

It was pleasing to see many of our Newcastle juniors representing in the NSW Schools team at the upcoming Australian Schools Championships. I remember being a fairly nervous parent and feeling the pressure that Steven and Kris felt when representing NSW. I can also remember being really nervous in my own first Australian Relay Champs. Robert Vincent said to me that I didn't have to do anything different just because it was a major event. He reminded me "I was selected for that NSW team because of my consistent results during the year. My expectation should be to go out and concentrate on my own navigation, and run the event as I had run every other course. Choose the route that assures success."

I pass on this advice to all club members when competing in the Hunter Valley Champs and then the Australian Champs carnival and the World Masters. You have no control over what others are doing, but you do have control over your own performance. When training, we must not only train for running fitness, but also train for our orienteering technique. We must get into a routine, and then even when we get tired we should continue to follow the same process, and not make mistakes because of bad technique.

I wish all members good luck in the upcoming events. So it is timely to provide some suggestions for improving the consistency of your navigation.

1, Preparation, everything you do before you start:

Ready yourself. Have a drink, warm up and stretch, attach your equipment- control card / SI stick, compass, and whistle. Visit the finish chute and look for the last control, which may be visible. Note the forest type and conditions.

On the way to the start, think of running through the forest, compassing, concentrating, pacing and control procedure and trying to ignore any distractions. At the start, analyse the terrain, check where north is, so that when you first look at the map, you already have a picture of where you are.

2. The Start

When the beep sounds on the start clock you turn your map over and you are away. Find the start triangle, check your direction and read the detail on the way to No 1. 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 and practiced beforehand. (Attack Point, Route Choice, Distance, Detail-- What was that routine again?)

-Geoff Todkill