

# GUIDE FOR LOCAL URBAN/SPRINT EVENT COURSE PLANNERS

Ideally, each local Urban/Sprint event will have a Course Planner, a Vetter, a Series Coordinator, and a Computer Operator. The initial job of the Series Coordinator is to select mapped areas for the series and to identify planners and vettors for the events. The job of the Computer Operator is to set up the SI timing software prior to the event, transport the computer equipment to the event and then run the system at the event. Thus, on the competition day the Course Planner should only have to concentrate on making sure all the controls are out and in the correct location, and printed maps are available. This guide is for the Course Planner to aid them in the planning and preparation of their event.

## Start Location

Assuming you've been allocated an event map, the first decision is the start location. The Urban Series Coordinator will need this information several months prior to publicise the event. Things to consider in making the decision about a start location:

- Is there plenty of room for parking?
- Is there some shelter from inclement weather, or room to set up the club gazebos?
- Can people mill around without being a public nuisance?
- Is there access to any facilities (e.g., toilets, water, playground).

## Planning the Courses

For sprint events at the state and national level, obtain advice from the event administrator about the number and type of courses required.

For NOC Urban Series events three courses are required - Long, Short and Mini.

- Long courses should be around 4 to 5 km.
- Short courses should be around half the length of the Long course (i.e. 2 to 2.5 km).
- Mini courses should be around 1 km.

**NOTE:** The length of a sprint course is not measured as the straight line distance between controls as generally done in forest orienteering, but as the most likely route, measuring around uncrossable features such as buildings, out of bounds areas etc. The length should represent the actual distance to be covered which may be longer than a straight line measurement. (Stated course distances can be manually adjusted in the course planning software).

Since some of the early SI sticks and NOC rental sticks can only handle 30 controls, this is the upper limit on the number of controls. However, plan for no more than 28 controls on any one course to allow for any competitor punching mistakes.

Because sprint/urban orienteering events are held in fast terrain, the aim is to plan courses that require many quick decisions. This can be achieved by:

- having plenty of changes of course direction (including crossovers or butterfly legs that don't obscure other controls).



- clusters of short legs (requiring full concentration) followed by a somewhat longer leg with route choice.
- legs with genuine route choice with little or no difference in distance between the different route options.



- route to the first control obscured so that competitors waiting at the start area get only a general idea of which direction to head.

If possible, consider a spectator control at some point through the course (i.e., runners come within view of the assembly part way through the course).

If you're not familiar with the mapped area, make a visit so you're aware of its features. Begin planning the courses on the map, perhaps by identifying good legs between controls and joining those legs.

You can use either OCAD (map and course-planning software) or Open Orienteering Mapper and Purple Pen (course-planning tool). Experienced NOC members can give you advice on the use of all these programs. NOC's Gear Steward will let you know which control stand numbers you'll use (usually 30 are allocated for each urban event).

It's often the case that the Long course will need a map change (i.e. the course is split and is printed on both sides of the map).

Once the initial course planning is done, visit each control site to assess its suitability, create a control description and check map accuracy. Once a control site is locked in, numbered tape (that corresponds to the control stand number) can be left at the site. This allows a course vetter to check the accuracy of your work and to reduce the risk you make a mistake when you place control stands in the field.

Good control sites:

- are not seen from a long distance away when approaching from the previous control.
- are not hidden – if you successfully navigate to the centre of the circle, and have read the control description, you should easily see the control.
- make good use of complex areas of the map.
- allow control stands to be “tethered” and locked in place where there's any chance the stand will be stolen or moved.

Check each route choice option to ensure map correctness. If you notice map inaccuracies, let members of NOC's mapping sub-committee know so they can update the map.

Check that the map displays course closure time and the event phone number.

Check that each control circle is centred on the control feature you have taped. Also make sure that the control circles and lines joining the controls don't obscure any features on the map that are necessary for accurate navigation. If they do, use

the relevant tools to cut pieces out of the control circle and/or make gaps in the lines joining controls.

When you finalise the control descriptions, produce both English and IOF symbol versions. Symbol descriptions should be printed on long and short course maps, and English descriptions on the mini course map.

## **Printing the Map**

Course planning needs be completed early enough to give time to get the maps printed and then passed on to you. Printing is done by NOC's Printing Officer, currently Geoff Todkill, with Jeff Guy as backup. Geoff's instructions are:

- Email the course planning and map files to Geoff at [gctodkill@bigpond.com](mailto:gctodkill@bigpond.com) at least 10 days before your event. This usually allows the maps to be given to you at the event the week prior to yours.
- Please keep Geoff advised of progress (by Ph 0447091079; or email).
- Control descriptions and the SI file will be generated from the print files.

## **Obtaining the Gear**

It's the course planner's job to get the required stands (with SI units attached), flags and tethers so that they can be put out early on the afternoon of urban events. Collecting this gear can often be done at the event the week before yours. Otherwise contact the club's Gear Steward, (currently Geoff Peel, [leepback1@gmail.com](mailto:leepback1@gmail.com), 0422471353) to make alternative arrangements.

Both the Planner and Series Coordinator should work with the Gear Steward to ensure that all the gear needed for the event will be onsite.

## **Risk Management**

- ensure competitors cross busy roads at safe points (e.g., pedestrian crossings, or where there's a pedestrian refuge in the middle of the road).
- place controls at those safe crossing points to ensure the safe crossings are used.
- avoid placing controls (or having legs between controls) in high/medium traffic pedestrian areas where runners could injure themselves or members of the public.
- try to set the urban mini course entirely within parkland.

## To Do List for the Day

Although there'll be helpers on the day, here's a list of things that must be done:

- put up the NOC banner in a highly visible location, along with start & finish banners.
- synchronise the clocks.
- set up the board for competitors' car keys.
- set up the registration table for admin/enter on the day.
- set up a finish table for the Computer Operator/SI gear/download.
- put out the notice board including general instructions and instructions specific for your event.
- put up a blank copy of the map
- put out loose control descriptions if available.
- set up the start area with the maps, start clock, clear & check stands, start punch stand and start triangle flag.
- put out finish punch stand.
- make sure the first-aid kit is accessible, relevant COVID social distancing rules and hygiene procedures are followed, and the event phone is active.

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