IOF pictorial control descriptions. Full details can be obtained from the IOF web site at http://www.orienteering.org

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
1	123	↓	⬯	▦	15 x 5	○	🗑

A Control number
B Control code
C Which of any similar feature
D Control feature
E Appearance
F Dimensions/combinations/bend
G Location of control flag
H Other information

C - Which Feature

↑	Northern
⊥	Upper
⊤	Lower
‖	Middle

D - Control Feature

See below.

E - Appearance

⌐	Low
◡	Shallow
⊔	Deep
▦	Overgrown
⋮⋮	Open
▲▲	Rocky, Stony
≡	Marshy
⋰	Sandy
♠	Needle leaved
♣	Broad leaved
⌐	Ruined

G - Location of Flag

⊙	West Side
Q	South East Edge
◑	East Part
∟	South West Corner (inside)
⋏	North Corner (outside)
⬉	North West Tip
⬊	South East End
⊓	Upper Part
⊔	Lower Part
⋒	Top
⊾	Foot
○	North East Foot
⊡	Beneath
⊟	Between

F - Dimensions

1.5	Height or Depth
5 x 3	Size
1.0/2.5	Height on slope
1.5/2.5	Heights of two features
✕	Crossing
Y	Junction
⟨	Bend

H - Other Information

✚	First aid post
⊓	Refreshment point
⬈	Manned control

⊢ - - 200 m - - →△		Distance to Start Triangle from point of timed start
○ - - - 70 m - - →↑		Follow Taped Route away from control
○ - - - 90 m - - ○		Follow Taped Route between controls
✕ ⟞⟝ ○		Mandatory crossing point or points
✕ ⟞⟝⟞ ○		Mandatory passage through out of bounds area
○ - - 20 m - →△		Follow Taped Route to Map Exchange
○ - - 80 m - ⊗		Follow Taped Route to Finish
○ ⟩ - 50 m - ⊗		Navigate to Finish Funnel, then follow tapes
✕ 90 m ⊗		Navigate to Finish, no tapes

These are the symbols used to describe controls explaining what you are looking for

Beginners courses have a description in words also

Land forms

⫾		Terrace
⋰	∿	Spur
⋀	∩	Re-entrant
⋔	⊤⊤⊤	Earth bank
⊙	⌓	Quarry
⧻	⊥⊥⊥	Earth wall
∧		Erosion gully
▨	⋯	Small erosion gully
◯	�	Hill
•	·	Knoll
)(	⋈	Saddle
◯	⌣	Depression
∪	⌣	Small depression
∨	⌄	Pit
⋓	⋰	Broken ground
✳	▲	Ant hill, Termite mound

Rock and boulders

⫙	⧄	Cliff, Crag
⫯	⌐	Rock pillar
⋔	⋌	Cave
▲	⋰	Boulder
⋰		Boulder field
⋈		Boulder cluster
⫶	⋰	Stony ground
⌒		Bare rock
⫿		Narrow passage
⊔	∿	Trench

Water and marsh

⊚	🌊	Lake
⋓	•.	Pond
⋁	v	Waterhole
⋯	∿	River, Stream, Watercourse
⋙	— —	Minor water channel, Ditch
⋮	⋯	Narrow marsh
≡	≡	Marsh
⊟	≡	Firm ground in marsh
⋒	□	Well
⋒	∿	Spring
⊡	□	Water tank, Water trough

Vegetation

◇	▬	Open land
⋮	⋇	Semi-open land
⬦	⋀	Forest corner
⋰	▭	Clearing
✳	⬮	Thicket
⋰	∿	Linear thicket
⋰	⋯	Vegetation boundary
⋈	⬭	Copse
⋀	°.	Prominent tree
⊗	×	Root stock, Tree stump

Maprunner
www.maprunner.co.uk
© Simon Errington 2017. simon@maprunner.co.uk

Man-made features

⁄		Road
⫽	— —	Track, Path
⋰	— —	Ride
⁄	∿	Bridge
⋇		Power line
⊗	⋇	Power line pylon
⋇	⊢⊢	Tunnel
⋰	⊢	Wall
⫿	⊢⊢	Fence
⊣⊢	⊣⊢⊢	Crossing point
■	📷	Building
▨	▬	Paved area
⫎	⫶⫶	Ruin
⋰	→→	Pipeline, Bobsleigh track
⊤	✚ T	Tower, Pylon
⊓	T	Shooting platform
⌐	T	Fodder rack
⊙	↑	Boundary stone, Cairn
⊕	▲ ○	Platform
⟁	○ ×	Monument, Statue
⊓	▬	Canopy
⋰	▦	Stairway
⊞	▬	Out of bounds area

Special features

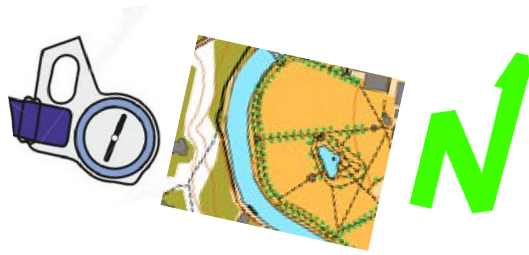|		
✕	×	Special item
○	○	Special item
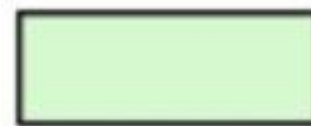
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Basic Navigation Routine

Try this video collection of basic skills

This video is available to view in the Basic Navigation Routine section of Betterorienteering.org
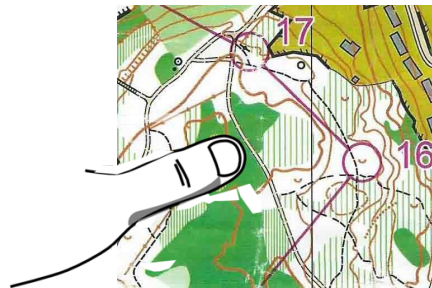
Basic Navigation Routine

Keep the map lined up to north

Know the scale, tune in to it

scale 1:10000, contours 10m
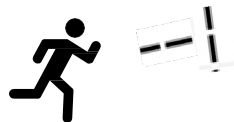500m

Thumb on map where you are

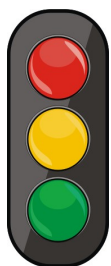|	
Exiting control	Every leg has 3 parts
Route to Attack Point	
Finding control	

Break the leg into sections:
Red = tricky/ slow
Amber = easier/ steady
Green = simpler/ quicker
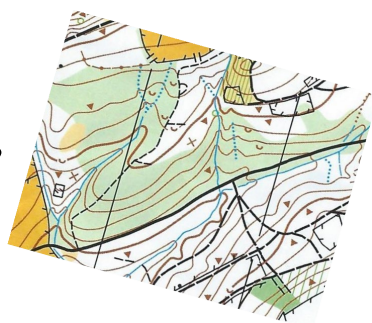
Go steady to No. 1 and get into the flow

Once you have completed a few orienteering courses you need to build a rock solid basic navigation routine

You need to reliably do the basics right for every leg of every course

Photo: Steve Rush

Better Orienteering

Its about navigation more than running

Stay in contact with the map all the time
Look at it often

If unsure where you are, relocate straight away to a firm feature

Only run as fast as you can think
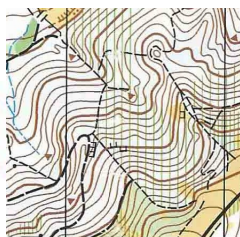
Walk when the map reading requires it

Orienteering navigation is not the same as using a road atlas or smartphone. You must simplify and zoom in or out on detail as needed

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Page 2
Basic Navigation Routine

If you don't get this right it will hold back for years

Better orienteering

Intermediate

A Skills Tool Kit

These 9 videos cover Intermediate to Advanced skills

Use this summary together with the Betterorienteering.org website

Better Orienteering Navigation Model – simple version

Start by getting the basics right

Have a reliable Basic Navigation Routine

Zoom In and out

Be systematic

Identify Attack point
Plan Route
Map + Compass for direction
Visualise where you are going
Execute the leg in stages

Draw on a Tool Kit of Skills

Aiming off
Attack Point
Catching feature

Skills Tool Kit

Better Orienteering.org
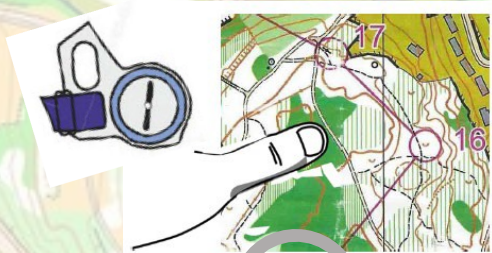
Use a range of strategies

Anticipate errors

Maintain concentration

Respond to errors

Parallel error?

Visualise map in 3D in your mind

Image: worldofo.com

As you move beyond developing a Basic Navigation Routine this is an overview of what you will need to explore and join up

The concept of a Skills Tool Kit is covered next

Better Orienteering

Skills Tool Kit

Basic   Intermediate   Advanced

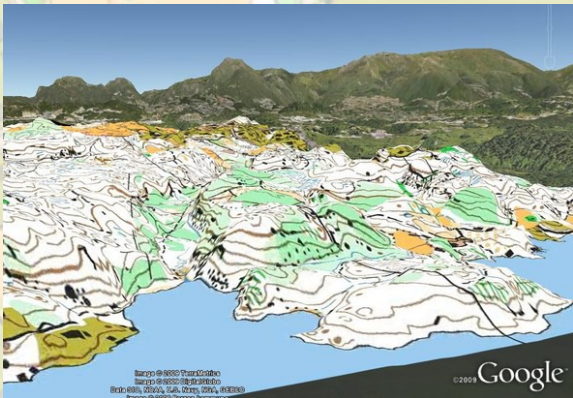Once you have a good **Basic Navigation Routine** (see separate summary), you can use a **Tool Kit of skills** and apply them flexibly as needed. These skills interact with each other and operate at all levels of orienteering from Basic to Advanced with varying levels of complexity.

Attack Point

Aim to a firm feature you can be sure of finding then navigate more carefully to the control

1   **2**

The Skills Tool Kit illustrates a set of core concepts you can use to navigate

You can 'mix and match' these skills on a flexible basis

Head to fence, follow to the saddle where the path turns west for firm **Attack Point**

then head south west along spur

The **Attack Point** is confirmed by the fence, the path turning and the saddle contour shape

part of Summerhouse Knott
copyright Warrior OC 2019
map by
martinbagness@aol.com

betterorienteering.org

Duncan Bayliss, 2019 v3   3

Hand rail

Follow a linear feature to move quickly towards the next control

A - Basic e.g. follow a path or stream

B - Advanced e.g. follow a distinct contour shape

A

B

7

8
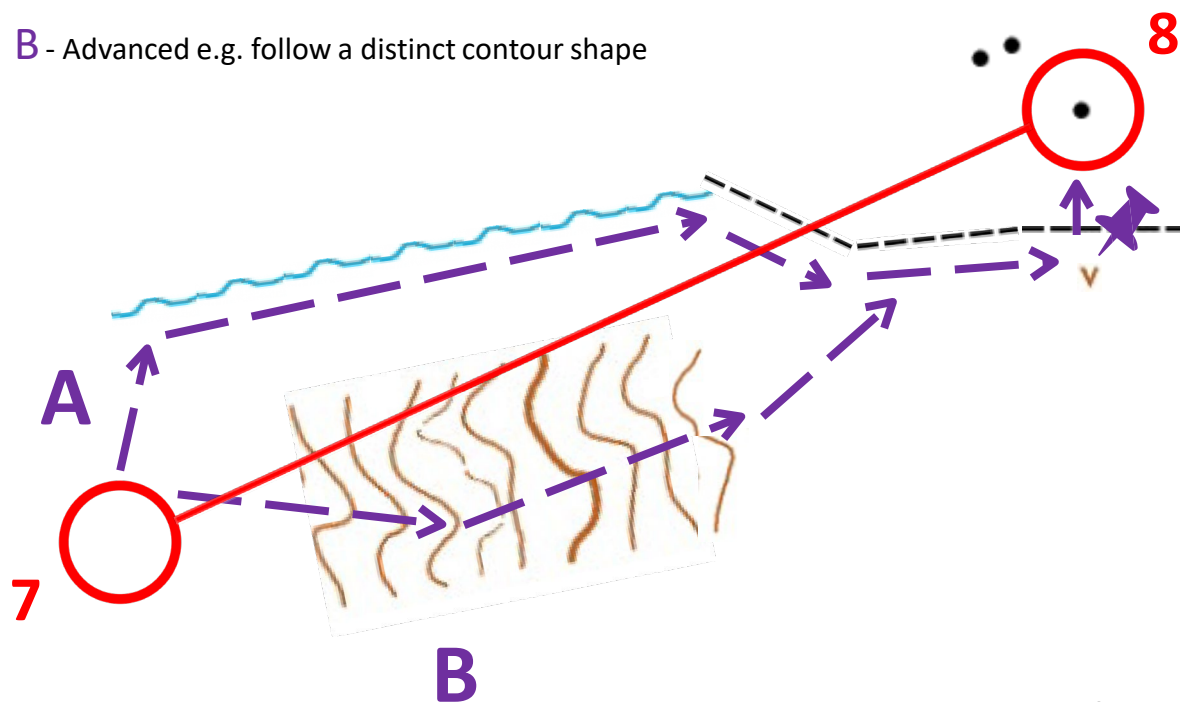
These skills concepts can be used at a range of levels from intermediate right up to elite level

They are skills every orienteer needs to know
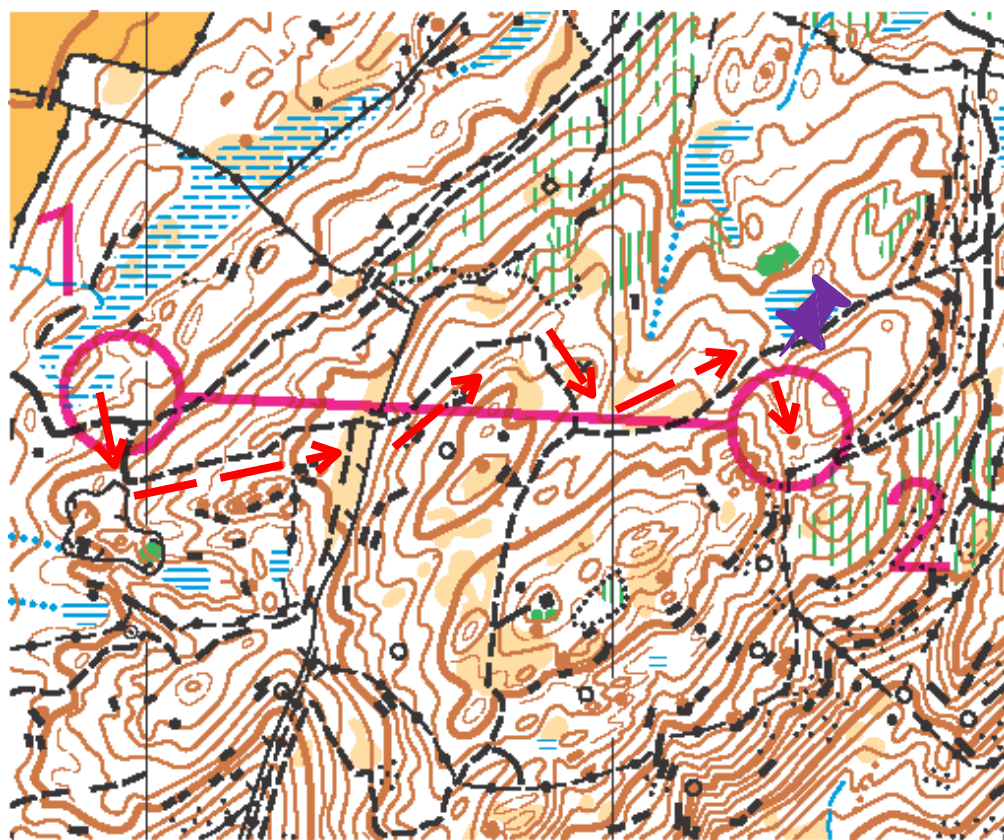
Simple Hand Rail:

Follow paths

Attack point is where re-entrant goes up to the right

Route on ground →

The easiest courses allow you join up **Hand Rails** as your route

part of Summerhouse Knott copyright Warrior OC 2019 map by martinbagness@aol.com

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Advanced Hand Rail

The contour features can be used as a **Hand Rail** to complete most of the leg

Head north following up small re-entrant to saddle

By staying within the re-entrant shape it can be followed up to the top of the hill
the only detail that matters is following the re-entrant and the top of the hill
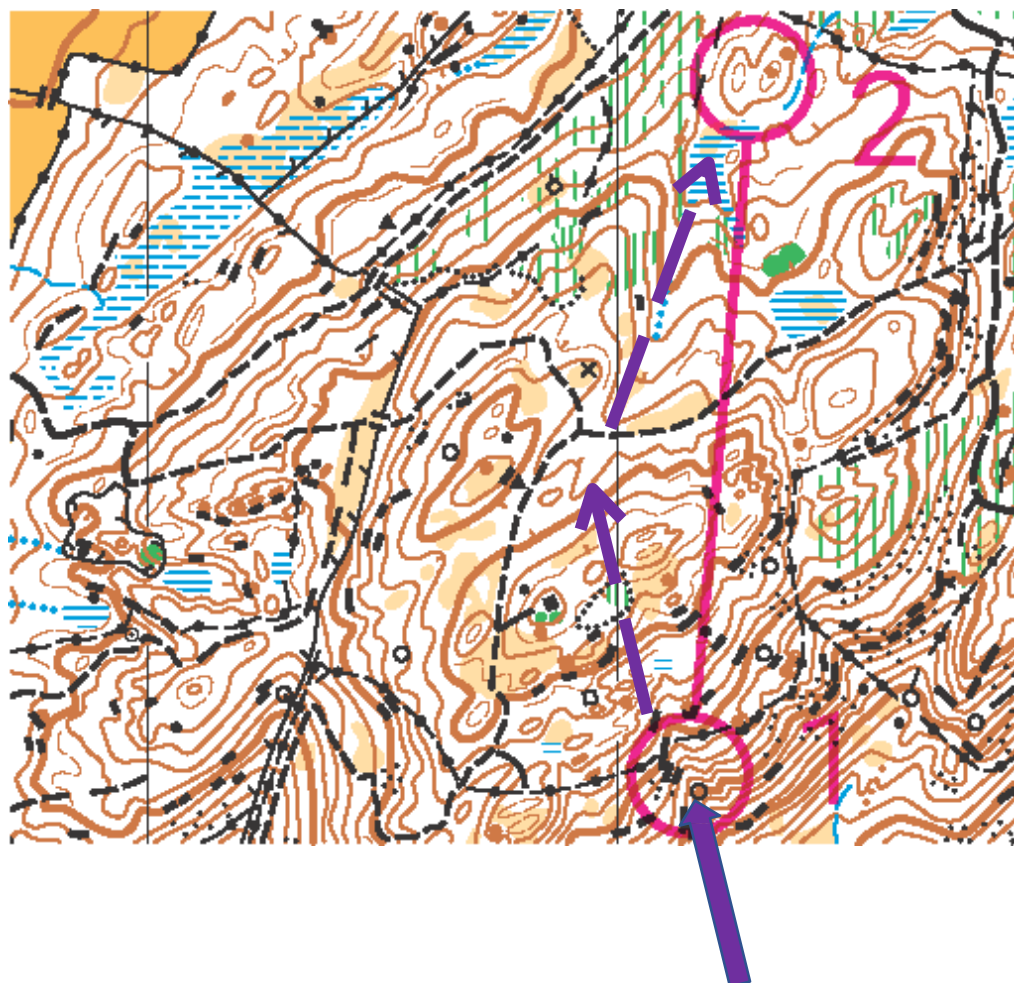
part of Summerhouse Knott
copyright Warrior OC 2019
map by
martinbagness@aol.com

descend on Rough Bearing
the path junction will be seen to the left,
cross path follow re-entrant as **Hand Rail** to where it levels to marsh
onto small hill to control

The exact line on the ground down re-entrant will not matter because the flat ground
with a marsh splits either side of the low hill with the control on it

As your orienteering progresses you will understand the interaction between these different skills and other concepts such as simplification and visualising the shape of terrain

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Aiming off

Aim off deliberately to one side of an Attack Point
or Control or Catching Feature
then you know which way to turn

8

?

?

9
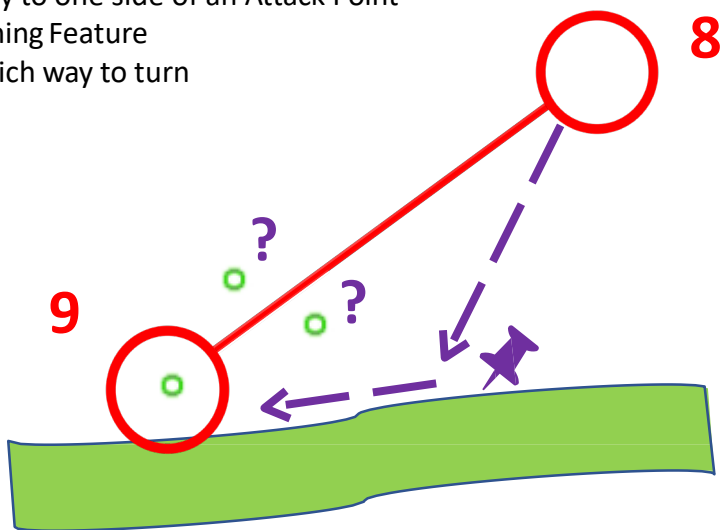
Aim Off to path,
turn right. Follow
stream to where
the wall and stream
cross the path as
Attack Point.

Then head SW
parallel to the stream
and under the small
spur to crag.

Going straight
it would be easy to be
very uncertain of your
location and not
have a firm Attack Point
Aiming Off allows
certainty in finding firm
features

Potential route on
the ground ➡️

part of Skelghyll Woods
copyright Warrior OC 2018
map by
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The Skills in this Tool Kit
can be combined

This concept -

Aiming Off

can often be used in
conjunction with the next
one -

Catching Features

Catching feature

Simplify the level of detail you are reading and move quickly to a firm feature
Use Rough Compass to give direction
Note features on route but relocate on the catching feature.
Then more careful navigation to the Attack Point or control

4

5
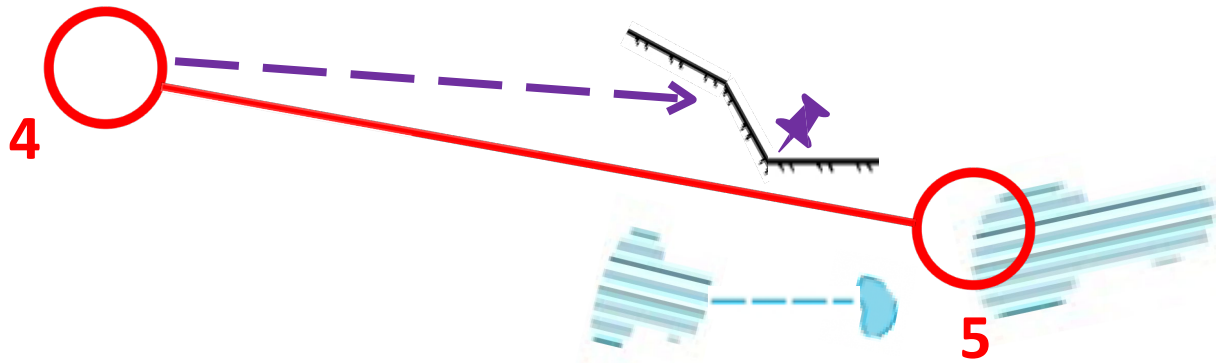
Combine Aiming Off with moving quickly to path which acts as **Catching Feature**

Path bend beneath crag gives Attack Point

Your route on the ground will not be a straight line →

Aiming for a Catching Feature can help you simplify the amount of detail you need to follow as you move through the terrain towards the next control

part of Esthwaite Intake
Copyright Warrior OC
Map by
martinbagness@aol.com

Duncan Bayliss, 2019 v3   7

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Corridor

Instead of following a series of linear features as hand rails to get close to the control identify a **corridor** of features to move through

11 ... **12**
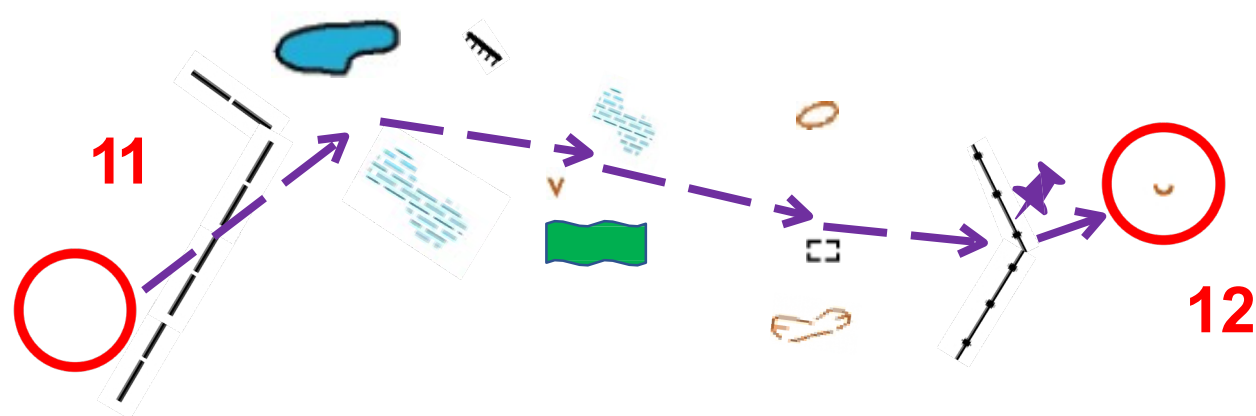
Visualize notable features – go from 2D to 3D

See a terrain map in your mind
Use **notable features** to turn the 2D
features above into a
3D visualization

11

Remember - You don't need to put it all in words
Move through your **visualisation** with confidence
e.g.
Rough compass out of control
Cross path
Right of lake
Behind thick forest vegetation boundary
Below small hill, past ruined building
To stone wall
Control
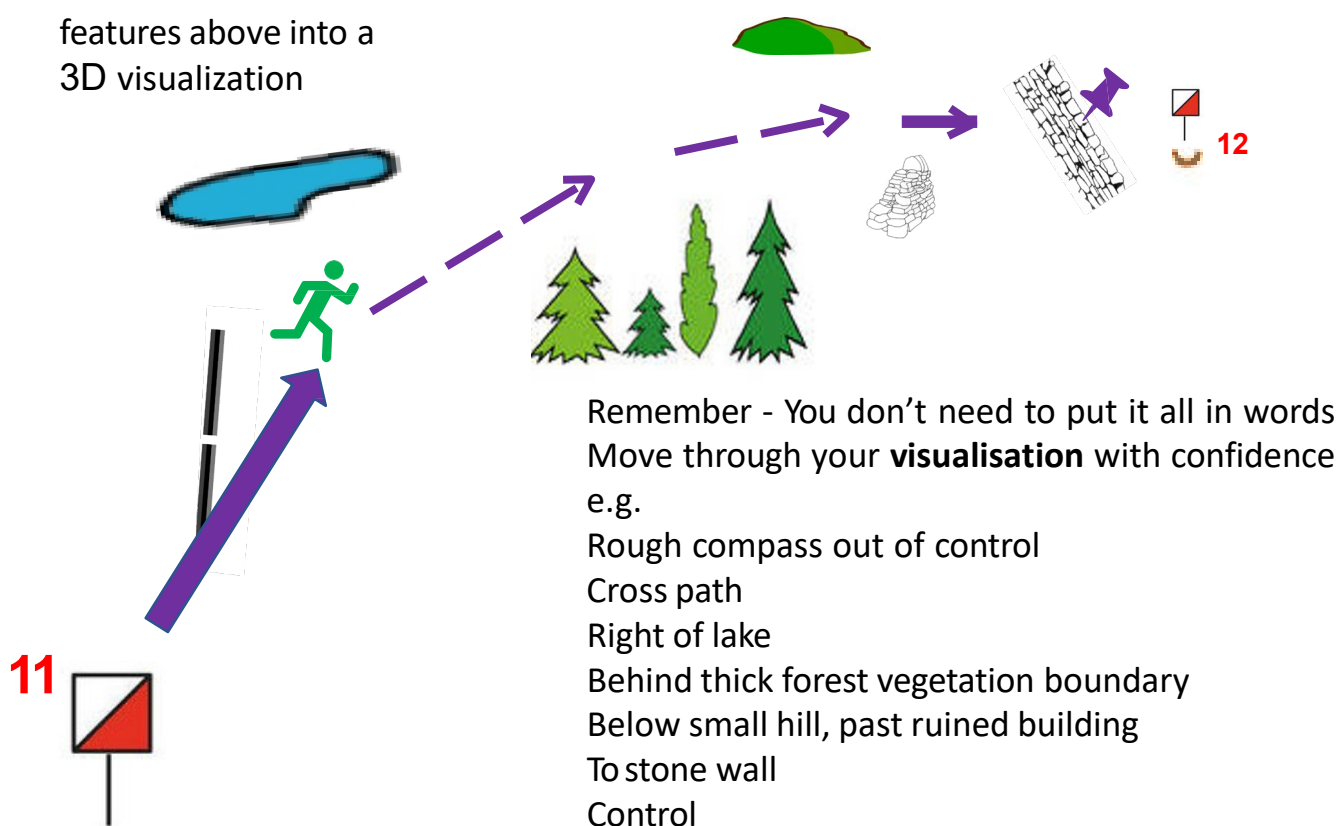
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Beginners will tend to follow line features such as paths or fences

As you progress you can identify a corridor of features to move through without needing a line feature to follow

With time you will get better at visualising what these feature will look from what you see on the map

Relocation - Intermediate Relocation

Relocation happens at small and larger scales
Unsure of where you are? Stop. **Relocate** straight away
Orientate map
How big a circle of uncertainty are you in?
The sooner you **relocate**, the smaller the circle
Look for large notable features
Still uncertain?
Don't just stand still or go in circles
Move out to a firm feature
Come back in with certainty

In this example the leg is contained within field boundaries
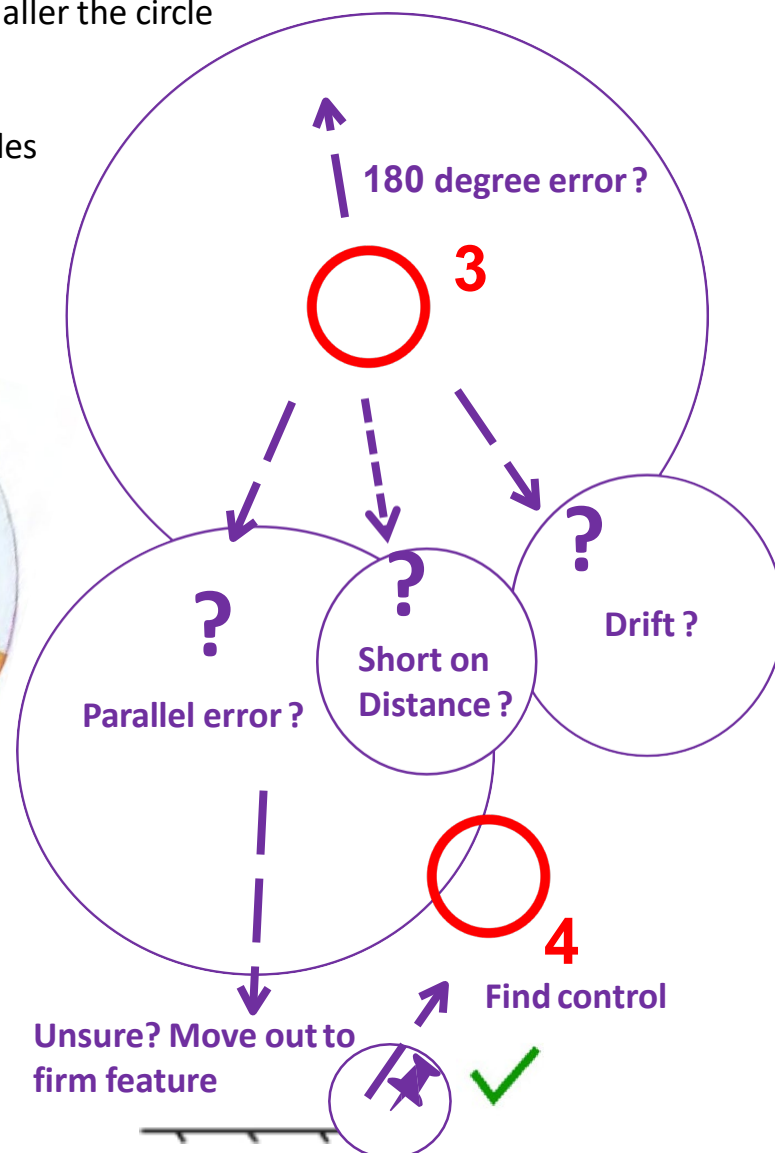
◯ = how certain you are of your exact location

180 degree error ?

3

?
Parallel error ?

?
Short on Distance ?

?
Drift ?

4
Find control

Unsure? Move out to firm feature

✓

Mistakes will happen

Learning how to relocate quickly and effectively is essential

Advanced Relocation - more complex courses and longer legs

If you are unsure exactly where you are, <u>do you know where you are going?</u>
Will you be able to pick up a more accurate location as you move on through the terrain? Are you on line to a more certain feature that will locate you?
Near to control needs greater certainty
Or, has the map stopped matching the ground too much and you need to **relocate** now? **Relocation** can even be a deliberate part of a route choice

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There is a lot to think about and do when navigating at speed

This explanation and the info-graphic that follows summarise the many things you will be doing when navigating a leg between controls

You will need to complete a lot of orienteering races to be able to draw together all these elements

More detail on Better Orienteering.org

The following schematic diagram, Route choice and executing a leg, captures a lot of the thought processes in navigating a leg. It combines strategies to employ such as identifying an Attack Point and Corridor to move through, with a series of processes you need to undertake throughout the leg.

Level of certainty

The purple circles are indicative of a sense of the level of certainty you will need of your exact location at varying points through a leg – in the same way that a circle on a smartphone or GPS changes size depending on how certain it is of your location.

Route choice A

With Route Choice option A, following a Hand Rail, the purple circles are small indicating that you could know with a high degree of certainty where you are when on a path.

Route choice B

With Route Choice option B, moving through a Corridor of features you might have less certainty of your exact location but be confident of where you are going, heading for a Catching Feature and the circle placing you is larger.

Flexibility

The permutations of skills and processes for different legs are endless, so you will need to follow a Basic Navigation Routine and then flexibly draw from a Tool Kit of Skills as needed on route.

Speed

The orange, green and red runner symbols remind you to consider the appropriate speed for different parts of a leg and the navigation challenges they present and to think of the leg in sections – red= slow, orange = moderate speed, green = faster. Remember some legs are best taken slowly all the way between controls. Some other legs allow a section of much faster progress.

Route choice and executing a leg

Strategies

Exiting control

Plan – Attack Point then route

Route to Attack Point

Visible features

Corridor or hand rail ?
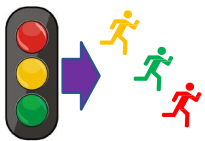
Catching feature ?

Attack Point

Finding control

Fine navigation

◯ = how certain of exact location

1

Option A

Option B

2
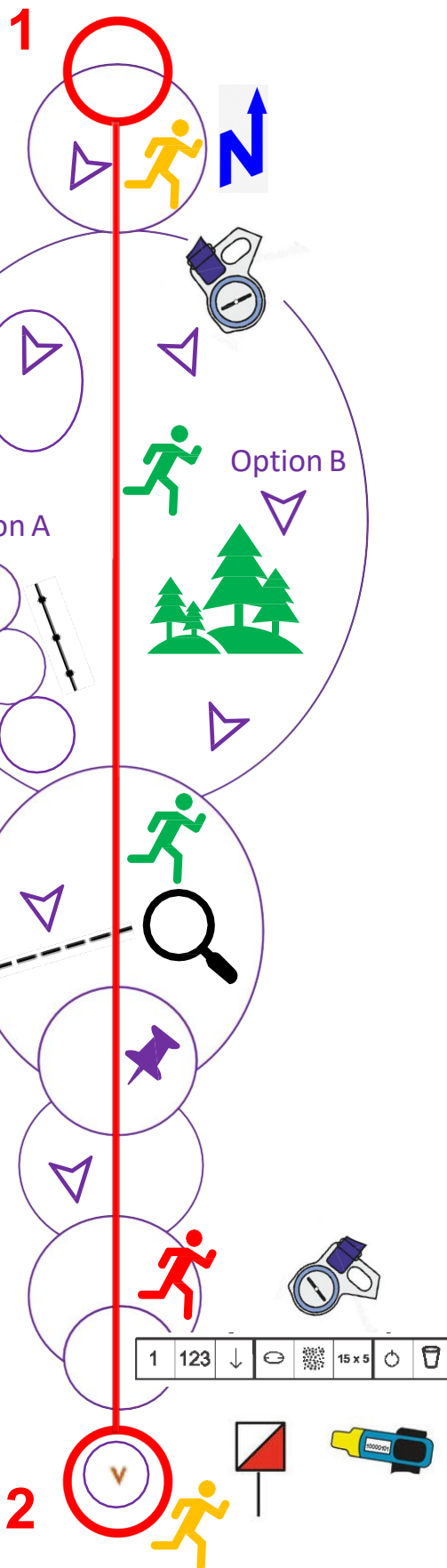
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Processes

Orientate map

Rough Compass

Read description

Simplify

Move quickly

Visualize notable features

Plan ahead plan control exit

Re-focus on detail

Slow down

Accurate compass

Check control description

Punch control

Control flow – exit smoothly

It takes a lot of practice to integrate all your skills

Be aware of all these elements

Then review legs from your races

How well were you able to join these ideas up?
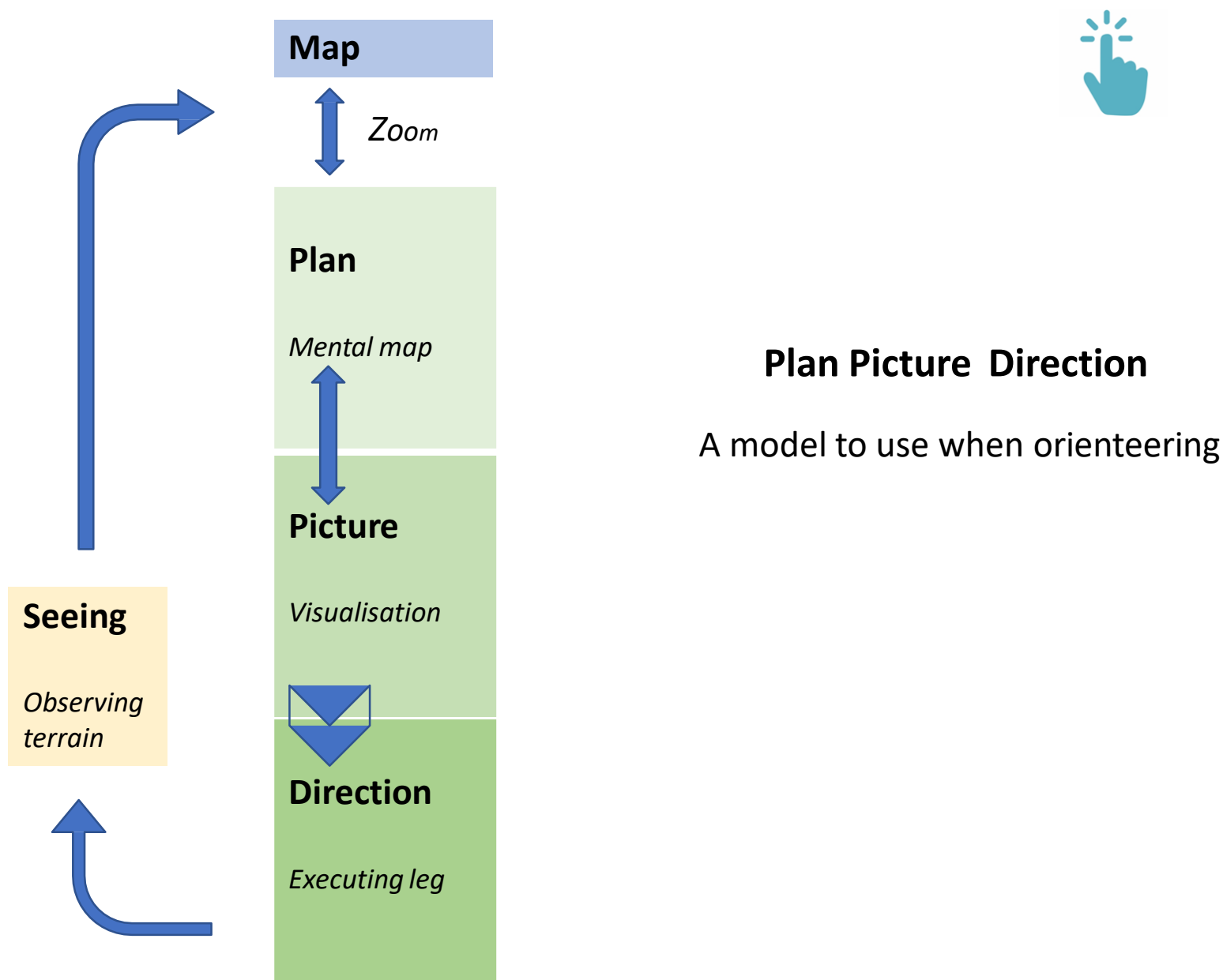
Map

Zoom

Plan

Mental map

Picture

Visualisation

Direction

Executing leg

Seeing

Observing terrain

Plan Picture Direction

A model to use when orienteering

Plan, Picture Direction draws on a model by Kris Jones integrated with other elements of navigation on Better Orienteering, Duncan Bayliss, 2019

Plan Picture Direction gives you a simple method to apply to orienteering races

Plan – read the map to work out a route and Attack point

Picture – visualise what you will encounter on route

Direction – follow a routine with map and compass to navigate the leg

Seeing – what you see in the terrain will need to be matched to your Picture of what you expect to see. You then keep updating the details of your Plan and Picture

As your navigation improves you can link this model to more concepts

Better orienteering

Advanced Strategies
How to join it all up

And

Beyond Advanced

The last run of the King of Orienteering

Be inspired by this video

This summary should be used together with the Betterorienteering.org website

Plan Picture Direction

Map

Zoom

Plan

Mental map

Picture

Visualisation

Direction

Executing leg

Seeing

Observing terrain

Navigation Routine

- Attack point
- Route choice
- Sections of leg

- Overall route for leg
- Notable features
- Visibility
- Control location

- Exiting control
- Overall direction
- Placement in terrain
- Micro route choices
- Decision points
- Sections of leg
- Finding control (inside circle)

Skills and Strategies

- Hand rail
- Catching feature
- Aiming off
  ● ● ●

Anticipate errors

Personal Terrain library

Respond to errors / relocation

Maintain concentration

Plan, Picture Direction draws on a model by Kris Jones integrated with other elements of navigation on Better Orienteering, Duncan Bayliss, 2019

This info-graphic summarises what successful orienteering navigation is built on

As your orienteering improves you can work through the ideas in all the sections of Better Orienteering and link them to the basic navigation model -
Plan Picture Direction

The model is then linked in your mind to a range of routines, skills and strategies to use when competing

Better Orienteering Navigation Model - systematic description

The elements Better Orienteering uses to help you build successful navigation

Routines

Pre-race

Research the map
Start well

Basic Navigation Routine

Map to north
Know scale
Thumb map
   Exiting control
   Route to next control
   Finding control
Break leg into sections
Steady to No.1
Map contact
Relocate promptly
Relate speed to navigation
Zoom in and out on map

Post race

Record route
Identify losses
Track trends
Plan to avoid repeating errors

Concepts

Tool Kit of skills

Attack point
Handrail
Aiming off
Catching features
Corridor
2D to 3D
Simplification
Notable features

Advanced
Advanced Visualisation
Library of terrain experience
Catalogue of errors

---

5 Key Principles

Route choice

Plan

Direction

Picture / visualisation

Execution

Strategies

Integration and implementation

Intermediate
Minimise losses maximise gains
Positive attitude to mistakes
Every leg a new beginning
Ignore other people
Look at options then commit
Simplify appropriately

Advanced
Style - don't get stuck in a rut
Control Flow
Virtual corridor
Planning ahead
Bigger picture in mind
Categorize legs by type
Right approach for course
Evaluate certainty of features
Improve distance estimation

Beyond Advanced
Total immersion
Not all in words
Improve mental maps and visualisation
Feelings and the terrain
Extended race routine
Plan your own training

The content of Better Orienteering is mapped here across the 3 main themes – Routines, Concepts, Strategies

The items listed are all sub-headings or sections of Better Orienteering.org

Better Orienteering Navigation Model

The model Better Orienteering uses to help you explore orienteering navigation

Pre - race

Research the map

Start well

Race

Basic Navigation Routine

Better Orienteering
Basic Navigation Routine
Basic Intermediate Advanced

Keep the map lined up to north

Know the scale, tune in to it — scale 1:10000, contours 10m

Thumb on map where you are

Exiting control
Route to Attack Point — Every leg has 3 parts
Finding control

Break the leg into sections:
Red = tricky/ slow
Amber = easier/ steady
Green = simpler/ quicker

Go steady to No. 1 and get into the flow

Concepts – Tool Kit of Skills

Better Orienteering
Skills Tool Kit
Basic Intermediate Advanced

Once you have a good **Basic Navigation Routine** (see separate summary), you can use a **Tool Kit of skills** and apply them flexibly as needed. These skills interact with each other and operate at all levels of orienteering from Basic to Advanced with varying levels of complexity.

Attack Point
Aim to a firm feature you can be sure of finding then navigate more carefully to the control.

Head to fence, follow to the saddle where the path turns west for firm **Attack Point** then head south west along spur

The **Attack Point** is confirmed by the fence, the path turning and the saddle contour shape

Advanced Visualisation

MAP
↓
MENTAL MAP - a selection of map elements
↓
VISUALIZATION - of terrain
↓
SEEING - confirming the visualization against the real terrain
↓
MOVEMENT through terrain –

Continuous updating of the Mental Map and Visualization

Post race

Analysis

Race Analysis Checklist

Route choice and Executing a leg

Route choice and executing a leg
Strategies — Processes

Exiting control
Orientate map
Rough Compass
Read description

Plan – Attack Point then route

Route to Attack Point
Simplify
Option A — Option B
Visible features — Move quickly
Visualize notable features
Corridor or hand rail ?
Plan ahead plan control exit

Catching feature ?
Re-focus on detail

Attack Point
Slow down
Accurate compass

Finding control
Check control description
Fine navigation
Punch control
Control flow – exit smoothly

+ how certain of exact location

Strategies to implement routines and concepts

Anticipate errors

Maintain concentration

Respond to errors

Join it all up - Process model

5 Key Principles

Route choice

Plan

Direction

Picture / visualisation

Execution

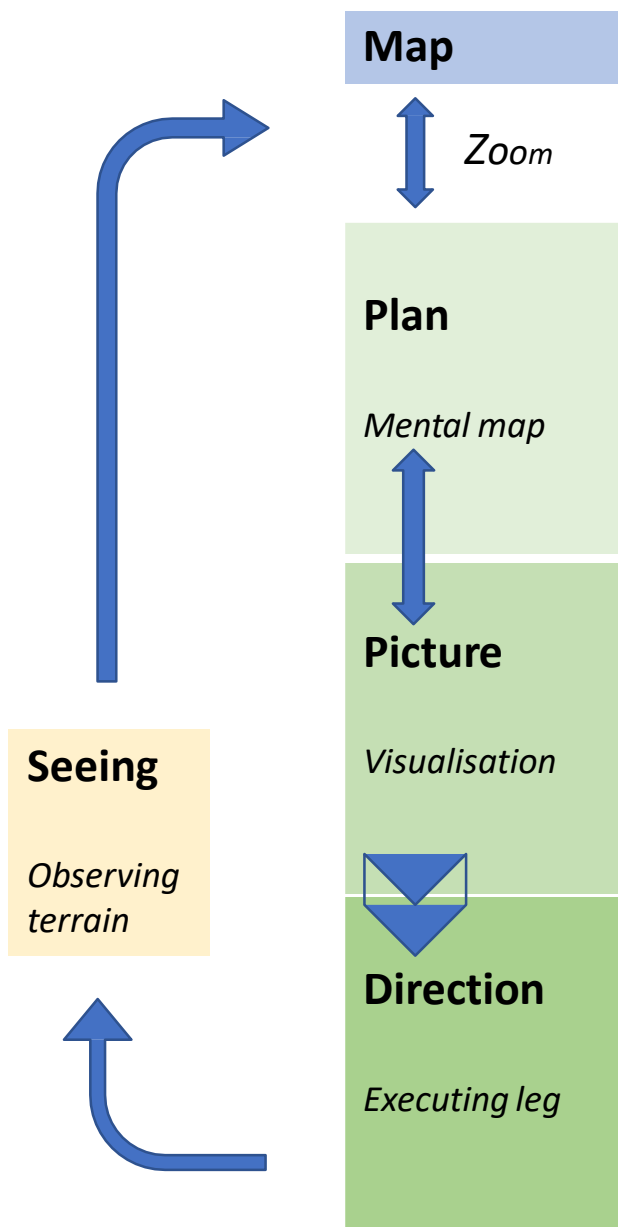## Training

How well am I orienteering ?

Training plan

It can be helpful to think about the orienteering skills you are learning in different ways, so that they join up more effectively
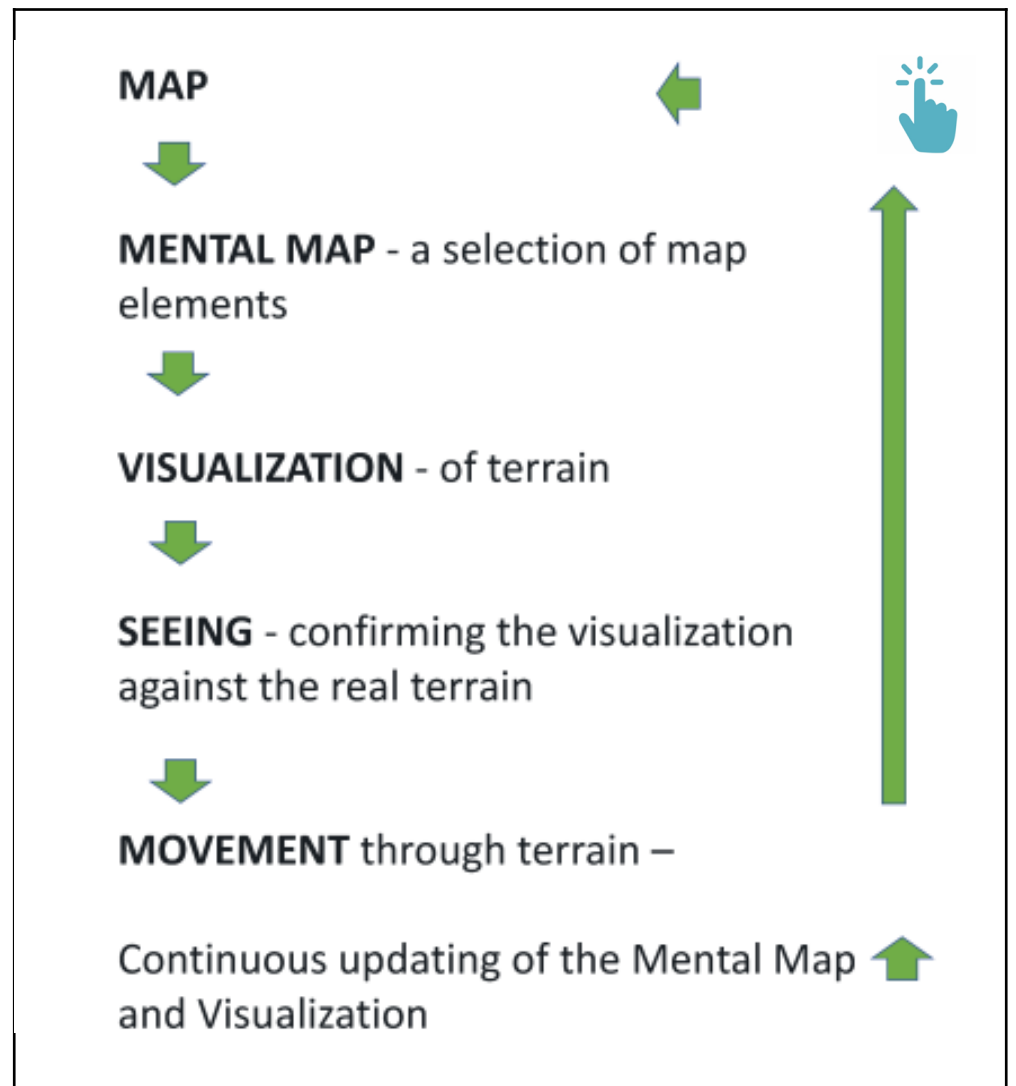
This info-graphic maps the main sections of Better Orienteering against the cycle of pre-race, race, post-race, training

You can improve your orienteering by paying attention to each of these steps from researching the area, through navigating the course, to analysing how it went afterwards and training to do better in future

There are downloads related to each of those steps on Better Orienteering

Map

Zoom

Plan

Mental map

Picture

Visualisation

Direction

Executing leg

Seeing

Observing terrain

Improve your mental maps and visualisation

MAP

MENTAL MAP - a selection of map elements

VISUALIZATION - of terrain

SEEING - confirming the visualization against the real terrain

MOVEMENT through terrain –

Continuous updating of the Mental Map and Visualization

Plan Picture Direction

Plan Picture Direction can be considered in more detail

Identify which features on the map you need to use to navigate the leg

Build an effective simplified mental map

Improve how you visualise those features – build a Terrain library from experience

Keep your visualisation updated and always ahead of you

Run into your visualisation confidently

How well am I Orienteering?

A self diagnostic test

Photo: Steve Rush

This summary should be used together with the Betterorienteering.org website

Try to honestly measure yourself against these 3 statements of orienteering ability

1. *I have a solid basic navigation routine that helps me avoid regularly repeating errors such as:*
   - *exiting the control in the wrong direction*
   - *failing to identify and navigate in from an Attack Point*
   - *failing to reliably estimate distance*

NO
Review your basic routines and practice applying them reliably.
Be aware of other techniques but focus on delivering the basics right every time
FOCUS ON BASIC TECHNIQUES

MOSTLY
Reinforce your basic routines but explore which other techniques you could use more often
EXPLORE INTERMEDIATE TECHNIQUES

You can use these diagnostic questions at any time

Try to gauge where you are on your orienteering journey

and identify what you need to focus on next

2. *I am running within my thinking ability, not forcing errors with oxygen debt or rushing*
My route choices are good and I reliably execute them
I am able to deliver good control flow most of the time
I am able to confidently move through terrain without following linear features

NO
Be aware of Advanced Techniques but
FOCUS ON IMPROVING INTERMEDIATE TECHNIQUES

YES
Systematically identify where you are losing time
Practice different mixes of techniques to see where your strengths and weaknesses lie
REINFORCE ADVANCED TECHNIQUES

3. *I understand all the Advanced Techniques. I can use them as needed and can join them up consistently and reliably*

NO
Try exploring HOW TO JOIN IT ALL UP. Use the suggestions on visualisation and psychology to help you process the Advanced Techniques in race conditions

YES
Congratulations your are orienteering beyond the remit of this guide!
Please do contribute suggestions on further content to include in this guide to help others follow your success.
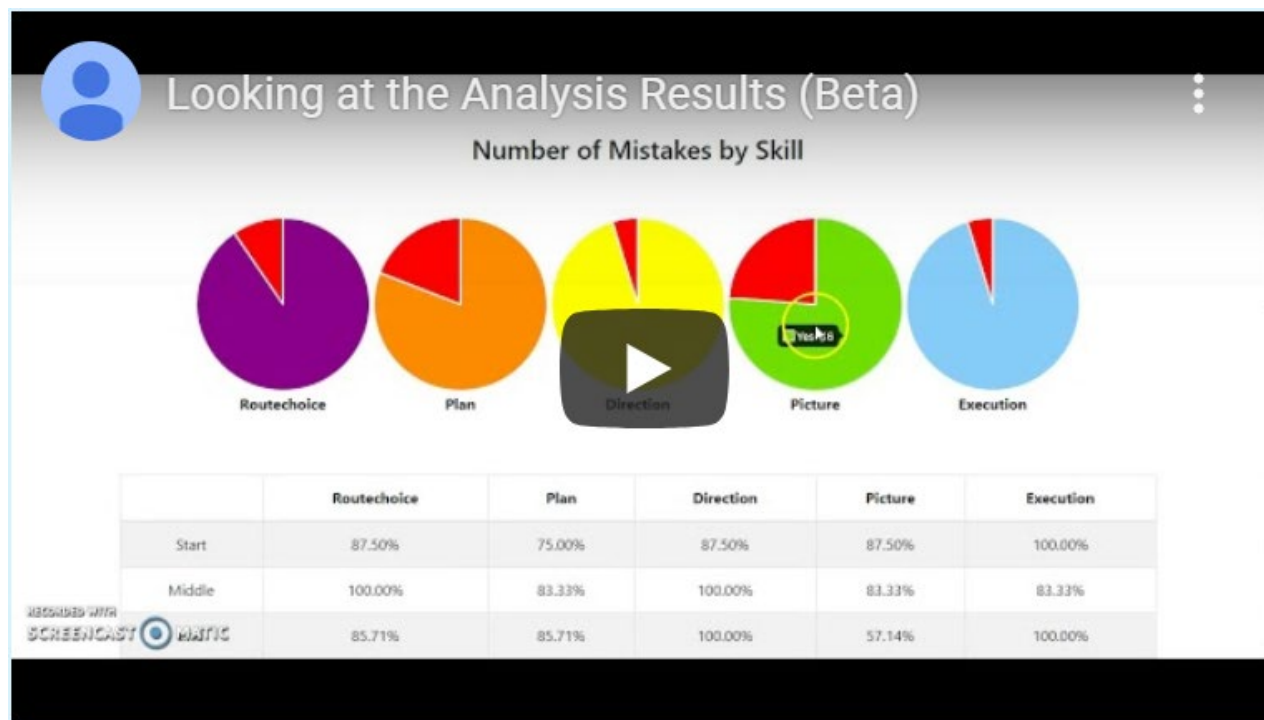

Photo: Steve Rush

Better orienteering

Race analysis

What went well ?
What went wrong ?
What are my priorities
for improvement ?

Consider trying this web analysis tool at elevate.run

This summary should be used together with the Betterorienteering.org website

Race Analysis Checklist

Routines, concepts, strategies		Event name/date		Event name/date
👆	Yes/No secs/mins lost	Comments		Comments
BASIC NAVIGATION ROUTINE				
Map to north				
Exiting right direction				
Attack point				
Finding accurately				
Map read correctly				
CONCEPTS USED				
Aiming off				
Hand rail				
Distance estimation accurate				
Catching feature				
Rough compass bearing				
Accurate compass bearing				
STRATEGY				
Steady to No 1				
Route appropriate to skill level				
Running within thinking				
ERRORS TOTAL	Mins/secs			

As a minimum, after each race:

1 Draw your route on your map

2 Estimate where you lost time

3 Keep your maps in date order

4 Look back over them to see if you keep making the same mistakes

You can also try more detailed analysis such as with this table

INTERMEDIATE STRATEGY				
No talking				
Ignored other runners				
Anticipating possible errors, planning for them				
Relocating quickly				
Treating every leg as a new beginning				
Good control flow				
Committing to route choice				
Varying speed to fit terrain / navigation				
Simplifying confidently				
ERRORS TOTAL	Mins/secs			
ADVANCED CONCEPTS				
Simplifying and seeing notable features on map and ground				
Identifying corridors				
Planning ahead				
Overall shape of terrain visualised				
Categorising types of leg and responding appropriately				
Recognising certainty of features				
Using less words				
Quick and accurate terrain visualisation – Mental Map				
Optimum route choice?				

Race Analysis table

Maybe try this type of more detailed analysis for a few races to see where your weaknesses are

You can also try a more interactive analysis tool at

 elevate.run

Photo: Steve Rush

EXTENDED RACE ROUTINE			
Researched map and courses			
Calm mind set			
Good sleep, eating well			
Started well			
Positive emotional response to challenges			
Managed and maintained concentration			
Statistics			
Distance			
Time			
Mins/ km			
Placing			
Potential placing minus errors			

Photo: Steve Rush

Do remember that orienteering requires a continual process of fine tuning your skills

You will never reach a point where you have got it all sorted and needing no improvement !

There is much more material available on the Betterorienteering.org website

I hope that using Better Orienteering has been helpful and enjoyable way to explore orienteering navigation and develop your skills
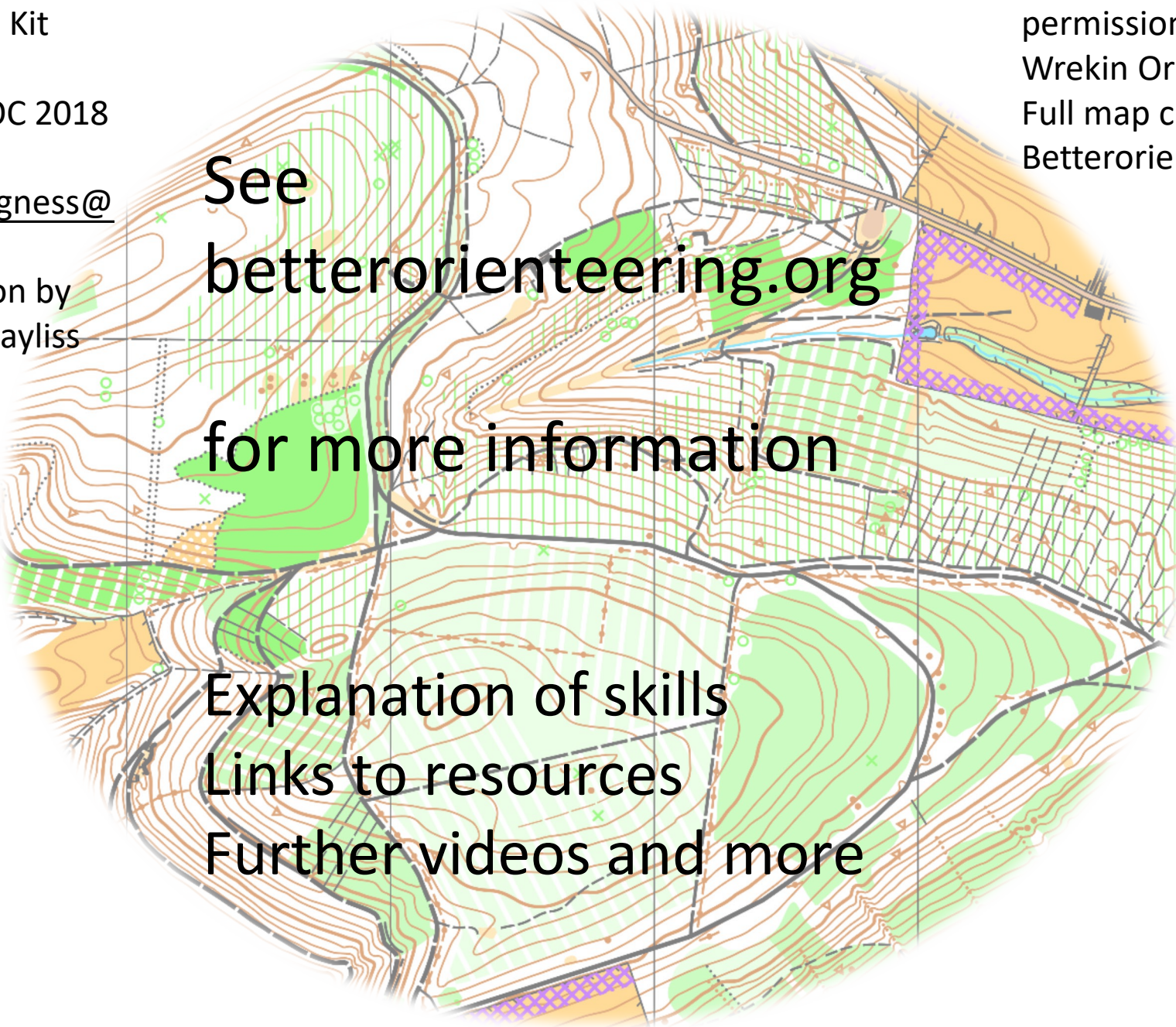
Duncan Bayliss, 2019

Better orienteering

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See betterorienteering.org

for more information

Explanation of skills
Links to resources
Further videos and more

This summary should be used together with the Betterorienteering.org website