

The second of the coaching days was held on Sunday 22nd June at Hawke Mount, and was developed to practise rough and fine navigation skills. The emphasis was to know where you were at all times. Traffic light orienteering and window orienteering were designed to encourage rough orienteering early in the leg and to decrease speed and increase map reading later in the leg to lead into the control. This is the normal situation in a competition course. The line orienteering exercise was designed to increase the accuracy of fine navigation.

The coaching notes, over the past issues have been describing single techniques that can be used. Course setters expect that you will use a number of these skills to navigate your way around the total course. As you work your way through the course you look at each leg in turn and decide on your route choice.

## Route Choice Revisited

Route Choice is simply the deciding which is the fastest way for you to get from one control to another.

This can be simple– around the paths or straight, over the hills or round; but is often complicated by the variety in terrain.

To be able to make the best choice needs experience, of navigation and of yourself.

- a. how fast do you travel over different terrain?
- b. how far round should you go to avoid a given height of climbing?
- c. can you go fast along paths?
- d. are you a steady runner who can run nearly as fast in rough going as along a path?
- e. do you navigate slowly off paths?
- f. have you confidence to fast across country away from line features?
- g. is it early in the course (play safe)?
- h. have you just made a mistake (lost concentration)?
- i. are you tired, physically or mentally?

The important thing is to make a calm decision and then to execute the route well.

The secret is to choose a route that allows you to stay in contact with the map. It is invariably quicker to go steadily round a course without making mistakes, than to race off and waste time getting lost.

Try to use this next section of the year to increase the consistency of navigation. The really competitive orienteers amongst us will be gearing up for NSW Champs and the Australian Champs. Remember to not only work on improving fitness, but also to practice navigational techniques.

## Techniques Revisited

### Leg Analysis

Look at the leg to be attempted, the first thing to look for should be the ‘attack point’ to lead you to the control. Then you decide on your route choice, and use your navigational skills to get you there, remembering that you may need to use a combination of skills as you progress through the leg.

### Attack Points.

Moderate or hard navigational courses rarely have controls on or near linear features. Orienteers can use major features near the control to simplify the navigation.

### Thumbing the Map

Helps the orienteer keep in contact with where they are on the map. Remember to keep the map oriented.

### Contouring.

To save energy always try to avoid route choices that take you uphill, and then downhill, when you could have remained on the same altitude.

### Aiming Off

Aiming off can be used when navigating towards a linear feature at right angles to the direction of travel. If there is a control point or attack point on the feature, the orienteer can take a bearing to either the right or left of the control so that when the linear feature is reached the orienteer knows which way to turn.

### Use of Catching features

Catching features can also be used during the course, rough navigating quickly to a large linear feature that will be passed on the way to the control.

### Distance estimation.

It is often important to know how far you have gone. Some people do it by judging the distance as they go; others by counting the number of paces taken.

– Geoff Todkill