

I am writing this as I (like many of our club members) am preparing to travel to the Australian 3 Day Event. Last year our club members achieved excellent results, with Newcastle placed second overall in the club pointscore. Good luck to all, and I'm sure even if we don't win, we will still be enjoying ourself.

My own fitness is poor due to a run of injuries and therefore a lack of fitness training, so I am turning my to focus clearly on correct navigation technique. Regardless of the level of competition, we still need to concentrate on our technique. When we put ourself under pressure we tend to rush and not think clearly, but this is still the most important aspect of our sport.

It will probably help me to go out with some novices at the first coaching day. When I'm showing them techniques to be safe, I'll be trying to reinforce to myself that I must also follow correct technique, to be positive with my navigation and to minimise any mistakes.

This was reinforced for me last week at Sugarloaf. My problem knee allowed me to only run at half pace, and I walked in some rougher spots, but I navigated cleanly and finished in a respectable position.

I will refer back to the routine that I detailed in a newsletter, last year.

1, Preparation, everything you do before you start:

Ready yourself. Have a drink, warm up and stretch, attach your control card and compass. Visit the finish shute 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.

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. (Attack Point, Route Choice, Distance, Detail-- What was that routine again?)

Remember again the skills required for navigating on a Red course.

1. Orient the map
2. Determine the best route choice, that allows to you keep in contact with the map.
3. Recognise the "attack point" to find the control
4. Interpret the contour lines (know uphill or downhill)
5. Use the features in the terrain as handrails or set a compass bearing, and recognise features being passed (eg. watercourse, hill, rockface)
6. Accurately estimate distance travelled.

– Geoff Todkill