

Firstly, it was pleasing to see Newcastle juniors featuring prominently in the NSW Schools team at the recent Australian Schools Championships. Well done to Joshua Blatchford, Glenn and Robyn Charlton and Joshua Roberts. All produced great efforts. Congratulations especially go to Joshua Blatchford who after excellent results was selected in the Australian Schools Honour Team, and was chosen to represent Australian in the upcoming Australian / New Zealand Challenge.

Secondly some suggestions for improving the consistency of your navigation.

In Orienteering, we repeatedly have to find control flags. To improve the consistency of your orienteering, you must get into a routine. If we make it a habit then even when we get tired we should continue to follow the same process, and not make mistakes because of bad technique.

1, Preparation, everything you do before you start:

Have an Orienteering bag where everything required is kept, so all you have to do is pick it up and leave for the event.

After registering, return to your car/gear and ready yourself. Have a drink, warm up and stretch, attach your control card and compass. Mentally prepare yourself.

Visit the finish shute and look for the last control which may be visible. Note the forest type and conditions.

I then make my way towards the start envisaging the forest and think of running through it, compassing, concentrating, pacing and control procedure and trying to ignore any distractions such as others or the weather.

2. The Start

When the beep sounds on the start clock you turn your map over and you are away. Always be careful at first. Some of us tend to rush off away from the other assembled starters. Most errors are made here. The key to a good run is to navigate successfully to the first control. That gets you off to a good start, with a confident attitude.

3. Consistent Technique.

The nature of orienteering as a sport is a combination of physical fitness and mental alertness. Your mental alertness is helped by having everything in the right place at the right time and following a procedure learned beforehand.

4. Planning the Route Choice.

Basically, route choice comes down to which of the big features near the control gives me the safest approach? and then which big features do I find along the way to lead me to the last one. The route should be planned **before** leaving the start of each leg.

It is important to read the map carefully to see the detail for the route choice and the final fine navigation from attack point to the control. If you are not able to read the map details on the run, you must stop and read the detail. (Most time loss in orienteering is due not seeing the essential detail on the map) Once you have decided what direction and route, you can now set off.

5. At the Attack Point.

Slow down, Read the detail within the circle and create a mental picture of the flag at the feature.

Read the code number and control description, and the exit direction. Navigate carefully into the control, punch and begin to leave the control.

Repeat the steps again for the next leg.

To improve your navigation, you must train yourself to repeat these steps, again and again, until it becomes a routine.

-Geoff Todkill